

**Song-writing and Modern Band:**  
**Applying Musical Elements of the Herero Tribe**  
**Created by Alexandra Charney**

**Course Description:** This semester-long course is held twice per week for a class of 6-10 students and can be offered at multiple times throughout the week to accommodate more participants. It is designed for seventh and eighth grade students who wish to deepen their understanding of music theory, performance, and history. They will learn an in-depth history of the Herero tribe, primarily located in Namibia, Botswana, and Angola, and will study their ways of music-making and movement, while analyzing the similarities and differences between their music and American music. They will apply this knowledge to modern rock band instruments, including guitar, drum set, keyboard, electric bass, and vocals. Students will incorporate what they learn from this Non-Western musical style, such as Euclidean rhythms, complex meter, narrative, form, emotion, call-and-response, and improvisation, to collaborate, create, and perform their own music based on these musical concepts.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will recognize modern and traditional Herero musical practices and make connections to American pop music.
2. Students will communicate and collaborate in order to create and compose their own music inspired by musical elements used in traditional Herero music.
3. Students will demonstrate performing basic modern band techniques on electric guitar, electric bass, drums, and keyboard.
4. Students will read, discuss, and write a reflection on *Mama Namibia*, a novel by Mari Serebrov, based on true Herero events.
5. Students will apply music theory concepts to their own compositions.

**Supplemental Resources:**

1. Website on Herero history, music, and research: <https://guppies321.wixsite.com/hereromusic>
2. PowerPoint presentation on Herero culture, history, and general musical practices
3. *Mama Namibia* by Mari Serebrov

## Budget Requests

Item Needed	Estimated Cost per Item	# Items Needed	Estimated Cost Total Cost of Item
PA system with mics and mic amplifiers	\$290.00	1	\$290.00
Amplifiers for bass, guitar, and keyboard	\$100.00	3	\$300.00
Drum set	\$300.00	1	\$300.00
Electric Bass	\$50.00	1	\$50.00
Electric Guitar	\$60.00	1	\$60.00
Keyboard	\$150.00	1	\$150.00
Mama Namibia book	\$16.00	10	\$160.00
TOTAL	--	--	\$1,310

## Weekly Plan (13-week semester):

Week	Topic	Activities	Assignments
1	Introduction and Identity	<b>Day 1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ “What is identity” discussion – how identity is present in music</li> <li>❖ Kahoot “pre-quiz” on musical concepts that will be covered throughout course</li> </ul> <b>Day 2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Begin experimenting on instruments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mini lesson on each, then students rotate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Music Identity Project
2	Traditions	<b>Day 1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Webquest (<a href="https://guppies321.wixsite.com/hereromusic">https://guppies321.wixsite.com/hereromusic</a>)</li> <li>❖ Project: Using one of the instruments, your voice, or both, find a musical way to present about one of your cultural traditions. (5 min presentation)</li> </ul> <b>Day 2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Finish and present projects</li> </ul>	Begin Reading <i>Mama Namibia</i>
3	Storytelling and Narrative	<b>Day 1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen to Herero folk music, find translations, discuss how it relates to their history</li> <li>❖ Listen to modern pop Herero music</li> <li>❖ Brainstorm list of song topics; how can we tell a story through music?</li> <li>❖ Watch student webquest project videos if time</li> </ul> <b>Day 2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Begin writing song: form groups and write lyrics</li> <li>❖ Finish watching student webquest project videos</li> </ul>	Prepare project described in webquest website
4	Form	<b>Day 1:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Write out and analyze form of outjina</li> <li>❖ Write out and analyze form of Western pop song</li> </ul> <b>Day 2:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Create a short song and dance in Western pop style inspired by the outjina form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Submit written reflection on musical form and how it is influenced by the culture in which it exists and from outside cultures.</li> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> reading</li> </ul>
5	Call-and-response	<b>Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen to call-and-response Herero songs</li> <li>❖ Find examples of call-and-response in well-known American pop/rock songs</li> <li>❖ Perform these songs on instruments</li> </ul>	<i>Mama Namibia</i>

		<b>Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Collaborate with a group, write and perform a song on instruments using call-and-response</li> </ul>	
6	Body Percussion	<b>Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Watch videos of body percussion used in Herero song and dance, mostly stomping and clapping</li> <li>❖ Students compose a rhythmic piece using only body percussion</li> </ul> <b>Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Students recall their call-and-response song from last week and find a way to incorporate some aspect of their body percussion composition into the song</li> </ul>	Finish body percussion composition by Day 2
7	Complex Meter	<b>Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen to a Herero folk song in complex meter</li> <li>❖ As a class define complex meter and find examples in American pop music</li> <li>❖ Discuss and question the concept of assigning Western musical terms to a context in which they do not exist; discuss benefits for the purpose of this class</li> </ul> <b>Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Collaborate, compose, and perform a short song in complex meter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Complex Meter worksheet</li> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> reading</li> </ul>
8	Euclidean Rhythms	<b>Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Partner activity – with few instructions and no help from the teacher, the students must diagram a rhythm (written in Western notation on the front board) in any form they wish, except in Western notation.</li> <li>❖ Pairs share with class</li> <li>❖ Introduce Euclidean rhythm diagram</li> <li>❖ Listen to Herero music that has Euclidean rhythms</li> <li>❖ Split into 2 or 3 groups: Write a new song using their own Euclidean rhythm or alter a previously-written song to include a Euclidean rhythm</li> </ul> <b>Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Finish composition and perform for class</li> </ul>	Euclidean rhythms worksheet
9	Rhythmic Timeline	<b>Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Teacher plays a Herero song with timeline and an American pop song with a timeline; students silently reflect on what was similar. Then – students cannot talk and must demonstrate on an instrument what they thought they heard in common. If the rest of the students agree, they should raise their hand.</li> <li>❖ Introduce the concept and musical purpose of timeline</li> <li>❖ In groups students begin composing a song with a timeline</li> </ul> <b>Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Finish compositions and perform for class</li> </ul>	<i>Mama Namibia</i> reading
10	Harmonies	<b>Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen to a video of Herero's improvising</li> </ul>	Choose a song you like, find a harmony (can use a piano or any

		<p>harmony overtop of the leader; dissect the chords, transcribe them, sing them, write a song for modern band using the chords (today just assign notes in chord or entire chords to instruments and figure out voice leading)</p> <p><b>Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Add a melody and lyrics to the song; practice and perform</li> </ul>	other instrument), sing or play along, record and submit.
11	Rhythmic Improvisation	<p><b>Day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listen and watch a video of Herero people improvising rhythms</li> <li>❖ Practice improvising on the drum set</li> </ul> <p><b>Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Alter the song from last week to include a section for solo improvisation for each instrument; perform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Improvise-tap a rhythm for 6 measures in 4/4 or 6/8 meter, record and submit audio file or video</li> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> reading</li> </ul>
12	Final Project	<p><b>Day 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Introduce final project, expectations, and grading rubric: In two groups of five, students will compose and perform a song that includes at least three of the concepts covered in the curriculum.</li> <li>❖ Teacher will write topics on board, students will form groups and choose topics</li> <li>❖ Teacher will answer remaining questions</li> <li>❖ Students will begin working</li> </ul> <p><b>Day 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Mama Namibia</i> discussion</li> <li>❖ Students will work with group members on their final project</li> </ul>	Finish <i>Mama Namibia</i> (reflection due on Day 2)
13	Final Project	<p><b>Day 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Students work on projects</li> </ul> <p><b>Day 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Project performances!</li> </ul>	Prepare final projects!