

World Dances



Lesson – Argentinean Culture & Folk Dance

Companion Video – Four Dances from “Estancia”

Suggested Grade Level

Grades 5-8

Objective

Students will become familiar with Argentinean malambo and be able to recognize the elements of folk dance. They will explore how the historical cultural landscape of Argentina influenced the music and dance of the time. Students will demonstrate their understanding by illustrating a significant event or cultural movement in history through selected music.

Suggested Materials

- BPO video of Alberto Ginastera’s Four Dances from “Estancia”
- YouTube example of Malambo folk dance- <https://tinyurl.com/y5bjshhe>
- Composer Fact Sheet (provided)

New York State Arts Standards

MU:Cr1.1.5a-8a	MU:Pr4.2.5c-8c	MU:Re7.1.5a-8a	DA:Cr1.1.5b-8b
MU:Cr2.1.5a-8a	MU:Pr4.3.5a-8a	MU:Re8.1.5a-8a	DA:Cr2.1.5a-8a
MU:Cr3.2.5a-8a	MU:Pr6.1.5a-8a		DA:Re7.1.5b-8b
	MU:Pr6.1.5b-8b		DA:Re8.1.5a-8a
			DA:Cn10.1.5a-8a
			DA:Cn11.1.5a-8a

New York State English Language Arts & Literacy Standards

Reading, Standard 1, 2, 3 & 4
Speaking & Listening, Standard 1, 2, 3 & 6
Language, Standard 1, 3, 4 & 6

New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English

Standard 1: Communication Skills
Standard 2: Cultural Understanding

Procedure

- 1) The *gaucho* first emerged during the War of Independence in Argentina. Men from rural areas with excellent horse riding skills and knowledge of the land provided support to the soldiers fighting the Spanish in the country’s rural areas. After the war, the gauchos

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migrated to Argentina's fertile lowland *pampas* (plains) which would become their new home. They found work herding cattle for the owners of wealthy *estancias* (ranches). The *malambo* dance developed from competitive duels between gauchos to show off their agility, strength and dexterity.

- 2) Have students read through the Composer Fact Sheet and background information on the malambo. Then have students watch the YouTube example of malambo.
- 3) Composers are often inspired by their own cultural heritage and the environment they grew up in. They may even integrate elements of the music of their homeland in their own original compositions. Composer Alberto Ginastera was heavily influenced by the folk music of his native Argentina. He incorporated the Argentinean malambo folk dance throughout his Four Dances from "Estancia."
- 4) Have students watch the BPO video of Four Dances from "Estancia." As they listen, have students think about what musical techniques Ginastera used to portray the malambo. What instruments are used to characterize the *gauchos*? How is the title of each dance brought to life and reflected in the music?
- 5) Brainstorm a list of significant historical events or cultural movements with students. Examples could include the Industrial Revolution, the first man on the moon, the Civil Rights movement, etc.
- 6) Have students select a specific event or cultural movement. Students can then create a playlist of music selections that represent or portray the event or movement. The music should be reflective of the time period and historical significance.
- 7) Have students share selections from their playlist with the class. Have students explain why they chose specific songs to express their chosen event or cultural movement and what musical and/or stylistic elements help illustrate it.

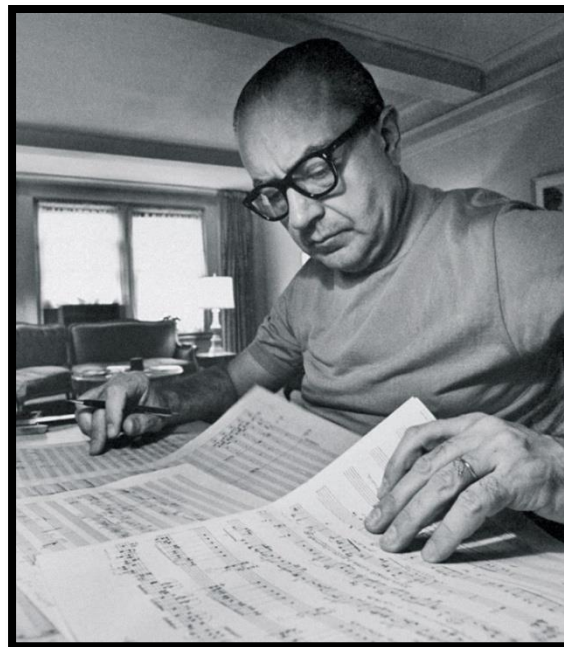
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Alberto Ginastera

Argentinean composer Alberto Ginastera was born in 1916 in Buenos Aires. At age 12, he entered the Williams Conservatory where he studied composition and also took piano lessons.

In 1942, Ginastera received a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation to visit the United States where he studied with American composer Aaron Copland at the prestigious Tanglewood music center in Massachusetts.

Shortly upon returning to Argentina, Ginastera co-founded the League of Composers and founded the La Plata Music and Performing Arts Conservatory, as well as the Latin American Center for Advanced Music Studies at the Di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires. He served as the Dean and Honorary Professor at the School of Music Sciences and Arts (Argentine Catholic University), and Professor at the La Plata University.



Ginastera moved back to the United States in 1968 and then to Europe in 1970, where he lived mostly in Geneva. He died in Geneva, Switzerland at the age of 67. He is remembered as one of the most influential Latin American composers of all time, noted for his patriotism, love for his homeland, and incorporation of native Argentinean folk music within his works.

Estancia

Ginastera's *Estancia* was a ballet commissioned by the American Ballet Caravan. It was intended as a one-act ballet with five scenes based on the life of the *gauchos* (Argentine cowboys) on the *estancias* (cattle ranches) in the *pampa* (plains). The ballet was not performed until years after it was written, but the "Estancia" Suite (four dances extracted from the ballet) premiered in 1943 at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and quickly gained popularity around the world.

The four dances are:

Los Trabajadores agrícolas (Agricultural workers) comes from the "morning section" of the ballet, which follows the life of a *gaucho* in an average day. The music is inspired by the *malambo* folkdance.

Danza del trigo (Wheat Dance)

Los Peones de hacienda (the Cattlemen)

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Danza Final (Final Dance) features the *malambo* once again, illustrating a ferocious dance contest between the *gauchos*.

Malambo

Malambo is a folk dance from Argentina performed by *gauchos* that involves a sustained tapping of the feet. It is a solo male dance, though it may be performed in groups, and involves elaborate leg movements with energetic *zapateados* (stomping) and *cepillados* (foot sole brushes against the ground). Since the 19th century, malambo has been a way for men to show off their dance skill and speed. Today, malambo dancers from all over Argentina gather together to celebrate the “National Festival of Malambo.”

