



# The United States Army Field Band



## **MI ALMA LATINA** **ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN: TANGO THE CLASS AWAY!**

### OBJECTIVES:

- Students will distinguish between strong and weak beats.
- Students will identify themes used in the selection.
- Students will perform steps used in a classic Argentinian tango.

### MATERIALS:

- Mi Alma Latina track 4 (*La Cumparsita/Por Una Cabeza*)
- The Tango: An Introduction to Basic Steps (teacher worksheet)
- Note: it will be helpful if any desks or other encumbrances are already cleared before the lesson starts!

### PROCEDURES:

1. Review concept of strong and weak beats. Divide class into three groups—one to provide a steady beat (clap on legs), one to provide a strong beat (stomp feet), and one to provide weak beat (clap hands softly).
2. Cue track to 3:58 and play for about 30 seconds. How many beats seem to be in a measure? Which beats are strong (1 and 3) and which are weak (2 and 4)? If needed, continue movements from step #1 to help student responses.
3. Using the excerpts below, teach the students the three basic melodies of La Cumparsita and Por Una Cabeza. If they are skilled enough to read the melodies, post them on the board or on an overhead; if not, teach through rote singing.
4. Assign each of the previous groups one of the melodies. While playing the selection in its entirety, instruct students to raise their hands (or use another signal) to show that they recognize “their” melody.
5. Describe the tango as a South American partner dance and, using the sheet provided, teach students the basic steps of a tango. When the students are familiar with the basic pattern, begin track at 3:58 again and play through to end (middle section may not be an easy place to start).

### EXPLORATION:

1. With grades 4-6, use attached call chart to solidify instrument identification and point out additional musical details.
2. Show portions of a documentary such as Mad Hot Ballroom (2005) so students can observe tangos and other dance styles being taught to children. Follow up with tango scenes from Scent of a Woman (1992) and/or Some Like It Hot (1958) for contrast. How do the actual lessons differ from the film scenes? How do the dances in the films differ from each other?
3. The tango is typically identified with a smaller ensemble than a concert band. Bring in recordings of tangos by legends such as Astor Piazzolla, and have students contrast those instruments with those featured in this recording. How does the ensemble size affect the style of performance?

### ASSESSMENT:

- Did the students distinguish between strong and weak beats?
- Did the students correctly identify themes in the selection?
- Did the students perform tango steps?

NATIONAL STANDARDS:\*

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
  - 6a. Students demonstrate perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures.
  - 6b. Students use appropriate terminology in explaining music, music notation, music instruments and voices, and music performances.
  - 6e. Students respond through purposeful movement (e.g., swaying, skipping, dramatic play) to selected prominent music characteristics or to specific music events (e.g., meter changes, dynamic changes, same/different sections) while listening to music.

*This lesson also meets the following standards for Dance as defined in the National Standards for Arts Education:*

*Content Standard #1: Identifying and demonstrating movement elements and skills in performing dance*

- Students demonstrate the ability to define and maintain personal space.
- Students demonstrate movements in straight and curved pathways.
- Students demonstrate accuracy in moving to a musical beat and responding to changes in tempo.

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## La Cumparsita



## Por Una Cabeza (theme 1)



## Por Una Cabeza (theme 2)

