

YURI YUNAKOV ENSEMBLE YOUTH PERFORMANCE

Friday, January 29, 2010
Hogg Memorial Auditorium 11-12 noon

✓ GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

- Students will become familiar with the life and music of Yuri Yunakov
- Students will gain an understanding and familiarity the Romani culture
- Students will develop reading, writing, and speaking skills.

👁️👂 MEDIA -VIDEO

YURI YUNAKOV ENSEMBLE VIDEO LESSON OVERVIEW

:00-:07	Intro slides
:08-:35	Music with descriptions quoted from reviews and articles 1
:36-2:23	Yuri Yunakov background
2:24-2:40	History of the Romani culture
2:41-3:29	Clip from The Romany Trail about the migration from India
3:30-3:44	Explanation of the misuse of the term “Gypsy”
3:45-4:23	Clip from The Romany Trail with song about discrimination
	Lyrics: <i>Just because my eyes are dark and my skin is not like yours You’ve been after me ever since I was born. But I’ve been here as long as you. How long can this go on before we all go under? It had already begun at school As a Gypsy you always got the worst. They call you stupid! Lazy pig! That’s what they think all Gypsies are.</i>
4:24-5:59	Slavery
5:00-5:18	Holocaust
5:19-6:10	Clip from The Romany Trail- World Gypsy Congress, 1981
6:11-7:09	Discrimination-Madonna in Bucharest, 2009
7:10-7:19	Back to Yuri Yunakov and his exodus from Eastern Europe (Bulgaria)
7:20-8:25	Yuri Yunakov Ensemble in San Antonio at the International Accordion Festival
8:26-8:35	Questions for Discussion (pause video here)
8:36-8:54	Michelle Obama quote
8:55-14:55	“Bonus Video” Romani in Canada, 2000 – good personal stories of Roma life

*Also:

9:19 IanHancock.mov -UT Prof. Ian Hancock discusses Romani and UT Romani Studies Program



Eastern Europe



Thrace Region



Haskovo



Tupan



Kaval



Clarinet



Saxophone



Accordion

VOCABULARY

Musical Terms:

- Staccato – short, separated sounds
- Legato – smooth, connected sounds
- Run – a series of notes that moves scalewise in pitch
- Tempo – the speed of the beat (pulse)
- Improvisation – music that is “made up” (not written down)
- Ornamentation – notes added to a simple melody to make it more interesting
- Virtuoso – exceptionally skillful with playing technique; particularly playing notes fast

Non-Musical Terms:

- Eclectic – wide variety
- Finesse – refined skill

BACKGROUND - Yuri Yunakov

- Turkish-Bulgarian Romani (“gypsy”) ancestry
- born in Haskovo, Bulgaria
- grew up in the Thrace region (southern Bulgaria) around music and musicians
- played the tupan (pronounced tapan), a two sided drum) and the kaval (shepherds’ flute) before taking up the clarinet, which his father played
- while performing on stage with his brother, Ivan Milev, a famous accordion player, heard him and suggested he switch to the saxophone. Milev trained him to play in the Bulgarian Slavic style. Yuri played in Milev’s famous, prize-winning wedding band called “Mladost” (youth).
- In 1983, Yunakov joined the famous clarinetist, Ivo Papisov, to play Turkish Rom wedding music in the band “Trakiya.” Yunakov played with Papisov for about ten years and attracted many fans.
- Yunakov says, “Before the 1989 revolution, jazz music was also prohibited in Bulgaria and some of the best musicians went to jail.”
- Yunakov listened to bootleg recordings and decided to use some elements of jazz in his music (especially improvisation) but does not feel that makes him a “jazz musician” in the American style.
- Wedding music is a combination of Indian, Turkish, Arabic, Roma, and Balkan styles mixed with jazz and rock. Yunakov says he “combines a lot of staccato technique with legato notes in a very interesting way. Before that, nobody had done that with a saxophone.”

- "Wedding music" players were often fined and arrested because of the crowds that gathered to hear their music.
- "Before the revolution in 1989, the situation was really terrible." says Yunakov, " I had been in jail! We felt like house mice, like the lowest kind of criminals, being hounded for playing Rom music!"
- Yunakov faced persecution from "reformed communists" and moved his family to New York City in 1994 to perform wedding music for Albanian, Macedonian Roma, Turkish, Armenian, and other Eastern European immigrants. He formed the Yuri Yunakov Ensemble in 1995.
- performed in the "Gypsy Caravan" tour throughout USA in 1999. (In 2001, the Gypsy Caravan tour was filmed for a documentary.)

Some descriptions of Yunakov's musical style:

"frenetic, complicated" "daredevil runs, lightning-fast tempos, and dazzling improvisation" "impossible rhythms, plummeting key changes" "village folk tunes melded with jazz, rock, and Turkish music" "influenced by Indian, Serbian, Irish, Greek, and other European musical styles." "haunting melodies, dense ornamentation, complex rhythms, and stunning improvisations" "incredibly thrilling music" that showcases "virtuosic technique, electrifying improvisation, rapid tempos, daring key changes, eclectic musical literacy"

Critics' Praise for the Yuri Yunakov Ensemble CD entitled *Balada*

"...amply illustrates Yunakov's talent as an improviser, one who can elevate even the simplest melody with his virtuosity and finesse." --The Washington Post

"If you think Bulgarian wedding music is an unlikely candidate for the next big thing, just listen to about ten seconds of Yuri Yunakov's *Balada*....more than a few listeners will be left breathless by this remarkable music." --Rhythm Magazine

"Breakneck speeds, impossible rhythms, plummeting key changes..."

"Just listening to this album will make you sweat." --Dirty Linen

📍 BACKGROUND – Romani Culture and Discrimination

- Roma originated in Northern India. Their language, Romany, which is derived from the gypsy word "rom" (which means "man") very closely resembles Sanskrit.
- The English word "Gypsy" stems from the early belief that they came from Egypt, which is disproved of nowadays. The gypsies began their migration westward around 1000 A.D.
- The loanwords of Persian, Armenian, and Greek in their language indicate the course of their journey. By the 15th century many inhabited European countries. Now, the gypsies are distributed throughout Eastern and Western Europe, as well as in the United States. The estimated population is around five to six million.
- The earliest legal documentation referring to Gypsies as slaves date back to the 1300s. They are referred to variously as sclavi, scindromi or robie in the documents, Rumanian and Slavic terms meaning "slave."
- Throughout the Balkan principalities, the Gypsy population was divided into house slaves (tsigani de casatsi) and field slaves (tsigani de ogor).
- There was a class of laborers known as laieshi, individuals who were allowed to move with some freedom over the estates, and who did a variety of jobs.
 - o lautari or musicians (properly 'fiddlers').
 - o vatrashi, who were grooms, coachmen, cooks and Petty merchants
 - o laieshi, who were kirpachi 'basket-makers', kovachi 'blacksmiths', zlatari 'goldwashers', churari sieve-makers', chivute 'whitewashers'.
- Romani dance and music are a way of life. The dances also represent freedom of personal and spiritual expression, the only type of freedom possible for an oppressed people.
- In Romani dance, the hands, the arms, and the shoulders each have their own special role. The most common to be found is that of clapping of the hands or snapping of the fingers in rhythm with the music. The arms are also very graceful in their movement along with the upper body, reaching up towards the sky as if wanting to

take off and fly, touch the stars, while the feet are joined with the earth - tied to the earth.

- In the Balkan principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, Gypsies were slaves bought and sold until 1864, when the newly formed nation of Romania emancipated them.
- In 1939, about a million Roma lived in Europe. About half of all European Roma lived in Eastern Europe, especially in the Soviet Union and Romania. Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria also had large Romani communities. In Greater Germany there were about 30,000 Roma, most of whom held German citizenship; about 11,200 of this number lived in Austria. Relatively few Roma lived in Western Europe.
- There are no exact statistics on the number of European Gypsies exterminated during the Holocaust. Estimates place the number as high as between 500,000 and 600,000 people, with most of the deaths occurring at Auschwitz.
- Because the Romani people have been so widely misunderstood, ostracized, oppressed, discriminated against, and were subject to attempted extermination by Hitler, they keep their culture closely guarded within their own family/social structure, passing it from generation to generation over a millennium until today

? CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

What is unique about Yuri Yunakov?

What does the word "Gypsy" mean to you?

Why do you think the Romani people have such a strong negative image?

How is the Romani story similar to that of the African American, Jewish people, and Native Americans?

REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS

Last year in Romania, Madonna was booed for defending Gypsies. *Does it surprise you that the hatred and discrimination of the Roma people is so strong there?*

http://www.starpulse.com/news/index.php/2009/08/27/madonna_booded_in_romania_for_defending_g

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMrk2PIFAKA>

Negative associations with the word gypsy: gyped, gypsy cab (unlicensed), gypsy moth (destructive pest), song by Cher in the 70's called "Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves."

Famous people of Romani heritage: Charlie Chaplin, Elvis Presley, Yul Brynner, Bill Clinton (formerly William Blythe), Pablo Picasso, Mother Teresa (born as Agnees Goxha Bojaxhiu), Clark Gable, Rita Hayworth (born Margarita Carmen Cansino)

* Clinton was born three months after his father William Jefferson Blythe was killed in an automobile accident. He assumed the last name of his stepfather Roger Clinton after his mother remarried.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3649123?seq=7>

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international organization combating anti-Romani racism. Their website gives reports of current cases. <http://www.errc.org/>

Before and after hearing the Yuri Yunakov Ensemble performance, describe what this statement means to you.

"People who might not speak a single word of the same language, who might not have a single shared experience, might still be drawn together when their hearts are lifted by the notes of a song, or their souls are stirred by a vision on a canvas. That is the power of the arts -- to remind us of what we each have to offer, and what we all have in common; to help us understand our history and imagine our future; to give us hope in the moments of struggle; and to bring us together when nothing else will."

--First Lady Michelle Obama

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-The-First-Lady-CAPA/

AT THE PERFORMANCE

As you watch each performer, notice

- facial expressions and body language
- the different instruments and their role in the music (melody/harmony/rhythm/solo?)
- the range and tone color of the pitches (low/high, unique sounds and blending of sounds)
- the emotion you feel as they play (happy, funny, angry, sad?)

8 AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

What questions do you want to ask the performers?

What did you like about the performance?

What did you not like and why?

RESOURCES

Short videos (clips from these were used in the Video Lesson)

Madonna huiduita Madonna booed in Bucharest.mov	1:25
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xAn600Efsg&feature=related	
Opre Roma Gypsies in Canada – PREVIEW.mov - documentary	10:00
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEcaJ8W1Dn0	
Paidushko tapan.mov – Tupan drum demonstration	2:55
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7PPSXPMFGM	
Turkish Kaval played by Nadishana.mov– Kaval “flute” demonstration	4:53
Source: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xa25zk_turkish-kaval-played-by-nadishana_music	
Yuri Yunakov Ensemble - Yuri and Milen - Yuri and Milen (Yuri Yunakov, Milen Slavov, Rumen Shopov, Sal Mamudoski, Rambo)	:48
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5kYJdqA1Ck	
Yuri Yunakov Ensemble from Bulgaria.mov – San Antonio International Accordion Fest, 2007	2:11
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8Ksu-n2K9I	
Yuri Yunakovs Wedding Ensemble.mov- 2007	5:11
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0-C7_FbUFc	
Yuri-Sal-Alfred Mehanata Rehearsal.mov – 2007	4:58
Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeOvwTdpqiY	
Clips from The Romany Trail – guitarists singing, World Gypsy Congress, migration through E. Europe	

Related Web Pages

Yuri Yunakov & His Romani Wedding Band - <http://www.voiceofroma.com/kal/yuri.htm>
Roma Sax Man of Bulgaria - <http://www.rootsworld.com/rw/feature/yunakov.html>
Yuri Yunakov - <http://www.dirtynelson.com/linen/82/yunakov.html>
Yuri Yunakov Ensemble - <http://www.slavonicweb.org/performers.php?id=79>
New Take on the Old World - <http://www2.registerguard.com/cms/index.php/static/search/archive/?q=yunakov>
Yuri Yunakov November 2007 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFm6qVu4ggg>

Roma history - <http://www.romani.org/>
Roma (Gypsies) in Prewar Europe - <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005395>
Gypsies Guidebook - http://www.muzeum.tarnow.pl/cyganie/przew_jang.html
Roma informational brochure - http://www.rroma.org/booklet_on_rroma/english_brochure.pdf
A Forgotten People, a Terrible Ordeal - <http://www.tomgrossmedia.com/AForgottenPeople.html>
The Roma - http://en.auschwitz.org.pl/m/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=8
Sinti & Roma booklet - <http://www.ushmm.org/education/resource/roma/RomaSBklt.pdf>
Roma (Gypsies) and the Holocaust - <http://iearn.org/hgp/aeti/aeti-1997/roma-in-holocaust.html>
ERRC (European Roma Rights Centre) - <http://www.errc.org/> (current legal cases)
Roma & Sinti (Gypsies) scanned photos from Holocaust collection - <http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/victims/romaSinti/index.html>
Holocaust images - http://images.google.com/images?imgurl=http://www.ushmm.org/imedia/photos/images/7878680.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/media.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005475&MediaId=3D917&img_siz=33&hl=en&sat=1&um=1&itid=W0uqgT1pLgM&itn=85&itnw=133&prev=imas%3Fq%3Dgyps%2Bsave%2Broman%26hl%3Der%26cler%3Dstar%26f%3Dar%26st%3DN%26um%3DI

The Journey of Gypsy Music - <http://people.unt.edu/jw0109/misc/gypsy.htm>
Bulgarian Wedding Traditions - http://worldweddingtraditions.com/locations/east_europe_traditions/bulgarian_traditions.html
Bulgarian Dances - <http://www.eliznik.org.uk/Bulgaria/dance/index.htm>