Destination America: Activity 1
Getting to Know the Music of America

Teaching Objective
Students will increase their aural awareness of the musical characteristics found in the DSO concert music selections.

Resources/Materials
- “Getting to Know the Music of America” graphic organizer – Student Copy - 1 per student for each musical selection studied
- “Getting to Know the Music of America” graphic organizer – Teacher Copy with explanations to be projected onto board for students to see.
- Pencils
- Accompanying Youth Concert CD

Vocabulary – Musical Characteristics
- Tempo – How fast/slow the music moves
- Rhythm – How evenly or unevenly the music moves over the beat
- Melody – The tune of the music
- Theme – The musical main idea which is sometimes repeated through the music
- Accompaniment – The supporting music which moves underneath the melody
- Dynamics – The loudness/softness of the music

Pre-Assessment
Ask students if they have ever gone shopping for new clothes. How did they choose what to purchase? Perhaps the color of an item caught their eye, or perhaps it was the style of the item, the fabric, or the design. The characteristics of the clothing item would determine if we wished to purchase it or not. Repeated wearing and comments from others might make it a favorite item to wear or perhaps not. Either way, we would know why the item was purchased and why we like or dislike it. This happens with music too. The more we hear a piece of music, the more we get to know its special characteristics. The more we listen, the more we hear. Sometimes a musical selection becomes such a favorite that we purchase a recording or download the tune from iTunes.

Teachers Note
This lesson may be completed in one session or it may be divided into many listenings depending on the time frame for the class.

Teaching Sequence
1. Inform the class that today they will listen to one of the selections played by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra at the Destination: America concert.
2. Project the “Getting to Know the Music of America” graphic organizer (Teacher Copy with explanations) onto the board for all students to see.
3. Pass out pencils and the “Getting to Know the Music of America” graphic organizer worksheet for students - 1 per student.
4. Ask students to write in the title of the music and the composer in the center circle on their papers. Teacher writes this information on the board. Discuss the focus of listening for each oval in the graphic organizer.
5. As the students listen to the music ask them to fill in each oval on their graphic organizer according to the musical characteristic listed. Ask students to use descriptive words which will enable them to remember the piece of music when heard another time.
Culminating Activity
Using the “Getting to Know the Music of America” graphic organizer as a visual for the class, the teacher should fill in the ovals on the board as students share the words they chose to describe the characteristics of the music. Encourage the students to share why their word descriptions fit this piece of music. Encourage the class to copy additional descriptions they may not have down on their own papers, but which they feel describe what they heard.

Extension Activity
On another day, choose a different musical selection and repeat the lesson. Have the students use a new graphic organizer for each piece of music they hear.

Evaluation
Did the students increase their aural awareness of the musical characteristics found in the DSO concert music selection?

TEKS Connections
English Language Arts: 110.14b(29-31); 110.15b(27-29); 110.16b(27-29); 110.18b(26-28)
Music: 117.12b(1,3,5,6); 117.15b(1,3,5,6); 117.18b(1,3,5,6); 117.33b(1,3,5,6)
Direction: Fill in the blanks which describe each area.

Composer: ____________________________

Title: ________________________________

Tempo: ______________________________

Rhythm: ____________________________

Melody/Figure: __________________________

Adjectives: __________________________

Dynamic Levels: ______________________

Instruments: __________________________

What is your opinion of what you did on this music project?

Name:

Music of America
Name or Musical Piece

1. How would you describe the accompaniment?
   - How loud or soft is the music?
   - Does it use a majority of only one instrument?
   - What tempo do you hear in any other instruments?
   - Can you clap along?
   - If so, what is the rhythm?
   - How many times can you hum this song or phrase?
   - If there is a melody, what do you think it sounds like?

2. How do you feel as you listen to the piece?

3. In your opinion, who is the composer or creator of this piece?