



Resource Guide for Educators and Students Grades 4–12

What is traditional music? It's music that's passed on from one person to another, music that arises from one or more cultures, from their history and geography. It's music that can tell a story or evoke emotions ranging from celebratory joy to quiet reflection. Traditional music is usually played live in community settings such as dances, people's houses and small halls.

In each 30-minute episode of Carry On™, musical explorer and TikTok sensation Hal Walker interviews a musician who plays traditional music. Episodes air live, allowing students to pose questions. Programs are then archived so you can listen to them any time from your classroom or home. Visit Carry On's [YouTube channel](#) for live shows and archived episodes.

[Episode 7, Tina Bergmann](#)

Tina Bergmann is a fourth-generation musician from northeast Ohio who began performing at age 8 and teaching at age 12. She learned the mountain dulcimer from her mother in the aural tradition (by ear) and the hammered dulcimer from builder, performer and West Virginia native Loy Swiger. She makes her living teaching and performing. She performs on her own, with her husband bassist Bryan Thomas and with two groups, [Apollo's Fire](#) and [Hu\\$hmoney string band](#).

Even though the hammered dulcimer has strings, it's considered a percussion instrument because the strings are struck (like the piano). Percussion instruments like the hammered dulcimer can play melody and harmony. But because the sound fades quickly after the string is struck, it has to be struck again and again—and so rhythm becomes an important musical element with this (and any) percussion instrument.

The hammered dulcimer may have been "born" in the Middle East 3,000 years ago or more, starting life as a plucked-stringed instrument and evolving into one that was struck. It spread east and west and is used in many regions of the world, called by different names.

Tina's dulcimer is a chromatic instrument, with all the "in-between" notes (half-steps). In a C major scale (the key of C), there are 7 notes; with all the in-between sharps and flats, there are 12 notes total. Tina explains [how her dulcimer is laid out](#), with strings for diatonic keys grouped together. She also [shows us the woodwork](#) on her dulcimer, beautiful decorations and details that enhance its appearance.

Tina plays tunes in a number of musical genres (styles) on our episode:

- [Traditional American fiddle tunes](#) that early settlers brought with them from Ireland and Scotland. The first is called "[Cowhide Boots](#)"; the second one is "[Pretty Betty Martin](#)." These tunes were originally written for social occasions like dances. They have a very regular, or danceable, rhythm with strong downbeats.
- [Sephardic music](#), which originated with Sephardic Jews in Spain and Portugal. Tina plays a love song called "La Rosa Enflorece" ("The Rose Blooms"). The song starts with a musical meditation (or introduction) called a taqsim (pronounced *tack-SEEM*). [At the beginning of the taqsim](#), watch as Tina "bends" a note with her finger on the string; this is in keeping with the fluid nature of the song's tonal scale, with many notes a half-step apart, or even closer together in the sung version. After the taqsim, Tina transitions into [the actual song](#).
- [A traditional Appalachian song](#) at least 100 years old. If "Red Rocking Chair" started life as an early Scottish ballad, as some suspect, it's probably much older. Like a ballad, it tells a story in verses.
- [Ragtime](#), which emerged in the mid-1890s in the southern and midwestern US and quickly became a huge fad that spread to Europe. The name for this uniquely American genre comes from its "ragged" time, or rhythm, against a steady beat. The melody is broken up with syncopation that adds a lot of bounce and energy. "The Combination Rag" is a tune from the 1930s, written by and for a string band called the East Texas Serenaders. Ragtime was also performed on piano and by orchestras to entertain people at home and audiences at concerts and clubs.

Vocabulary

Bridge – On a stringed instrument, a piece of wood that transfers the vibration of the strings to the body of the instrument, which in turn "broadcasts" the sound. Tina points out [the two main bridges](#) on her dulcimer, as well as a lower bridge, [which you can see here](#).

Chromatic scale – 12 pitches, or notes, one half-step apart. You can easily [see and hear the chromatic scale on a piano](#)—it's all the keys, black and white, within one octave.

Diatonic scale – A scale of 7 notes that uses whole and half-steps (5 whole and 2 half-steps). A whole step involves skipping the half-step in between. Diatonic scales can be major or minor; the difference involves changing the order of whole and half-steps. See and hear the difference between a [C major scale](#) and a [C minor scale](#) on the piano. A piece organized around the C major scale is in the **key** of C major.

Downbeat – The first beat of a repeated pattern, which is the strongest beat in certain types of music (like Appalachian fiddle tunes).

Genre – A French word meaning "kind" or "type." In music, it refers to a particular style. For example, jazz, country, classical, hip hop and traditional are all different genres of music. There are often subgenres under main genres. For example, Baroque is a subgenre of classical music.

Rhythm – The time element of music and dance. Different elements of rhythm are the beat (the repeated emphasis you hear; what you can tap your foot to), patterns of sound, duration of sound, tempo (speed) and meter (or time signature).

Rubato. The term *rubato* is from an Italian word that means "to rob." The performer stretches, or slows down, certain beats, measures or phrases, and speeds up others, eventually returning to the original speed of the music.

Syncopation – An emphasis on the "up" beat of the music. In 4/4 time, this accents what are usually weaker beats—the 2 and the 4 beats—which are sometimes called the "off-beat" or "backbeat." Syncopation gives the music bounce and energy.

Tonality – Organization of musical notes (or tones, or pitches) around a main note (the tonic). In Western music, organization is usually based on a diatonic (7-note) scale. Music from other regions of the world have other tonalities, like the pentatonic scale (with 5 tones). These are examples of the pentatonic scale [in Western music](#), and some in [Chinese tunes](#).

Activities and Questions for Students

Before you watch the episode—locate the following places on [Google Maps](#) or a printed map.

Countries: Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, India, China, United States.

Middle East: Modern-day countries of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Egypt.

United States: Ohio and Texas, plus southeastern states home to the Appalachian Mountain range: Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia.

After you watch the episode—Complete assigned activities and questions from this list, which progresses from simpler to more complex.

1. A generation indicates a parent-child relationship—you + your mother (or father) = two generations. Tina is a *fourth*-generation musician, and her mother was a *third*-generation musician. Keep going up the line of ancestors—in Tina's family, who was the original (first-generation) musician? One of her grandparents, great-grandparents or great-great-grandparents?
2. How many living generations are there in your family? (Be sure to count yourself!) Is there a tradition that has been passed down from one generation to another? If so, what is it? If not, what tradition or talent or profession do you wish you could "inherit"?
3. Tina talks about the possible origins of the hammered dulcimer. Research the origin of something that interests you—for example, the automobile or the computer. Set a timer and spend 5 minutes trying to find the very beginning of your something. How hard or easy is it to find—were you able to do it in 5 minutes? If you couldn't, where would you guess your something began? Spend another 5 minutes of Internet research to see if your guess is right.
4. The hammered dulcimer probably started in the Middle East and spread east and west from there. [What other inventions](#) started in that region of the world?

5. Tina plays in several different genres of music. What type(s) of music do you enjoy playing or listening to?
6. Off the top of your head, name as many musical genres as you can. (To jog your memory, look at the very beginning of [this list on YourDictionary.com](#).)
7. Of the genres that Tina demonstrates on our episode, which did you like the best? Which would you like to learn more about, or hear more of?
8. What adjectives would you use to describe the [Appalachian tunes](#) at the beginning of the episode? What adjectives would you use to describe the [Sephardic piece](#) Tina plays? How would you describe the musical difference between those genres?
9. You are a reporter for your school's newspaper. Write and illustrate a review of Tina as an artist, what she talked about, and the music you heard. Describe the music, your favorite things about it, and what more you wish you could see or know about. Be sure to give your article a descriptive title!
10. Tina was hailed by Pete Seeger as "the best hammered dulcimer player I've heard in my life." [Check Wikipedia](#)—who was Pete Seeger? What qualified him to know a good hammered dulcimer player when he heard one?
11. Tina plays a taqsim, a musical meditation, at the beginning of the song "[La Rosa Enflorece](#)." Choose a familiar tune—the national anthem, a children's tune or a tune you're learning on an instrument. Invent a short taqsim. Does it add to or take away from your tune? Why would a musician want to play or sing an introduction like this?
12. On the tune "[Cowhide Boots](#)," Tina changes the sound of the instrument on the repeat of the main tune—she mutes the strings with a bar of felt controlled by a pedal (she talks about it [HERE](#)). She mutes the strings in a different way near the end of the tune "[Pretty Betty Martin](#)"—how does she accomplish that? Watch closely!
13. Tina plays her first two tunes ("Cowhide Boots" and "Pretty Betty Martin") one after the other. But they're in two different keys. How does she make the transition between those two keys? [Listen to the transition](#).
14. Name one musical characteristic of each genre that Tina plays. No research required—just what do you notice about that genre, musically speaking? Rhythm, tonal organization, form?
15. Read the definition above (see Vocabulary) of *rubato*. Which piece does Tina play that employs rubato? What does it do for the piece, or for any piece? Your thoughts, not a textbook definition!

Additional Resources

Tina Bergmann

Tina's [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

Tina's [YouTube playlist with several lessons](#) for the hammered dulcimer. The overhead view and her explanations make it easy to observe how the instrument is played and the effects it can produce.

[YouTube channel](#) and [website](#) for Apollo's Fire, a Cleveland-based Baroque orchestra that performs with historical instruments. Apollo's Fire specializes in early Western music, world music and folk traditions. Videos featuring Tina include "[Garfield's Blackberry Blossom](#)," "[Glory in the Meeting House](#)" and "[At Work on the Land](#)."

The Hammered Dulcimer

[Dulcimer.net](#) – History of hammered and lap (or mountain) dulcimers, plus a listing of dulcimer festivals around the US (some of which are virtual right now).

YouTube videos of dulcimers around the world – In Greece, the hammered dulcimer is called the [santouri](#). In India, it's the [santoor](#). In France, it's called the [tympanon](#). In China, it's the [yangqin](#).

[Nicholas Blanton Instruments](#) – Nicholas Blanton made Tina's dulcimer. His site has pictures of the different dulcimers and dulcimer-type instruments that he makes.

Musical Genres

Sephardic Music & People

[Wikipedia](#) – A good explanation of Sephardic music, which is a secular (non-religious) type of music that originated in Spain and Portugal with the Sephardic Jews.

[La Rosa Enflorece](#) (YouTube) – Another version of the song Tina played on our episode. This version is performed by two singers, a guitar and a darbuka (a drum used in North Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans).

[My Jewish Learning](#) (website) – A brief history of the Sephardim and other Jewish communities that settled in different areas of the world.

Ragtime

[The East Texas Serenaders](#) (YouTube) – A recording of their performance of "The Combination Rag."

[Hard Drive with Tatiana Hargreaves](#) (YouTube) – A modern string band performance of "The Combination Rag."

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We want to make Carry On™ even more useful and enjoyable for students and educators across the country. [Send us your feedback!](#) Tell us what you liked and what we could do better. And please... tell other educators and schools about the show. Help us all carry on!

With the help of generous donors, [Carry On](#)™ is produced by the nonprofit [Northeast Ohio Musical Heritage Association](#) (NEOMHA). The show is programmed by [Laura Lewis](#), artistic director of NEOMHA's [Lake Erie Folk Fest](#). Carry On's resource guides are the work of writer and musician [Rita Lewis](#).

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