

# EUROPEAN PLAYGROUND TEACHING GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION:

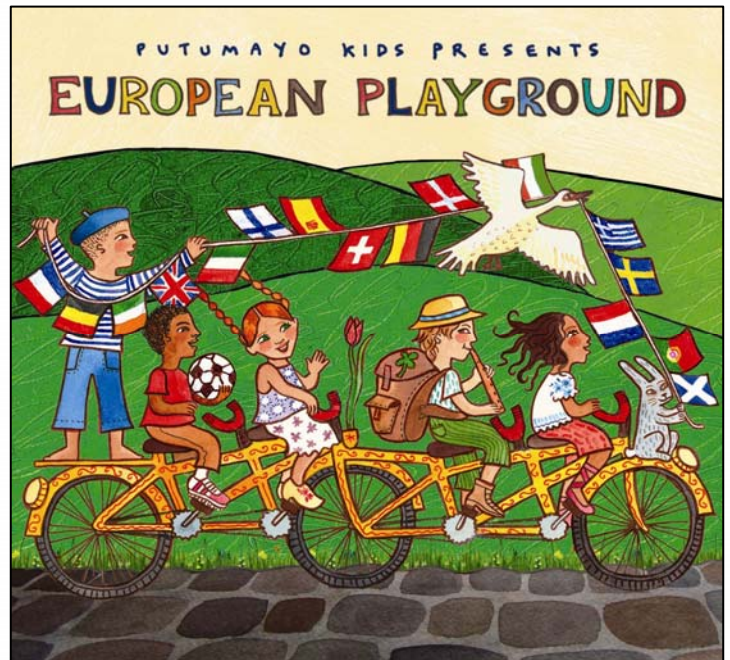
**European Playground** introduces children to the culturally rich and diverse continent of Europe. You'll visit more than 15 different countries and hear 11 of the more than 30 languages spoken in Europe, the birthplace of classical music and home to composers like Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Vivaldi, as well as more modern superstars like Edith Piaf and the Beatles. The songs on the CD, which are both traditional and popular, have recognizable influences from reggae, pop, jazz and folk music. They demonstrate that music's appeal is universal and transcends mountains, rivers, oceans and political boundaries. This guide provides cultural information, musical terms, and activities to engage children in exploring the rich musical variety of Europe.

## OVERVIEW ACTIVITY:

Hand out a copy of the European Playground map found on [www.putumayokids.com](http://www.putumayokids.com). Note that many of the countries are very close together, yet have vastly different languages and cultures. Play a clip of each song and have the students find the country it is from on the map and color it in.

## TRACK LISTING:

1. Sås & Kopp \* Trampolin (Finland/Sweden)
2. Les Déménageurs \* Bonjour Tout Va Bien (Belgium)
3. Herbie Treehead \* Change Song (England)
4. Mek Pek \* Stop Den Lille Kænguru (Denmark)
5. Alma Zenekar \* Tudom Én Már, Mit Csinálok (Hungary)
6. Alain Le Lait \* En Voici, En Voila (France)
7. Locomondo \* Den Kanei Krio (Greece)
8. Buscapolos \* Tito Troca-Tintas (Portugal)
9. Alex Schmeisser \* Anneliese (Germany)
10. Ian F. Benzie \* I'se the B'y (Scotland)
11. De Band Krijgt Kinderen \* Alles Uit De Kast (Netherlands)
12. Biella Nuei \* Tarantainas De La Casa Sin Pared (Spain)
13. Roland Zoss \* Bärenguburi-Bubuland (Switzerland)
14. Giovanni Caviezel \* La Canzone Del Battello A Vapore (Italy)
15. Sharon Shannon \* Sandy River Belle (Ireland)



## ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

#1) With My Hands and Your Hands  #2) Let's Be Upbeat About Change  #3) All Kinds of Friends 

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

### Students will:

- Train their ears to listen for musical elements
- Understand that music is a universal language
- Gain awareness of the value of friends who are different from themselves
- Experience the benefits of working together
- Learn about the culture and geography of Europe

## CULTURE & HISTORY

Europe is a continent where ancient ruins stand beside modern buildings. Some of the roughly 50 countries in Europe are islands. Some countries are so small they are hard to find on the map. A few have cities full of canals—like Venice, Italy and Amsterdam, Holland—where people take boats to school or work. In the northern countries of Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway and Denmark), there are months when the sun never sets (so it's light at midnight) and others when it never rises (so it's dark at noon). Many Europeans speak one or more languages in addition to the official one of their native country. (Listen to the CD for the special sounds of French, German, Greek, Dutch, English, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, and Swedish.)

Europe has a strong history of traditional, popular, and classical music. As people from European countries traveled around the world, they brought their music with them. That music changed as people in other lands made the melodies, harmonies and rhythms their own. In turn, music from the “new world” of the Americas—like blues, jazz, hip-hop, rap, rock, and reggae—traveled back across the ocean to influence European music. Listen for the hip hop/pop influence in “Bonjour, Tout Va Bien,” the lilt of reggae in “Stop den Lilie Kænguru,” and the jazzy clarinet solo in “Tito Troca-Tintas.”



### ACTIVITIES



#### #1) With My Hands and Your Hands

*Aragon, a region in northeastern Spain that was a center of Spanish culture in medieval times, is the home of the group Biella Nuei. These Aragonese musicians like to perform music that is happy, hopeful and optimistic. Tarantainas de la casa sin pared (“Tarantainas of the house without walls”) celebrates people returning to small rural towns to start businesses and rebuild houses that have long been neglected. Soon the whole village is full of life and looking more beautiful!*

#### You Will Need:

- CD Player
- Tarantainas De La Casa Sin Pared (track #12)
- Song lyrics
- Shoeboxes or other small boxes
- Arts and crafts materials like markers, scissors, glue, tape, scraps of fabric or patterned paper, paint, glitter, pipe cleaners, etc.
- Space to move around
- Optional: cans, bottles, uncooked or unpopped beans, rice, popcorn, heavy plastic bags, spoons

#### Activity:

##### Explore the lyrics...

- 1) Listen to the song and read the lyrics. Have students describe the house—identifying all the problems it has (leaky roof, caved in walls, dried out stone and wood, overgrown with brambles) as well as the features that make it potentially beautiful (balcony, fireplace, grapevine). The lyrics say the house will be reborn “Con mis manos y tus manos.” Do any of the students know or can any guess what this (“with my hands and your hands”) means? How is this the key to making the little house beautiful once again? What else might happen while everyone is working together? (Friendships might form or get stronger, plans might be made to work together to accomplish other goals, people might share strengths, teach each other skills and so on.)
- 2) Expand the discussion. Is there something in the students’ school or neighborhood that could use such an effort? Are there any projects their classmates, families, friends or neighbors have done as a group? What was that like? Did they get a lot accomplished? Were there any problems? Is it always easy to collaborate? The idea of cooperation could be expanded to working together to keep the planet healthy and clean.
- 3) Have children create houses out of a shoebox or other small box—using their imagination and aesthetic judgment to make them beautiful with a variety of arts and crafts materials. After the individual houses are done, encourage students to cooperatively construct a beautiful village.

### **Explore the music...**

- 1) The tarantaina is a traditional dance from Aragon. Have students listen to the music again and describe the mood of the song. Does it make them feel happy or sad? Energetic or sleepy?
- 2) Ask them to imagine they are fixing up a house. What actions would be involved? (Painting walls, hammering nails, sweeping the floor, etc.) Have children move to the music as though they were performing one of those activities. Encourage them to try to move in time with the beat of the song. Does listening to lively music make it easier to work?

#### **Optional extension:**

Biella Nuei uses instruments from different traditions and even makes some of their own. Conduct a workshop to create simple instruments: use cans or bottles and fill each with a different material to create shakers with different sounds (try uncooked beans, unpopped popcorn, uncooked rice), make sure to have a lid; drums from a large coffee can or cooking pot covered in a heavy plastic bag (attach with a rubber band); old spoons to be rubbed across ridged cans. Have children demonstrate the sound of their instrument. Then have individual students take turns playing a rhythm, which the other students try to imitate. Point out that the more they carefully listen to one another, the better the music sounds.

### **Explore the map...**

- 1) Find Spain on the map. Explain that there are many countries in the world that call Spanish their official language. The majority of these countries are in Central and South America, but there are also Spanish-speaking countries in North America (Mexico) the Caribbean (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico) and one country in Africa (Equatorial Guinea). Find the Spanish-speaking countries on a world map in the classroom and point out how the language spread around the world as Spaniards migrated to other lands and brought their culture with them.



## **#2) Let's Be Upbeat About Change**

*Change is a part of life for all creatures. Change can be scary but it's also exciting. A new class, teacher and classmates at the beginning of the year or your family moving to another town can bring sadness as well as new friends into your life.*

*Rhythm is all around us. It is made up of sounds and silences that repeat and form a pattern. The sound of someone running down the stairs, the boom of the bass from a car radio, even water dripping from a faucet – all of these are rhythms. Some musical rhythms you might have heard of include cha cha, mambo, or hip hop. The strong beats in a song—the ones you'd stomp your feet to while marching around the room are called downbeats. The beats in-between the downbeats are called upbeats.*

#### **You Will Need:**

- A CD Player
- Change Song (track #3)
- Song lyrics
- Map of Europe

#### **Activity:**

##### **Explore the Lyrics...**

- 1) Play *Change Song* and ask the children to try to remember as many of the changes they hear mentioned. Make a list of those changes. Read the lyrics and add any other changes.
- 2) Note how Herbie Treehead sings about change in feelings or perspective— ask students: What does it feel like when the sun comes out after it rains? What would the world look like if you stood on your head? (Change of perspective or point-of-view, etc.) Have students give additional examples of things that have changed how they were feeling.
- 3) Discuss physical changes such as caterpillars becoming butterflies, tadpoles becoming frogs, and chameleons changing color to match their environment. Why are these changes important? What would happen if the animals didn't change?

### Explore the Music...

- 1) Explain that the downbeat in music means the strong beat. It's the beat on which a conductor moves his arms down. Play the song and have the children walk in place or around the room, stepping on each strong beat. Then ask them to "conduct" the downbeats. Next, explain that the beats in between the downbeats are called upbeats. They are the beats on which the conductor gestures up with her arms. Have the children "conduct" both down and up beats, moving their arms down and up with the music. Now challenge the children to clap the upbeats while stepping on the downbeats. Divide the class into two groups—one group claps the downbeats while the other claps the upbeats. Then switch parts.

#### **Optional Extension:**

Play other songs on the CD and conduct or step and clap on the downbeats and upbeats. Decide which songs have strong downbeats or strong upbeats.

### Explore the Map...

- 1) Find England on the map of Europe. Note that it is located on an island. Tell students that the prime meridian passes through England. Explain that, while the equator is like a huge belt around the world (at 0 degrees latitude), and divides the northern and southern hemispheres, the prime meridian is like a huge circle around the world from north to south and separates the eastern and western hemispheres. [Click here to view a map that demonstrates how the prime meridian runs through England.](#) If you visit Greenwich, England, you can straddle the prime meridian and, thus, be standing in both hemispheres at once!



### #3) All Kinds of Friends

*Sometimes we see people together who look very different. This song celebrates the friendship between a big cow and a small mouse. On the surface, they seem to have very little in common but, in fact, they are the best of friends.*

#### **You Will Need:**

- A CD Player
- Anneliese (track #9)
- Song lyrics
- Map of Europe
- Optional: paper and colored pencils or markers

#### **Activity:**

##### **Explore the Lyrics...**

- 1) Listen to Anneliese and read the lyrics. Enjoy the rhymes ("wiese/Anneliese" and "maus/Klaus") The song talks about the differences between Anneliese the cow and Klaus the mouse. What are those differences? Have children imagine what this unlikely pair might have in common that makes their friendship work.
- 2) Ask children to invent funny, unexpected combinations of friends like Anneliese and Kraus. Have them draw pictures of these comical duos. What makes them funny or unexpected? Why might they like each other even though they look different?
- 3) Ask students about their own friends. Do they have any friends who are much older or younger? Any pets that they consider friends? Explore the importance of having friends who look and act just like you. Does it matter if your friend is taller or shorter or fatter or thinner than you are? Do you have friends from another country or religion or ethnicity? What are the most important qualities of a friend?

##### **Explore the Music...**

- 1) Listen to the song again, paying attention to the instruments accompanying the singer. The song starts with a guitar, which is soon joined by a clarinet. Have students note the way the voice and clarinet seem to talk to each other—sometimes making statements back and forth and sometimes joining together.

Johann Denner, a leading German woodwind instrument maker is credited with inventing the modern clarinet in the very early 1700s. While some woodwinds—like clarinets, oboes and bassoons—are made of wood, others--like saxophones and flutes--are made of metal. Sound is produced on all woodwinds by blowing air across a reed or the edge of an opening.

### Explore the Map...

- 1) Have students find Germany on the map of Europe and count how many countries it borders. Explain that German is also the official language of Austria, as well as one of the official languages of Switzerland and Belgium. Find these countries on the map.

### Optional Extensions:

- Have students research and discover that Switzerland has four official languages and Belgium has three. Why might these countries have so many official languages? Discuss the size and location of these two countries.
- Listen to Track 13 (Barengburi-Bubuland), which is sung in Swiss-German. Does the language sound the same?



## CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How can we enjoy songs sung in languages we don't understand?
- What did you learn about strong and weak beats?
- What do you think are the most important qualities for a friend to possess?
- How can listening to music inspire us?
- What happens when musicians travel from country to country?

*Written by Iris Hiskey Arno of CityLore*

*Edited by Mona Kayhan, Teresa Georgi, Annette Cambareri and Jessica Jones of Putumayo Kids*

