Think Like A Drummer

Grade Level: Grades 6-12

Objective: Students will be able to identify and analyze drum set parts and characteristic grooves from multiple genres, and collaboratively create and perform a percussion ensemble groove using found objects and the Drums Explorer app.

Vocabulary: Groove, backbeat, four on the floor, one drop, clave, swing, syncopation, hi-hat, kick drum, snare drum, genre, tempo, subdivision, timbre

Presentation Slides:
Think Like A Drummer:
How Do Drummers Create Grooves?

Project Expectations:
Found Sound Groove Project Expectations

Assessments:
Found Sound Groove Project Rubric

National Core Arts Standards:

Creating
1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
3. Refine and complete artistic work.

Performing / Presenting / Producing
4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Responding
7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Connecting
10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context.

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Activities:

1. **Introduction to Drum Set Parts & Function**
   - Identify kick, snare, hi-hat, toms, cymbals. Use the "Anatomy of a drum set" tool in the Drums Explorer app as a reference point.
   - Discuss each part's role in creating groove.
   - Reflection Questions:
     i. Which parts of the drum set can you identify (kick, snare, hi-hat, toms, cymbals), and what role does each play in a groove?
     ii. When listening to a song, how can you tell which sound is the kick, snare, or hi-hat?
     iii. How do these core parts (kick, snare, hi-hat) work together to create the foundation of a rhythm?

2. **Genre Groove Listening & Analysis**
   - Listen to curated examples for Rock, Funk, Jazz, Reggae, Latin/Afro-Cuban, Pop/Dance.
   - Identify kick, snare, and hi-hat patterns. (Modify the speed of the videos as needed using the functionality in YouTube).
   - Discuss what makes each groove unique.
   - Reflection Questions:
     i. What makes this groove sound like its genre?
     ii. How do the different instruments (kick, snare, hi-hat, percussion) interact to build the groove?
     iii. How does the sound quality (timbre) or texture of each instrument affect the overall feel?

3. **Percussion Ensemble Inspiration**
   - Watch selected clips from Stomp, Blue Man Group, and The Vegetable Orchestra.
   - Identify how found objects create musical textures and grooves.
   - Reflection Questions:
     i. How do groups like Stomp, Blue Man Group, or the Vegetable Orchestra use unusual objects to create music?
     ii. What new sounds or textures do found objects bring compared to traditional drums?
     iii. How might using found objects inspire choices for your own group project?

4. **Groove Mapping Practice**
   - Explore the "Groove Lab" Sequencer in the Drums Explorer app.
   - Practice creating simple 4-beat loops to reinforce kick/snare/hi-hat coordination.
   - Use the genre grooves as a reference point.
   - Reflection Questions:
     i. How does using the sequencer help you understand the relationship between kick, snare, and hi-hat?
     ii. What patterns did you try, and how do they compare to the grooves you listened to earlier?
     iii. How could your app loop serve as a blueprint for your live group performance?

5. **Project Introduction & Ensemble Creation**
   - Introduce and model the Project Expectations.
   - Present and explain the rubric criteria.
   - Facilitate group formation and help students assign roles.
   - Encourage students to use their Drums Explorer app "Groove Lab" loops as a reference point when rehearsing and arranging.
   - Perform for peers and reflect: Have each group perform their groove for the class and use the rubric to guide self-assessment and peer feedback.

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Resources:

Found Sound Ensemble Examples:
1. Stomp
2. Blue Man Group
3. Vegetable Orchestra

Genres and Grooves Listening Examples:

Rock (Backbeat)
- **Description**: Steady 4/4 groove with kick on beats 1 & 3, snare on beats 2 & 4, and hi-hat playing eighth notes or quarter notes, providing a consistent pulse that drives the rhythm forward. This classic backbeat pattern forms the foundation of most rock music.
- **Prominent Drummers**: Ringo Starr, Dave Grohl, John Bonham, Chad Smith, Stewart Copeland
- **Musical Examples:**
  - The White Stripes – "Seven Nation Army" (Meg White)
  - Nirvana – "Smells like Teen Spirit" (Dave Grohl)
  - Imagine Dragons – "Believer" (Daniel Platzman)

Funk (Syncopated Groove/Backbeat)
- **Description**: Funk grooves emphasize a tight, danceable pocket, with kick and snare interlocking and hi-hat maintaining a steady pulse. The drummer drives the rhythm and feel of the music.
- **Prominent Drummers**: Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks, Chris Dave, Questlove (Ahmir Thompson), Zach Danziger
- **Musical Examples:**
  - James Brown – "Get Up Offa That Thing" (Clyde Stubblefield & Jabo Starks)
  - Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars – "Uptown Funk" (drums by Jamareo Artis)
  - Stevie Wonder – "Superstition" (Stevie Wonder on drums)

Jazz (Swing/Ride Pattern)
- **Description**: Jazz swing grooves feature a flowing, "swinging" rhythm. The ride cymbal keeps time while snare and bass drum add syncopated accents. Drummers shape the groove and interact with soloists.
- **Prominent Drummers**: Buddy Rich, Max Roach, Art Blakey, Brian Blade, Kendrick Scott
- **Musical Examples:**
  - Miles Davis – "Freddie Freeloader" (Jimmy Cobb)
  - Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers – "Moanin'" – (Art Blakey)
  - Christian McBride Big Band – "Gettin' to It" (Brian Blade)

Reggae (One Drop Groove/Offbeat Emphasis)
- **Description**: Reggae grooves emphasize a relaxed, syncopated rhythm. The kick and snare often hit together on beat 3 ("one drop"), while hi-hats or rim clicks mark the offbeats, creating the genre's signature swaying feel.
- **Prominent Drummers**: Calton Barnett, Sly Dunbar, Questlove, Will Calhoun, Zach Danziger
- **Musical Examples:**
  - Bob Marley & The Wailers – "Three Little Birds" (Carlton Barnett)
  - Toots and the Maytals – "54-46 Was My Number" (Sly Dunbar)
  - Ziggy Marley – "Love is My Religion" (Dion Hopkins)

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Latin/Afro-Cuban (Clave-Based Groove)

- **Description**: Latin and Afro-Cuban grooves use the clave as the foundation, with layered kick, snare/timbales, and hi-hat/cowbell creating a syncopated, danceable rhythm.
- **Prominent Drummers/Percussionists**: Tito Puente, Giovanni Hidalgo, Poncho Sanchez, Tony Succar, Alex Acuña
- **Musical Examples**:
    - Tito Puente – "Oye Como Va"
    - Celia Cruz – "La Vida Es Un Carnaval"
    - Tony Succar – "Mi Gente"

Pop/Dance (Four on the Floor Groove)

- **Description**: Steady kick on every beat with hi-hats or claps adding texture, creating a danceable, driving rhythm.
- **Prominent Producers**: Calvin Harris, Shellback, Max Martin, Mark Ronson, Greg Kurstin
- **Musical Examples**:
    - Lady Gaga – "Poker Face"
    - Avicii – "Wake Me Up"
    - Calvin Harris – "Summer"

Extensions:

1. **Notation Extension**: Transcribe your Drums Explorer app "Groove Lab" sequencer pattern into standard drum set notation to connect technology with traditional music literacy.
2. **Sound Design Extension**: Record or sample found objects and use them to create a custom drum kit in a sequencer or DAW.
3. **Composition Extension**: Expand your group's groove into a full song by arranging sections (verse, chorus, etc.) and performing or recording it.
4. **Improvisation Extension**: Add fills, solos, or call-and-response sections to your ensemble groove to showcase individual creativity.
5. **Cross-Discipline Extension**: Pair your groove with dance, spoken word, or visuals to create a multi-arts performance piece
6. **Cultural Extension**: Explore the origins of one genre groove and present short research findings to the class.
7. **Performance Extension**: Students perform their grooves for a school assembly, recording showcase, or community audience.