

# Antonín Dvořák’s New World Symphony: In Search of An American Voice

## Classical Music and Folk Music



- Skills/Learning Goals:**
- Distinguishing even rhythms from uneven rhythms
  - Distinguishing diatonic from pentatonic scales
  - Recognizing folk elements in classical music

**Big Idea:** Folk music has recognizable rhythmic and melodic traits, which can be evoked in a classical work.

**Preparing for the Video:** Make a list of classical and folk music you know. Explain that this video will help you think about what makes them different.

**How to Use this Video:** Pause at the seven opportunities to discuss what you have heard. Teaching Artists Mitch Lyon and Janey Choi play short excerpts of classical and folk music and ask what the differences are.



**Pause 1:** After they demonstrate the steady rhythm in much classical music, and the “bumpy” rhythm of much folk music, they invite you to create your own rhythm, either steady or bumpy.



**Pauses 2 & 3:** After Janey demonstrates the pentatonic scale heard in much folk music, Mitch plays a “Pastoral” tune by Dvořák and asks whether it sounds more classical, or more folk. After this pause, you will hear the orchestra play the same melody, and have another chance to discuss, more classical or more folk?



**Pauses 4, 5, 6 & 7:** Mitch plays the “Rolling Rhythms” melody by Dvořák, and then the orchestra plays it, and each time asks whether it sounds more classical or more folk. The same sequence occurs with the “Finale” melody.

**Extension:** Go back to the list you made before watching the video. Does each piece of music have a steady or bumpy rhythm? Do you think they have a diatonic or pentatonic scale? Would you say they have a classical or folk feel?