

DREAMCATCHERS

TEACHING GUIDE GRADES: 3 - 12

SONS OF MYSTRO



Standards Addressed by the Performance & Study Guide

National Core Arts Standards

TH:Re9.1

MU:Cr1

MU:Pr4

MU:Re7.1

MU:Re9.1

SC CCR ELA

ELA.OE.1

ELA.OE.2

ELA.OE.4

ELA.OE.5

ELA.R.1

SC CCR Music

Anchor Standards 6-9

Social Emotional Learning

Self Awareness

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Communication

Curriculum Connections:

Performing & Visual Arts/
Theatre, Music, Dance; Social
Studies/World Cultures,
Cultural Enrichment, History
Social Emotional Learning
and Geography.



Why do we try so hard to fit in, when we were
born to stand out?"

– MACHINE GUN KELLY

Synopsis

Have you ever experienced a musical duo, in this case brothers, who play all genres of popular music, using the violin instead of their voices to express a song's lyrics? If not, then you must not have heard of the violin virtuosos - Sons of Mystro! They use their violins to interpret reggae classics, American pop songs, and their own creations.

At an age when music is coming to be more defined by genres and labels, Sons of Mystro shows that music does not exist within a box, but rather exists in another space – one as open and unrestrained as the minds that produce it.

The brothers tell us, “musical instruments were created to imitate the human voice, and create a connection that transcends cultures and languages. Our dad instilled in us the importance of interpreting vocal music, so when we create ‘covers,’ we keep the integrity of the song while placing our own artistic stamp on the music. Our workshops are designed to show students, through performance and discussion, exactly how we go about creating original arrangements, and how we work together as musicians.”

The Program (subject to change)

The show will include some of the following songs, with a few surprises. Please note that the original versions of some selections have lyrics that are not suitable for all audiences. Sons of Mystro will be performing instrumental versions only.

“This is How We Do It” by Montell Jordan

“Supreme” by Sons of Mystro (original)

Improvisation and effects demonstrations

“Astronaut in the Ocean” by Masked Wolf

“A New Dawn” by Sons of Mystro (original)

“Invincible” by Sons of Mystro (original)

“Cupid” by Fifty Fifty

“Vivaldi Rock” by Sons of Mystro (original)

“Die with a Smile” by Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga

“Happy” by Pharrell Williams, from the movie *Despicable Me 2*

Q & A

Fun Facts about violins

- The modern violin has been around for roughly 500 years. It was said to have been designed in the 1500s by Andrea Amati.
- Playing the violin burns approximately 170 calories per hour.
- Violins are typically comprised of spruce or maple wood.
- Violins come in many different sizes. Typically, students will start learning violin at a young age with a 1/32 or 1/16 size violin. As the student ages, they will graduate up to a full-sized violin.
- Violins are very complex. Over 70 different pieces of wood are put together to form the modern violin.
- The word violin comes from the Medieval Latin word vitula, meaning stringed instrument.
- The world record in cycling backwards playing a violin is 60.45 kilometers (about 37.5 miles) in 5 hours, 8 seconds.
- The most expensive violin in the world was made by Giuseppe Guarneri in 1741. This extravagant violin was appraised with a value of \$18 million.
- Violin bows typically contain 150 to 200 hairs. They can be made up of a variety of materials including horse hair and nylon.
- Violin strings were first made of sheep gut (commonly known as catgut), which was stretched, dried, and twisted. Other materials violin strings have been made out of include: solid steel, stranded steel, or various synthetic materials, that have been wound with various metals and sometimes plated with silver.
- In folk music, the violin is often called the fiddle.
- The first electric violin was invented in the 20th century.

Vocabulary

a capella — singing without instrumental accompaniment

acoustic — a musical instrument whose sound is not electronically modified

blue note — minor interval where a major would be expected, used especially in jazz

cadenza — a virtuoso solo passage added to a piece of music, typically near the end

counterpoint — the relationship between two melodies in a piece of music that fit together harmoniously, but have different rhythms

cutting — in its simplest form, cutting involves removing a few bars of the beat and looping it to create a continuous sound

DJ — (disc jockey) in hip hop, a person who cuts and loops beats to recreate music. They also pause, scratch, backspin, speed up or slow down, and or/delay the music

duet — a piece of music written for two performers

fugue — a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts

improvise — create and perform (music, drama, or verse) spontaneously or without preparation

influence — the power to change or affect someone or something



maestro — a distinguished musician, especially a conductor of classical music

pitch — the relative highness or lowness of a sound

reggae — a style of popular music with a strongly accented subsidiary beat, originating in Jamaica

solo — a piece of music written for or performed by a single voice or instrument

tempo — the speed or rate at which a piece of music is played

violinist — a person who plays the violin

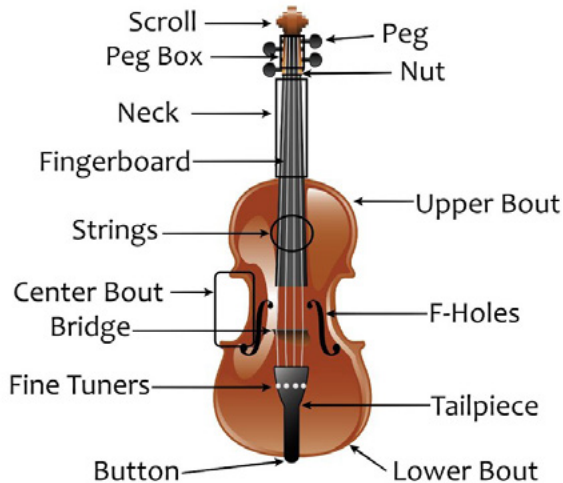
virtuoso — a person highly skilled in music or another artistic pursuit



Fun Facts About the Artists

- Sons of Mystro is comprised of singing/violin-playing brothers, Malcolm McNeish, age 32, and Umoja McNeish, age 29.
- Born to a Jamaican father and Barbadian mother in South Florida, the brothers' genre-bending music weaves in Caribbean influences.
- They learn all of their music by ear.
- They know each other so well that they can tell what the other is thinking musically.
- The brothers sometimes argue, just like all family members occasionally do, but always manage to figure out a way to make the song work.
- The duo made an appearance in a music video for 2015 Levitt National Tour artist Black Violin.
- Sons of Mystro were awarded the "Emerging Artist Under 21 Award" at the International Reggae and World Music Awards.
- They performed at a 'Keys to the City' ceremony honoring Wyclef Jean.
- The duo has delighted fans at several Miami Heat halftime shows.
- They've contributed music to an episode of *Kourtney and Kim Take Miami*, starring the Kardashian sisters.
- In addition to performing, the brothers aspire to give back to their community by teaching and influencing young musicians.
- Their eclectic musical fusion was featured at TedX Youth in Miami.





The Violin

The violin is a four-stringed instrument traditionally held in place between the chin and the shoulder and played with a bow. The violin derived from Arabic string instruments centuries ago, however, the name “violin” was first developed in the 1500s in Europe. Since that time, the instrument has undergone many aesthetic transformations. By the 19th century, it settled into the shape and design we recognize today, although the quality of sound produced from each new model is ever-changing. To most people, classical, jazz and hip-hop are mere musical genres, but to the revolutionary Black Violin and their protégés Sons of Mystro, they are ingredients for their signature sounds.

Acoustic Violin

The attributes of an acoustic violin are: hollow-bodied, traditional-looking and sounding, usually made of wood, produces sound through f-holes located on both sides of the instrument, amplification is not needed (although it is possible). Teachers often recommend starting with the acoustic style to learn how a violin should sound and get the correct feel of the instrument.

Electric Violin

The attributes of an electric violin are: solid-bodied, mainly made for added creativity, more artificial sounding, amplified through jack output and allows for silent practice through an inbuilt headphone amp, ideal for performances within genres of music such as jazz or rock, offers a range of creative features for any violinist looking to expand their range.

What Is...?

Electro-Acoustical Music

The sounds of electro-acoustical music incorporate electronic tools and instruments, including software, in its production or performance.

Looping

In electro-acoustical music, a loop is a repeating section of sound material. It is created using a wide range of music technologies including turntables, digital samplers, synthesizers, sequencers, drum machines, tape machines, delay units, or they can be programmed using computer music software.

A Musical “Sampler”

A sampler is an electronic or digital musical instrument which uses sound recordings, or “samples” of real instrument sounds (e.g. a piano, violin or trumpet), excerpted from recorded songs (e.g. a five-second bass guitar riff from a funk song) or found sounds (e.g. sirens and ocean waves).

MIDI

MIDI is an acronym that stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface. It's a way to connect devices that make and control sound — such as synthesizers, samplers, and computers — so that they can communicate with each other using MIDI messages.

Drum Pad

A drum pad is a control device used as an alternative to a keyboard, mainly for playing drum and percussion sounds. It is intended to be struck or tapped, with either drum sticks or the fingers.

MPC Device

An MPC is a sampler device that sends MIDI through drum pads to a device to create sounds. Sons of Mystro uses an Akai MPC Live device to create loops and play drum beats on stage while improvising. This innovative technology helps artists and musicians create. Mixing in the violin, they can record their own sounds in the MPC LIVE to create even more loops.

A Sound “Effect”

A sound effect, or audio effect, is an artificially created or enhanced sound, or sound process. They are used to emphasize artistic or other content in films, television shows, live performances, animations, video games, music, or other media.

Hip Hop Music

A musical genre that began in the South Bronx of New York City in the 1970s by African Americans, Latin Americans, and Caribbean Americans. It is defined by four central stylistic elements: rapping, DJ-ing, sampling, and beatboxing.

Jazz

A musical art form characterized by blue notes, syncopation, swing, call and response, polyrhythms, and improvisation. Originating in African-American communities in the early 20th century, jazz has been called “the first original art form” to develop in the United States of America.

Blues

A musical form created primarily within the African-American communities in the Deep South of the United States at the end of the 19th century from spirituals, work songs, field hollers, narrative ballads, shouts, and chants. The genre is characterized by specific chord progressions, most commonly a 12 bar progression.

Classical Music

Music, usually European and from the 18th or 19th centuries, following Western music traditions such as fugue and counterpoint.



Tomasz Kosek c/o Creative Commons

The History of Hip Hop

1925 - Louis Armstrong introduced scatting, a type of vocal improvisation, in his song "Heebie Jeebies," which went on to influence beat boxing.

1930 - Nonsense words and singing in a half-talk are incorporated by Harry "The Hispster" Gibson and Slim Gaillard.

1973 - DJ Kool Herc, aka Clive Campbell, deejays his first block party in The Bronx, New York City. He uses two turntables and creates "breakbeats," thereby laying the foundation for the b-boy dance movement. B-boy stands for break boy dancer and they rock out on the dance floor during breaks.

1976 - Public School (PS) 123 in The Bronx is home to the first DJ battle between Disco King and Afrika Bambaataa.

1979 - The Sugar Hill Gang releases "Rapper's Delight," the first commercial rap record on Sugar Hill Records.

1982 - The film *Wild Style*, co-created by Fab Five Freddy and directed by Charlie

Ahearn, is released featuring the first full-length account of all four elements in hip hop culture: graffiti, deejaying, emceeing and b-boying.

1986 - The album *Raising Hell* by Run-DMC goes platinum.

1987 - The debut album *Licensed to Ill* by the Beastie Boys becomes the first rap album to reach number one.

1987 - The hit song *Push It* by Salt-N-Pepa establishes them as leading female artists in hip-hop music.

1988 - DJ Jazzy Jeff and Will Smith (aka The Fresh Prince) win the first rap award at the Grammys.

1992 - *Vibe*, the first magazine dedicated to hip-hop culture, begins publishing in New York City.

1993 - The duo OutKast releases "Player's Ball" which hits number one on the Billboard Rap Chart.

1995 - Hip Hop represents almost 7% of the entire music industry's revenue.

1999 - Lauryn Hill, member of The Fugees, becomes the first woman to receive 10 Grammy nominations for her solo album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* and takes home five wins, including Album of the Year and Best New Artist.

2002 - Hip Hop now makes up almost 14% of the music industry market share.

2003 - For the first time in the history of the United States *Billboard* chart, the top ten songs are all by African-American artists.

2005 - 55% of the hip-hop consumer market is white males, ages 25-45, with incomes of \$40,000 and up, signifying an expansion of the hip hop market.

2005 - Black Violin, mentors to Sons of Mystro, wins the "Showtime at the Apollo" grand prize. That same year, they open and perform with Mike Shinoda, The Eagles, Stevie Nicks, Nas, 50 Cent, T-Pain, and at the Billboard Music Awards with Alicia Keys.

I Am... But, I Am Not... Lesson 1

**Grades
3 - 12**

**Curriculum
Connections**

SC CCR ELA
ELA.OE.3
ELA.OE.4

SC SEL
Self Awareness
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills
Communication

Objectives

Students will:

- identify descriptors for themselves that help to shape their identity;
- share personal stories for the purposes of self-expression and challenging stereotypes;
- create a statement that reflects their self-image.

Materials

- Computer or pen and paper

Procedure

Ask the students to describe a professional violinist. Guide them with questions about gender, race, age, clothing, economic status, etc. If they have not seen the show, explain that Malcolm and Umoja do not fit the stereotype of professional violinists. Explain why. If they have attended the show, have the class discuss their initial description of the artists and what they have learned. Discuss why they thought the way they did. Then begin this activity.

1. Create a simple diagram template for this activity. The diagram has a large center circle with four smaller circles branching out from it. You can draw this diagram on the board and have students copy it into their notebooks, or distribute it as a handout.
2. On the diagram, have students write their names in the center circle. In each of the four satellite circles, ask students to put a descriptor that they consider to be most important in how they define themselves (for example: he/she, female, athlete, Native American, brother, Jewish, tall, etc.) Older students may want to add identifier/descriptor bubbles.
3. Divide students into pairs. Instruct students to share two stories with each other. First, share a story about when you felt especially proud to belong to one of the categories you listed on your diagram. Next, share a story about a time when it was especially painful to be associated with one of those categories.
4. Instruct students to think about stereotypes they have heard about one of the groups in their diagrams that does not accurately describe them. Ask them to complete the following sentence: "I am [category from one of your circles], BUT I am not___."
5. Ask students to make sure they have permission to share the stories with the rest of the class. Explain that sometimes, in the retelling of a story, facts can be interpreted, blanks filled in, even unintentionally. Discuss how this can happen and its effects. Ask if that has ever happened to any of them.
6. As a class, discuss some of the stories that were shared amongst the partners. Which stories made a particularly strong impression?
7. Have each person in the class share their "I am" statement. It is important that everyone pays attention and is respectful of each other's statements.
8. As a class, discuss these questions:
 - How do the aspects of your identity that you chose as important differ from the aspects other people use to make judgments about you?
 - How did it feel to be able to stand up and challenge your stereotype?
 - Did anybody hear somebody challenge a stereotype that you once bought into? If so, what?
 - Where do stereotypes come from? Why do so many of us believe them, or fail to challenge them when we know they aren't true?

Assessment

- Quality of participation
- Students' stories and diagrams demonstrate thought about their own personal identities

**Grades
6 - 12**

**Curriculum
Connections**

SC CCR ELA
ELA.OE.4
ELA.OE.5
ELA.R.1

SC CCR Music
Anchor Standards 6-9

Violinists Past and Present

Lesson 2

Objectives

Students will:

- Research established and new violinists;
- Compare obstacles encountered as they grow in their field;
- Predict the future of the scope of performers and effects on music in the future.

Materials

- Article 1 - **"The 25 Greatest Violinists of All Time"**
- Article 2- **"10 Black and Latino Musicians Changing the Face of Classical Music"**

Procedure

1. There are literally hundreds of famous violin players from all over the world. In addition to the number of well-known classical violinists, such as Fritz Kreisler and Pablo de Sarasate, there are also many great bluegrass and jazz violinists. Choosing just a few violinists to listen to can be a daunting task as there are so many genres to choose from.
2. Divide the class into five small groups. Assign each group one of the artists from Article 1 and two from Article 2. Have them read the articles and watch the videos about them.
3. Extend the research to discover what challenges they may have encountered. Ask them to look at race, religion, economic status in which they grew up, and prejudices or stereotypes in their time.
4. Have them discuss as a group what they have discovered. Ask them to pose questions, identify patterns and make connections. What is the same? What is different? Does the genre of music change the circumstances?
5. Have the group report their findings to the class.
6. What does the class predict for the future of violinists and their effect on music?

Extensions/Modifications

- Extend the list of violinists to research. Next, include more popular and hip-hop artists using violins. How does this change the profile?

Assessment

- Quality of participation

Questions to Engage & Connect

Do you play an instrument? If you could play an instrument, which one would it be?

What is your favorite kind of music?

Does music inspire you? How does it make you feel?

Are these styles of music something that you have heard before?

What did you notice about the different instruments that were played? Were any of them new to you? Or, were they played in a way that you had never experienced before?

What were your thoughts and feelings during the music in this show?

Bonus Explorations

Create your own artistic impression of the performance. Using shapes, lines, colors, patterns and other artistic elements from your imagination, draw or paint a picture that expresses how the music made you feel. Use art to interpret your impression of the performance and qualities of the music.

From the perspective of the violin, write a creative narrative about *The Day in the Life of a Violin*, using rich adjectives and verbs to describe sensory details, feelings and emotions. Choose from Malcolm, Umoja, another famous violinist (ex. Lindsay Stirling) or someone you know who plays the violin.

Write an argumentative essay for or against combining different types of music, such as, but not limited to, classical and hip-hop, gospel and grunge, or country western and rock, etc.

Resources

PICTURE BOOKS

Erhardt, Karen. *This Jazz Man*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2015.

Johnson, James W. *Lift Every Voice and Sing: Selected Poems*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Michelson, Richard, and Earl B. Lewis. *Across the Alley*. New York: Putnam, 2006.

Raschka, Christopher. *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*. New York: Orchard Books, 2004.

Taylor, Debbie A, and Frank Morrison. *Sweet Music in Harlem*. New York: Lee & Low, 2014.

CHAPTER BOOKS

Fenner, Carol. *Yolanda's Genius*. Listening Library, 2001.

Parkinson, Siobhán. *Second Fiddle, Or, How to Tell a Blackbird from a Sausage*. New Milford, Conn: Roaring Brook Press, 2007.

Tate, Eleanora E. *The Minstrel's Melody: #17*. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Company Publications, 2001.

TEEN FICTION

McDonald, Janet. *Harlem Hustle*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2012.

Townley, Rod. *Sky: A Novel in 3 Sets and an Encore*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Wolff, Virginia E. *The Mozart Season*. New York, N.Y: Square Fish, 2007.

Yoo, Paula. *Good Enough*. New York: HarperTeen, 2012.

*Check your local library for nonfiction books on violins and African Americans in music.

MEDIA/VIDEOS

[Listen to the Sons of Mystro on Soundcloud](#)

[Sons of Mystro Youtube Channel](#)

[TEDx Talks: Watch the Sons of Mystro cover "Happy" by Pharrell Williams](#)

[Sons of Mystro on the Steve TV Show](#)

Black Violin's music is available at as well as for download on iTunes, and streaming on [SoundCloud](#).

SUGGESTED LISTENING

""Winter" from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*

W.A. Mozart, *Symphony in G Minor K 550 #40*

Stuff Smith's album *Black Violin*

"Vivaldi Rock" by Sons of Mystro and Black Violin