



MEDIEVAL PROGRAM: "THE FAITHFUL WIFE" TEACHER PACKAGE

The Travelling Troubadours

This package includes some suggestions for preparing students for the presentation they will enjoy, including some optional activities, additional reading and listening as well as tips on being a good audience for live musicians.

The Faithful Wife is a medieval tale presented through song and music by the Travelling Troubadours. Students will receive a unique insight to the role of troubadours, music and women in society of the period.

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What we do

The Travelling Troubadours bring a wealth of experience to Children’s performances. A passion for music & storytelling led to the creation of a musical drama program that incorporates folklore and traditional stories. These interactive, educational, and curriculum-based performances are perfect for elementary classrooms!

It’s hugely important that young children have the opportunity to hear live music. Many young children—toddlers, for example—may not understand that the music they hear from a radio, CD player, or MP3 player was originally created by a live person—that music doesn’t just come out of a box, that there’s not a small person in there. Live music is a living, breathing, and wonderful thing. When children experience a live performance, they will begin to understand that it takes a person and an instrument or a voice to create music. Another important part of hearing live music is the value in just listening. Listening is doing something, and listening to live music can help young children build that skill.¹



There’s also a value in music for music’s sake and art for art’s sake. With the pressure to focus on academics, music sometimes gets overlooked. There’s plenty of research that shows that music supports the curriculum, but the real bonus is that we are honoring the emotional side of the child. It’s time to breathe. It’s time to say there is some beautiful music out there. There are beautiful sounds, instruments, voices, and words. When you hear someone create music, something special happens. Music evokes emotions. When children hear live music, it resonates with them emotionally. There’s an old song called “Bread and Roses” in which the lyrics describe that workers need their bread, but they need their roses too. Music is like the roses. It brings beauty into our lives, and we all need that.

Listening to live music is also a community-building event, and there are many benefits to being part of a community. We experience something together. We can talk about it. We share that experience. Even for young children, when the community is their classroom, there’s something valuable about experiencing and enjoying music together.

Preparing for our visit

Young students are accustomed to watching television or videos on computer screen that can often be a) paused for a bathroom break b) restarted if they missed something or c) can be played at high or low volume as the viewer desires. The experience of a live concert or

1 Interview with Cathy Fink from “Conversations About Young Audiences” by Susan Friedman in *Young Children*, March 2010

stage presentation is of course *very different!* Here are some tips to help students have a good experience with a live show:

- A group trip to the bathroom beforehand.
- Let the students know that listening quietly during the presentation is important, so that they don't miss anything. We can't stop and rewind! And of course, it's good manners, too.
- If a student needs to go to the bathroom or ask a question of the teacher, have them raise a hand and wait for permission to approach the teacher and ask quietly.
- Give them an idea of what they'll be hearing and seeing ahead of time.
- After the music is finished, a good way to show you enjoyed it is to clap. How do you know when it is finished? The musicians may turn and look at the audience, they may also be smiling at you, or they may have dropped their hands away from their instruments, or even stand up to take a bow.
- **Review the Crusades and if possible, the following roles in society: Monk, Knight, Sultan**

What will the students experience?

1. As outlined with our introductory letter, we will begin with an "introduction" which begins with us performing a song.
2. We will introduce ourselves and demonstrate our instruments. We might even pretend to make a bagpipe sound if the students can help us!
3. With the help of a slide show, we will talk about the story we will present, about music and its context in medieval life.
4. We will conduct a "Medieval Statue" dramatic exercise for students to participate in, individually, using music.
5. We will perform the story of The Faithful Wife, which includes some music and some dialogue with the students, and some song and movement participation.
6. After the story, we will ask questions about the story they heard (e.g. Was there anything in the story that surprised you?)
7. We will finish with a final dramatic group exercise creating **Medieval Tableaux**. (see below)

Class Participation:

We will be discussing four different kinds of music that occurred in medieval life, and students will get a taste of it when they "**Make a Medieval Statue.**"

Music to accompany a story – told by a bard

Music for love songs and poems – told by troubairitz and troubadours

Religious music for worship

Music to dance to.

We would like you to make a medieval statue when you hear the different kinds of music:

1. When you hear the bard's story music, *be a bard, telling a story*

2. When you hear the love song, turn into a star-crossed lover
3. When you hear the religious song, take a prayerful pose
4. When you hear the dance tune, take a dance pose.
5. Watch out, because we are going to mix them up!

At the close of the story of *The Faithful Wife*, students will be asked to participate as one of the guests at the welcome feast for the knight. Angelica will lead with **clapping and other dance-related movement** while Tori performs music.

DISCUSSION

1. What was surprising about this story?
2. Why would we admire the heroine?

Tableaux

This is a dramatic group exercise targeted at Gr. 4 classes (optional for Gr. 5-6)

1. The knight's wife is playing her harp in her father's cottage, while the knight is outside listening.
2. The knights are captured and being led away as slaves.
3. The Knight's wife has put the general to sleep.
4. The knight's wife is playing the harp under the staircase, while the General is shouting orders to the sailors.
5. The monk is playing the harp at a banquet for the sultan and his company. People are eating, drinking, or listening to the music.
6. The monk and the sultan are strolling in the rose garden, while the knight and his comrades are working in the fields.
7. The monk overhears the knight saying "I wish I had said good-bye to that Turkish serving girl".
8. The knight greets his wife in front of the castle.
9. The knight's guests are gossiping about the knight's wife, who has been away for such a long time.
10. The knight begs his wife's forgiveness for his accusations, after she tells him how she rescued him.

Background Information

The role of women in medieval society was generally one of subservience. However, there were a number of social roles that could be filled, and interestingly the peasant class of women are considered by many to have been fairly equitable with men of the same class. From around the 5th century to the 15th century, women held the positions of wife, mother, peasant, artisan, and nun, as well as some important leadership roles, such as abbess or queen regnant. Catholicism was a big influence on western Europe at this time. With the rise of monasticism, women could start to have roles in the church and even rise to Abbess which controlled the lots of other women and men and even control land. For the most part, women's roles were designed to support those of men, with steep punitive measures for stepping out of line. Dressing like a man could be punishable by exile or even death!

Other Sources

Students can learn more from sources such as these:

Medieval Women: Social History of Women in England 450-1500 (Women in History), 2002

The Voice of the Trobairitz: Perspectives on the Women Troubadours, 1989

The Impact of Islamic Civilization and Culture in Europe During the Crusades, World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization, 2 (3): 182-187, 2012

Medieval Music by Richard Hoppin (W.W. Norton & Co.)

The Travelling Troubadours, 2017

Medieval Quiz

Place the correct word beside the sentence. The first one is done for you.

An establishment that houses monks, friars and men of a religious order.	ie. Monastery	Psaltery
A French nobleman in the middle ages who wrote and performed songs and poems		Sultan
A war between European Christians and Arab Muslims		Monophony
A Celtic or Viking storyteller		trobairitz
A modern instrument that has a double reed and a nasal sound		troubadour
A celtic drum		harp
A medieval instrument that is played by blowing into a mouthpiece		drone
A many stringed instrument that is bowed		Crusades
A many stringed, three cornered instrument that is plucked		Recorder
Music that has a melody and no harmony		Monastery
A noblewoman in the middle ages that wrote and performed poems and songs.		Bodhran
A royal leader in an Arab or Muslim region		Oboe
A medieval musician		Bard
one or two notes that provide a continuous accompaniment, as in a bagpipe		Minstrel