



VOCAL VICTORIES

Meets National Core Arts Standards 7-9, 11

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work (*Re8*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (*Re9*)
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding (*Cn11*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (December 2017)
- *Music Alive!* Classroom Worksheet #6: All About the Article (download at musicalive.com)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “Vocal Victories” on pages 10-13. Then, go over the following highlighted words.

[This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

SPINOFFS—a byproduct or result of a larger project

JUGGERNAUT—a huge, powerful, overwhelming force

FRANCHISE—a general title or concept used for creating or marketing a series of products

CHARISMA—a personal quality that gives an individual influence over a group of people

ADJUDICATES—act as a judge in a competition

DEVELOP

- **1. Play** Kelly Clarkson's “A Moment Like This” (Hear the Music track 5 on musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What instruments do you hear in the first 30 seconds of the song?** (Electric guitar, acoustic guitar, vocals, organ, and synthesized strings.)
- **When Clarkson begins the first chorus, what instruments come in?** (Percussion and bass.)
- **What happens at 1:06?** (The full band comes in.)
- **Does Clarkson sing the melody straight or with ornamentation and embellishments?** (The latter.)
- **Name some of the embellishments Clarkson adds to the vocal.** (Growl, trills, melisma, alternating between chest voice and head voice, etc.)
- **How would you describe the mood created by the lyrics?** (Dramatic, romantic.)
- **How does Clarkson give a personal touch to the music?** (The embellishments are improvised, conveying Clarkson's feelings in the moment in response to the music.)
- **Do you think this song is a good choice for a vocal competition? Why or why not?** (Subjective.)

- **2. Play** “I Dreamed a Dream,” as performed by Susan Boyle (Hear the Music track 6 on musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What instruments set up the song?** (Piano and synthesized strings.)
- **What mood does this create?** (Pensive.)
- **Would you describe the vocal style as more straight or embellished?** (More straight.)
- **Compared to Clarkson, does Boyle make use of many vocal embellishments?** (No.)
- **Name a vocal embellishment Boyle does use.** (Vibrato.)
- **How does she give the song a personal interpretation?** (Subjective—phrasing, articulation. Sometimes she says words more softly or more pronounced.)
- **What instruments come in during the bridge at 1:05?** (Acoustic guitar, horn, tubular bells.)
- **What instruments are added in the second verse?** (Snare drum, vocal harmonies.)
- **By the end of the song, how does the mood change?** (It builds from pensive to dramatic, then returns to pensive as the song concludes.)
- **Do you think this song makes a good choice for a vocal competition?** (Subjective.)

- **3. Play** Pentatonix's “Without You” (Hear the Music track 7 on musicalive.com).

ASK

- **Do you hear any instruments on this recording?** (None, just vocals.)
- **What are some of the ways voices are used on this recording?** (They imitate percussion, bass, and sing melody and harmony.)
- **What technique is heard at 1:10?** (One of the “instrument” voices uses “mm” noises to imitate a melody, creating a unique effect.)
- **How do the vocal lines change at 1:29?** (They're singing in harmony, but the parts are independent in that they each have different lyrics and rhythm.)
- **The arrangement changes again at 1:45. How?** (They suddenly begin singing harmony in the same rhythm, creating a contrast to the moving harmonies in the previous verse.)
- **What happens next at 2:02?** (The vocalists sing a chord by coming in one note at a time, before ending the song in rhythmic unison.)
- **Without instruments, how do the vocalists keep the song interesting?** (By varying harmonies and rhythm and by creating unique sounds to imitate instruments.)
- **In a capella competitions, the song arrangement—the adding of harmonies, sound effects, and general restructuring of a song—is as important as song choice. Do you think this arrangement made for a good competition performance?** (Subjective.)

CLOSE

Hand out copies of the All About the Article worksheet and ask students to write about their observations from the article.

ASSESS

- Did the students read the article?
- Did they discuss the three listening selections?
- Did they fill out their All About the Article worksheets?