

MUSIC ALIVE!

FRETLESS STRINGS

Part 1: In an Orchestra and Beyond

THE SINGING SERIES, PT. 4

Into the Spotlight

LISTENING GUIDE

"Uptown Girl"
by Billy Joel

INCLUDES LESSON PLANS FOR:

- The Singing Series, Part 4: Into the Spotlight
- Fretless Strings, Part 1: In an Orchestra and Beyond
- Listening Guide "Uptown Girl" by Billy Joel
- SOTM: "Let Me Down Slowly" by Alec Benjamin

ALEC BENJAMIN

The "OCD"
Musical Narrator



WHO INVENTED
The Tuba

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In an Orchestra and Beyond
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by Alec Benjamin
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FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome back to a brand new season of *Music Alive!* magazine. Our lineup for this school year is packed with exciting emerging artists and their hit songs, fun and engaging lessons, and breakdowns of iconic songs that will inspire your students. To kick things off, we return to The Singing Series. Musical theater is a great way to get students involved in music, but learning to sing on stage takes some practice. In this part four of our series, we cover the essentials of singing for theater productions including everything from vocal resonators to stage presence.

We also discuss the basics of fretless strings. Violins, violas, cellos and basses are common instruments for young music students to play, and we want to make sure they understand their role in an orchestra, how they are made, and where they might be found in other genres of music.

Throughout this new season of *Music Alive!*, our Listening Guides will focus on classic artists and their songs that have shaped music history in pop, rock and soul. This month, we start with GRAMMY-winning songwriting rock legend Billy Joel.

As always, each month we aim to introduce your students to productive and exciting ideas in music. Encourage active participation as you read through the magazine. Allow students to be creative and share their ideas, and who knows where the music will take them.

— Anna Black, Editor-in-chief

National Core Arts Standards: A Summary

As you use this Teacher's Guide, refer to this summary of the 11 NCCAS anchor standards:

- Cr1.** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Cr2.** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- Cr3.** Refine and complete artistic ideas and work
- Pr4.** Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Pr5.** Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Pr6.** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work
- Re7.** Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Re8.** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Re9.** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work
- Cn10.** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Cn11.** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

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TRACK LISTING

HEAR THE MUSIC

"Let Me Down Slowly"
by Alec Benjamin

"Uptown Girl" by Billy Joel

"Popular" by Kristin Chenoweth

"Someone To Watch Over Me"
by Kristin Chenoweth

"If I Could Tell Her"
by Ben Platt & Laura Dreyfuss

"Grow As We Go" by Ben Platt

"J.S. Bach: Partita For Violin Solo
No.2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 -4. Gigue"
by Daniel Lozakovich

"Viola Sonata" by Rebecca Clarke

"The Upside" by Lindsey Stirling feat.
Elle King

EXTENDED PLAY

"What is This Feeling?" by Kristin
Chenoweth & Idina Menzel

"For Forever" by Ben Platt

"Cello Suite No.1 in G Major, BWV
1007: I. Prélude" by Yo-Yo Ma

"Mardi Gras in New Orleans"
by Tuba Fats

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EDITORIAL QUESTIONS

For any content-related questions or comments, or to suggest an artist or topic for future coverage, please e-mail the Editor at awblack@intunemonthly.com. We welcome your feedback.



FEATURE

THE SINGING SERIES PART 4: INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 5, 7, 9 and 10

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (*Pr5*)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (*Re9*)
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (*Co10*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (Vol. 39, No.1)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “The Singing Series Part 4: Into the Spotlight” on pages 6-9 before reviewing the words below. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

DYNAMICS—varying levels of volume of sound

SUB-PLOT—a secondary storyline

CONVERSATIONAL—appropriate to an informal conversation; casual

CONCISE—short but complete

PHARYNX—the opening behind the nose and mouth; throat

PHARYNGEAL—of or relating to the throat

RESONANCE—the quality in a sound of being deep and full

TRANSMITTER—equipment used to pass something on from one place to another

ENUNCIATE—say or pronounce clearly

PROJECTION—the ability to make the voice heard at a distance

PRESENCE—the impressive manner or appearance of a person

DEMEANOR—outward behavior; attitude

STAMINA—the ability to sustain mental or physical effort for a long time

CAPACITY—the maximum amount that something can contain

CONTEMPORARY—occurring in the present

DEVELOP

If necessary, refresh your students on last season’s The Singing Series material in the first three issues. These articles discuss vocal mechanics, singing techniques, and famous singers with unique voices.

Ask your students if anyone has had the experience of singing on a stage before.

What was the experience like?

Were you nervous? Why?

Did you have to dance or act at the same time?

How did your voice sound differently than it does in your room or in the shower?

What are some things to consider when preparing to sing in a musical?

What is conversational singing and why is it used in musical theater?

What is resonance and where are the different resonators within your body? How can you use them to your advantage when you sing on stage?

Why do you sound “better” when you sing in the shower?

If you train your voice specifically for musical theater, can you also train your voice for other genres?

CLOSE

● **Watch a clip of the live performance of “Popular” from the musical *Wicked* (watch on musicalive.com).**

How would you describe the tone of Chenoweth’s voice as she sings?

Does she sound like she has control over her voice? What about when she dances?

Does she use conversational singing?

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they answer the review questions?



FEATURE

FRETLESS STRINGS: IN AN ORCHESTRA AND BEYOND

Meets National Core Arts Anchor 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 (Vol. 39, No.1)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “Fretless Strings” on pages 10-13. Then, go over the following highlighted words. **[This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]**

TONE—quality and strength of a sound

TIMBRE—the character of a musical sound or voice

FRET—each of a sequence of bars on the fingerboard of some stringed instruments

ACCOMPANIMENT—a musical part that supports a solo instrument

COUNTERMELODY—a secondary melody

SOPRANO—an instrument of the highest pitch in its family

ALTO—an instrument of the second highest pitch in its family

TENOR—an instrument of the second lowest pitch in its family

BASS—an instrument of the lowest pitch in its family

VERSATILE—able to adapt to many different functions; changeable

PROMINENT—important; noticeable

VARNISH—a liquid finish applied to wood or metal

FREQUENCY—the speed at which a vibration occurs

SENSOR—a device that detects or measures a physical property

DEVELOP

1. Have students close their magazines before asking the following questions:

ASK

What are the four sections of an orchestra? Strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion

What is an instrument called when it does not have horizontal bars on its neck? Fretless

Can you name all four of the orchestral fretless instruments?

Violin, viola, cello, bass

Can you identify the range of pitch of each instrument? Violin: soprano, viola: alto, cello: tenor, bass: bass

2. Play “Violin Partita No. 2” (Hear the Music on *musicalive.com*).

ASK

Is the violin playing mostly long or short notes?

Does this piece have a fast or slow tempo?

What adjectives would you use to describe the tone of this piece?

Do you think this piece would be equally as effective if played on a different instrument, like a cello? Why or why not?

3. ▶ **Play** “Rebecca Clarke Sonata for Viola and Piano” (Hear the Music on *musicalive.com*)

ASK

In what ways is this piece different from the violin sonata?

Is the viola playing mostly long or short notes?

What adjectives would you use to describe the tone of this piece?

How does it make you feel?

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they review the vocabulary words?

Did they answer the supplemental questions?



LISTENING GUIDE

“UPTOWN GIRL” BY BILLY JOEL

Meets National Core Arts Standards 5, 7, 9, and 11

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (*Pr5*)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- 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 (Vol. 39, No.1)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “Listening Guide” on pages 18-19.

DEVELOP

► **Play** “Uptown Girl” by Billy Joel (*Hear the Music* on *musicalive.com*) while having the students follow along with the timeline.

2. Ask students about the song

What instruments do you hear?

How would you characterize the quality of Joel’s vocals?

Do you like them?

How does this song make you feel?

Does this song remind you of any other song or artist?

Is this song slow or upbeat?

Which part of the song do you like better: verse or chorus?

Why?

If you were to remix this song, what would you change?

What is this song about?

Do you think the message comes across clearly? Is it supported by the orchestration and pace of the song?

CLOSE

► **Play the music video for “Uptown Girl.” Has your interpretation of the song changed?**

What happens in the music video? Does it tell the story well?

ASSESS

Did the students follow along with the Listening Guide?

Did they listen to the song using the timeline?

Did they answer the supplemental questions?

QUIZ ANSWERS

This month’s quizzes are available at musicalive.com/the-quiz-zone-Oct-2019. Here are the quiz answers:

SINGING SERIES:

TAKING THE SPOTLIGHT

1. Whether you’re on key, dynamics, tone, and the character you play
2. You have to be louder and use a voice that cuts through the sound of the instruments when singing with a live band
3. A way of singing that utilizes short syllables, to make it sound like the character is speaking in a conversation
4. Whether your voice is resonating in your head or in your throat
5. So that everyone can hear you and the lyrics don’t blend together
6. Showers have hard, smooth surfaces that reflect the sound of your voice back to you
7. Because you are changing where your voice resonates inside your body
8. A successful theater performance requires good singing as well as good acting
9. Because your lungs are doing twice as much work
10. Kristin Chenoweth, Ben Platt, Carol Channing, Ethel Merman, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand

STRINGS

1. Four: strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion
2. Guitar (could be others)
3. Soprano
4. Fiddle
5. Tenor
6. The thickness/type of wood and the varnish
7. The speed at which a string vibrates to produce a specific pitch
8. A horizontal bar that sits on the neck of a string instrument
9. The string section
10. Bass

ALEC BENJAMIN

1. Narrator
2. Alessia Cara
3. “Water Fountain”
4. He felt awkward in front of the camera
5. Honesty and self-expression
6. John Mayer
7. Khalid and Jimin
8. Narrated for You
9. OCD
10. The kids of his generation that grew up the same way he did



SONG OF THE MONTH

“LET ME DOWN SLOWLY” BY ALEC BENJAMIN

Meets National Core Arts Standards 7-9

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work (Re7)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work (Re8)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (Re9)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (Vol. 39, No.1)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

1. Ask students to read the text on pages 14-15 on their own
2. Have one of the students read aloud the text on page 16
3. ▶ **Play** Alec Benjamin’s “Let Me Down Slowly” (*Hear the Music* on musicalive.com), while the students read through the notation on pages 16-17

DEVELOP

Ask students about the story:

What is most notable about Benjamin’s songwriting style?

Why does he call himself a narrator? Do you think this is a fitting title for him?

He says he pays “exhaustive” attention to detail. When it comes to songwriting, do you think this helps or hurts him?

Do you relate to his song “Water Fountain”? How so?

What does he say is the most important thing when writing and performing music?

Do you prefer the solo version of “Let Me Down Slowly” or the duet with Alessia Cara? Why?

2. Ask students questions about the song/notation:

What is this song about?

How many measures long is the introduction?

How many sharps are there in the key signature? What key is this?

What is the note that is repeated in the first and second measure of the first verse?

How does this song make you feel?

How would you describe Benjamin’s vocals?

What instruments do you hear?

What elements change in the second verse compared to the first?

When do the background vocals first enter?

How many times does Benjamin use the word “down” in the chorus?

3. This song tells a story about a relationship. Can you think of other songs that do the same thing? What do these songs have in common? What elements of each of these kinds of songs make it relatable to everyone?

CLOSE

Listen to the original version of “Let Me Down Slowly,” then listen to the version with Alessia Cara. Ask students to compare the two.

Does the solo version or the duet tell a better story? Why?

Do you think Alessia’s vocals add a new element to the song?

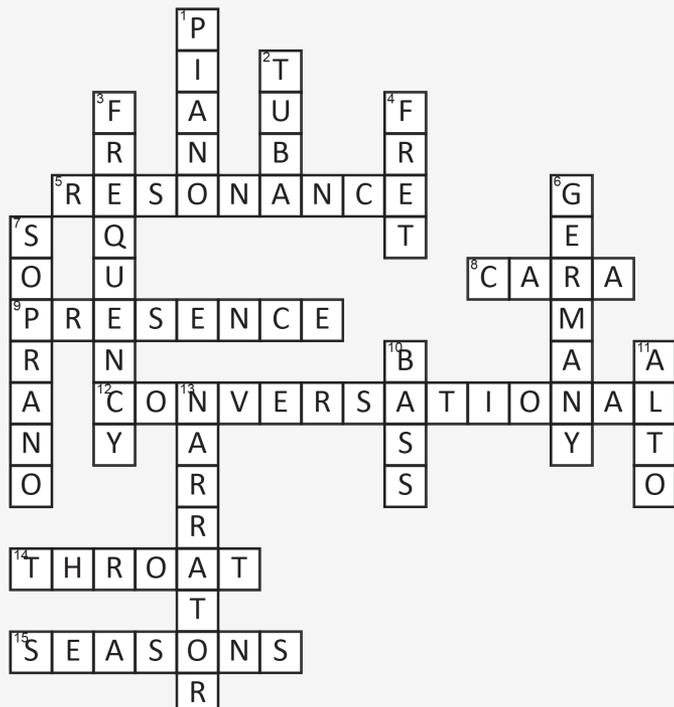
ASSESS

Did the students follow along with “Let Me Down Slowly”?

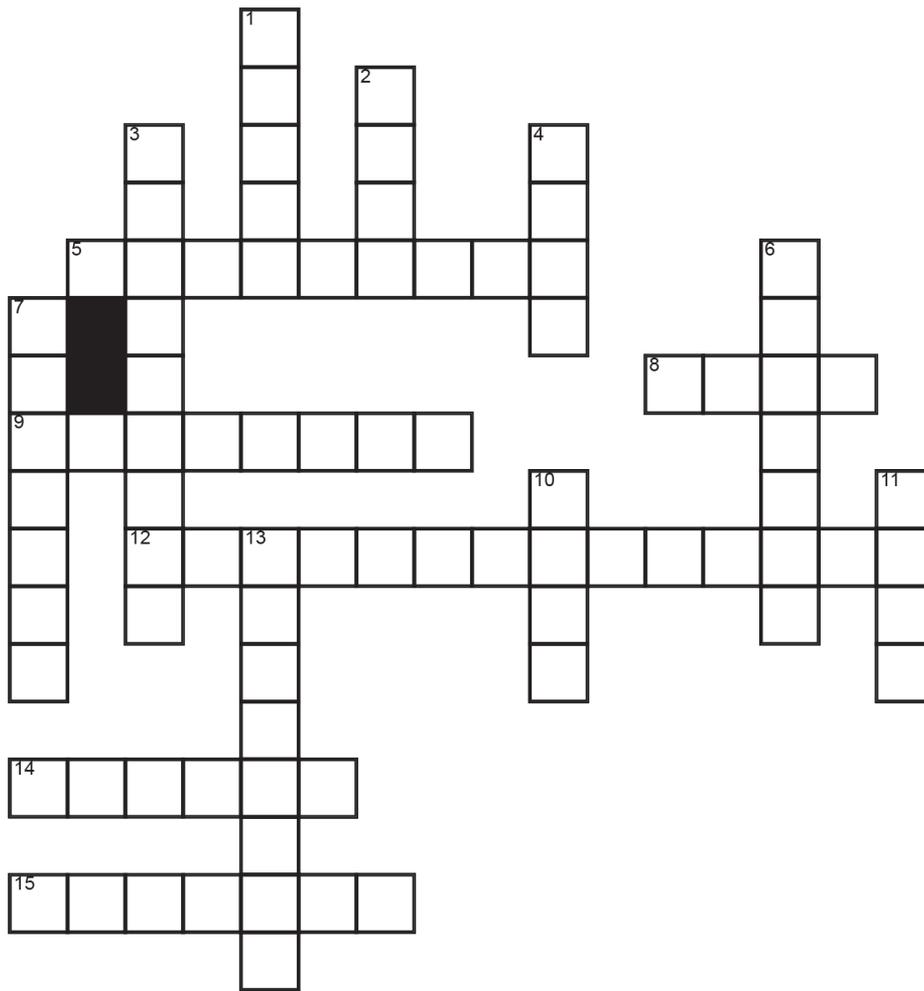
Did they answer the discussion questions?

Did they listen to both versions and compare them?

CROSSWORD SOLUTION



CROSSWORD



Across

5 The rich, full sound that occurs when your voice is projected in an open space

8 Alec Benjamin released a duet version of "Let Me Down Slowly" with Alessia _____

9 When singing in theater, stage _____ is important in order to put on a good show

12 This short, talking-style of singing is used in musical theater producons

14 Your voice can resonate in your chest, head or _____

15 "Uptown Girl" by Billy Joel was inspired by the song "Rag Doll," by the band the Four _____

Down

1 Billy Joel is nicknamed the "_____ man"

2 This is a Latin word meaning tube

3 This is the speed of a string's vibration that determines pitch on an instrument

4 The horizontal bar on the neck of a guitar

6 Wilhelm Wieprecht was born in this country

7 The highest range of pitch (hint: it belongs to the violin)

10 The largest instrument in the fretless string family

11 The second highest range of pitch (hint: it belongs to the viola)

13 Alec Benjamin feels awkward in front of the camera, so he decided to play this role