Johnette and Scott
Swamp Romp
Educational Guide, Grades PreK-3

About the Performance



Move the furniture and roll up the rug, it's time to romp in the swamp and boogie on the bayou. **Johnette and Scott's** *Swamp Romp* is a rollicking ride through Louisiana roots music from Cajun, zydeco, traditional jazz, Isleño, swamp pop, and New Orleans rhythm and blues. Students are immersed in Louisiana culture, traditions, cuisine, and dance through interactive songs about Mardi Gras king cakes, New Orleans po' boy sandwiches, the Bamboula rhythm, Isleño oxcarts, and how to spell Mississippi River. Simple words in French and Spanish are introduced, with translations. Johnette's gift for communicating with children is matched with smart musicianship to create a toe-tapping, interactive, and authentic roots music experience that is fun for all!

About the Artists

Musician and author **Johnette Downing** performs all over the world. Her passion for roots music and for sharing music with children, in the way her parents had shared it with her, led Johnette to her career as "the Musical Ambassador to Children" and the "Pied Piper of Louisiana Music Traditions". Johnette is the 2017 Louisiana Writer Award recipient and has received 22 international awards for her 30 books and 12 recordings for children, including a 59th Grammy Award Participant Certificate.

Three-time Grammy Award winner **Scott Billington** has performed internationally on harmonica and produced over 100 albums of roots-oriented music. Awards include the Sweet Soul Music Award (Italy), the Keepin' the Blues Alive Award (Memphis), and the Offbeat Lifetime Achievement Award (New Orleans). In recognition of his work in Louisiana, Scott was appointed a Louisiana Colonel by Governor Edwin W. Edwards.

Program Learning Goals

1. To broaden awareness and understanding of Louisiana culture and traditions.
2. To explore a wide variety of musical genres that comprise Louisiana roots music.
3. To understand simple words in French and Spanish.

Essential Questions

1. What elements make up a person's culture?
2. How does music tell the story of a culture?
3. How can music help us to express ourselves?

Vocabulary

- **Swamp:** an area of land near a river or lake that is covered with water, plants, and trees
- **Romp:** to move around in a lively, playful way
- **Beat:** the steady pulse of a song or piece of music
- **Rhythm:** a strong pattern of notes or beats in music
- **Tempo:** the speed of a song or piece of music
- **Melody:** a series of notes that creates the main part of a song or piece of music
- **Dynamics:** how loud or soft a note sounds, musical volume

Key Facts and Context for Students

All About Louisiana

Louisiana is a state in the southern region of the United States. Its neighbors are Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Over 4,600,000 people live there!



Louisiana also borders the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, so there are many swamps and other types of wetlands. This habitat is home to a variety of frogs, birds, fish, plants, and trees.

The culture of Louisiana includes a mixture of French, Spanish, Native American, and West African food, music, language, and art. Many people speak multiple languages and celebrate the diverse traditions and customs of the people in this state.



What's in a Swamp Romp?

The songs featured in this performance can be found on Johnette and Scott's 2019 recording *Swamp Romp (see page 5 for liner notes and lyrics)*.

This CD is a Louisiana dance party for children that offers a collection of many Louisiana roots music styles, from the Cajun, zydeco, and swamp pop of South Louisiana; to the rhythm & blues, gospel, jazz, brass band, and street music of New Orleans; to the rock'n'roll of North Louisiana; along with a small side trip to Mississippi. So come on in and join the fun!

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What do you know about Louisiana and its culture? What would you like to know?
- What instruments do you know? How are they played? What type(s) of music do they play? What kinds of musical ensemble(s) are they part of?
- How does music make you feel? Do you have favorite songs to listen to when you feel a certain way?

Pre-Performance Activity: Bamboula Rhythm

Learning Goals:

- To explore Louisiana music and culture.
- To identify New Orleans cultural elements.

Materials:

Map of the United States and/or Louisiana, YouTube video:



YouTube video: "Bamboula Rhythm"
by Johnette Downing and Scott Billington

Directions:

1. On a map of the United States, find Louisiana. Identify Baton Rouge, the state capital, and New Orleans, which is featured in this activity. Are students familiar with Louisiana or New Orleans? What do they already know?
2. Watch the video “Bamboula Rhythm” by Johnette and Scott.
3. Discuss what students observed in the video. What instruments are featured? What are the people wearing? Talk about how New Orleans is famous for street parades. What do students notice about how people are moving, marching, dancing, etc.?
4. Play the video again and explore how students can move their bodies to the music. Can you clap to the beat? Stomp? Dance? Pretend to play one of the featured instruments and have a parade around the classroom to the music!

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- What did you learn about Louisiana and its culture?
- What instruments did Johnette and Scott use in their performance? How were they played?
- What was your favorite song from the performance? Why?

Post-Performance Activity: How to Dress a Po' Boy

Learning Goal:
To explore another element of Louisiana culture through an iconic sandwich.

Materials:
Paper, crayons/markers/colored pencils, YouTube video:



[YouTube video: "How to Dress a Po' Boy" by Johnette Downing and Scott Billington]

Directions:

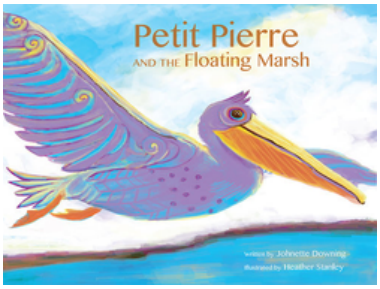
1. Reflect on Johnette and Scott's performance. What did students notice, see, and hear?
2. Tell students that in addition to music and dance, food is an important part of a culture. What kinds of foods are important to students' cultures?
3. Watch the video "How to Dress a Po' Boy" by Johnette and Scott.
4. Discuss what students learned in the video. What is a po' boy? What do you put on it? Have students ever had this sandwich?
5. Draw a picture of a po' boy and/or Johnette and Scott.
6. Share students' pictures with the class and ask each student to share something they learned about Louisiana culture from the performance.

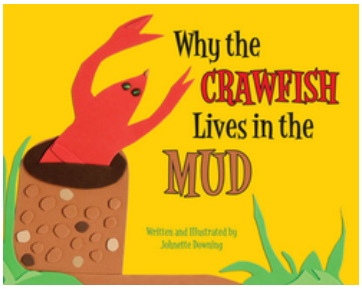
Further Resources

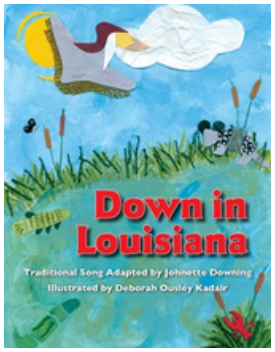
- [Johnette and Scott Artist Website]
- [*Swamp Romp* CD Liner Notes]
- [*Swamp Romp* Coloring Sheet]
- [Educational Music Resources from the Preservation Hall Foundation]
- [Educational Science Resources from the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Program]

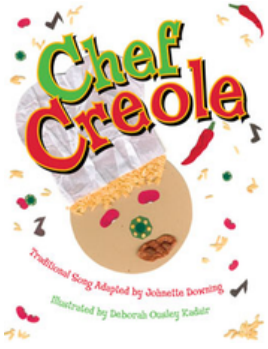
- **Featured books by Johnette Downing:**















- **Additional recommended books:**
  - Andrews, Troy: *Trombone Shorty: A Picture Book Biography*, Abrams Books for Young Readers (2015)
  - Cline-Ransome, Lesa: *The Story of the Saxophone*, Holiday House (2023)
  - Kimmel, Eric: *A Horn for Louis: Louis Armstrong--as a kid!, Random House Books for Young Readers (2006)*
  - Marsalis, Wynton: *Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!: A Sonic Adventure*, Candlewick Press (2021)
  - Pardo, Juan: *When the Morning Comes: A Mardi Gras Indian Story*, Pelican Publishing Company (2019)

Curricular Connections

Arts Standards: Music

Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. (M.Cr.01)
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (M.Cr.02)

Performing

- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. (M.P.06)

Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (M.R.07)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (M.R.08)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (M.R.09)

Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (M.Co.10)
- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. (M.Co.11)

English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards

Speaking and Listening

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL.PK-12.2)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. (SL.PK-12.3)

Language

- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. (L.PK-12.3)
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. (L.PK-12.5)



...continued on next page

Curricular Connections, continued

History and Social Science

Pre-K

- Topic 1: Civics: fairness, friendship, responsibility, and respect (HSS.Pre-K.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography: maps and places (HSS.Pre-K.T2)
- Topic 3: History: personal experiences and memories (HSS.Pre-K.T3)

K

- Topic 1: Civics: classroom citizenship (HSS.K.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography: connections among places (HSS.K.T2)
- Topic 3: History: shared traditions (HSS.K.T3)

Grade 1

- Topic 1: Civics: communities, elections, and leadership (HSS.1.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography: places to explore (HSS.1.T2)
- Topic 3: History: unity and diversity in the United States (HSS.1.T3)

Grade 2

- Topic 2: Geography and its effects on people (HSS.2.T2)
- Topic 3: History: migrations and cultures (HSS.2.T3)

Science and Technology/Engineering

Earth and Space Sciences

- Earth's Systems (PreK.ESS.2, K.ESS.2, 2.ESS.2)
- Earth and Human Activity (PreK.ESS.3, K.ESS.3)

Life Science

- From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes (PreK.LS.1, K.LS.1)
- Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics (PreK.LS.2)

Physical Science

- Waves and Their Applications in Technologies for Information Transfer (1.PS.4)



...continued on next page

Curricular Connections, continued

World Languages Standards

Communication

- Engage in, negotiate with, and improvise with cultural norms, etiquette, and nonverbal cues. (S.4.e)

Linguistic Cultures

- Analyze and evaluate variations among products and practices and how they relate to perspectives in multiple cultures and communities. (S.5.a)
- Analyze and evaluate the contributions of various cultural influences in the development of identity. (S.5.b)
- Investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of culture through comparisons of diverse target-language cultures and their own (S.6.a)

Lifelong Learning

- Research, analyze, evaluate, and hypothesize about diverse perspectives and distinctive viewpoints found in authentic materials from target-language cultures. (S.7.b)
- Apply cultural and linguistic skills to participate in the school, local, and global community (S.8.a)

