

Kirsten Lamb

Coyote's Song

Educational Guide, PreK-5



About the Performance

Acclaimed musician and educator Kirsten Lamb's solo performance of the fable, "Coyote's Song" is a unique introduction to the double bass, voice, and basic musical concepts. Part concert, part storytelling, and part sing-along, the program begins with a demonstration on the double bass, leading to the interactive musical story. Following the story, two basic rhythmic patterns based on the story's characters are taught and performed by students. The program ends with songs accompanied by banjo, and time for questions.



About the Artist

Kirsten Lamb is an award-winning multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, composer, and educator. Praised by the Boston Globe for her "versatility and assurance" and the Huffington Post as a "brilliant musician," she has performed across the United States and internationally for audiences of all ages. An avid educator with experience in diverse communities, Kirsten is a frequent music class and workshop leader at universities and grade schools. With Arts for Learning MA, she performs a variety of solo and ensemble programs and has developed music curriculum to support preschoolers with early trauma at Horizons for Homeless Children. Kirsten holds a Master of Music in Contemporary Improvisation from New England Conservatory, where she was an active participant in community outreach programs and was awarded the Gunther Schuller Medal for "extraordinary contributions" to the school. She earned a Bachelor of Music in Double Bass Performance and Ethnomusicology from Oberlin Conservatory.

Program Learning Goals

1. To identify, perform, and recall plot, characters, and songs from the telling of the fable "Coyote's Song".
2. To see how sounds "talk"; how sounds convey emotion and how sounds can be used to create stories.
3. To explore the string instrument family, specifically the double bass and banjo.

Essential Questions

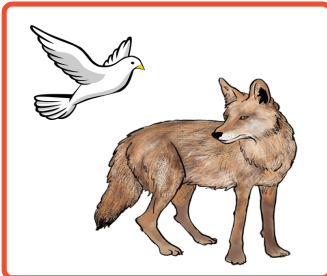
1. How does music connect to your emotions?
2. Why does some music make you feel happy and other music make you feel sad?
3. How can you make music to express your emotions or bring a story character to life?

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Vocabulary

- **Musical storytelling:** using music and sounds to help make a story come to life.
- **String instruments:** musical instruments sounded by plucking, striking, or moving a bow across a string.
- **Double bass:** a large musical instrument with strings played with fingers or a bow. It has a very low, deep sound.
- **Banjo:** a medium-sized musical instrument with strings played with fingers or picks. It has a bright, twangy sound.

Key Facts and Context for Students



What is a Fable?

A fable is a short story that usually features animals and teaches a lesson. In this story you will meet **Coyote** and **Little Dove**. Coyote needs to learn to be a better listener and to respect his friend Little Dove. Coyote finds out that being mean to your friends has consequences.

Instruments Featured in this Performance

Kirsten will bring two instruments to play: the **double bass** and the **banjo**. They are both members of the **string instrument family**. Kirsten plucks the strings on these instruments to make sound. She also uses a wooden and horsehair bow on the double bass.



Double Bass



Banjo

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What string instruments do you know? How are they played?
- What do you know about the double bass? What do you know about the banjo? What do you think these instruments sound like? Have you ever seen or heard either of them before?
- How does music make you feel? Do you have favorite songs to listen to when you feel a certain way?

Pre-Performance Activities

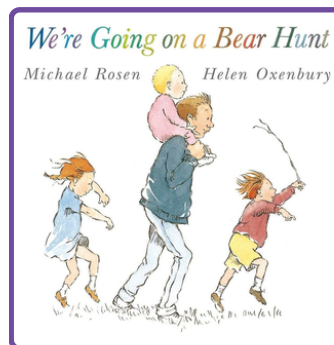
Activity 1: Sounds and Storytelling

Learning Goal:

To explore how sounds illustrate and enhance storytelling

Materials:

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (or [this telling on Youtube](#))



Directions:

1. As a class, read or watch "We're Going on a Bear Hunt".
2. Notice the words and sounds that are used to help illustrate the story. Ask students to think about how they could make those words come to life. Could they say them in a particular way? What sounds or movements could they make with their bodies to highlight these words?
3. Ask several students to share different ways to say or perform those words using their voices and bodies. After each suggestion, have the whole class copy the sound/movement.
4. Read "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" again, this time adding in your special sounds and movements!



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Pre-Performance Activities, continued

Activity 2: Music and Emotions

Learning Goal:

To connect the different moods of music with emotions.

Materials:

Recordings:

- ["William Tell Overture" by Gioachino Rossini](#)
- ["In the Hall of the Mountain King" by Edvard Grieg](#)
- ["Flight of the Bumblebee" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov](#)

Drawing paper and coloring supplies



Directions:

1. Watch each of the musical examples and discuss what students see and hear.
2. Talk about the mood of each piece of music. Ask students for a few words that describe it. Does it sound exciting? Happy? Sad? Does it remind you of a car chase or creeping through the woods?
3. Have students draw a picture of what they heard or write a sentence about it.
4. Share the pictures with the class and discuss the similarities and differences between them. Assure students that all of their interpretations are welcome!



Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- Did you like hearing a story with music? Why or why not?
- How did the music from the story make you feel? Happy? Sad? Scared? Excited? Something else?
- Do you think Coyote learned a lesson in the story? Do you think he will be nicer to his friends in the future?

Post-Performance Activity: DIY Musical Storytelling

Learning Goals:

- To make original instruments and sounds
- To explore how to accompany a story with sound

Materials:

2-3 story books for students to pick from

Recycled materials to make instruments such as:

coffee cans (with lids), toilet paper tubes, cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, rubber bands, balloons, dried rice/beans, etc.



Note for the teacher:

This activity can be done simply with body percussion/sounds, instead of making instruments, for a shorter activity.

Directions:

1. Pick a story together as a class. For younger grades, use a familiar story such as “The Three Little Pigs” or “The Tortoise and the Hare”. For older grades, this could be an opportunity to explore a new story or even write an original story as a group. Careful not to pick/write a story with too many characters.
2. Read/tell the story to the class, then discuss the major plot points together.
3. Identify each character in the story and pick some descriptive words for each one. For example, is the character nice or mean? Loud or soft? Big or small? Scary or funny?
4. Split into groups and assign each group a character from the story. Give each group materials to make an instrument to represent their character. (Depending on the group dynamics, each student can make one instrument to add to the character’s sound, or they can work together to make a single instrument.)

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Post-Performance Activity, continued

Directions, continued:

5. Explore what sounds the materials can make alone and when you put them together.
6. Build an instrument.
7. Once the instrument is built, what sounds can you make with it? (Or if each student in a group makes an instrument, what sounds can you make when you play them all together?) Can you find sounds that match the descriptive words you came up with in Step 3?
8. Share your instrument with the rest of your class. Does each instrument make you think of the character it represents?
9. Re-read/tell the story together with each group adding their character's music when appropriate. Make sure to leave pauses in the story to give each character group a chance to shine!



Further Resources

- [Kirsten Lamb Artist Website](#)
- More Musical Storytelling:
 - [The Boston Symphony Orchestra Presents "Berlioz the Bear" by Jan Brett](#)
 - [The Redlands Symphony Presents "Carnival of the Animals" by Camille Saint-Saëns](#)
 - ["Doxie and Andre's Flight Path" by Andrea Bonsignore](#)
- Making Homemade Instrument Resources:
 - [Bash the Trash: How to Build Musical Instruments](#)
 - ["Make Homemade Music with These 6 DIY Instruments"](#)
 - ["DIY Musical Instruments for Kids"](#)
 - ["Easy Homemade Instruments for Kids"](#)
- Hood, Susan: *Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay*, Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers (2016)
- Levine, Robert: *A Child's Introduction to the Orchestra*, Black Dog & Leventhal (2019)
- Marsalis, Wynton: *Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!: A Sonic Adventure*, Candlewick Press (2021)
- Oliver, Carmen: *Building an Orchestra of Hope: How Favio Chavez Taught Children to Make Music from Trash*, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (2022)

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

Reading

- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. (R.PK-12.2)
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. (R.PK-12.4)

Writing

- Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences. (W.PK-12.3)

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)

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Curricular Connections, continued

English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards, continued

Language, continued

- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. (L.PK-12.5)

History and Social Science

PreK

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

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- Topic 1: Civics: classroom citizenship (HSS.K.T1)
- Topic 3: History: shared traditions (HSS.K.T3)

Grade 1

- Topic 1: Civics: communities, elections, and leadership (HSS.1.T1)

