

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 song from the telling of the fable "Coyote's Song".
2. To identify 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.
- 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 Cultural 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.



Kirsten plucks the strings on these instruments to make sound. She can also use a wooden and horsehair bow on the double bass. This is a picture of Kirsten playing the double bass. Look how big it is!

Instruments

Kirsten will bring two instruments to play for you, the banjo and the double bass. What do you think these instruments sound like? Have you ever seen or heard either of them before?



Banjo



Double Bass

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Pre-Show Activities

Sounds and Storytelling

- As a class, read “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (or listen/watch [this telling on Youtube](#))
- 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?
- Ask several students to share different ways to say or perform those words using their voices and bodies. After each suggestion, the whole class can copy the sound/movement.
- Read “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” again, this time adding in your special sounds and movements!

Music and Emotions

Listen to the following songs. Ask students to think about what emotions each song makes them feel.

1. “William Tell Overture”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIbYCOiETx0>
2. “In the Hall of the Mountain King”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nMUr8Rt2AI>
3. “Flight of the Bumblebee”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QV1RGMLUKE>

Post-Show Activity: Make Your Own Instruments

After the performance, make your own instruments to add music to a story in your classroom. Note: this activity can also be done simply with body percussion/sounds, instead of making instruments, for a shorter activity.

Materials needed:

- 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
- STEP 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.
- STEP 2: Read/tell the story to the class, and then discuss the major plot points together.
- STEP 3: Identify each character in the story, and pick some descriptive words for each. For example, is the character nice or mean? Loud or soft? Big or small? Scary or funny?
- STEP 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.)
- STEP 5: Explore what sounds the materials can make alone and when you put them together (watch the videos in “Further Resources” for more ideas).
- STEP 6: Build an instrument.

Post-Show Activity (Continued)

- STEP 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?
- STEP 8: Share your instrument with the rest of your class. Does each instrument make you think of the character it represents?
- STEP 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!

If you record the story that your class tells, we would love for you to share it with AFLMA at scheduling@artsforlearningma.org and we can share it with Kirsten.

Further Resources

New England Conservatory's [Musical Storytelling Fellows YouTube playlist](#)
Features 5 more stories told with the help of different musical instruments

For DIY Instrument Ideas:

VIDEO Link: ["Make Homemade Music with These 6 DIY Instruments"](#)

VIDEO Link: ["DIY Musical Instruments for Kids"](#)

VIDEO Link: ["Easy Homemade Instruments for Kids"](#)

BOOK: Making Musical Things by Ann Wiseman

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Curricular Connections

Music PreK-5

Creating:

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Improvise short original musical ideas. (M.Cr.01)
2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Connect multiple original musical ideas together into a single piece. (M.Cr.02)
3. Refine and complete artistic work. Explore different musical ideas by experimenting with the voice or instruments. (.M.Cr.03)

Performing:

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

Responding:

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work. (M.R.07)
8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.(M.R.8)
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Demonstrate active listening as an audience member (.M.R.09)

Connecting:

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