

Musiquita

Vamos a Jugar! (Let's Play!)

Educational Guide, Grades PreK-6



About the Performance

Vamos a Jugar! is a joyful, interactive musical experience that engages students through singing, movement, rhythm, and storytelling. The program explores a vibrant mix of musical genres including Latin folk, jazz, classical, rock, and original songs in English and Spanish. Rooted in play-based learning, the performance celebrates cultural diversity, encourages participation, and nurtures emotional and social development. Musiquita's concerts are designed to connect children to themselves, each other, and the wider world through music.



About the Artists

Musiquita is a bilingual music project with a mission to inspire and empower children and families through music. Created by musician-educators **Blanca Cecilia González**, a Juilliard-trained violinist and vocalist, and pianist **Jesse Elder**, former Music Director for Postmodern Jukebox, together they bring world-class musicianship and joyful energy to every performance. Their interactive, play-based approach celebrates cultural diversity, encourages connection, and sparks creativity in audiences of all ages.

Program Learning Goals

1. To foster curiosity and respect for different cultures by exploring a diverse array of musical styles, languages, and traditions from around the world.
2. To strengthen listening skills, vocabulary, rhythm, and pitch recognition through bilingual songs, call-and-response exercises, and interactive musical elements.
3. To encourage self-expression, collaboration, and empathy through music and movement activities that build confidence and a sense of belonging.

Essential Questions

1. How can music help us to express ourselves?
2. How does music tell the story of a culture?
3. How can music help people from different cultures and backgrounds to understand and connect with one another?

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Music Vocabulary

- **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
- **Pitch:** how low or high a note sounds
- **Melody:** a series of notes that creates the main part of a song or piece of music

Spanish Vocabulary

- **Arriba** (*ah-ree-bah*): up, above
- **Abajo** (*ah-bah-ho*): down, below
- **Jugar** (*hoo-gar*): play
- **La Luna** (*lah loo-nah*): the moon
- **El Sol** (*ehl sohl*): the sun
- **Lluvia** (*you-vee-ah*): rain
- **Chao** (*cha-oh*): bye
- **Nos vemos** (*nohs vey-mohs*): we'll see you

Key Facts and Context for Students

Musiquita is made up of two musicians who play and sing songs in **English** and **Spanish**.



Blanca is from **Colombia**, a country in northwestern South America. She sings and plays the **violin**, **ukulele**, and **percussion** instruments.



Jesse is from **Michigan**, a state in the northern midwestern United States. He sings and plays **piano** and **percussion**.

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What are some different ways music can tell a story or express an emotion?
- Have you ever heard music in more than one language? What did you notice about it?
- What do you think it means for music to come from different cultures around the world? Why might that be important?

Pre-Performance Activity: Musical Sound Map

Learning Goals:

- To explore music as a form of storytelling, cultural expression, and connection.
- To highlight students' backgrounds and cultural diversity.

Materials:

World map (paper or projected), YouTube/Spotify to find musical examples



Directions:

1. Discuss what makes up a person's culture. Examples can include music, dance, language, food, etc. From what places around the world do students have cultural ties?
2. On a large world map, mark the places that students highlighted (i.e. USA, Colombia, Ireland, China, Ghana, etc.). How far across the globe do these places span?
3. Divide students into small groups and assign each group one of the locations highlighted on the map. Ask each group to find 2-4 short clips of children's or traditional music from their assigned location. *(Optional adaptation for younger grades: pick musical examples in advance to listen to in a large group.)*
4. For each musical example, have students answer the following questions:
 - What instruments do you hear?
 - How does the music make you feel?
 - What do you imagine the story behind the music could be?
5. Have each group present their favorite musical example to the class and talk about their answers to the questions.
6. Reflect on what students learned from this activity. How can music help us learn about different cultures, languages, and ways of life?

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- What instruments did Musiquita use in their performance? How were they played?
- Did you hear any instruments, rhythms, or languages today that were new to you? What did you learn from them?
- How did the music make you feel? Why do you think it had that effect?
- Do you have a favorite song from the performance?

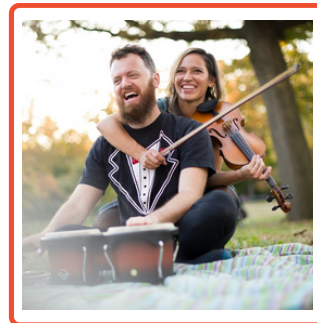
Post-Performance Activity: Making Musical Instruments

Learning Goals:

- To create original instruments from recycled materials.
- To explore layering sounds and rhythms using the original instruments.

Materials:

Coffee cans, beans, rubber bands, fabric, soda bottles and caps, paper towel rolls, paper clips, wooden sticks (for tapping), water



Directions:

1. Discuss Musiquita's performance and the instruments they used. How did those instruments make sound?
2. Have students brainstorm materials they could use to make instruments. Imagine how they could vary the sounds by changing the mechanics of their instruments (amount of beans, different sizes of cans, etc.).
3. Have each student make an original instrument using the collected materials. Encourage them to experiment with sounds before finishing their instruments.
4. Give students time to practice playing their instruments by themselves and with partners.
5. Have students make music together with their instruments! Ask one student to begin. Gradually add layers of sound by adding more instruments one at a time.



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Further Resources

- [Musiquita Artist Website](#) and [YouTube Channel](#)
- [Bash the Trash: How to Build Musical Instruments](#)
- Bonilla, Lindsay: *The Note Who Faced the Music*, Page Street Kids (2023)
- Engle, Margarita: *Drum Dream Girl*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2015)
- Hood, Susan: *Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay*, Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers (2016)
- Marsalis, Wynton: *Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!: A Sonic Adventure*, Candlewick Press (2021)
- Morland, Charlie: *Music and How it Works: The Complete Guide for Kids*, DK Children (2020)
- Oliver, Carmen: *Building an Orchestra of Hope: How Favio Chavez Taught Children to Make Music from Trash*, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (2022)
- Schofield-Morrison, Connie: *I Got the Rhythm*, Bloomsbury U.S.A. Children's Books (2014)

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)



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Curricular Connections, continued

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)

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 1: Reading and making maps (HSS.2.T1)
- Topic 2: Geography and its effects on people (HSS.2.T2)
- Topic 3: History: migrations and cultures (HSS.2.T3)

Grade 4

- Topic 1: North America: geography and map skills (HSS.4.T1)

Grade 6

- Topic 1: Studying complex societies, past and present (HSS.6.T1)
- Topic 5b: Physical and political geography of South America (HSS.6.T5b)



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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)

