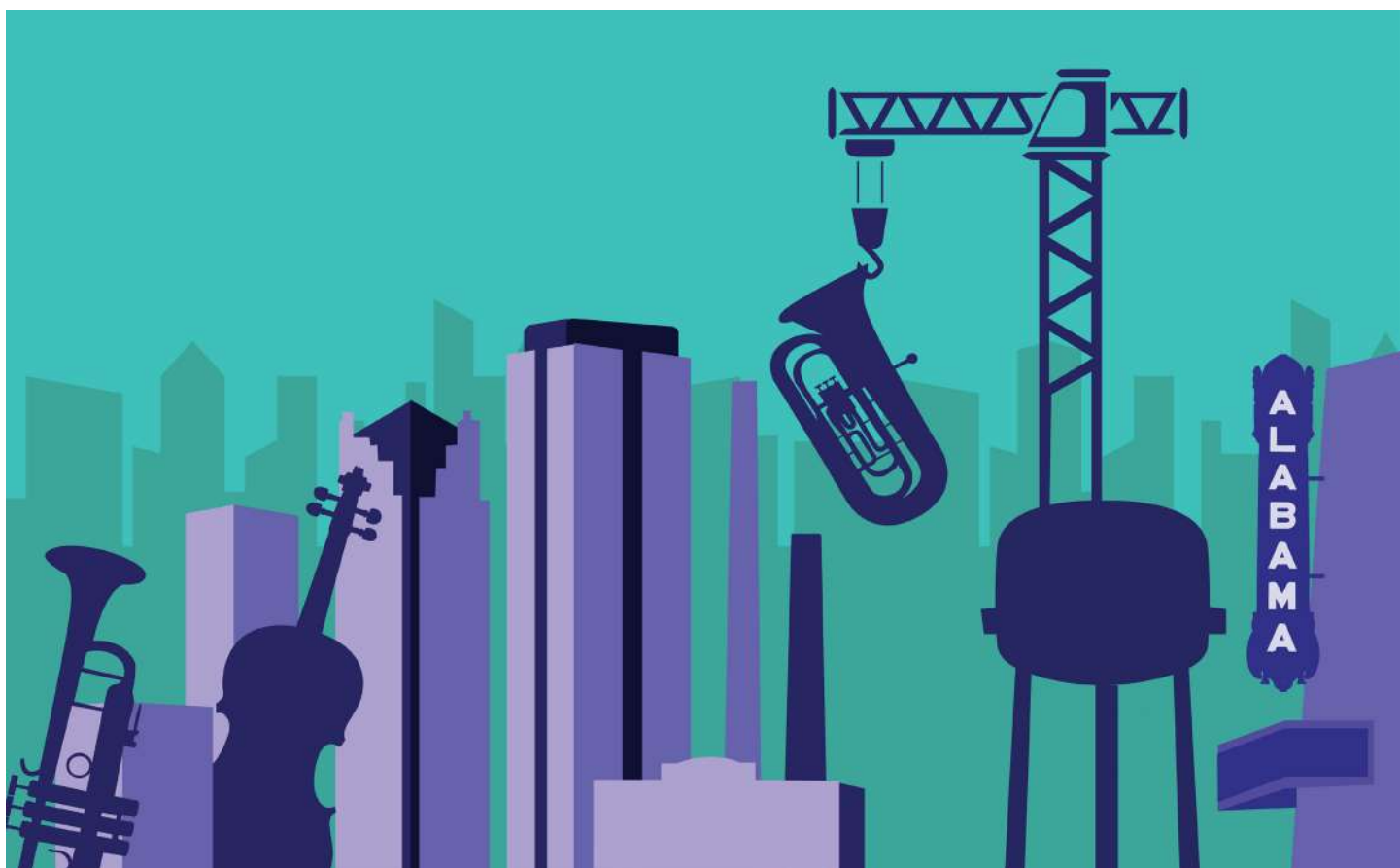




23/24

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Composing Conversations: ASO Teacher Guide



Created and written by Dr. Rob Lyda, Music Teacher at Cary Woods Elementary, Auburn, AL and AMEA President

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PROGRAM

D'un matin de printemps (1918)

LILI BOULANGER
(1893-1918)

Román népi táncok (1917)

- I. Jocul cu bâta (Stick Dance)
- II. Brâul (Waistband Dance)
- III. Pe loc (Stamping Dance or On the Spot)
- IV. Buciumeana (Hornpipe Dance)
- V. Poarga româneasca (Rumanian Polka)
- VI. Maruntel (Quick Dance)

BÉLA BARTÓK
(1881-1945)

Lyric for Strings (1947-1990)

GEORGE WALKER
(b. 1922)

Suite (1919 version) from The Firebird (1909-1910)
6. Final

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882-1971)

Letters from Birmingham

BRIAN RAPHAEL NABORS

Meet the Musicians



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Composer Conversations: *Letters From Birmingham*

Essential Question:

How do composers express their ideas to an audience?

Lesson Objectives:

Students will discuss the composer's intent of the composition, *Letters From Birmingham* (2022).
Students will learn the structure of a symphony.

Essential Resources:

R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5
[Brian Nabors - What Inspires your music?](#)
[Brian Nabors Down Beat](#)
[Urban Design](#)

Essential Standards:

Music 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.A, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.A, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.A, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.A
Social Studies 3.3, 4.14, 6.1, 6.7

Key Vocabulary:

Commission
Composer's Intent
Movement
Symphony

To the Teacher

Brian Raphael Nabors' *Letters From Birmingham* (2022) was commissioned by the Alabama Symphony Orchestra for the 2022-2023 season. According to Dr. Nabors, the piece was written to "pay homage to my hometown...to encapsulate the history, growth, and hope of Birmingham". While this lesson will focus on the inspiration the composer drew from Birmingham, the same ideas can be applied to any person's hometown.

Introduction

Ask the students what makes their hometown special. Use R-1 to create a list, individually or as a class, of reasons why their hometown is special. Have the student share their lists and discuss.

Lesson Sequence

1. Tell the students that they will be learning about a piece of music that was commissioned by the Alabama Symphony. Explain to the students that when new music is created for a symphony or other professional music group often someone commissions the piece of music. A **commissioned** piece of music is a piece that someone or an organizations pays a composer to write for a specific ensemble or purpose.
2. Show the students R-2. Tell the students that Dr. Brian Raphael Nabors was commissioned by the Alabama Symphony to write a piece of music. Ask the student to read the facts on R-2. Discuss the facts presented on R-2. Ask the students if any of the facts make them want to know more about Dr. Nabors. Ask the students if they are familiar with any of the places or organizations mentioned in Dr. Nabors' biography.
3. Tell the students that they are going to learn about the piece Dr. Nabors wrote for the Alabama Symphony, *Letters From Birmingham*. Show the students R-3; this resource has a basic outline of *Letters From Birmingham* in pictures. Ask the students If they recognize any of the pictures used in the graphic. Explain to the students that the pictures are different places, organizations, or important things about Birmingham. Ask the students if there are other places they would add to the graphic.
4. Show the students the video [Brian Nabors - What Inspires your music?](#) (0:08 - 0:55). Ask the students if they listen to any of the music that inspires Dr. Nabors. Explain to the

students that when a composer writes a piece of music they draw upon their experiences, their education, and their likes and dislikes. Refer back to R-3. Tell the student that the the places used in the graphic for R-3 are all places that inspired Dr. Nabors. Dr. Nabors wrote for the Alabama Symphony is *Letters From Birmingham*.

5. Tell the students that when Dr. Nabors wrote *Letters From Birmingham*, he wanted to “pay homage to my hometown...to encapsulate the history, growth, and hope of Birmingham.” Ask the student why they think the places pictured in R-3 inspires Dr. Nabors’ *Letters from Birmingham*?
6. Explain to the students that *Letters From Birmingham* is a **Symphony**. A symphony is a large work for orchestra divided into four **movements**. Each movement is its own piece of music with its own themes and form. All of the movements together make up the symphony. Refer back to R-3. Ask the students what the four movements of *Letters From Birmingham* represent. Ask the students to hypothesize what each movement would sound like and what the tempo and dynamics would be for each of the individual movements.
7. Explain to the students that when a composer writes a piece of music they are often trying to communicate certain thoughts, feelings, and experiences to audiences. This is called **composer’s intent**. Ask the students what they think Dr. Nabors’ intent is for each movement. Discuss with the students that Dr. Nabors was born in 1991. Many of the events and places he composed about happened before he was born. Ask the students how they think he learned about each of the events or places to be inspired to compose the symphony.
8. Composers must also plan the structure of their piece. Show the students the video [Brian Nabors Down Beat](#). In this video, Dr. Nabors will show them his “composer’s lair” Discuss how they think his work environment influences his composition process. Notice that during part of the video Dr. Nabors discusses sketching his music. Explain to the students that composers will sketch an outline of their work before they start composing. Sometimes these sketches will be simple melodies, rhythms, or other ideas.
9. Explain to the students that often when composers write about historical events or places they need to do research. Research could be interviewing people that were alive during the time period, reading books, looking at pictures, or visiting places.
10. Show the students R-4. Tell the student that they are going to research Birmingham in the past through vintage postcards. Discuss what they see in the postcard on R-4. Use a cellphone, iPad, or computer to scan the large QR code on R-4. Use Google VR to explore the same intersection in Birmingham in 2023. What do they notice? Compare and contrast the postcard and the intersection today. Ask the students how they think composer’s intent would change if Dr. Nabors composed a piece about Birmingham based on the postcard versus the Google VR view.

Conclusion

Show the students R-5. Complete the chart as a class. Ask the student to hypothesize creating a piece of music based on their hometown. Ask the students to select one place, person, or event in each category to form the movements for their piece. If time allows on another class meeting or for outside homework have the student use [Chrome Song Maker](#) to create a short movement for their work.

Extension

1. Another famous letter written in Birmingham was Dr. Martin Luther King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. Have the students make a connection between Mvt. III - *March*, and Dr. King’s Letter. Have the students brainstorm if they think Dr. Nabors is trying to make a connection to Dr. King’s letter when he titled his piece *Letters From Birmingham*.
2. Show the students this video on [Urban Design](#). Have the students discuss how urban planing and compositional planning are similar. As a class or in groups have the students design a city that could be used as the basis for a future composition. This could be considered a composers sketch.

3. There have been several pieces of music and songs written about Birmingham and Alabama. As a class make a playlist. Listen to a few of the songs and discuss the composer's intent of each piece or song.

What makes your hometown special?



- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



Dr. Brian Raphael Nabors



Born in Birmingham, AL in 1991



Graduated from Huffman High School in 2009



Graduated from Samford University and University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM)



Teaches composition at Louisiana State University



Church musician and pianist



Has written music for several major orchestras including the Alabama Symphony

Letters From



I. Sloss



II. Tuxedo Junction



III. March



IV. The Magic City

Compare and Contrast

19TH STREET LOOKING NORTH FROM 1ST AVENUE, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.



- (1) Look at the postcard. What do you notice?
- (2) Scan the QR code. Explore the same street today. What do you notice?
- (3) Compare and contrast 19th Street in the 1920s to today.



Scan this QR code to see other postcards from the Alabama Archives. They show scenes in Birmingham from the 1900s to the 1990s.

Favorite food?



Favorite famous person?

Favorite landmark?

What do you love about your city?

Favorite park?

The Firebird Suite (1919): IV. Infernal Dance

Essential Question:

How do composers create tension in the music they write?

Essential Standards:

Music 3.1, 3.10, 3.11, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.A, 4.1, 4.10, 4.11, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.A, 5.1, 5.10, 5.11, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.A, 6.1, 6.10, 6.11, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.A
English Language Arts 3.22

Lesson Objectives:

Students will identify a syncopated pattern used throughout *Infernal Dance*.
Students will identify the use of syncopation and dynamics to create tension in the *Infernal Dance*.

Key Vocabulary:

Expressive Elements
Dynamics
Folk Tale
Sforzando
Suite
Syncopation

Essential Resources:

R-6, R-7, R-8
Story of the [Firebird](#)
[YouTube Symphony - The Firebird Suite \(1919\): IV Infernal Dance](#)

To the Teacher

The Firebird has captivated audiences since it was premiered in 1910 at the Paris ballet. The ballet was so popular with audiences that Stravinsky composed three concert suites (1911, 1919, 1945) based on the music. This lesson plan will focus on Stravinsky's use of dynamics and the syncopated opening figure that recurs throughout the piece.

Introduction

Ask the students to think about their favorite fairy tale. Who is the main character? What is the plot? Where and when is the fairy tale located? After discussing favorite fairy tales with the students tell them they are going to hear a piece of music that was based on a Russian **Folk Tale**. A folk tale is a story that is passed down through time from person to person. Many of the fairy tales we know started as folk tales. When the stories were written down, they became fairy tales. Show the student the story of the [Firebird](#).

Lesson Sequence

1. Explain to the students that composers find inspiration for their musical compositions from a variety of places. Igor Stravinsky originally wrote the music for the *Firebird* in 1910 for a ballet. The ballet was so popular that Stravinsky decided to arrange the music into a **suite**. Musical suites are individual instrumental pieces or movements of music that together are based on a theme or story. Explain to the student that they will be hearing *The Firebird Suite, Movement IV Infernal Dance*.
2. Explain to the students that the 4th Movement of the *Firebird* is the part story when the Prince is trapped by a wizard and his evil creatures. Earlier in the story, the Prince saved the Firebird and was given a magic feather. The Prince uses the magic feather to summon the Firebird. The Firebird makes the wizard and his evil creatures dance an infernal dance until they are exhausted. The Prince is then able to defeat the sorcerer and free his kingdom.
3. Listen to the beginning section of the *Infernal Dance* (0:23-1:43). Ask the students what is their first impression of the music. If at all possible, insist that the students use music

terminology to discuss what they heard in the clip. Ask the students if the music sounded calm or tense.

4. Explain to the students that composers can create tension in several different ways. One way a composer can create tension by using the expressive elements (tempo, dynamics, articulation). Ask the students if they think Stravinsky used any of the expressive elements to create tension. Another way composers can create tension is by manipulating the meter and/or rhythm. Ask the students if they think Stravinsky used rhythm to create tension.
5. Show the students R-6. Explain to the students that Stravinsky used syncopation to create tension. **Syncopation** is the shifting of the rhythmic emphasis from the down beat to the upbeats. Teach the students the firebird motive in R-6. Have the students try to keep a steady beat as they speak “Look for the Firebird”. Ask the students if it was difficult to keep a steady beat while they spoke the rhythm. Split the class into two groups - have one group count 1-2-3, while the other group of students speak “Look for the Firebird”. It might be helpful to make copies of R-6 for the students to tap the steady beat on the hearts as they speak the rhythm.
6. Show the students R-7. Teach the students the melodic figure. Listen to 0:23-0:46 of *Infernal Dance*. Have the students sing the firebird motive as they listen to the clip. Tell the students that after this moment in the music Stravinsky continues to use the syncopated figure. However, in later occurrences of the syncopated pattern, Stravinsky will only use one (Look for the Firebird) or two (Look for the Firebird. Look for the Firebird) instead of all three. Listen again from 0:23 to 1:43. Ask the students to count all the times they hear the pattern “Look for the Firebird”. (15 times)
7. Remind students that another way composers can create tension is through the expressive elements. **Expressive Elements** in music are articulation, dynamics, and tempo. Tell the students that they are going to examine the dynamics used in the *Infernal Dance*. Show the students R-8. Tell the students that Stravinsky used a dynamic marking called **Sforzando (sfz)** at the beginning of the *Infernal Dance*. When a note of music is marked Sforzando, it means to make a sudden accent on the note or chord. Sforzando translates as “suddenly with force”. Listen to 0:23-1:04 of *Infernal Dance* and ask the students to count the number of times they hear Sforzando used. (7 times).
8. Look at R-8 again. Ask the students if there are any other dynamic markings on the page they do not recognize. Review the dynamic symbols with the students. Listen to the entire *Infernal Dance* (0:23-4:23). Have the students use R-8 to track the number of times they hear changes in dynamics. The students can either complete this as a class or make copies of R-8 for each student. Have the students make a tally mark under each dynamic marking when they think a dynamic is used in the *Infernal Dance*. Have the students compare their answers.

Conclusion

Brian Nabors chose *Infernal Dance* to be performed for the 2023-2024 Young People’s Concert. As a class hypothesize why you think the *Infernal Dance* inspires Dr. Nabors. Do you think there might be a connection between the *Infernal Dance* and Birmingham? Do you think the *Infernal Dance* could represent Sloss Furnace and the Iron Industry? Write your answers down and bring them to the concert. When Dr. Nabors discusses the *Infernal Dance* see if your hypothesis was correct.

Extension

1. Watch *The Firebird* sequence from Disney’s *Fantasia 2000*. Compare and contrast the original Firebird fairy tale to the *Fantasia 2000* version. How does the role of the firebird change between the two stories? Does the use of animation help you understand the music?
2. Research folk tales or myths from Alabama. Compose a melody for a character from the folk tale or myth you researched. Describe your creative process and your intent when you composed your melody. Will you create tension? If so, how will you create tension?



Suite from the Firebird

1919 version

Mvt IV - The Infernal Dance

Look *mf* for the ____ Fi - re-bird. Look for the ____ Fi - re-bird. Look for the ____ Fi - re-bird.

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3



Suite from the Firebird

1919 version

Mvt IV - The Infernal Dance

$\text{♩} = 168$



Look for the ____ Fi - re-bird. Look for the ____ Fi - re-bird. Look for the ____ Fi - re-bird.

mf

Suite from the Firebird

Mvt IV - The Infernal Dance



sfz



pp



p



mp



mf



f



ff



Romanian Folk Dances (1917)

Essential Question:

How can the traditional music of a culture be used in classical music?

Essential Standards:

Music 3.1, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.A, 4.1, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.A, 5.1, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.A, 6.1 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.A

Lesson Objectives:

Students will identify the form of selected movements from *Romanian Folk Dances*. Students will explore the ways folk songs were collected and used in a piece of music.

Key Vocabulary:

Ethnomusicologist
Fiddle Tune
Folk Song
Form
Meter

Essential Resources:

R-9, R-10, R-11
Bartók Field Recording of Romanian Folk Dances
Romanian Dances by the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra
Datina Folk Ensemble

To the Teacher

Romanian Folk Dances (sometimes titled *Rumanian Folk Dances*) was composed as a suite of six short piano pieces by Béla Bartók in 1915. The piece was made up of seven short fiddle or shepherd's pipe tunes that Bartók collected and recorded in the Transylvania region of Romania. In 1917 he orchestrated the piece for small ensemble. Some recordings of the piece will show six movements and some will show seven. Movement six and seven are short and usually performed *attacca* - without break. This lesson plan will focus on Movement I (*Jocul cu bâță*; Stick Dance), Movement V (*Poarga Românească*; Romanian Polka), and Movement VI and VII (*Mărunțel*; Fast Dance). Each of these movements could be taught as short mini lessons.

Introduction

Ask the students if they collect anything. Discuss their answers. Show the student R-11. Discuss the pictures on the resource. Ask the students what they think is being collected in the last picture. Discuss the students answers. Tell the students that some people collect music of other cultures. These people are called **Ethnomusicologists**. Tell the students that they will listen to short pieces from a suite of music by Béla Bartók. The main melodies in each of the movements were collected in Romania by Bartók.

Lesson Sequence

1. Explain to the students that Ethnomusicologists have collected music from cultures all over the world. Béla Bartók and his friend and colleague Zoltan Kodály were both interested in learning about native music from Romania and Hungary. They traveled all over both countries collecting songs, fiddle tunes, and other music to use in their compositions and teaching materials for children. Ethnomusicologists either write down the music they hear or they use recording devices to capture a person making music. Explain to the students that the woman in R-9 is singing a song to Bartók and he is capturing her singing on an Edison phonograph machine. Explain that an Edison phonograph machine is like a record player, but it can record sound.
2. Tell the students that they are going to hear an actual recording of a Fiddle Tune Bartók collected in Romania. Play Bartók Field Recording of Romanian Folk Dances from 0:00-0:26. Discuss with the students about the sound quality of the recording. Explain to

the students that these recordings are over 100 years old. Ethnomusicologists today have much better sound equipment than Bartók did in the early 1900s! Tell the students that Bartók used this **Fiddle Tune** he collected as the basis of the first movement of Romanian Folk Dances. A fiddle tune is a tune, usually with two sections and in duple meter, played on a fiddle. Often fiddle tunes were used to accompany dancing. A fiddle is the term used for violins played in folk and country music.

3. Play the first movement of *Romanian Dances* by the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra (0:06-0:38). Ask the students if they recognize the main melody. Discuss with the students how Bartók added to the tune to create a piece of music. Ask the students what they think he added to the fiddle tune. Show the students R-10. Explain to the students that the first movement of *Romanian Dances* is based on a fiddle tune called Stick Dance. There are two main sections to the melody. Explain that the listening guide has a picture of a violin and a clarinet because in some performances of this piece the clarinet plays the melody with the violins.
4. Listen to the A section of *Romanian Dances Movement I* (0:06-0:38). Use R-10 to help guide the students' listening. Listen to the B section of *Romanian Dances Movement I* (0:39-1:03). Use R-10 to help guide the students' listening. Discuss with the students the similarities and differences in the melody of A and B. Notice that the B section is twice as long as the A section.
5. Listen to the entire *Romanian Dances Movement I* (0:06-1:33). Have the students use the listening guide (R-10) to help guide their listening. Ask the students what kind of dance they think would accompany the fiddle tune used in Stick Dance. Show the students the Datina Folk Ensemble's performance of Stick Dance (0:04-1:47). Discuss with the students their impressions of the piece after seeing the dance. Did the dance help their understanding of the piece?
6. Tell the students that they are going to listen to Movement V of *Romanian Dances* (5:05-5:39). Discuss with the students the differences between Movement V and Movement I (the tempo is faster in Movement V, Movement V is shorter than Movement I). Explain to the students that Movement V is titled Romanian Polka. The interesting thing about this movement is that the meter shifts from two to three. **Meter** is the grouping of beats into groups duple (two) or triple. Show the student R-11. Demonstrate how to read the listening guide shifting between duple and triple meters. Point out to the students how the repeat signs are used in two sections and also the half note on the third line.
7. Using R-11, listen to the Movement V of *Romanian Dances* (5:05-5:39). Have the students silently count the groupings of two and three. If at all possible, make copies of R-11 so the students can tap the meter as they listen. If it is not possible to make individual copies of R-11, display R-11 and have the teacher or a student tap the listening map that is displayed.
8. Explain to the students that when we think of dances, we usually don't think of dances switching between meters of two and three. Show the students Datina Folk Ensemble's performance of Romanian Polka (6:01-6:44). Discuss how the dancers were able to move between the shifting meters.
9. As a class or in groups create a simple movement for duple and a simple movement for triple. Listen to Movement V of *Romanian Dances* (5:05-5:39) again and try to perform your simple movements as you listen. You might want to have a student be the meter keeper and call out the meter (1-2; 1-2-3) while the other students move. Discuss the movements created by the students and offer feedback.

Conclusion

Movements V, VI, and VII are performed attacca (without break). Movements VI and VII are made up of two different fiddle tunes. Watch the Datina Folk Ensemble's performance of Movement VI and VII (Mărunțel; Fast Dance). Discuss the performance with the students. Have the students work as a class to create a listening guide based upon what they saw and heard in the Datina Folk Ensemble's performance. Use the listening guide the students created to watch the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra's performance of *Romanian Dances* Movement VI and VII (5:39-6:33).

Extension

1. The first dance is titled Jocul cu băță or Stick Dance. Have the students use R-10 to create a stick dance with rhythm sticks. The dance should demonstrate the change in melody between the A and B sections. Share the stick dances with the class and provide feedback to each group.
2. The fiddle has been an important instrument played throughout Alabama's history. Research and learn about Alabama fiddlers such as Charlie Stripling and Vearl Cicero, string bands such as The Flat Creek Boys, and Alabama Fiddlers Conventions. Share what you learned in class.

DO YOU COLLECT ANYTHING?



RUMANAIAN FOLK DANCES

I. JOC CU BÂTĂ



Allegro moderato ♩ = 104

A



B





RUMANAIAN FOLK DANCES

V. POARGA ROMÂNEASCĂ

INTRODUCTION



3 TIMES



4 TIMES



Letters From Birmingham: Mvt. III - March

Essential Question:

How can a song lead a movement?

Essential Standards:

Music 3.1, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.A, 4.1, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.A, 5.1, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.A, 6.1, 6.10, 6.11, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.A
Social Studies 3.3, 4.14, 6.1, 6.7

Lesson Objectives:

Students will learn the historical significance of *We Shall Overcome*.
Students will discuss the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham.
Students will identify motives used in a piece of music.

Key Vocabulary:

Augmentation
Diminuendo
Imitation
Protest Song
Motive

Essential Resources:

R-3, R-12, R-13, R-14, R-15, R-16, R-17
Joan Baez performing We Shall Overcome at the March on Washington in 1963
Atlanta History Museum video - "Birmingham Children's March"
Atlanta History Museum - Sing With Us

To the Teacher

We Shall Overcome is a gift of hope, strength, and courage to the world from America. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr spoke at the 25th anniversary of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee in 1957. He heard Pete Seeger sing *We Shall Overcome* and was immediately taken back by the song's simple message. *We Shall Overcome* become the anthem of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Like most folk songs, the history of the song is not straightforward. This lesson plan can be taught in one setting or you can teach the **Introduction** and **Lesson Sequence 1- 3** before the Young Person's Concert and teach **Lesson Sequence 4-8** after the Young Person's Concert.

Introduction

Show the students R-12. Discuss the pictures with the students and answer the questions provided on R-12. Show the students the video of Joan Baez performing We Shall Overcome at the March on Washington in 1963. Ask the students if they know the connection between pictures in R-12 and the video. Tell the students that the pictures on R-12 are from the 1963 "Birmingham Children's March". During the 1963 Children's March, the song *We Shall Overcome* was a powerful tool that gave strength to the the Civil Rights Movement.

Lesson Sequence

1. Show the students the Atlanta History Museum video - "Birmingham Children's March". This video displays images of the actual 1963 Children's March. Some of these images may be upsetting, please preview the video. If you are uncomfortable showing the video to your students, please go to Lesson Sequence 2. Ask the students why they think signing helped the movement. If the children hadn't sang *We Shall Overcome*, would they have had the same impact? Ask the students if there are any songs that they sing or listen to when they are scared or nervous. Allow the students to share their answers. Ask the student why the songs mentioned before give them strength and courage.

2. Tell the students that *We Shall Overcome* is a **Protest Song**. Ask the students what they think is meant by the term protest song. Explain to the students that a protest song is a song that is used to help bring about social change. If you watched the video in Lesson Sequence 1, refer to examples provided in the video. If your library has *We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song* by Debbie Levy (ISBN 978-1423119548) you may want to read it now.
3. Teach the students the song *We Shall Overcome* using R-13 (simple) or R-14 (advanced). We have provided a melody line for the first verse and also chords for ukulele on R-13 and R-14. You may want to research and teach the additional verses of the song. In addition, you could use this video by the [Atlanta History Museum - Sing With Us](#) to learn *We Shall Overcome*.
4. Show the students R-3. Review with the students the four movements of Brian Nabors' *Letters From Birmingham*. Ask the students why they think Dr. Nabors named the third movement of *Letters From Birmingham* "March". Explain to the students that Dr. Nabors wanted to "encapsulate the history, growth, and hope of Birmingham" in *Letters to Birmingham*. Ask the students based upon what you have learned, why is March important to Birmingham?
5. Explain to the students that Dr. Nabors uses *We Shall Overcome* throughout the third movement of *Letters From Birmingham*. Instead of using the entire song he uses portions of the melody of *We Shall Overcome* as **motives**. A motive is a small identifiable melodic idea in music. A motive is often repeated through a composition. Tell the students that Dr. Nabors uses motives from *We Shall Overcome* 6 times in the third movement of *Letters From Birmingham*. Show the students R-15 and discuss the instruments that play the motives.
6. Explain to the students that when a composer creates a motive from an existing melody they can present the motive in different ways. Sometimes composers create a short direct quotes of the melody. Sometimes the composer will alter the melody or alter the rhythm. Show the students R-16 and R-17. Some of the motives are direct quotes (presented exactly as the original melody, some motives are examples of **imitation** (two voices copying or echoing each other), and some motives demonstrate rhythmic **augmentation** (increasing the rhythm or stretching the rhythm out) and **diminuendo** (decreasing the rhythm or shortening the rhythmic value of the example).
7. Go through each of the motives on R-16 and R-17. Discuss with the students which motive technique they think Dr. Nabors used in each example. 1 - exact restatement, 2 - augmentation and slight alteration in the second sequence, 3 - diminuendo and imitation, 4 - augmentation, 5 - augmentation, and 6 - augmentation and imitation.

Conclusion

Use R-13 or R-14 to sing *We Shall Overcome* again. Have the students work in groups to create new verses to the song. Also, challenge the students to create motives based upon their new verses. Tell the student not to worry about writing down their motives, they can use their voice to sing their motives. Have the students explain what motive technique they used in their creative process. Have the students share their motives and provide feedback.

Extension

1. In Mvt. III of *Letters From Birmingham*, Dr. Nabors has the trumpets quote the melody of *Oh Freedom* for nine measures. Have the students explore the history *Oh Freedom* and compare and contrast the history and significance of the song to *We Shall Overcome*.
2. Ask the students if they know of any other Civil Rights songs. Have the students make a list of reasons why Dr. Nabors chose *We Shall Overcome* for the third movement of *Letters for Birmingham*. Bring the students' list to the Young Person's Concert. Hopefully, Dr. Nabors will share his reasons why he decided to use *We Shall Overcome* as the basis of Mvt III - *March!*

3. The Civil Rights movement can seem like a long time ago to students. Have the students investigate if they know any adults that were participants in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s in Alabama. Have the students ask their adults if they remember any music from the Civil Rights era. Share the student's answers in class.

Letters From



I. Sloss



II. Tuxedo Junction



III. March



IV. The Magic City



What do you see?

- (1) What do you think is happening in these pictures?
- (2) What do you think people are feeling in these pictures?
- (3) What do you wonder about these pictures?



We Shall Overcome

Gospel
Protest Song

C F C C F C C F

We shall o - ver come, _____ We shall o - ver come, _____ We shall o - ver

Am D7 G F C

come some day; Oh, _____ deep in my heart _____

F Am C F C G C

I do be - lieve, - We shall o - ver come some day.

C **F** **Am** **D7** **G**

Ukulele chord diagrams for C, F, Am, D7, and G. Each diagram shows a 4-string ukulele fretboard with fingerings indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3.

Photos of 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL
from the Library of Congress.

We Shall Overcome

Gospel
Protest Song

C F C C F C C F G7

We shall o - ver come, _____ We shall o - ver come, _____ We shall o - ver

Am D7 G7 F C

come some day; _____ Oh, _____ deep in my heart _____

F Am C F C G7 C

I do be - lieve, - - - We shall o - ver come some day.

C **F** **Am** **D7** **G7**

Ukulele chord diagrams for C, F, Am, D7, and G7. Each diagram shows a 4-string ukulele fretboard with fingerings indicated by yellow circles and numbers 1, 2, 3.

Photos of 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL
from the Library of Congress.

Motive

The smallest identifiable melodic idea in music.
A motive is often repeated throughout a composition.

1



2



3



4



5



6



Motive

The smallest identifiable melodic idea in music.
A motive is often repeated throughout a composition.

1



2



3



Motive

The smallest identifiable melodic idea in music.
A motive is often repeated throughout a composition.

4



We shall o - ver come



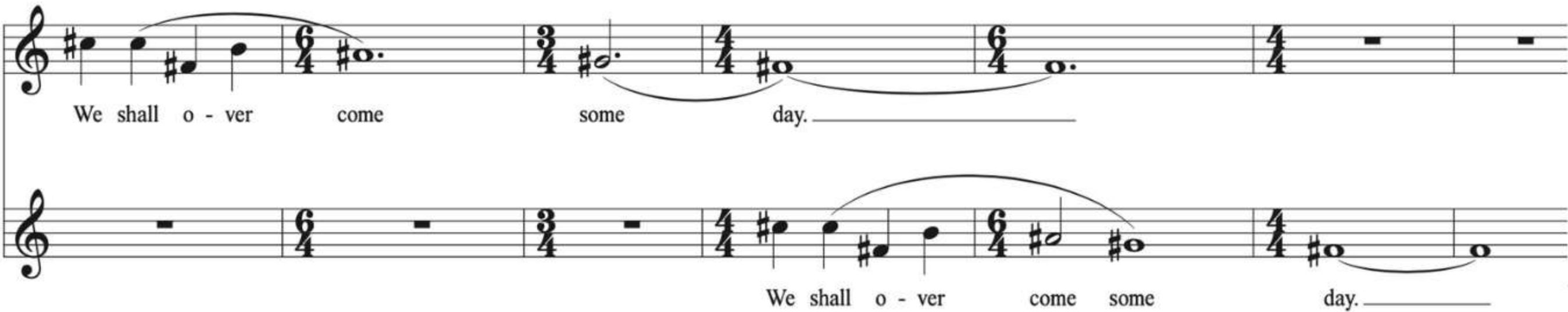
5




We shall o - ver come some day



6



We shall o - ver come some day




Letters From Birmingham: Mvt. I - Sloss

Essential Question:

How does a composer write music to represent a place?

Essential Standards:

Music 3.1, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 3.A, 4.1, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.A, 5.1, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.A, 6.1, 6.10, 6.11, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.A
Social Studies 3.3, 4.14, 6.1, 6.7

Lesson Objectives:

Students will learn about the steel industry and Sloss Furnace in Birmingham.
Students will learn about program music.
Students will create a rondo based on natural resources need to make steel and Sloss Furnace.

Key Vocabulary:

Program Music
Rondo
Steel Mill

Essential Resources:

R-3, R-18, R-19, R-20, R-21, R-22
Yellowhammer History Hunt: Sloss Furnace
Tapping of a Blast Furnace

To the Teacher

The steel industry shaped Birmingham into the modern city it is today. Many people are surprised to learn that Birmingham and not Atlanta was originally supposed to be the hub of the South. Brian Raphael Nabors encapsulates the energy of a working steel mill in the first movement of *Letters From Birmingham*. The movement is named for Sloss Furnace, the historic pig-iron blast furnace that fueled the steel making industry in Birmingham for almost 100 years.

Introduction

Show the students R-18. Answer the questions on the graphic organizer. Tell the students that they will be learning about the iron industry and a historic iron mill in Birmingham. Explain that Sloss Furnace inspired the first movement of Brian Nabors' *Letters From Birmingham*.

Lesson Sequence

1. Ask the students if they know about the importance of Sloss Furnace to Birmingham's history. Show them this video: Yellowhammer History Hunt: Sloss Furnace. Ask the students to think about and discuss what they learned in the video. There is a fantastic teacher's guide from Sloss Furnace that explains the steel making process that you might want to review. In addition, this video Blast Furnace provides a great explanation of the steel making process.
2. Explain to the students that steel was important to Birmingham's growth during the 1870s to the 1960s. In the 1870s after the Civil War, railroad expansion and the presence of three important natural materials found in Birmingham fueled an iron boom. Show the students R-19. Discuss with the students that the Birmingham area was the only place in the United States where coal, iron ore, and limestone were readily available. A furnace was needed to heat the natural materials enough to produce steel. Once Sloss Furnace was built, Birmingham had the resources, the furnace, and the railroad to transport the steel around the country. This helped Birmingham grow into an industrial hub and create jobs. The

population of Birmingham grew quickly and this is the reason Birmingham has the nickname “The Magic City”.

3. Review R-3 with the students. Brainstorm with the students why they think Brian Nabors chose for the first movement of *Letters From Birmingham* to be called Sloss. Ask the students if they think it was purposeful of Dr. Nabors to bookend the movements of *Letters to Birmingham* with Sloss and the Magic City.
4. Explain to the students that composers often write music to purposefully evoke thoughts or convey the impression of events, people or places. This type of music is called **Program Music**. Read to the students the program notes for Sloss: “Named after the most prominent pig-iron blast furnace in the city, Sloss turns the orchestra into a working steel factory. Clanging in the percussion section are bells and whistles inspired by the sounds of metal that fueled the beginning of one of the largest steel producing entities in the country.” Ask the students if they think Dr. Nabors’ intention was to write Mvt. I Sloss as program music.
5. Show the students this video of [Tapping of a Blast Furnace](#). Tell the students to list all the sounds they hear while they watch the video. After the video is over discuss the sounds they identified.
6. Explain to the students that Dr. Nabors wrote instrumental parts to mimic and represent the sounds that might be heard in Sloss Furnace. For instance, the percussion section uses an anvil or brake drum, drum set, and whistle throughout the piece. Whistles were important in mills because they signaled the start and end of work sessions, lunch time, and when work needed to stop. The brake drum and anvil is used to represent all the metallic sounds in the blast furnace.
7. Tell the students they are going to compose a piece of music about Sloss Furnace. Explain to the students that they will create a **Rondo**. A rondo is a musical form that begins with a refrain (an A section) that alternates with episodes (B, C, D, etc). Show the students R-20 (this is the A section of the Sloss Rondo they will create). Teach the students the words to the A section of Sloss Rondo. Practice the A section.
8. Once the students are comfortable with the A section, tell them they are going to work in groups to create a 16 beat section that will alternate with the A Sections to create the rondo. Show the students R-22. The students will use the cards on R-22 to create an 8 beat rhythm sentence. For your reference, R-21 shows the musical notation for the A section and episode (B, C, D, etc.) sections. The students should perform the body percussion pattern (stamp-stamp pat 𐇧 𐇧, stamp-stamp clap 𐇧 𐇧) one time before adding their rhythm sentence to the body percussion pattern. This will make each episode section 16 beats. You may want to have all students perform the body percussion pattern for every group’s episode section.

Conclusion

As a class perform the rondo composition. Provide feedback to each group about their rhythm sentences for their episode sections. Discuss with the students if they think they should transfer their rhythm sentences to instruments. Brainstorm what instruments could help represent the sounds of Sloss Furnace. Perform the Sloss Rondo again, but with instruments performing the rhythm sentence during the episode parts.

Extension

1. Many towns in the Birmingham metro area have connections to the steel industry. For instance, Bessemer was originally named Brooklyn. However the city was renamed for Sir Henry Bessemer who developed the Bessemer process for steel making. Research locations (quarries, towns, businesses, etc.) around Birmingham to find other connections to steel making.
2. Research the Vulcan Statue on Red Mountain to discover its connections to the steel industry. Create a presentation with the information you gathered.

3. Brian Raphael Nabors writes strong accented notes on the down beat of many in parts of the piece *S/oss*. Many work songs have been created to help workers move together in order to accomplish a job. On sailing ships sailors would sing songs with strong down beats to hoist the sails. In Alabama there were railroad workers called Gandy Dancers that sang as they were lining track. Research the Gandy Dancers in the Encyclopedia of Alabama and listen to a traditional Gandy Dancer call.

Letters From



I. Sloss



II. Tuxedo Junction



III. March



IV. The Magic City

What do you see?

- (1) Have you ever seen any of these places?
- (2) What do you think is made here?
- (3) What do you think it would be like to work here?



Three Natural Resources needed to make steel

Coal



Iron Ore



Limestone





Sloss Rondo



Once in good ole Alabama,
Steel was made in Birmingham.
All the resources were here
Sloss' Furnace gave the flare.





Sloss Rondo

Lyda

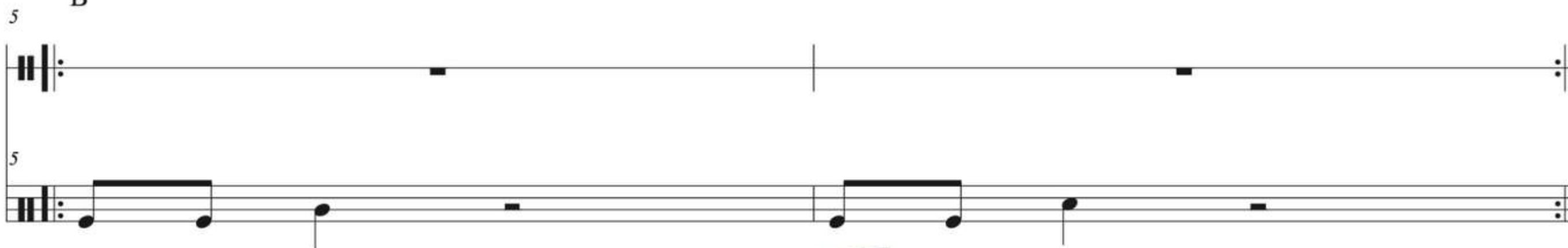


A



Once in good ole A - la - bam', Steel was made in Bir - ming - ham. All the re - sour - ces were here, Sl - oss' furn - ance gave the flare!

B



Sloss Rondo



Coal



Limestone



Blast Furnace



Iron Ore



Magic City



Use these cards to create an
8 beat rhythm pattern.

Submit Student Work from these Lessons to the ASO!

We'd love to see what your students have created!

to accompany all lessons

Instructions: Complete the information below, enclose student work, and mail to:

Education Department
Alabama Symphony Orchestra
3621 6th Avenue South
Birmingham, AL, 35222

School, Group, or Family name: _____

Address: _____

Contact name: _____

Contact email: _____

Phone: _____

Any Comments?

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Alabama Symphony Orchestra
Attn: Education
3621 Sixth Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35222

Date:

Dear Alabama Symphony Orchestra,

I just came to see a Young People's Concert called _____.

One thing I liked about the concert was _____

_____.

My favorite piece of music you played was _____

_____.

Something new that I learned was _____

_____.

If I could play an instrument in the orchestra, I would play the _____.

Sincerely,

Name _____

Address _____
