

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

Spencer Bohren's *Down the Dirt Road Blues* illustrates the evolution of one song over time and geography. Beginning with a simple *a capella* melody describing a personal situation, the song develops as it is shared with other musicians over 130 years (illustrating Colorado Content Standards 4 and 5 for Music at all grade levels). In a one-hour performance, teachers can expect the following cultural, societal, and historical events to be included as they form the song's changes:

1. slave quarters culture
2. the end of slavery
3. development of various musical instruments, including the banjo, the bottle-neck guitar on the metal-bodied resophonic guitar, washtub bass, washboard percussion, electric guitar
4. integration on Beale Street in Memphis as a reaction to musical development
5. commerce between Kentucky and Memphis, which carries the song eastward
6. Sundown law
7. the genesis of popular country music
8. the advent of electric blues and the guitar solo
9. the birth of rock 'n' roll
10. the radio's impact on popular music
11. Payola and its influence on American music
12. integration on the radio airwaves
13. migration of American music to England and back again
14. the Folk Movement and its influence in American music

Appropriate audience attention is important, as the story is told as a music/storytelling performance (Standard 5).

Colorado Model Content Standards MUSIC

4. Students will listen to, analyze, evaluate, and describe music.
5. Students will relate music to various historical and cultural traditions.

STANDARD 4: Students will listen to, analyze, evaluate, and describe music.

RATIONALE

Music is a part of daily life. Students become educated consumers of music by learning to critically listen, describe, analyze, and evaluate music as an expressive art form. Critical listening and thinking skills learned through music are essential to a successful, comprehensive educational experience.

Grades K-4

In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes

- listening to and identifying simple forms;
- identifying contrasts of timbre in sound; and
- identifying elements and/or expressive qualities in music.

Grades 5-8

As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- identifying and describing simple forms;
- identifying contrasts in meter, rhythm, melody and timbre; and
- identifying and examining criteria for evaluating music performances and compositions.

Grades 9-12

As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- describing and comparing forms;
- describing and evaluating music performance using musical terminology; and
- explaining characteristics that distinguish musical styles.

STANDARD 5: Students will relate music to various historical and cultural traditions.

RATIONALE

Music is an important element of the historical and cultural record of humankind. Students, through the study of music, will develop an understanding and appreciation of various cultures and histories.

Grades K-4

In grades K-4, what students know and are able to do includes

- identifying how elements of music are used in examples from various cultures (*for example: rhythms found in the music of Africa and rap music from America show commonalities*); and
- identifying the roles of musicians in history and various cultures (*for example: Scott Joplin and Billie Holiday were representatives of the early jazz movement in America*); and
- demonstrating audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed (*for example: It is not appropriate to talk during an orchestra concert in contrast to its permissibility during a rock concert*).

Grades 5-8

As students in grades 5-8 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- describing how distinguishing elements of music are used in examples from various cultures (*for example: The rhythms present in many examples of Latin American music are derived from dance rhythms. Dance is an integral part of that culture*); and
- describing the roles of musicians throughout history and in various cultures (*for example: the Medieval European Minstrel served as a storyteller and a news broadcaster, as well as a musician. The American folk singer serves much the same function*).

Grades 9-12

As students in grades 9-12 extend their knowledge, what they know and are able to do includes

- identifying and explaining the features of a given musical work in its historical or cultural context (*for example: many African songs are constructed in the call and response form because they originally functioned as work songs. It was not necessary to read musical notation to learn, sing or enjoy this type of music*); and
- comparing and evaluating the roles of musicians throughout history and in various cultures (*for example: Haydn was able and willing to work under the system of royal patronage whereas Mozart would struggle with it and Beethoven would completely rebel against it due to the social influences exerted by the American and French revolutions*).