



Walton Arts Center

Performance Guide



Dan Zanes

Photo Credit: Dan Zanes

Join Grammy Award winner Dan Zanes and Haitian-American jazz vocalist Claudia Eliza to hear and learn folk and blues classics as well as original songs from their popular new songbook entitled Dan Zanes' House Party!: A Family Roots Music Treasury. This highly interactive, sing along show will be performed in a casual atmosphere designed to accommodate diverse audiences with a wide range of needs. Subversively educational, Dan and Claudia's music is homespun, joyful and sophisticated. The performance will include traditional music from the Ozarks featured in the University Folklore Collection housed in Special Collections at University of Arkansas.

Ideas for Curriculum Connections:

Fine Arts Standards Music: P.4.3.4, P.4.4.4; P.6.3.3, P.6.4.3; P.6.5.3; CRA.SL.1; R.7.6.1, R.7.7.1, R.7.8.1; R.7.5.3, R.7.6.3, R.7.7.3, R.7.8.3; R.8.3.1, R.8.4.1; R.8.6.1, R.8.7.1, R.8.8.1; CN.10.3.1, CN.10.4.1; CN.10.6.1, CN.10.7.1, CN.10.8.1; Cn.11.6.1, CN.11.7.1, CN.11.8.1, CN.11.6.2, CN.11.7.2, CN.11.8.2; P.6.MA.2; R.9.MA.1.

Music Appreciation: CR.1.MA.1, CR.1.MA.2, P.4.MA.1, P.6.MA.2, R.8.MA.2, R.8.MA.3, CN.11.MA.1, CN.11.MA.2, CN.11.MA.3, CN.11.MA.4.



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Dan and Claudia Zanes

For the past 15 years, Dan Zanes has toured the world with his band sharing handmade 21st Century social music with enthusiastic crowds of kids and kid sympathizers. In the 1980s Dan was a member of The Del Fuegos, a roots rock band who released several albums and toured heavily before disbanding in 1989. In 1994, he became a father and began trying to create music that he and his daughter could enjoy together as a shared experience. In 2000, Dan moved to Brooklyn and released *Rocket Ship Beach*, which became an immediate hit with families.

Claudia's desire to use music compassionately led her to the music therapy degree program at Berklee College of Music in Boston in 2005. While there, she worked with a spectrum of individuals through the life span – from children with special needs in public and private schools, orphans and youth in Nairobi, to frail and well-elders in adult day health programs. Claudia was not looking to add more to her already full schedule when she ended up at a dining room sing-along in Dan Zane's Brooklyn home. This chance Labor Day meeting in 2016 put her on a path from Boston to Brooklyn via the Kennedy Center and cities throughout the U.S. and Canada. All along the way, she's been combining performance and music therapy to create a new paradigm for joyful, inclusive, participatory performance.

In the midst of it all they were married in 2018!

About this Performance

Dan and Claudia will play an assortment of songs, from variations on popular folk and children's songs, to fun original songs that they have created. This performance will include traditional folk songs from the Ozarks featured in the University Folklore Collection housed in Special Collections at University of Arkansas.

Folk songs are songs whose authors are generally unknown, and they are sung in order to hand them down generation after generation. There are many views on the definition of a true folk song, but all agree that it is a song with a simple melody, and one that expresses the traditions and culture of the common people who pass it on. Folk songs sometimes describe historical events or daily life, are religious or political in nature, or can also be just for fun. Because folk songs are handed down orally, for instance, songs can be shortened or lengthened, and rhythms and notes are altered.

One of the songs Dan and Claudia will perform is *Skip To My Lou*. It is a song commonly taught in elementary PE classes but has roots in early American Christian communities. Over time, the word "loo," which is Scottish for "love," was changed to Lou. It started as an ice breaker for partners to meet each other during a time when dancing and flirting was generally not allowed for religious reasons. Couples would skip around a boy in the middle of the circle, clapping, singing and switching partners. As the song moved West, it evolved into a song commonly used in square dancing.

Learning Activities

Opening Discussion

Music is written for many different occasions and purposes. One particular class of music is called folk music, which is music that is written with a specific story or tale in mind. Sometimes the composers write their own story for the music, or write music for other peoples' stories. In this activity students will listen to a piece of music and then write or draw a story that fits with what happens in the music. For instance, if there is a big crashing sound, that could be someone falling down who was trying to dance.

Activity

1. Arrange the students into small groups.
2. Let the class listen to some Dan Zanes songs (available on Spotify).
3. Once they have heard the songs, each group will draw a series of pictures to tell the story of the song they chose.
4. Ask students to develop pictures that the music seems to tell, being as descriptive and detailed as possible. If they think the story is about a girl, what color is her dress? If the music is about a dance, where is the dance? is the room bright or dim? Are the people in dress clothes or street clothes?

5. After each group has finished their story pictures, have each presenter describe the group's story pictures to the class.
6. When each presenter has told their group's story, listen to the musical piece again.

Closing Discussion

What elements of the music influenced the students' decisions about the content of the story? How did students make compromises to decide on what to draw when each individual probably had different ideas about the what the music was "saying"?

Post Performance Learning Activity

Students will listen to a variety of music and design an appropriate dance presentation. This activity encourages students to appreciate, and examine different styles of music as well as create dance presentations that are specifically related to the music.

Dance Party

1. Play a piece of music and ask students to listen to it carefully, think about what it's about and how it makes them feel.
2. Play the music again and ask students to move to the music. If the music is fast, encourage them to move fast.
3. At the same time, ask students to show you how the music makes them feel. If it is happy, then there should be smiles on their faces.
4. Continue through the whole song.
5. Play another piece of music and repeat the thinking process. After the music is finished ask three or four students to come up to the front of the class.
6. Play the music again and ask them to dance to the music appropriately. This time instead of asking them how they should dance, point out how they are dancing, ie: "Oh, I see that Tammy is stomping her feet because the music is really loud and strong..."
7. Repeat the process until everyone has had a chance to dance in front of the class.



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Reflect and Assess

- Discussion/Writing Prompt - If you could change one thing about the performance, what would it be?
- Remembering the Performance through words - Who was your favorite song? Why? Did you already know your favorite or was it new to you?
- Remembering the Performance through art - What did the stage look like? What was Dan Zanes wearing? Where were the band members standing? Draw a picture showing and other images from the performance.

Learn More Online

Official website Dan and Claudia Zanes

www.danandclaudia.com/

The website of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. This center was created to “preserve and present American Folklife”.

lcweb.loc.gov/folklife/afc.html

A great site to find lyrics to children’s songs and nursery rhymes from around the world. All are arranged by continent, and then by individual countries.

www.mamalisa.com/

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Walton Arts Center

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Learning & Engagement

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