

Teacher Guide

Expanding the Classroom

Celtic Crossroads



presents the

Bank of America SchoolTime Series

About the Show

Celtic Crossroads is the culmination of many years of hard work and passion for traditional Irish music. The project was born in 2005 in Galway, the home of Irish music, on the west coast of Ireland. A group of seven musicians came together from across the country and abroad. Each of the artists is a very well-respected figure in his or her field, and the development of this show turned heads within the traditional music world.

Although young, all of the musicians are multi-award-winning, all-Ireland champions on several instruments. Each is very successful in his/her own right, so the formation of *Celtic Crossroads* marked the creation of an unprecedented “super-group.”

The show has been recognized across Ireland as one of the few shows Irish people are proud to call their own. *Celtic Crossroads* exuberantly topples all that came before it as the hugely energetic combination of musicians and dancers astonishes audiences with an impressive display of talent. With its unstoppable driving rhythms and breathtakingly exciting performances, *Celtic Crossroads* has been dubbed “the greatest show to come out of Ireland for decades.” The name *Celtic Crossroads* originates from a time in Ireland when neighboring communities met at the crossroads between towns and villages to socialize – long before the pub tradition began.

The first half of the show features more traditional, ancient and authentic styles of Irish music lovingly handed down from generation to generation and played on the same kinds of instruments used for centuries (e.g., harp, bodhrán and uilleann pipes). Traditional dances such as reels, jigs and polkas are included, as well as slower, more somber styles such as the air and slip-jig. This music has traditionally been played in pubs, dance halls, people’s living rooms, and at the crossroads between towns where the parties happened. Some other forms of European music that have influenced Irish music (such as the **Czardas** from Eastern Europe) are also explored.

The second portion of the program is still rooted in the Irish tradition, but examines some of the styles that have evolved out of Irish music such as bluegrass, Nova Scotian folk and others. When Irish people headed out into the world, they took their strong tradition and passion for music with them. This tradition has been mixed and influenced by many other forms of music throughout the world and has evolved into new forms of musical expression. Modern Ireland itself has also moved in new musical directions that will be shared with the audience.

Information courtesy of *Celtic Crossroads*

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Background Information

Music of Ireland

Irish music is a generic term for music created in various **genres** on the entire island of Ireland. Irish traditional music is the **indigenous** music of the island and remains vibrant today despite the forces of cultural **globalization**. Irish music has preserved many of its traditional aspects and has influenced other forms of music such as country and **roots music** in the U.S., which have in turn influenced modern rock. Irish music has occasionally been fused with rock 'n' roll, punk rock and other genres. Irish rock, popular and traditional fusion have all enjoyed international popularity in recent years, including groups from The Chieftains and the Irish Tenors to Enya, *Riverdance*, Van Morrison and U2.

Although solo performance is preferred in the folk tradition, bands and small **ensembles** have probably been a part of Irish music since at least the mid-19th century, although there is no unquestionable evidence confirming this. Irish traditional music has survived particularly well intact in part because Ireland was not a battleground in either of the world wars and in part because of the agricultural economy, which favors oral tradition.

The popularity of Irish traditional music in the U.S. has ebbed and flowed somewhat since the end of World War II, with revivals in interest sparked by The Clancy Brothers in 1959 and The Chieftains after that. Much of America's old-time music finds its roots in the music of Ireland, England and Scotland, thanks to immigrants to the U.S. from Great Britain.

Music for Singing

Modern Irish folk songs are written in English and are more likely to originate in cities and towns. Older songs are in Irish and of rural origin. **Sean-nós** ("in the old style") are unaccompanied vocals and are considered the ultimate expression of traditional singing, usually performed as solos, occasionally as duets. This type of singing is highly ornamented and the voice is toward the top of the range. The melody varies with each verse, although the words are of as much importance as the melody and the latter should not interfere with the lyrics. Some listeners unaccustomed to *sean-nós* singing may note a sound akin to Arabic or Indian music. Even non-*sean-nós* traditional singing (accompanied) uses patterns of ornamentation, tonal range and melodic freedom derived from the unaccompanied *sean-nós* form.

Information courtesy of *Celtic Crossroads*

Music for Dancing

Irish traditional music was intended primarily for dancing at celebrations such as weddings, saint's days and other observances. Irish dance has been widely exported abroad, and includes both social and performance dancing. Social dances may be **céilí** or **set dances**, both of which are usually danced in formations (sets) of couples, frequently with four couples to a square. Irish performance dance is referred to as **stepdance** (popularized by *Riverdance*), and is characterized by rapid leg movements while the body and arms are kept largely stationary. Competitive stepdance is usually done solo and involves very precise and rapid footwork.

Irish dance traditions most likely evolved in close association with Irish traditional music. Originating in Pre-Christian Ireland, later influences (especially the **Quadrille**) came from continental Europe. Traveling dance masters taught throughout Ireland as recently as the early 1900s. Traditional dances and tunes include reels, **hornpipes** and **jigs** as well as imported **mazurkas**, polkas and **highlands**. Jigs may be single jigs, slip jigs or hop jigs. Double and treble jigs are danced in hard shoes and light jigs are danced in soft shoes such as **ghillies** or slippers. The main differences among the various dance types are found in the time signature, tempo and rhythmic emphasis.

Revivals of Irish Music

Irish efforts to gain independence were closely linked to a revived interest in traditional Irish music at the turn of the 20th century. The formation of the Gaelic League in 1893 acted as a catalyst for Irish nationalism and interest in Irish culture. Church efforts at enforcing morality culminated in the Public Dance Halls Act in 1935. A license had to be obtained to hold a public music or dancing event, and these were frequently granted only to parish priests. "Jazz dancing" was discouraged and traditional music and dancing were forced back into the cottage, where they remained until returning migrants persuaded pub owners to host sessions in the early 1960s. The Clancy Brothers, The Chieftains, The Dubliners, Sweeney's Men and Planxty revitalized Irish music in the '60s, followed by The Bothy Band and Clannad in the '70s. The '70s also brought the fusion of Irish music with rock 'n' roll. Van Morrison, Sinéad O'Connor, Enya and others have used traditional *sean-nós*-based elements in their popular music. With the Irish **diaspora**, music traveled to the New World, then came back from America to influence modern Irish rock.

Background Information

Instruments of Traditional Irish Music

Button accordions and concertinas made appearances in traditional Irish music in the late nineteenth century. The banjo became popular with Irish musicians in the U.S. in the 1920s and is now accepted as a legitimate instrument for traditional Irish music. **Céilidh** bands of the 1940s often included a drum set and saxophones, although they are not accepted by purists today. Traditional harp playing died out in the late eighteenth century, but was revived in the mid-twentieth century. The guitar and bouzouki came on the scene in the late 1960s. Although concert flutes have never been featured in traditional Irish music, simple wooden flutes and tin whistles are favored. Purists favor the instruments used by The Chieftains, Planxty and the Bothy Band. Modernists accept drum kits and guitars. Classically-influenced composers accept pianos.

The **fiddle** (or violin, there is no physical difference) is one of the most important instruments in traditional Irish music. It is played in widely-varying regional styles, particularly those of Donegal, Sligo, Sliabh Luachra and Clare.

The **flute** has been integral to Irish traditional music since about the middle of the nineteenth century, when wooden **simple-system flutes** were replaced with the metal Boehm system flutes used for classical music today. Wooden flutes have a distinct sound that is preferred by some traditional musicians even today.

Tin whistles or **metal whistles** have similar fingering to simple-system flutes and are popular in traditional Irish music. They may be made from aluminum, brass, steel, synthetic materials or tropical hardwoods. **Low whistles**, derivatives of the common tin whistle, are also popular, though somewhat less agile than a flute or ordinary whistle.

Uilleann pipes (pronounced ill-in or ill-yun) are complex instruments that take many years to master. Originally known as the Union pipes, uilleann pipes are quieter and have a sweeter sound than Great Irish Warpipes or Great Highland Bagpipes. They are frequently played indoors, usually with the musician seated. Uilleann pipes are Ireland's national bagpipe. The bag is filled with air by a bellows held between the piper's elbow and side rather than by the performer's lungs as is the case with the highland pipes and most other bagpipes.

Information courtesy of *Celtic Crossroads* and http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Uilleann_Pipes

The **harp** has become a symbol of Ireland. The Celtic harp was played as far back as the 10th century. In ancient times, harpers were considered to have near-magical powers and were greatly respected. The harp was used for aristocratic music and was only peripherally associated with the traditional music of the common folk. When the Gaelic aristocracy died out, the harping tradition all but vanished as well until its revival about thirty years ago.

The **accordion** came to Ireland in the late nineteenth century and has become an important component in modern Irish music. Most Irish players prefer a two-row button variety with rows tuned a semi-tone apart, unlike common European and American counterparts. This allows the instrument to be played **chromatically** in melody. **Concertinas**, with two or three rows of buttons, are also sometimes used. In the Anglo system, each button sounds a different note depending on whether the bellows are expanded or compressed.

Banjos, originally developed by African slaves and brought to Ireland by emigrants returning from the U.S., are almost always played as a melody instrument rather than strummed. **Guitars** have also become popular in modern Irish music. They provide backing for melody instruments. Players usually strum only two to four strings at a time rather than all six and definitely take a back seat to other instruments, following the lead of and complementing the melody player.

The Irish **bouzouki** is a cousin of its Greek ancestor, but has a flat or slightly arched back rather than the round back of the Greek version. Although first introduced in the late 1960s, bouzoukis have become popular in today's performances of traditional Irish music.

The **bodhrán** is a frame drum, usually of bent wood and goatskin, and is a relatively modern addition to traditional dance music, although the instrument itself (once known in Ireland as a tambourine) was mentioned as early as the 1600s. It is probably an adaptation of the ancient **Celtic** war drum. Some **musicologists** believe it was originally used exclusively by the **wrenboys** on St. Stephen's Day and for other quasi-ritual processions. Seán Ó Riada popularized this instrument in the 1960s. West African Djembe drums and Caribbean bongo drums occasionally augment bodhrán percussion in pubs.

"Bones" (two slender, curved pieces of bone or wood) and **"spoons"** are held together in one hand and shaken rhythmically to make a percussive, clacking sound.

Vocabulary

Show Related

Céilidh (kay-lee)—*Irish, Scot., and Canadian (chiefly Prince Edward Island) a party, gathering, or the like, at which singing and storytelling are the usual forms of entertainment*

Celtic—a branch of the Indo-European family of languages, including esp. Irish, Scots Gaelic, Welsh and Breton, which now survive in Ireland, the Scottish Highlands, Wales and Brittany; of the Celts or their language

Czardas—a Hungarian national dance in two movements, one slow and the other fast

Diaspora—any group migration or flight from a country or region; dispersion

Ghillie—a low-cut, tongueless shoe with loops instead of eyelets for the laces, which cross the instep and are sometimes tied around the ankle (apparently a type of shoe originally worn by Scottish hunting guides)

Globalization—extension to other or all parts of the globe; the act of making worldwide

Hornpipe—a lively, jiglike dance, originally to music played on a hornpipe (an English folk clarinet having one ox horn concealing the reed and another forming the bell), usually performed by one person, and traditionally a favorite of sailors

Indigenous—originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native

Jig—a rapid, lively, springy, irregular dance for one or more persons, usually in triple meter

Mazurka—a lively Polish dance in moderately quick triple meter; music for or in the rhythm of this dance

Highland—Irish version of the Scottish strathspey, a slow dance in quadruple meter

Wrenboys—mummers celebrating the Wren who parade through towns and villages of Ireland on Saint Stephen's Day (Dec. 26) dressed in colorful garb, wearing straw masks and accompanied by céilí bands

Art Form Related

Céilí (kay-lee)—literally “party,” a type of Irish dancing similar to square or contra dancing but with more complex footwork, using basic steps that are combined in different ways to music with a caller; dances may be performed in a circle, in lines or in groups of three or four

Chromatic—in music, involving a modification of the normal scale by the use of accidentals; progressing by semitones, esp. to a tone having the same letter name, as in C to C sharp

Concertina—a musical instrument resembling an accordion but having buttonlike keys, hexagonal bellows and ends, and a more limited range

Ensemble—in music, the united performance of an entire group of singers, musicians, etc.

Genre—a class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content, technique, or the like, e.g., *the genre of symphonic music*

Musicologist—one who pursues the scholarly or scientific study of music, as in historical research, music theory, or the physical nature of sound

Quadrille—a square dance for four couples, consisting of five parts or movements, each complete in itself; the music for such a dance

Roots music—American folk music, encompassing bluegrass, Appalachian folk, country, gospel, old-time music, blues, jug bands, Cajun and Native American music; roots music has influenced the development of later genres such as rock ‘n’ roll, R&B and jazz

Sean-nós—a particular “old style” type of a *cappella* singing in the Irish language which is highly ornamented and in which the melody varies with each verse; the voice is toward the top of the range

Set dances—traditional dances usually performed in formations (sets) of four couples, often in squares

Stepdance—a dance in which the steps are the most important characteristic, specifically a solo dance with intricate, vigorous steps, often performed with the hands kept in the pockets or almost stationary at the sides

Definitions courtesy of *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrenboys...American_folk_music, www.geocities.com/ceilis_twincities/whatisbody.html, *Celtic Crossroads*

Dance: Cultural and Historical Connections; Foreign Languages: Culture; Language Arts: Reading; Music: Cultural and Historical Connections; Social Studies: History

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Expanding the Classroom through Discussion

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

1. Are you familiar with Celtic music? What instruments do you expect to hear in this performance?
2. Many people emigrated from Ireland to the United States, especially during the potato famine in the mid-19th century. Can you name a few Irish songs these immigrants brought with them that have become popular songs in the U.S.?
3. Why do you think immigrants often cling to the music of their native lands and try to preserve it in their new homes?
4. From what countries did your ancestors come? Are you familiar with the music of those countries? How is it different from American folk and country music? How is it the same?

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. Were there any instruments used in this performance you hadn't seen or heard before? What were they?
2. Immigrants to the United States brought their favorite dances with them. What American dances have you seen or learned that appear to be influenced by Irish dancing?
3. What are some of the similarities and differences between Irish traditional music and old-time Appalachian music? Which popular instruments for these types of music are the same? Which are different?
4. Did you prefer the more traditional music presented in the first portion of the show or the more modern and eclectic music of the second portion? Why?
5. How is Irish stepdance different from other traditional dances such as American square dancing, tap dancing, flamenco, Russian or Greek folk dancing and others? How is it similar? Can you think of other dances similar to stepdance? What possible explanations can you suggest for the differences among these dances? How might religion, geography, politics, climate and culture affect the evolution of dance?

Teacher Guided Activities



Heraldry

Although there are reports of flags and banners being used in battle as early as 594 A.D., extensive use of coats of arms likely began in the first half of the twelfth century, simultaneously in England, France, Germany and Italy. The evolution of armor from coats of chain-and-link mail to full-body plate armor and the use of helmets covering the entire head rendered knights unrecognizable. The accompanying shrinkage from long shields to smaller triangular ones was linked to the use of distinctive markings on the shields for identification. Since knights from many countries participated together in the eight Christian crusades against Islam between 1096 and 1271 A.D., an efficient means of identification became a military necessity. Early shields displayed two or three colors in clearly visible patterns. When animals and other symbols were added on later shields, the need for easy recognition led to the stylization of these images. Christian symbols like crosses and fleur-de-lis were popular during the Crusades.

Coats of arms and heraldry (the study of coats of arms and the accompanying rights of individuals and families to bear them) continued even when military expediency was no longer a primary concern. Family identity and individual recognition replaced military need. Coats of arms became both personal and hereditary. Those developed during this post-Crusade period could exhibit symbols of one's name, station in life, territory, or a significant event in which the family was involved. Symbols reflected the character the family displayed or the image it wished to project. Because there was no longer a need for long-distance recognition amid the turmoil of battle, designs became more complex. Coats of arms were used on seals to authenticate documents, on tombs and on works of art and possessions.



As time went on, rules were developed to prevent the use of similar symbols and designs by different families. Offices of the King of Arms or King of Heralds were created in the fourteenth century to ensure the recognition and recording of arms and mediation of arms disputes. Beginning in the fifteenth century, genealogical functions had also been added since the right to bear various arms was dictated by family ancestry.

What's in a name?

Have students research their family names and find their family coats of arms if available. What symbols (charges) are on the family arms? Some students may be direct descendants of several families with arms. Compare the symbols used for these multiple names in a student's family if appropriate.

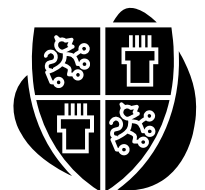
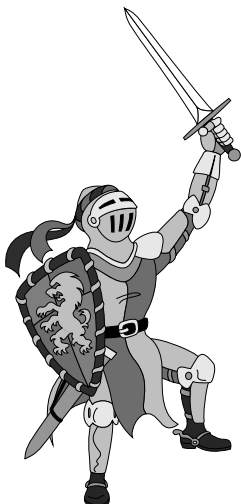
Have each student design his/her own coat of arms using symbols and colors that reflect the family history, occupations, location or personality traits, either real or desired. Ask each student to explain his or her coat of arms and the meanings of the various symbols and colors used.

Discuss desirable traits as a group and design a class coat of arms incorporating the appropriate symbols. What traits do the students think they should strive to exhibit? What should their class or school strive to be or achieve?

To get started, go to www.irishsurnames.com/heraldiccharges.htm for listings of symbolic colors, lines, shields, heraldic animals, birds, plants, etc.

Additional information on heraldry is available at www.araltas.com/info/article03.html, www.ireland-information.com/heraldichall/gm.htm and other sites.

Heraldry information above courtesy of www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/magazine/heraldry/index.htm and www.araltas.com/info/article03.html



Teacher Guided Activities

Migration Station

There are many reasons for migration, and people have been on the move throughout the world since before recorded history. Ireland, too, has been both a recipient and a contributor of migrants. Based on genetic research, it is thought that the earliest settlers in Ireland migrated from Iberia after the ice age. Neolithic and Bronze Age migration brought Celts who introduced both their culture and their language to the island. Gaelic culture became dominant, although Norse, Anglo-Norman, English, Scottish, French and Welsh elements have also been assimilated into the population. After 1400 years of Celtic domination, in 795 A.D., Vikings began a period of more than two hundred years of attacks on and settlements in Ireland. Over-population and land shortages led Norwegians and Danes to seek their fortunes elsewhere, especially from wealthy monasteries and churches. By 1014, their power was broken and the remaining Vikings were quickly assimilated. The 18th century brought Huguenots, French Calvinists suffering persecution by Catholic rulers. These immigrants had skills in weaving, lace-making and glove-making. Palatine German refugees followed in 1709 and 1710, forced from their land by war. Recent immigrants to Ireland include Poles and returning Irish who previously emigrated from Ireland.

Emigration *from* Ireland has also been frequent. Early emigration from Ulster to the U.S., politically and economically motivated, brought many “Scots-Irish” who became politically and socially prominent in the U.S. Presidents Andrew Jackson and Woodrow Wilson were of Scots-Irish descent. The most dramatic cause of emigration from Ireland was the potato famine. By 1845, because of economic and political factors and the division of farms into ever-smaller units, the potato, easy to grow and nutritious, had become the primary source of food for more than three million people. When potato blight caused repeated and severe crop failures, the Great Famine triggered a mass migration. More than two million people left in a mere eleven years, mostly for North America. Some made it only as far as England, others went to Australia and New Zealand. More than two-thirds of those born in Ireland in the 1830s either migrated or starved to death. Despite terrible traveling conditions often leading to death on-board ships, people left in droves, often with financial help from abroad. For people with strong ties to their land and families, this economically enforced exile was a bitter necessity for survival.

1. Have students research migration into and out of Ireland. The sites listed below might be a good place to start. Also, as a class, discuss where the students’ ancestors lived before they came to the U.S. On a large world map, have students mark routes of migration **to Ireland** with a **red** marker. With a **green** marker, have them show routes of migration **out of Ireland** to other parts of the world. Use a **blue** marker to indicate routes of migration from the ancestral lands of the students in the class **to the U.S.** Do you see any patterns that seem significant?

Discuss reasons for migration and some of the positive and negative effects of migration. How does immigration affect a society or culture? How has immigration to the U.S. affected our country?

2. Ask students what they think of when they think of Ireland. The Blarney Stone? Music and dancing? Green grass surrounding quaint white houses with thatched roofs? Peat fires? Pubs? Stories and jokes? Waterford crystal? Fine porcelain? Writers? The *Book of Kells* originated in Ireland. This special island has produced famous writers (including four Nobel laureates), artists, musicians and composers, actors, sports figures, physicists, mathematicians and philosophers. Research and discuss the many accomplishments of the Irish.

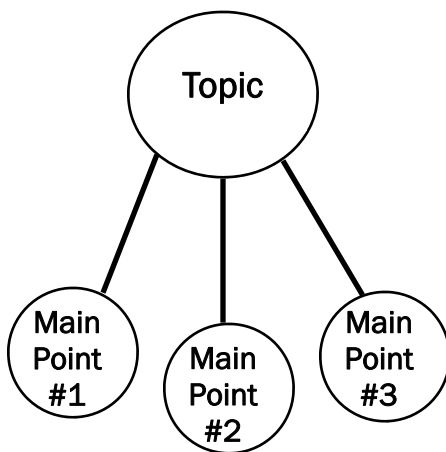


Information courtesy of www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/magazine/emigration/, <http://library.thinkquest.org/26786/en/articles/view.php3?arKey=2&paKey=3&loKey=0&evKey=&toKey=&torKey=&tolKey=>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Ireland

Florida Writing Connections

Music can be a very powerful force. It can be a vehicle of individual, national or cultural expression. It can bind people together who share a common heritage, common goals or values, or common political or religious beliefs. It can provide political or social commentary. Think of a song you believe demonstrates the power of music and explain how it achieves its goal of being a rallying point, making a social or political statement or binding people together either for comfort or to spur action.

Helpful Hints



Paragraph #1–Introduction: In the first sentence, introduce your topic. In the next three sentences, state what your three major points are (one in each sentence). Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #2–In the first sentence, tell what your first major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your first major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #3–In the first sentence, tell what your second major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your second major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #4–In the first sentence, tell what your third major point is. Then, in the body of this paragraph, give lots of good details about your third major point. Finally, write a concluding sentence.

Paragraph #5–Conclusion: Restate what you wrote in your first paragraph.

Language Arts: Writing; Music: Applications to Life

We want to hear from YOU! Write to us at The Marcia P. Hoffman Performing Arts Institute at Ruth Eckerd Hall, 1111 McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater, FL 33759

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Additional Resources

Ask your school or local librarian for help in locating these books for you and your students!

A Pocket History of Irish Traditional Music
by Gearoid O hAllmhurain

Field Guide to the Irish Music Session
by Barry Foy

The Companion to Irish Traditional Music
by Fintan Vallely

Traditional Music in Ireland
by Tomas O Canainn

Last Night's Fun: A Book About Irish Traditional Music
by Ciaran Carson

Check out these Internet sites for additional information!

www.murphyroche.com/Resources/Irish_Traditional_Music.htm

www.standingstones.com/cmaoitm.html

http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/genre/content.genre/sean_nos_784

www.folkmusic.net/htmlfiles/inart378.htm

<http://www.alan-ng.net/irish/learning/>

Student Guide Standards

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