**THE ROSE ENSEMBLE**  
THREE FAITHS POST-PERFORMANCE LEARNING/CREATION ACTIVITY

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**Descriptive Overview**

This lesson will introduce adult learners to the intersection of history, culture, and religion in the music of Medieval and Renaissance Spain (12th-15th c.) and explore how music functions as an expressive form of history, culture and religion, shaping ideas and perceptions. It will build on the learners’ experience of a one hour concert performance immediately preceding the lesson.

* The lesson teaches learners some of the musical scales, rhythms, instruments and languages that give voice to music of the period.
* The lesson provides learners with the opportunity to create music by performing melodies, chants and rhythms.
* The lesson invites learners to respond to ways in which music provides a meeting ground for diverse cultures through the sharing/borrowing of musical forms while simultaneously serving as an expression of distinct/different identities.

**Description of Arts Learning Community**

Approximately 200-300 **a**dult learners with no assumed previous experience of the arts activity

**Time Required** 1 hour

**Resources and Equipment Required**

The vocalists and instrumentalists of The Rose Ensemble

Handouts containing the words of songs to be learned

**Disciplinary sources**

Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Music History, Musical Performance, Ethnography

**Art Form** Vocal and Instrumental Music

**Rationale**

Music has served an important role as an expression of human culture throughout history. The period of 12th-15th c. Spain is distinctive because it reveals how musicians of different cultures and faiths influenced one another as a result of the relatively peaceful co-existence of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Spain at this time. The lesson not only introduces students to this rich and complex music, whose influence can be felt in music today, but provides a concrete example of ways in which community life is enhanced through cross-cultural interchanges. As a result, it serves a larger goal of promoting cross-cultural understanding and an appreciation for both similarities and differences.

**Learning Goals for Arts Learners**

* To introduce adult learners to key characteristics of music from Medieval and Renaissance Spain;
* To instruct students on ways in which the music of Medieval and Renaissance Spain reveals evidence of cross-cultural influence;
* To provide learners with an opportunity to perform culturally, melodically, rhythmically and linguistically different examples of vocal music from Medieval and Renaissance Spain
* To challenge learners to practice performing from memory songs they have learned
* To engage learners in conversation on the intersection between music, culture, and religion and the potential this offers for promoting cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding.

**Outcomes**

* Learners will be able to describe similarities and differences between music produced by Jews, Christians, and Muslims in this period;
* Learners will perform music created by different religious and cultural groups (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) in Medieval and Renaissance Spain;
* Learners will experience the effect of collective memory on the recall and performance of orally transmitted songs
* Learners will experience and reflect on speaking a language with which they are unfamiliar while participating in the familiar experience of creating music;
* Learners will be able to describe ways we grow individually and as a community by celebrating our cultural similarities and differences.

**Key Vocabulary**

Medieval

Renaissance

Chant (Plainchant)

Languages: Romance (Latin, Spanish), Semitic (Hebrew, Arabic), Ladino

Musical Scale (Mode)

Micro Tones  
Sephardic Jews  
Expulsion  
Andalusia

Liturgical   
*cantillation*

*taqsim   
muwashaha*

*hurdy-gurdy*

*oud  
vielle*

*rebec*

*riqq*   
*darabukka*

Collective memory

**Activities Generating Outcomes**

Ask learners what ideas and images the words “Medieval” and “Renaissance” bring to their minds. Are these the same images they had before experiencing the musical performance? Describe briefly the history and cultures of Medieval and Renaissance Spain and how music can shape our ideas about and perceptions of other periods and cultures.

Introduce the word “chant” and how the practice of chanting is featured in many cultures and spiritual traditions. Teach learners a short portion of a chant by rote (call and response): ***Alleluia: O Patriarcha pauperum.*** Demonstrate the use of that musical passage in a longer chant to show the challenges of committing such a piece to memory. Describe briefly human beings’ capacity for memorizing and how this changes over time as media technology changes.

The women of the Ensemble perform a Latin chant: ***Cives caelestis patriae*** (12th-century).  
Ask learners of what this music reminds them and in what kind of place this music might be performed. Explain the use of plainchant in the Christian faith.  Invite them to identify the language of this song; explain what a “dead” language is. Invite learners to identify the so-called “Romance” languages (Italian, Romanian, Portuguese, Spanish, French). Teach learners a Latin chant together, by rote: ***“Nicolaus Pontifex”***(Kathy teaches refrain, Jordan sings solo verses, audience sings refrain and is invited to harmonize in parallel 5ths, as led by Ensemble musicians).

Jordan introduces the *hurdy-gurdy*, explains its mechanism and historic usage in accompanying singers and dancers.

The men of the Ensemble perform a Hebrew-language chant: ***“Mismor L’David”*** from a Sephardic community in Istanbul, immediately followed by a solo by Kim: ***“Meyuchád”*** from a Sephardic synagogue in Florence, Italy. Invite learners to identify the language of this song and to share their impressions of this music – how is it similar to and/or different from the Latin chant? Explain the use of Hebrew as a liturgical language in the Jewish faith. Help learners identify the difference between communal/congregational singing (the men’s piece) and solo/*cantillation* (Kim’s piece). In what parts of the word do people speak Hebrew today? Are there other liturgical languages in today’s world which are also spoken languages (e.g. Arabic)?

The Ensemble performs a Sephardic Song: **“*Porke Yorash”***(Morocco/Turkey).

Invite learners to identify the language of this song and to share their impressions of this music. Explain that the language is Ladino, a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish, and was spoken by people of the Jewish faith (the Sephardic Jews) in Medieval and Renaissance Spain. Talk about the expulsion of peoples of non-Christian faith – particularly those of Jewish faith – by the Spanish government in 1492 and draw connections with people today who are homeless as a result of war, famine, or persecution. Read a portion of the Alhambra Decree, issued by the so-called Catholic Kings as a means to expel non-Christians from their kingdom in 1492.

Introduce the musical scale (mode) employed in this piece, which is found in many Jewish songs. Teach the scale to learners and have them sing it up and down on a neutral syllable.

David introduces the *oud*, a nearly 3,000-year-old string instrument used in the Middle East, Persia and North Africa. Introduce the idea of micro-tones, found in Arabic musical scales. Teach the learners to identify the micro tones by singing whole steps, half steps and then quarter-tones, using the *oud* and *vielle* (melodic string instruments) as support.

Teach learners an Arabic-language refrain to an Hispano-Arabic strophic song (*muwashaha*) from Andalusia: **“*Ayyu-hā s-sāqī ‘ilay-ka l-muštakà.****”* Invite learners to share their impressions of this music. Explain that Arabic was spoken primarily by people of the Islamic faith in Medieval Spain, but that many Jewish people spoke Arabic as well. In what parts of the world do people speak Arabic today? Describe the importance of the *taqsim*, an improvisation featured before the body of a piece. Help the learners to be able to identify for the transition between the *taqsim* and the song’s verse/refrain structure.

Ginna introduces two string instruments, *rebec* and *vielle*, which have Arabic roots and features and were played throughout the Mediterranean in medieval and Renaissance times. Teach learners to identify Arabic features of the *rebec* (rounded back, similar to the *oud*) and the *vielle* (bent neck), as well as the *vielle’s* Islamic features (crescents instead of typical ‘f’ shaped sound holes). Identify the *vielle* as a copy of an original instrument from 15th-century Spain.

Briefly discuss common rhythms in Western culture (3/4 time, 4/4 time, etc.) and invite learners to join in making the primary and secondary sounds in Arabic classical music: DUM and TEK. Introduce these sounds on the drum as low and high and then invite participants to tap hands on legs for DUM and clap for TEK. Begin to teach basic combinations of rhythms, gradually increasing the difficulty. Eventually arrive at 9/8 meter (*aksak*), with the combination of 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3 and use the learners’ percussion as accompaniment to an instrumental piece: ***“Arabaya Taş Koydum”*** (Turkish *karşilama* featuring *oud* and percussion)

Tim introduces other Arabic percussion instruments, most notably the *riqq* (tambourine) and *darabukka* (drum).

Explain that the learners have been singing music from Medieval and Renaissance Spain and that we have sung in many languages (name them: Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Ladino), but there is one language left that we haven’t yet sung in and that is Spanish. Teach refrain and then perform together: ***Hoy Comamos y Bebamos*** byJuan del Encina (1485 - ca. 1530), a musician who served under Ferdinand and Isabella, the so-called ”Catholic Kings.”Describe how using both European and Arabic instruments on a piece from the Spanish court, along with Arabic rhythms, exemplifies how musicians of different cultures and faiths were said to have collaborated and lived in relative peace in the time leading up to the Expulsion.

Explain how all of these instruments, languages, and musical styles existed together for an extended period in Medieval and Renaissance Spain, and how various groups borrowed ideas, forms and designs from each other, even though today we identify them as “Western” or “Middle-Eastern,” “Arabic “or “European.” Draw an analogy with the United States today where there are also many people from different cultures living and working together, learning each other’s languages and sharing/borrowing different cultural elements. Invite participants to give input and make mention of some of the ways we grow individually and as a community by celebrating our cultural similarities and differences. Positively reinforce being bilingual or trilingual by inviting participants to shout out the name of the non-English language they speak, they are learning or want to learn.

**Closing**  
As time allows, invite learners to recap the names of all the languages and instruments to which they have been introduced. Challenge participants by calling on those willing to recall the *Alleluia* learned in the very beginning (this is always very difficult), encouraging others to join in and help. Introduce the phenomenon of oral collective memory. Continue chronologically with the other melodies learned later in the activity, and make note of how more and more people remember together the songs taught most recently. Teach refrain in Ladino to this Sephardic/Abrahamic Song: **“*Kuando el Rey Nimród*”**

**Evaluation methods for assessment of learning goals**

Evaluation will occur in two forms:

Teacher Artist will observe to see if the learners were able to:

* perform music created by different religious and cultural groups (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) in Medieval and Renaissance Spain;
* demonstrate the effect of collective memory on the recall and performance of orally transmitted songs by singing songs taught during the lesson;
* speak/sing in a language with which they are unfamiliar while participating in the familiar experience of creating music;
* identify ways we grow individually and as a community by celebrating our cultural similarities and differences.

Written evaluations will be solicited to ascertain:

* the perceived effectiveness of the learning experience overall
* whether students can identify up to three similarities/differences between music produced by Jews, Christians, and Muslims in this period;
* the learners’ experience of speaking a language with which they are unfamiliar while participating in the familiar experience of creating music;
* one way in which learners’ believe they will interact with other cultures differently as a result of this lesson