

Pre-Show Information for Teachers: *Hear the Sound*, Grades 3-5, by Charles Pettee

***Hear the Sound*, Grades 3-5**

“What a wonderful way to experience the many cultural influences of our southern heritage...” (Norma McDonald, Principal, N. Duplin Elementary)

Hear the Sound introduces students to the variety of music enjoyed by southern folks from early colonial times to the present, as well as demonstrating some of the instruments from both Europe and Africa that are used to play the music. It is a fun show, with opportunities for the students to clap along, laugh, and sing. It is also an opportunity to reinforce or introduce lessons in social studies/state history courses that tell about the people from many places in the world that settled the southern US.

About the Artist

Charles Pettee, (pronounced “Petty”), has delighted audiences with a tasty blend of original and traditional music seasoned at more than 3,500 performances throughout the US, Canada, and Europe. He is a founding member of the world-traveling Shady Grove Band, and is currently working on his thirteenth full length CD/album. His original songs have received airplay in more than twenty foreign countries, as well as digital and satellite transmissions. His love and mastery of southern string music have made him a sought-after performer in educational settings for over twenty years. He currently resides in Chapel Hill, NC, with his wife and two boys. www.charlespettee.com

General Information

1) The setting is 200 years ago, right where we are now, in **NC**, (or **Virginia**, or **South Carolina...**). People from many parts of the world lived here at that time, (as is the case nowadays). Some of the people came directly from **Scotland, Ireland, and England**. Some of them relocated here from other parts of the US, such as people of **German** origin that came down from **Pennsylvania**. There were some people from **France and Spain**, who relocated from elsewhere, too. Some of the people were of **West African** origin, both slaves and freedmen. All of these very different cultures had distinctive songs and instruments. *The variety of musical styles of the time is a great way to get a glimpse of this tapestry of cultures.*

ACTIVITY: Find the above named places on the globe. If appropriate, review/discuss when and how people got from those places to the US. Go around the classroom and ask the kids if they know some of the places that their families/ancestors came from.

- 2) Mr. Pettee will perform songs from many of those people and places listed above in the program. He will play dance songs, work songs, songs from plays, and songs for worship. Most of the songs Mr. Pettee will play are classified as **folk songs**, (songs of specific cultures that are passed around from person to person,

and generation to generation by the oral tradition, just like stories and dances). At least one song Mr. Pettee will play is **classical**, (that is, created by a particular composer, and written down to be performed in a specific way). He will play **popular songs** from the time, too, (which can be written down, or not. The difference between “pop” songs and folk songs is that popular songs may appeal to a wide variety of different cultures and backgrounds. Sometimes folk songs become popular, and so become “pop” songs, such as the music from the movie *O Brother Where Art Thou*, the Irish folk music in *Titanic*, and so on). These are some of the things that **musicologists** study, and are mostly beyond the scope of this program, but it is interesting to discuss, and helps the students understand more about music and culture.

ACTIVITY: Discuss different types of music that teachers and kids enjoy today. Examples may include music from cartoons and movies, church music, songs on the radio, and funny songs. See if you can identify music from different cultures in the songs. Examples may be Latino sounds, bluegrass sounds, African-based sounds, etc.

- 3) During the show, Mr. Pettee will perform on the following instruments: the six-string **guitar**, the eight-string **mandolin**, the five string **banjo**, the ten-hole **harmonica**, and his **voice**. Pictures of most of these instruments are attached.

ACTIVITY: Discuss what kinds of instruments the kids or their family members/friends play, or are learning to play. What do these instruments sound like? Which ones use strings to make sounds? Which ones use air? What do you think of when you hear a banjo? What do you think of when you hear drums playing a marching rhythm?

SUMMARY

The string music of the southern US has sources from diverse places in the world that all came together here over time. In the 1800’s, each unique culture had unique instruments and songs. Over time, the sounds started mixing together to create new American folk and popular songs. The music of the past can help us learn more about people and places, and also help us to better appreciate where we live today. The above suggested activities are examples of the ways *we can use music to increase our understanding of social studies*. These activities may be done either before or after the program, or both, as time allows. We hope that Mr. Pettee’s obvious love for the music of the South will excite your students and encourage them to keep learning!

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the artist directly:
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