

LIVE Arts

TEACHER GUIDE

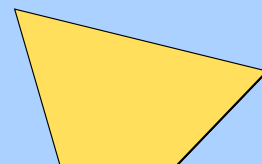
WORKSHOP NAME

With: Wura Sol

Date: October 7th

Grade: 7/8

Artistic Discipline: Music



OVERVIEW

Join Wura Sol for an exploration of melody and rhythm from the perspective of a Soul & RnB artist. Your students will experiment with melody and lyric writing create a chorus that stays with you.

MATERIALS

- A White Board
- A good speaker connected to the broadcasting laptop



CLASSROOM SETUP

As long as the students can see the broadcast clearly and can hear it clearly, any permutation works.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Wura Sol is an R&B/soul singer-songwriter who leans fully into soulful melodies and descriptive storytelling. Her mission is to create powerful emotional connection with her listeners. Through her performances and growing catalog, she continues shaping a sound rooted in honesty, depth, and heartfelt expression.

Curriculum Outcomes & Indicators

GRADE 7

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE

CP7.7 Investigate improvisation using the voice, instruments, and a wide variety of sound sources from the natural and constructed environment.

c. Maintain melodic and harmonic parts.

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE

CP7.7 Investigate improvisation using the voice, instruments, and a wide variety of sound sources from the natural and constructed environment.

j. Distinguish among diverse voice types, styles, and forms of vocal expression.

CRITICAL RESPONSIVE

CR7.3 Examine and describe how arts expressions of various times and places reflect diverse experience, values, and beliefs.

a. Distinguish among diverse styles of visual art, dance, drama/theatre, music, and other forms of expression (e.g., film) from different cultural and historical contexts.

GRADE 8

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE

CP8.7 Improvise, compose and perform (e.g., with voice, instruments, and technologies) a selection of pieces in contrasting styles.

f. Create composed and improvised melodic and rhythmic ostinati to accompany singing and playing.

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE

CP8.9 Compose sound compositions in response to social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs).

b. Create and perform own music compositions, improvisations, or song lyrics in response to a social issue of importance to students.

CRITICAL RESPONSIVE

CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.

b. Conduct inquiry into social justice and diversity issues in the arts including stereotyping and bias (e.g., stereotyping of male dancers, or the lack of women or First Nations artists represented in history of the arts books).

Workshop Vocabulary

R & B

A musical genre called 'Rhythm & Blues' that blends a mixture of Jazz, Blues, Gospel and Swing.

Blues

A musical genre created in Black communities in America. It became the foundation for other genres like R & B and Rock. The genre is based around representing difficult emotions in song.

Head Voice

The Head Voice is the vocal register that comes from singing higher pitches that vibrate through your head.

Chest Voice

A lower vocal register that we often use in our everyday speaking voices where the pitch vibrates more through our chest.

Pitch

Pitch tells us how high (like a eagle call) or low (like a cow mooing) a sound is.

Diaphragm

A big muscle that sits just below the lungs and helps support breathing.

Pre-Workshop Activity

Duration:

1 Hour

Materials:

- Internet
- Whiteboard
- Around 4 laptops/chromebooks for student groups
- A Good Speaker

EXERCISE 1 - Higher & Lower

- Introduce your students to the concepts of high and low pitches.
- Ask them what sort of things in nature have high pitches (bird calls, telephone ringing etc) and low pitches (Dryer sounds, stomach rumbling etc).
- Show them the following video and ask them to identify which sounds are higher or lower:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjkYS6szkBY>
- As your student's abilities mature, you can start to use resources like the following website to start training them on identifying specific notes or repeating back the right pitch:
<https://checkyourpitch.com/>

EXERCISE 2 - The History of R&B

- What is it that defines each different genre of music? Talk to your students about the definition of 'genre' and ask them what their favorite genre might be? What is it that makes that genre unique?
- Ask the students which of them has heard of R&B or Soul music before. If any students have, ask them to describe what they've heard about the genre.
- Show your students the following video to give them an introduction to the genre.
<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/TpLq-HiW-Vk>
- You can also use the following video to give them a clearer understanding of what old Blues (and eventually R&B) music sounds like. I would recommend only watching approx. the first 2 minutes as some of the more modern songs featured in the video might feature lyrical content that isn't for a school class.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYzUvjUud1U>
- Choose ~5 of the artists/songs featured in that first video and separate the students off into 'expert groups' have each group listen to that artist and try and write down a list of features of their music.
- Come back together as a class and try and collate these lists on the board into a description of the roots of R&B music.
- Discuss with your class the political history of R & B and other genres of music created by the Black community in America. Feel free to use the following Youtube Doc/Video Essay to explore the history of R & B and 'race records'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyYBJXAgGWE>
- Put your students into 4 small 'expert groups' and have each group come up with a timeline for the history of these genres of music that started in Black communities:
-R & B -Jazz -Hip Hop -Gospel
- Have each group research these histories and identify what the hurdles were that some of the Black musicians in these genres had to face as they attempted to break into mainstream popularity.
- Then have each small group present back to the full class.

Broadcast Program

00:00 - 00:05:

- Artist Bio Video + Introduction

00:05 - 00:10:

- Welcome & Introduction/Workshop Explanation

00:10 - 00:15:

- What Makes A Song Catchy? Group Discussion
- Breakdown of Song Components
- Explain what a hook or chorus is

00:15 - 00:20:

- How to Discover the Melody
- Hum along to a specific song - What did you like? What did you feel as you hum the melody?

00:20 - 00:30:

- Create a melody by humming/mumbling
- Move from hums to la la to words
- Guitar Loop Improv Time

00:30-00:35

- How to give our melodies words, identify the feeling and give it words
- What do you want people to remember from the song?
- Make it short and easy to remember (just the hook)

00:35-00:40

- Brainstorm Lyric Writing

00:40-00:45

- Perform the hook that we've created and form actions
- Rehearsal

00:45-00:50

- Put it all together

Post-Workshop Activity

Duration:

1 Hour

Materials:

- Internet
- Whiteboard
- A Laptop
- A Good Speaker

EXERCISE 1 - Melody VS Harmony

- Ask your students if anyone knows the difference between melody and harmony.
- See if any students can recall any famous melodies (ie: Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Imperial March from Star Wars, The Final Countdown, Never Gonna Give You Up, Staying Alive etc)
- Choose one song with an iconic melody that they all know and look up a version of it on Youtube with the harmony isolated
- Listen to the iconic R & B Chorus of Lauryn Hill's version of 'Killing Me Softly' - play the students the original and ask them if they can hear the harmony parts on the chorus:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK0tzlo-uYw&list=RDoK0tzlo-uYw&start_radio=1

- Then play them these harmony parts where the harmony is more clear:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUsMKeUlnLM&list=RDHUsMKeUlnLM&start_radio=1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV1p2DLM96Y&list=RDyV1p2DLM96Y&start_radio=1

- Now listen to the full song again and ask the students to try and pick out the harmony.
- Split the students into 3 different groups and give each group access to these videos. Assign the melody, lower harmony and higher harmony to each group and have them try to learn it before coming back together as a class to try it out.

EXERCISE 2 - Head Voice & Chest Voice

- Introduce your students to the concept of head voice and chest voice. Show them the following videos to demonstrate how they sound:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/nKpcCctvgV8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV7hEII47HI>

- Getting your students to feel the resonance of their voice in either their head or chest can look a little silly but try out some of these exercises to get them to start to feel the difference.
- For Head Voice: Practice humming to a song with lips closed but teeth apart, Lip Trills/Lip Rolls that transition between notes (also great as a breath exercise!), if your students are willing have them try to make the noise we think of for a pouting puppy (that sort of whiny noise) to get a feeling for the head voice.
- For Chest Voice: Have your students make their natural vocal fry and then try to do it along with a pitch, pentatonic riffs to smooth out the chest voice (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pabIEGm1ihI>), have your students try to sing a scale with a 'zz' sound as the first part of each note as that 'zz' sound can help support students finding that chest voice.

Post-Workshop Activity

EXERCISE 3 - Studying Choruses

- Ask your students what they think makes for a catchy chorus. Ask them what choruses are stuck in their head.
- Listen to the choruses on some of these classic R & B songs, what is it about them that makes them good?
Lauryn Hill: Killing Me Softly - Alicia Keys: If I Ain't Got You - Brandy: Best Friend
- Since so much of R & B music talks about relationships, ask your students what kind of important relationships they have in their life, siblings, parents, friends etc. Choose one of these types of relationships and as a class try and write a simple 2 line chorus about this relationship.
- Writing lyrics doesn't have to be overcomplicated, try a few of these approaches as a class while you write your chorus:
 - Find a central simile to describe the relationship you're talking about (or the emotions that that relationship makes you feel)
 - Describe one specific memory of the relationship using descriptive language
 - What are some parts of the other person in this relationship that you really appreciate, describe those things
 - Polish up whatever approach you use by adding a rhyme to the end of the lines. You can do this by writing the first line of the chorus and then creating a bank of words that all rhyme with the last word in the first sentence. Then choose one of the words from your rhyme bank that fits best and end your second line with it.
- Once the lyrics have been written, find a simple R & B chord loop to play, use the one below as an example:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wxqfsuahXg&list=RD8wxqfsuahXg&start_radio=1
- Have your students hum along to the instrumental like you did in the workshop to try and find a melody they like.
- If you want to go through the decision making process, you can try and choose a melody as a class, or just have the students individually play with it until they find a melody they like. Then as a class have each student try and sing the lyrics in that melody.

Additional Information

Upcoming Workshops

NOVEMBER 18: Wizwon - Graffiti Scribble Sketches

JANUARY 13: Nathan Coppens – Neurodivergence and Creativity in Theatre

FEBRUARY 24-25: Randy Morin & Jonathan Pickrell – Theatre Across Languages

MARCH 17: Rena – Azerbaijani Folk Dance

APRIL 14: Miguel Fenrich – Journalism 101

MAY 12-13: Anne Brochu Lambert – Potato Print Making

More Art By The Artist

Find out more about Wura on her Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/wurababyy/>

