



# CONNECTIONS: HISTORY AND MUSIC

**Monday, October 3, 2005**

**11 a.m.-12 p.m. ET**

**Grades 4-8**

When viewing *Connections: History and Music* and participating in this guide's suggested activities, the following National Standards for Music will be addressed: 6, 7, 8, 9.

## Program Notes

What does the word "history" mean to you? Your students might think of stories about kings and queens, wars in faraway places, or people working in old-fashioned clothes. History is all of those things, but it is also much more. It is about people communicating thoughts and feelings to each other through plays, paintings, poetry, and music. Music is

a universal language that brings people together. By listening to music from othertimes and places, your students can learn much about the famous people who lived in the past, and also about the time and place in which you live.

In *Connections: History and Music*, four musicians from the National Symphony Orchestra demonstrate some surprising facts about the relationship between history and music. The musicians are: Laurent Weibel, violin; Gabrielle Finck, French horn; Yvonne Caruthers, cello; and Stephen Dumaine, tuba.

## Musical Imports and Exports

For centuries, people have brought their music with them when they moved to America from other countries. Over the years, much of this "imported" music developed into American music. For example, we sing "Oh Say, Can You See?" from our national anthem at school or sporting events. It might surprise you to learn that the melody actually came from England where rich men sang it at parties in the late 1700s. By 1814, the song was popular here in the States. More familiar to students is that poet Francis Scott Key put different words to this same tune and created a new song, "The Star Spangled Banner." He wrote the words after seeing the American flag still flying over Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland after the British bombarded it. Because of the Olympics and other international events, people all over the world recognize our National Anthem.

## The Violin and the Fiddle

Violin and fiddle music are both played on the same instrument, but they sound completely different. Around the time of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), most violin music was composed in Europe and brought to America by European musicians. Jefferson took lessons on the violin and loved it so much that he practiced every day and often played music with his friends. Most fiddle music is traditional folk music played by musicians who have taught themselves. Pierre Cruzatte (pee-AIR crew-ZAT) was just such a musician, as well as an expert boatman and translator who could speak the Omaha Indian language. From 1804 to 1806, he traveled more than 8,000 miles from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean and back with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. His fiddle playing helped the explorers relax and make friends with Native Americans they met along their journey.



**NSO Musicians**



### From the New World

When jazz musicians moved to Paris in the 1920s, American music gained worldwide popularity. Thirty years before that, Czech (check) composer Antonin Dvorak (AN-toh-nin di-VOR-zhahk) brought the flavor of American music back to Europe. In 1893, while teaching in New York City, an African American student sang Negro spirituals to him. Those songs, along with other Native American melodies he had heard, inspired some of the melodies in his Symphony No. 9 in E minor “From the New World.”

## Instructional Activities

### Facts and Feelings

History is not just facts from long ago. It is also the story of people who lived in a particular time and place, just like today. A song like “The Star Spangled Banner” has a history that you can learn about from books or online. But it is also part of the personal history of every American. Think about what the National Anthem means to you and how it makes you feel when you hear it or sing it. Write a paragraph about your feelings or make up a story about what it might have meant to a child in Baltimore who heard it for the first time in 1814. Share your response with your class.

### What Songs Do You Sing?

At home, many Americans sing songs they learned from parents or grandparents. Choose a song you learned from your parents or grandparents and write down the words. Tell your class about the song and perform it for them. Teach it to your class. How many students are already familiar with the song? Compare your song with those of your classmates.

### History in the Making

History is happening everyday. Today’s news is tomorrow’s history. Select a topic from the daily newspaper. Choose a familiar song melody and write lyrics that describe the news story. Have you creatively captured what’s new in the news?

### Internet Resources

For more information, visit:  
[yvonnecaruthers.com](http://yvonnecaruthers.com)  
[contemplator.com/america/anacreon.html](http://contemplator.com/america/anacreon.html)  
[100 iTunes.com/CollectionSamples/index-TUNE1.htm](http://100itunes.com/CollectionSamples/index-TUNE1.htm)  
[nationalgeographic.com/features/97/west/main.html](http://nationalgeographic.com/features/97/west/main.html)  
[cruzatte.com/music\\_video.html](http://cruzatte.com/music_video.html)  
[kennedy-center.org/nso/nsoed/online-resources.html](http://kennedy-center.org/nso/nsoed/online-resources.html)

Additional resources related to *Connections: History and Music* can be found on pages 28-29. General Dynamics is the proud sponsor of the NSO’s 75th Anniversary Season. Washington Gas is the proud sponsor of the NSO Family Season.