

**Lesson Plan Title: The Song as Monologue****Author: Jason Robert LeClair****Date: 6/2/20**

**Description:** Performing a song on the musical theatre stage takes more than just an ability to sing. Acting is a key component to the successful plot and character driven delivery of a song. This lesson covers how to treat the lyrics of a song as a piece of in the moment, contextual, and character-driven work of theatre.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will know:

- Research methods to gather proper era/area details for the context of the song
- How to identify psychological influences that affect the portrayal of a character
- How to create a character from context found in the lyrics and refrain/chorus of a song.

Students will be able to:

- Perform a piece of lyrical material (song) as a monologue
- Derive and express character using contextual reference
- Develop and portray character and plot with body and facial expression
- Develop and portray character and plot through the use of beats, intonation, and emphasis

**Grade Level:** High School Accomplished**2014 National Core Theatre Standards:**

TH:Cn11.1.II.a Integrate conventions and knowledge from different art forms and other disciplines to develop a cross-cultural drama/theatre work.

TH:Cn11.2.II.a Formulate creative choices for a devised or scripted drama/theatre work based on theatre research about the selected topic.

TH:Cr1.1.II.c. Use personal experiences and knowledge to develop a character that is believable and authentic in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr3.1.II.b. Use research and script analysis to revise physical, vocal, and physiological choices impacting the believability and relevance of a drama/ theatre work.

TH:Pr5.1.II.a Refine a range of acting skills to build a believable and sustainable drama/theatre performance.

TH:Pr6.1.II.a Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience.

TH:Re8.1.II.a Develop detailed supporting evidence and criteria to reinforce artistic choices, when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.

**Time to Teach:** Two to four Class Period(s)

**Materials Required for Instruction:** Ability to listen to music and preferably to the lyrics of a popular song (not from a work of theatre).

### **Opening:**

We all listen to songs on the radio or Spotify, etc. that tell stories. Some examples are “Lost Boy” by Ruth B., “Cat’s in the Cradle” by Harry Chapin, or “Stan” by Eminem. These songs, along with countless others tell stories with a plot line and characters equal to that of a play. The concept of this lesson is to teach you how to perform something that is a song in a way that is character-driven and well-acted.

This is so that when performing a piece of musical theatre, you will not only be able to hit that belt at the bridge, but explain the emotions and character through your acting.

### **Instructional Procedures:**

**Activity 1.** Ask students to remember their favorite song from childhood. Have them dig deeper to ascertain why that song means so much to them and have them write it down privately (they do not have to share if they do not wish to). If the song is a story, ask what the story is.

**Activity 2.** After identifying a “story-song,” students are to either transcribe the lyrics or find them online. This set of lyrics is the student’s monologue. The most difficult portion of this is to avoid singing it. The melody must not be present in the final product. It is to be delivered as a monologue.

**Activity 3.** This is where they can get creative. Having a story helps, but the explanation of it is up to the student. The key is removing the rhythms as much as possible. The performance should have the feel of a monologue. The character’s given circumstances and present moment should be well defined through expressive blocking, vocal variety in the speech and timing/pace of delivery. In short, all of the items looked for in a normal monologue performance. During Activity 3 these artistic decisions will be determined and rehearsed.

**Activity 4.** After a period of rehearsal, (memorization and more development can be assigned as homework) students should seek peer review either in a classroom workshoping format, small groups, or individually with a partner.

**Activity 5.** Presentation of the work. Students will perform the new adaptation of the song as a monologue as a summative assessment.

Note: Students frequently ask if they must repeat the chorus/refrain. This is at teacher discretion, however, this lesson was developed with the intent that every word is performed helping to emphasize the ability to create and develop a character as each refrain allows for an opportunity to create a beat change.

**Exit ticket -** A reflection on the final product in a digital form rating their own performance. If possible, record the final presentations and share them with the students.

### **Assessment:**

Participation - Use Theatre Daily Rubric

Summative - Use Theatre Reflection Rubric and Monologue Rubric:

1. What was your process in creating the script and performance? Writing and/or rehearsal notes.
2. What were the successes in the piece? Cite peer and/or instructor input.
3. What were the difficulties in the piece? Cite peer and/or instructor input.
4. How will this project help to advance or how has it affected your artistic life

### **Closing:**

In order to perform a song, an actor must learn to develop the words within the song as a piece of theatre in and of themselves. The music enhances the emotion and character, and the actor sculpts it using the words as the tools to manipulate themselves and the music (in the case of a musical) to polish it.

**Please use the space below for suggestions for any adaptations or accommodations for inclusion of special needs learners.**

Utilize all documentation on students as to IEPs or 504 Plans. Take into account students' abilities and help to find a soliloquy for them. Suggestion: should the student be having an issue finding a song, look to some standards like "Eleanor Rigby" by the Beatles, or anything you may know that is not in their wheelhouse.

**Please use the space below to list any suggestions for multi-cultural inclusions.**

For multi-cultural inclusions, Please provide the instructions above in a translated format to the language of the student. Encourage bi-lingual performances and utilizing their cultural perspectives to aid in defining the character.

**Resources:**

166 Pop, Rock and Country songs that tell a story:

<https://spinditty.com/playlists/Pop-Rock-and-Country-Songs-That-Tell-A-Story>

Inventory: 26 Songs That Are Just As Good As Short Stories

<https://music.avclub.com/inventory-26-songs-that-are-just-as-good-as-short-stor-1798211011>

**Theatre Daily Rubric (formative lab assessment)**

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	<b>Exceeded Expectations 10</b>	<b>Meets Expectations 9</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations 7-8</b>	<b>Needs Improvement 5-6</b>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays appropriate motivation and work ethic consistently: work is being done diligently with no distractions; progress is being made at a steady pace, enough so that peer help and critique does not interfere with work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays appropriate motivation and work ethic; steady progress is being made with occasional distractions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays appropriate motivation and work ethic some of the class period; progress is being made intermittently due to several distractions.</li> </ul>	<p>Displays some struggle with the assignment and turning to distractions or disrupting other students.</p>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks or responds to questions about the project and is open to suggestions from peers and instructors. Actively takes part in discussion and/or instruction (online or in person).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks or responds to questions about the project. Takes part in discussion and/or instruction (online or in person).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seldom asks or responds to questions about the project. Reluctantly takes part in discussion and/or instruction (online or in person).</li> </ul>	<p>Struggles to ask or respond to questions about the project. Does not take part in discussion and/or instruction (online or in person) OR is disruptive.</p>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has completed project early and has moved on to the extension assignment .</li> </ul>	<p>Has completed project on time and is spending time editing/refining work based on peer/instructor suggestions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has nearly completed project and is spending time editing/refining work based on peer/instructor suggestions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is struggling to complete the project and is spending time on other things/distractions/homework/etc.</li> </ul>

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## Theatre Reflection Rubric

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	<b>Exceeded Expectations 25 - 20</b>	<b>Meets Expectations 19 - 16</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations 15 - 10</b>	<b>Needs Improvement 9 - 0</b>
<b>P 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate opening paragraph describing her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses rich and varied words and theatrical vocabulary throughout the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate opening paragraph describing her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary within the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has a complete opening paragraph describing her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary sporadically/inappropriately in the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has not completed an opening paragraph describing her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses little to no theatrical vocabulary in the paragraph.</li> </ul>
<b>P 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate paragraph highlighting the successes in his/her/their work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses rich and varied words and theatrical vocabulary throughout the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate paragraph highlighting the successes in his/her work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary within the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has a complete highlighting the successes her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary sporadically/inappropriately in the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has not completed highlighting the successes of her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses little to no theatrical vocabulary in the paragraph.</li> </ul>
<b>P 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate paragraph highlighting the difficulties and challenges in his/her work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses rich and varied words and theatrical vocabulary throughout the paragraph..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate paragraph highlighting the difficulties and challenges in his/her work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary within paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has a complete highlighting the difficulties and challenges her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary sporadically/inappropriately in the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has not completed highlighting difficulties and challenges of her/his/their process in the creation of the work of theatrical art. He/she/they uses little to no theatrical vocabulary in the paragraph.</li> </ul>
<b>P 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate paragraph speaking to how this work of theatrical art will influence their future artistic life. He/she/they uses rich and varied words and theatrical vocabulary throughout the paragraph..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has formulated an articulate paragraph speaking to how this work of theatrical art will influence their future artistic life. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary within the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has a complete speaking to how this work of theatrical art will influence their future artistic life. He/she/they uses theatrical vocabulary sporadically/inappropriately in the paragraph.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student artist has not completed speaking to how this work of theatrical art will influence their future artistic life. He/she/they uses little to no theatrical vocabulary in the paragraph.</li> </ul>

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## Theatre Monologue Rubric

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	<b>Exceeded Expectations 25 - 20</b>	<b>Meets Expectations 19 - 16</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations 15 - 10</b>	<b>Needs Improvement 9 - 0</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>PREPAREDNESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist is prepared for the monologue presentation in the following ways:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly Slates</li> <li>• Transitions from slate to monologue with a beat</li> <li>• Monologue is fully memorized</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist is prepared for the monologue presentation in the following ways:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly Slates</li> <li>• Transitions from slate to monologue</li> <li>• Monologue is memorized</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist is prepared for the monologue presentation in the following ways:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partially Slates</li> <li>• Transitions from slate to monologue abruptly</li> <li>• Monologue is mostly memorized</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist is prepared for the monologue presentation in the following ways:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglects to or improperly Slates</li> <li>• Lacks a transition from slate to monologue</li> <li>• Monologue is partially memorized</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>VOICE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist organically uses the technical aspects of voice:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projection</li> <li>• Annunciation</li> <li>• Diction</li> <li>• Pacing</li> </ul>               to communicate nuances of character emotion and objective             </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist uses well rehearsed technical aspects of voice:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projection</li> <li>• Annunciation</li> <li>• Diction</li> <li>• Pacing</li> </ul>               to communicate character emotion and objective.             </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist displays some mastery the of technical aspects of voice:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projection</li> <li>• Annunciation</li> <li>• Diction</li> <li>• Pacing</li> </ul>               to communicate character emotion and objective.             </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist displays little ability to use technical aspects of voice:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projection</li> <li>• Annunciation</li> <li>• Diction</li> <li>• Pacing</li> </ul>               with any consistency to communicate character emotion and objective             </li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>MOVEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist has considered the space and expressive movement that is contextually appropriate for the piece, but with artistic variation provided by the student artist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist has considered the space and expressive movement that is contextually appropriate for the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist has partially considered the space and expressive movement that is contextually appropriate for the piece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not evident that the student artist has considered the space and expressive movement that is contextually appropriate for the piece</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>CHARACTER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist adapts the character to his/her/their interpretation of emotional truth of the character in the moment of the monologue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist portrays the character to his/her/their interpretation of emotional truth of the character in the moment of the monologue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist shows the character with minimal interpretation of emotional truth of the character in the moment of the monologue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student artist lacks connection to the emotional truth of the character in the moment of the monologue.</li> </ul>

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