Lesson Plan for Ovation documentary

Song by Song: Dolly Parton “Coat of Many Colors”

Grade Level – 9-12

- Music
- Language Arts

Materials for teacher
- Ovation’s website www.ovationtv.com/educators

Note: It is recommended that teachers view all programming clips prior to using the content in class.

National Standards for Arts Education

Music – Grades 9-12

Standard 6 – Listening to, analyzing and describing music

Standard 7 – Evaluating music and music performances

Standard 9 – Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Curriculum Extension for English Language Arts – Grades 9-12

Part I of the lesson is also offered as an English Language Arts curriculum extension. It addresses general skills in reading, oral communication, and research. A writing activity is included at the conclusion of Part II.

Lesson Overview

There are two parts to these resources. In Part I, students will gain an understanding of the life, career and music of legendary country music artist Dolly Parton, by viewing and discussing segments of a documentary about this artist. They will be introduced to a significant song composed and performed by Parton. They will learn about the distinctive musical style of Parton and the talents and personal qualities that made her a renowned performer. Students will enhance their reading and research skills, exploring websites on the Internet related to the subjects in the documentary. In Part II, students
will listen to, analyze and discuss lyrics and performance of Parton’s song “Coat of Many Colors.”

Length of Lesson:

4 – 45-minute class periods

Part I Dolly Parton – Early Years, Career, Musicianship – Inspiration to “Coat of Many Colors”

Part II Analyzing Musical Elements of “Coat of Many Colors”

Instructional Objectives

- Students will understand how background influencers impacted creations of significant music artist of the 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries.
- Students will identify song structure of a particular genre, indicating expressive qualities.
- Students will understand how a composer uses musical concepts to contribute to meaning and mood of a song.
- Students will enhance research skills.

Supplies

- computers with Internet access and a printer
- equipment for screening documentary footage
  - White Board, or
  - laptop computer, projector with speakers, screen
- Ovation’s documentary, \textit{Song by Song: Dolly Parton “Coat of Many Colors”}
- music by Dolly Parton – CDs, streaming from Internet websites, and/or streaming from Ovation’s documentary
- audio player for CDs
- blank pieces of paper and pens
- journals in binder format – for students’ notes and assessments
PART 1
Lesson 1 – Day 1
Class work

Program Segments and Discussion:  *Song by Song: Dolly Parton “Coat of Many Colors”*

The teacher will inform students that they will be viewing programming segments from a documentary about Dolly Parton and that they will be discussing aspects of her life, career and music, based on the content of the programming. Each programming segment ranges from two to three minutes in length. The documentary provides an account of her legendary career as a singer, songwriter, producer and philanthropist, and focuses on a particular hit country song Parton composed and sang, based on a significant event which took place in her early life. The program spans the period before and during the years when she was acknowledged as a leading country music artist.

Subject-related words

The teacher will relate the following list of words and definitions to the students for use during class discussions and in their writing assignments. These specific definitions were selected for their correlation to words used in association with this lesson, from [http://www.merriam-webster.com/](http://www.merriam-webster.com/) The students can obtain additional meanings for these words, and usage, from this website.

**agility noun** :the quality or state of being agile: NIMBLENESSE, DEXTERITY <played with increasing agility>

**articulate adjective**  1 a: divided into SYLLABLES or words meaningfully arranged: INTELLIGIBLE  b. able to speak  c: expressing oneself READILY, clearly, or effectively

**chord noun** :three or more musical tones sounded simultaneously

**chorus noun**  1 c: an organized company of singers who sing in concert: CHOIR, especially: a body of singers who sing the choral parts of a work (as in opera)  2 a: a part of a song or hymn recurring at intervals

**interpret verb - transitive verb**  1: to explain or tell the meaning of: present in understandable terms <interpret dreams> <needed help interpreting the results>

**intonation noun**  3: the ability to play or sing notes in tune
key noun  7 :a system of tones and harmonies generated from a hierarchical scale of seven tones based on a tonic <the key of G major>  8: a: characteristic style or tone b: the tone or pitch of a voice

lyric noun  1 :a lyric composition; specifically : a lyric poem  2: the words of a song – often used in plural

melody noun  1: a sweet or agreeable succession or arrangement of sounds: TUNEFULNESS  2 :a rhythmic succession of single tones organized as an aesthetic whole

mood noun  1: a conscious state of mind or predominant emotion: FEELING; also: the expression of mood especially in art or literature

note noun  1 a (1) obsolete: MELODY, SONG (2)a (3): CALL, SOUND; especially: the musical call of a bird  b: a written symbol used to indicate duration and pitch of a tone by its shape and position on the staff

octave noun  3 a: a musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees  b: a tone or note at this interval  c: the harmonic combination of two tones an octave apart  d: the whole series of notes, tones, or digitals comprised within this interval and forming the unit of the modern scale

phrase noun  3 : a short musical thought typically two to four measures long closing with a cadence  4: a word or group of words forming a syntactic constituent with a single grammatical function <an adverbial phrase>

rhythm noun  2 a: the aspect of music comprising all the elements (as accent, meter, and tempo) that relate to forward movement

soprano noun  1 :the highest singing voice of women or boys and formerly of castrati; also: a person having this voice  2 :the highest voice part in a 4-part chorus

timbre noun  :the quality given to a sound by its overtones: as a: the resonance by which the ear recognizes and identifies a voiced speech sound  b: the quality of tone distinctive of a particular singing voice or musical instrument

tone noun  :vocal or musical sound of a specific quality <spoke in low tones> <masculine tones>; especially: musical sound with respect to timbre and manner of expression  2 a:a sound of definite pitch and vibration

verse noun  1:a line of metrical writing  2 a(1):metrical language (2):metrical writing distinguished from poetry especially by its lower level of intensity (3): POETRY
Homework

Following are suggested Internet websites, containing information, images and examples of music and performances by Dolly Parton, and country music artists, Porter Wagoner, Vince Gill, Carrie Underwood, Kenny Rogers, and Mac Davis. It is suggested that the teacher and students explore some (particularly Dolly Parton) or all of these resources prior to and throughout the class experience. The teacher will ask the students to keep notes in their journals about class discussions, and to log their observations.

Related Websites and Resources

Note: The “Song by Song: Dolly Parton” programs include highlights and interviews with many artists, colleagues, and friends who have known and worked with Dolly Parton over the years. In addition to those individuals featured below, the programs include Lily Tomlin, Kristin Chenoweth, Kellie Pickler, Miley Cyrus, Miranda Lambert, Brad Paisley, Janis Ian, record producer Kent Wells, recording executive Jody Williams, record producer Steve Buckingham, Parton’s band leader Michael Davis, director Duncan Tucker, singer/songwriters Lindi Ortega, Marty Stuart, Mindy Smith, Brandi Carlile and Jim Lauderdale, the Bluegrass group Grascals and biographer Alanna Nash. The series is narrated by Ray Van Ness.

Following are some of the artists featured in the programs.

Dolly Parton

*Dolly Parton: Home* – Recordings, Dollywood, Imagination Library

http://www.dollyparton.com/

AZLyrics – Lyrics to “Coat of Many Colors”

http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/dollyparton/coatofmanycolors.html

Youtube – Performance of “Coat of Many Colors”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_-YbWHs6DE

Porter Wagoner

*About.com* – biography, music, career milestones

http://countrymusic.about.com/od/porterwagoner/p/Porter-Wagoner-Biography.htm

Vince Gill

Vince Gill’s official website

http://www.vincegill.com/wired/?page_id=306
Carrie Underwood

Carrie Underwood’s official website

http://www.carrieunderwoodofficial.com/us/node/60851

Kenny Rogers

Kenny Rogers’ official website

http://kennyrogers.musiccitynetworks.com/

Mac Davis

*Songwriters Hall of Fame* – biography, music, career, photos

http://www.songwritershalloffame.org/exhibits/C350

**Review Sheets**

The teacher will print copies of the biographical information of Dolly Parton’s life, and accomplishments (on page 7) and distribute it to students, prior to engaging in the lessons.

The teacher will access lyrics to the song “*Coat of Many Colors*” at the following website: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/dollyparton/coatofmanycolors.html and will access Parton’s performance of “*Coat of Many Colors*” at the following website: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-YbWHs6DE

The teacher will distribute printed copies of the biography and the lyrics to each student, prior to engaging in the lesson activities.
Dolly Parton – Biographical Information & Career Highlights

- Dolly Rebecca Parton, born January 19, 1946 in Sevierville, Tennessee
- Fourth of twelve children of Robert Lee Parton, a tobacco farmer, and his wife Avie Lee
- American singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, record-producer, actress, author, businesswoman and philanthropist
- Best known for work in country music
- Parton describes her family as being “dirt poor”
-Outlined her family poverty in early songs, including “Coat of Many Colors”
- Began as child performer, showcasing distinctive soprano voice
- Moved to Nashville the day after she graduated from Sevier County High School in 1964, to pursue career in music
- Met Carl Dean when she was 18 and married him two years later
- Came to prominence in 1967, as featured performer on Porter Wagoner’s weekly TV program The Porter Wagoner Show
- Recorded several duet singles with Wagoner including “The Last Thing on My Mind,” a top-ten hit on country singles charts
- Ended the partnership with Wagoner in 1974
- A string of pop-country hits followed into the mid-1980s, including the very successful “9 to 5” (from the film of the same title)
- Has written over 650 songs and sold more than 100 albums
- One of best known song is “I Will Always Love You” (a two-time U.S. country chart-topper, as well as an international pop hit for Whitney Houston)
- In the late 1990s, returned to classic country/bluegrass with a series of acclaimed recordings
- One of the most-honored female country performers of all time, having received eight Grammy Awards (including 2011 Lifetime Achievement Grammy), and many other awards at the American Music Awards, Country Music Association, Academy of Country Music
- Has also been nominated for two Academy Awards and a Tony Award
- As an actress, starred in the movies 9 to 5, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, Rhinestone, Steel Magnolias, Gnomeo & Juliet, Straight Talk, Unlikely Angel, and Joyful Noise.
- Non-musical ventures include co-ownership of The Dollywood Company, which operates Dollywood and several other related ventures, located in the Smokey Mountains in Tennessee
- Founded Imagination Library, on behalf of childhood literacy

Class Work
The teacher will stream programming clips 1 through 4, from the documentary *Song by Song: Dolly Parton “Coat of Many Colors.”* Each clip is two to three minutes in length. Following each clip the teacher will engage the students in discussions about the content. The teacher may decide to use the discussion points below, or include other points in the student dialogue.

*Song by Song: Dolly Parton “Coat of Many Colors”*

Clip 1 – Discussion Points

- Here we learn that Dolly Parton used her experience of growing up in poverty as an inspiration to write the song “Coat of Many Colors.”
- As you listen to the lyrics and the music of the song, make note of and discuss the words, references and phrases Parton used to compile an image about her life and her mother.
- Parton’s mother drew inspiration from a spiritual story to create a quilted coat for her daughter. Discuss what you believe to be the significance of that act on the young Dolly Parton.

Clip 2 – Discussion Points

- A statement is made here that “your art is deeper if you suffer.” Do you agree or disagree with that comment? If so, or if not, expand on your opinion.
- In this clip, comments are made about the level of poverty Parton experienced, and the sadness in her family’s life. What personal qualities do you believe she most likely possessed at a young age to sustain her through those years.
- A reference is made that shadows were cast over her childhood. From what you’ve heard and seen in the program segments, what do you believe were the nature of those shadows?

Clip 3 – Discussion Points

- The Parton family had 12 children. Do you believe a family of that size, living in poverty, might have fueled a rich imagination in a young child? If so, or if not, relate your opinion.
- Parton’s family knew she was a special child, and encouraged her to be who she was.
- In your opinion, how might this sensitivity shown by her family impacted the young Dolly Parton?
- Parton could rhyme as a small child, write songs at 5 and sing on radio at 8 years of age. List some personal traits and artistic talents she likely had to have to accomplish those feats.

Clip 4 – Discussion Points

- A comment is made that telling her story in the song made her feel beautiful. In your opinion, what lyrics in the song support that assertion?
- Parton’s family lacked money, but exposed her to music. From what you’ve learned about her background and her early years, what particular themes likely served as inspiration of her songs.
- It is said that Parton wrote what she knew. In your opinion, how would this have impacted the lyrics, melodies, and mood of her songs?

Lesson 1 – Day 2

Class Work
The teacher will continue to stream programming clips 5 through 7, from the documentary Song by Song: Dolly Parton “Coat of Many Colors.” Each clip is two to three minutes in length. Following each clip the teacher will engage the students in discussions about the content. The teacher may decide to use the discussion points below, or include other points in the student dialogue.

Clip 5 – Discussion Points

- A comment is made that Parton writes personally. Do you believe that is an effective way to write song lyrics? If so, of if not, expand on your opinion.
- Discuss Parton’s personal attributes, in particular as they relate to her writing a song as “raw” as “Coat of Many Colors.”
- Expand on the meaning of “raw” in the context of this comment.
- Another comment is made, “To be vulnerable takes strength.” Discuss that statement, and how it applies to the song “The Coat of Many Colors.”

Clip 6 – Discussion Points

- Discuss the personality traits you believe it took for Parton to triumph over adversity. Make a brief list of descriptive words that sum up that quality in a person.
- Do you agree that Parton’s experience with poverty is a major reason why she is a mogul now? If so, or if not, expand on your opinion.

Clip 7 – Discussion Points

- Dolly also used her imagination and drew from her experience to create Dollywood and associated organizations, to support the community where she was raised.
- Discuss the attributes these organizations bring to the residents in Parton’s home state and in particular the youth of the county where she was raised.
- Can you make a connection between the significance of the coat her mother made for her to the benefits Parton brings to people living in poverty who hear her songs?
- When you listen to “Coat of Many Colors” and hear the lyrics inspired by Parton’s early years, what does it make you feel?

Lesson 2 – Days 3-4

PART II

Over these next two days the teacher will engage the students in activities where they listen to and analyze the song "Coat of Many Colors" composed and sung by country music artist Dolly Parton. Day 3 will be dedicated to analyzing the song’s lyrics. Day 4 will be dedicated to analyzing the artist’s performance of the song.

Day 3

The teacher will do the following:

1. Stream a recording (or play a track from a cd on an audio player) of Dolly Parton’s song “Coat of Many Colors.” (You may stream a recording by use of the link provided in the resource section on page 12.)
2. Display the lyrics to this song to the students, available at: http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/dollyparton/coatofmanycolors.html
3. Ask a student to volunteer to read the lyrics aloud to the class.
4. Ask the students which phrases in the lyrics have the strongest impact conveying meaning and mood.
5. Ask the students to make notes in their journals about the following:
   a. What feelings do these lyrics evoke?
   b. Did the composer write the lyrics with a sense of self-pity?
      i. If so, or if not, indicate phrases supporting opinions
6. Ask the students to summarize three key scenarios they gleaned from the lyrics of "Coat of Many Colors."

**Day 4**

The teacher will do the following:

1. Stream the recording or play it on an audio player again – Dolly Parton’s song “Coat of Many Colors” – paying attention all musical qualities of the performance.
2. Have the students analyze Dolly Parton’s vocal performance of the song, focusing on the following:
3. Ask the students to focus on the following areas:
   - overall style
   - mood
   - agility
   - intonation
   - attitude
   - timbre
   - phrasing
   - technique
4. Ask the students to make notes in the journals about the various aspects of the performance.
5. Ask the students to volunteer sharing their assessments.

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**Assessment for these lessons, to be determined by the teacher**

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*I try to always remember where I came from, who I am and why I wanted to do this to start with. It was not to get away from my family. It was not because I wasn’t proud of my home that I wanted to leave it. I just wanted to take the Smoky Mountains wherever I went.*

Dolly Parton

Language Arts Curriculum Extension
Writing an Essay - Expressing Gratitude

Day 1
The teacher will relate the following guidelines to the students about writing an essay.
- Using Dolly Parton’s lyrics from "Coat of Many Colors” as inspiration, imagine a scenario where you are expressing gratitude to a family member who was helpful or provided something for you when you were a small child, that left an endearing and enriching impact on your life and your attitude.
- The family member might be a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle, or older sibling.
- Make notes in your journal about the following:
  o name and relation who helped you
  o situation or challenge you were facing
  o your age when the event took place
  o how the act, advice or gift made an impact on you when you first encountered it
  o how it has had a lasting, positive meaning on your life.

Day 2
- Write a short essay (250 words in length)
  o Your point of view should be that you wish to pay tribute to this person and express gratitude by writing an essay for him or her, for this act, advice or gift, which had great meaning to you when you were young, and continues to sustain you in your current life.
- The teacher will ask one student (or more, TBD by teacher) to read his/her essay to the class.
Related Websites and Resources

Dolly Parton

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http://www.dollyparton.com/

AZLyrics – Lyrics to “Coat of Many Colors”

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Youtube – Performance of “Coat of Many Colors”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-YbWHs6DE

Porter Wagoner

*About.com* – biography, music, career milestones

http://countrymusic.about.com/od/porterwagoner/p/Porter-Wagoner-Biography.htm

Vince Gill

Vince Gill’s official website

http://www.vincegill.com/wired/?page_id=306

Carrie Underwood

Carrie Underwood’s official website

http://www.carrieunderwoodofficial.com/us/node/60851

Kenny Rogers

Kenny Rogers’ official website

http://kennyrogers.musiccitynetworks.com/

Mac Davis

*Songwriters Hall of Fame* – biography, music, career, photos

http://www.songwritershalloffame.org/exhibits/C350

Book