

Diversity in Orchestras

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1. Question & Research Task

A truly diverse group includes a proportionate number of males and females with multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds. This applies to orchestras, which have historically been predominantly white.

Programs such as Community Musicworks, the League of American Orchestras, and Project STEP have worked to make classical music professions and groups better reflect the diversity of their communities.

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How are orchestras creating unity through community engagement?



Click this photo to watch how Jessica Bejarano is changing how we perceive conductors.

Image Source: NBC Universal

2. Information Sources

You will use the resources below to help you complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.

Articles	Videos	Orchestras
Diversifying the classical music world <small>(You can reach Baltimore Sun articles through Newspapers in Education. Ask your teacher/LMS for the info)</small>	Organizations aim to Diversify Top-Tier Orchestras Through Audition Support	Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
AFM Educations and the Diversity “Buzz”	Portland Orchestra Transforms Young Lives through the Power of Music	Madison Symphony Orchestra
American Orchestras: Where Do We Stand?	From the South Side to the Symphony	Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field	Sphinx Organization Encourages Black and Hispanic Classical Musicians	Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
A Classical Case of Beating the Odds	Bringing Classical Music Back to Public Schools	Chicago Sinfonietta
Hip-Hop ‘N the Hall	Losing a Job But Keeping the Beat	Carnegie Hall

3. Student Activity

As you research using the sources on Slide 2, take **notes** to answer the following questions, and any other questions that arise.

- How is diversity a struggle in orchestras?
- What is the cause of these struggles?
- How are organizations approaching diversity?
- What are some steps needed to achieve the diversity goals desired in communities?

Once you have completed your research, develop an **Action Plan** to promote diversity in music in your own community.



View this video about the Rusty Musicians.

Image Source: YouTube

4. Assessment Activity

How are orchestras creating unity through community engagement?

Review the recommendations you made in your Action Plan and consider how you want to share that information.

Write a three-minute pitch on why someone should invest in your action plan. Record your pitch using a digital tool approved by your teacher.

Use this [success criteria](#) for your pitch.

Turn your Action Plan into a [Service-Learning project](#)!



A contemporary court orchestra with the tradition of Confucian and Korean music.

5. Enrichment Activities

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Click this image to watch a video about Floods of Fire.

Image Source: [Adelaide Symphony Orchestra](#)

In South Australia, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra is rethinking what community engagement and diversity in orchestras really means. They created their program *Floods of Fire* in response to national climate disasters in early 2020. The goal was to bring together people from every diverse community in South Australia to tell stories about fires and floods in different cultures and then write music that reflects all those diverse traditions.

Think about what a program like this might look like in the United States. What could motivate such a program? Who would be involved? What would they do? What would be the product?

Write a brief Program Proposal that answers these questions. Be as detailed as you need to be.

Read more about the process behind Floods of Fire in this article: [Community, Climate, Compassion, and Collaboration](#).

6. Teacher Resources



Learning Standards Alignment

Maryland Fine Arts Standards

I:6-8:1: Describe how interests, experiences, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and musical intentions when creating, performing, and responding to music.

I:9-12:1: Describe how interests, experiences, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and musical intentions when creating, performing, and responding to music.

E:6-8:1: Identify and describe personal and cultural influences as well as creative preferences in creating, performing, and responding to music.

E:9-12:1: Identify and justify personal and cultural influences as well as creative preferences in creating, performing, and responding to music.

I:6-8:2: Describe and explain factors that impact the roles of music in the lives of people.

I:9-12:2: Describe and analyze factors that impact the roles of music in the lives of people, citing research.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

Instrumental Music MS/HS

Objective: Students will analyze information from multiple sources in order to learn how orchestras are creating unity through community engagement and diversity

Time Frame: Two 90-minute class periods

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- This NYT article is an excellent student resource which we wanted to supply, but it is behind the NYT paywall: [Seeking Orchestras in Tune With Their Diverse Communities](#)
- Have students use learning supports provided in any [BCPS-licensed Digital Content](#) in the Apps Portal included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for guidance as needed.
- Consider [using the Schoology Assignment Apps feature](#) to assign Microsoft and Google documents and files for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.
- Success criteria has been added to Slide 4 at the teacher's discretion.
- Consider using VoiceThread or Flipgrid for the assessment.