

WEST MY FRIEND

BREAK IT DOWN, BUILD IT UP



THEMES:

- Chorus
- Cooperation
- Folk Music
- Lyrics
- Melody
- Practice
- Rhythm
- Skill
- Technique
- Tempo
- Theme
- Verse

About the Performance

West My Friend introduces student audiences to music that they've probably never heard but in many ways already know. Through guided listening and lots of participation, students will gain insight into how songs are put together and discover that they already have the skills to write songs themselves! [K-7 Program length: 45 minutes]

About the Artists

Described as everything from indie-roots to chamber-folk, *West My Friend* has an acoustic blend of instruments and four-part harmonies that challenges the conventions of popular music. The band features pure and thrillingly elastic vocals with catchy arrangements of bass, guitar, mandolin, and accordion that draw from jazz, classical, folk, and pop influences. Inspired by artists such as Owen Pallett, Joanna Newsom, Bright Eyes, The Decemberists, and the Punch Brothers, and forged from a sonically adventurous acoustic music scene on Canada's west coast, *West My Friend* is proving to be a key part of a new generation of grassroots folk music.

Guitar, Vocals / Eden Oliver

Mandolin, Vocals / Alex Rempel

Accordion, Vocals / Jeff Poynter

Double Bass, Vocals / Nick Mintenko



Activity Suggestions

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

ELEMENTS OF SONGS (10 MIN.) [K-3]

Sing a familiar short song with the class (e.g. *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*). Ask the class for ways you could change the song. For example: speed, pitch (how high or low), timbre (quality of the voice), and volume. Pick suggestions to try as a group, and after each suggestion, ask how the change affected how the song made them feel or what it made them think of.

NO GOOD MONSTER (10 MIN.) [GRADES 4-7]

Explain that the band they will be seeing has a song called *No Good Monster*, a song about the voice inside your head that tells you that whatever you are doing will turn out "No Good!" If possible, play some of the song for the class (search "West My Friend No Good Monster" on www.youtube.com). Give a personal example of a time when you told yourself you couldn't do something but then found you could. Ask the class to share personal examples, and with each example note: what the student was trying to do, the negative message they were telling themselves, and what they did (or could have done) to overcome that negative message.



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POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

IMAGINARY BAND (15 - 30 MINUTES) [K-7]

With the class, brainstorm the different instruments you see in a band and list them under two headings: "Common" and "Unusual." Note that *West My Friend* had common instruments (e.g. guitar, voices) and unusual instruments (e.g. accordion, mandolin, upright bass). With the class, list other instruments they can think of. Optional: Next ask students to write about and/or create a drawing of their own imaginary band. Have them decide: the instruments in the band, what kind of music the band plays, and the name of the band. Give the students time to share their writing/drawing with a partner in the class, explaining their thinking behind their decisions.

CLASS ANTHEM (30 MINUTES) [K-7]

Choose a short song that the class can sing together and sing it once through (e.g. *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*). Let the class know that you will create your own variation of the song together to create a class anthem. Decide as a group:

- Tempo (how fast or slow the song will be)
- Solo (a common school supply to have a rhythm solo, such as all of the students tapping a pencil or swishing a ruler on their desks, at the beginning, middle, or end of the song)
- Lyrics

For lyrics, in pairs have students brainstorm ideas of what makes your classroom unique (e.g. We like learning French, we have lots of fast runners, our classroom is painted blue...). Then have students share their ideas with the class and help students to rewrite the lyrics of the chosen song with their some of their ideas. Practice the song together.



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