



# SOVÓSÓ

## A Black History Musical Celebration

### STUDY GUIDE

# RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS

Dear Teachers and Educators,

Rhythmix is excited to have you and your students join us for **PAL - Performance, Art & Learning**. PAL assemblies are designed to foster awareness of world cultures, stimulate a sense of pride in students' cultural heritage and deepen connections to their communities.

PAL assemblies also serve as a catalyst for arts learning and a springboard for integrating arts education into your classroom.

To help your students gain the most out of each PAL assembly, we suggest that the learning begin before, and continue after, every performance. Utilizing the resources provided, your students can engage more fully with the performance experience, connecting what they see and hear to their personal lives, culture, community and any school subjects you choose.

Aligning with the **California Arts Standards**, the accompanying study guides and slide sets help foster students' artistic competencies, cultivate their appreciation and understanding of the arts, and support them to fully engage in lifelong arts learning.

At Rhythmix, we believe exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience, helping us to learn about ourselves, each other, and the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

Your "PALs" at Rhythmix



# ONE Planet, ONE World, ONE People

## A Black History Musical Celebration with SoVoSó

**SoVoSó** (from the **S**oul to the **V**oice to the **S**ong) demonstrates their imaginative a **capella** "voices only" music-making while celebrating Black History in this dynamic and inspirational assembly. Presenting musical styles of a global perspective, SoVoSó leads students in an exploration of vocal percussion and call-and-response singing while learning about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, migration, and the Civil Rights Movement. Students will sing about the heroes who helped fight for freedom and equality and discover that we are all ONE Planet, ONE World, ONE People.

*"SoVoSó is tight, soulful, and a whole lotta fun."*

*-Bobby McFerrin*

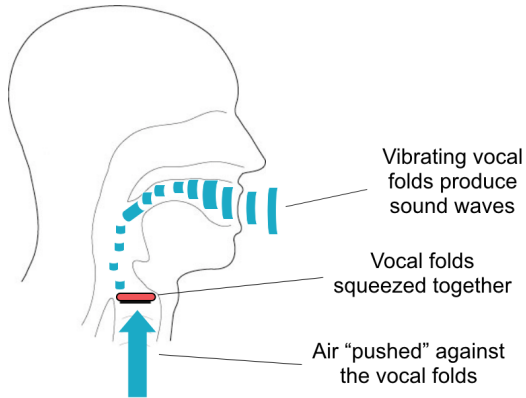
SoVoSó Video Examples:

<https://youtu.be/Q3L8JtTfcMc>

<https://youtu.be/hAiBqtgppuo>



# Basic Singing Vocabulary



**instrument** - an apparatus or tool for producing musical sounds

**the voice** - our first instrument; sound produced by human mouths by the controlled expulsion of air

**a capella** - music created with voices only (unaccompanied by other instruments)

**part-singing** - using several voices to create layers of sound and harmony in one song

**soprano** - the highest singing voices

**alto** - second highest singing voices

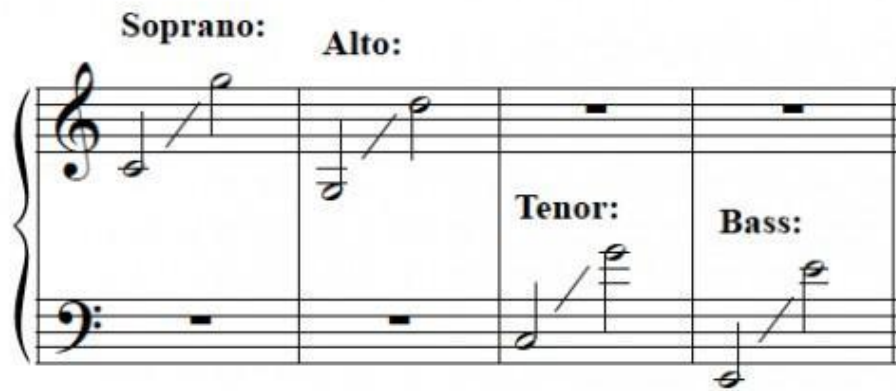
**tenor** - intermediate singing voices (between bass and alto)

**bass** - lowest singing voices



Part Singing Example:

<https://youtu.be/zLh5WGs2Tio>



# General Music and A Capella Techniques

**anthem** - using a song or music to send your message

**arranging / arrangement** - adapting or re-writing a composition to accommodate voices or instruments

**beat boxing** - to create the sounds and rhythms of percussion instruments or a drum machine by using the mouth and voice

([https://youtu.be/g0\\_2vmkTmf0](https://youtu.be/g0_2vmkTmf0))

**call and response** - a style of singing in which a melody sung by one singer is responded to or echoed by one or more singers. (<https://youtu.be/QFWRcXYsYMo>)

**circle singing** - improvisational singing performed in a group or community.

(<https://youtu.be/gJNgUdH0ijQ>)

**harmony** - any simultaneous combination of tones (different notes played or sung together to create one new textured, blended sound)

(<https://youtu.be/pRzjNPSIXH0>)

**hidden messages (in songs)** - singing one thing, but meaning another. The literal meaning of a word or phrase may be referencing something secret.

**improvisation** - to compose and perform (or sing) without previous preparation, to perform on the spur of the moment from whatever materials are readily available

(<https://youtu.be/81uJZIF9TCs>)

**melody** - singular musical sounds presented in a particular series or arrangement. (often creating a musical phrase or idea) (<https://youtu.be/pRzjNPSIXH0>)

**rhythm** - a pattern of regular or irregular pulses (caused in music by the occurrence of strong and weak melodic and harmonic beats)

**scatting (scat singing)** - singing in which the singer substitutes improvised nonsense syllables for the words of a song, and tries to sound and phrase like a musical instrument. (<https://youtu.be/k0175vPMU7o>)



# Musical Influences of Contemporary A Capella

## Bobby McFerrin

Video Examples:

<https://youtu.be/ne6tB2KiZuk>

<https://youtu.be/8eH8jS0DyO0>



## Ella Fitzgerald

Video Example:

<https://youtu.be/PbL9vr4Q2LU>

## Lambert, Hendricks & Ross

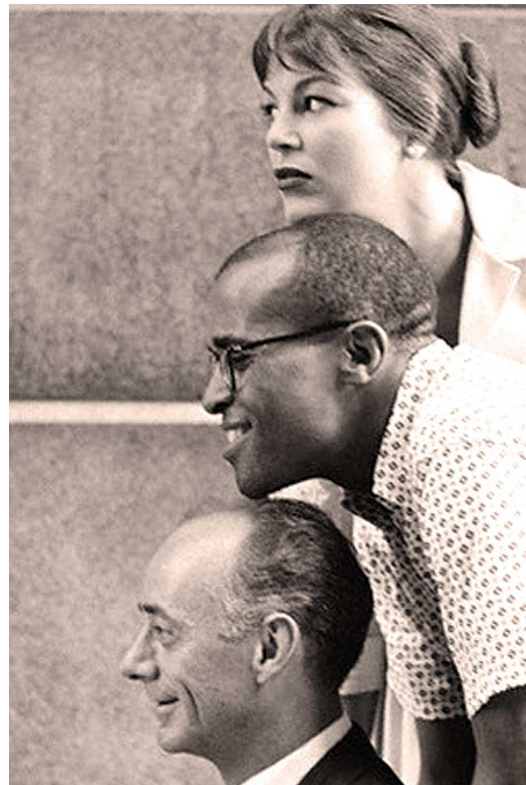
Video Example:

<https://youtu.be/UI54NwLxS>

## Jon Hendricks

Video Example:

[https://youtu.be/lzin4asq\\_fE](https://youtu.be/lzin4asq_fE)



# **Making the World a Better Place**

With these three guiding principles, SoVoSó uses their music to make the world a better place:

- 1. Collaboration / Cooperation**
- 2. Building community**
- 3. Social Responsibility**

**1. Collaboration & Cooperation** occurs when we work together to create something bigger than one person can do on their own. SoVoSó cooperates when they blend their voices to create their unique sound. Each member contributes their individual part to make something different and new through their collaboration.

***What are some ways that you have collaborated or cooperated with others? What did you create? What could you create?***

**2. Building community** is an important aspect of working together successfully. Building community takes trust and respect. SoVoSó builds community by listening to one another and using creativity and imagination to create new songs.

***What are some ways that you build community in: Your classroom? Your school? Home? Neighborhood? City?***

**3. Social Responsibility** is the concept of doing things that benefit the whole society, not just one's self. As individuals, we can take responsible for performing actions that benefit more people than just ourselves.

**SoVoSó fulfills their commitment to social responsibility by:**

- using their voices for good and
- using their voices to spread positive messages to people.
- Example: SoVoSó sings One Planet: <https://youtu.be/gEqOQy3Guol>

***What are some ways that you can demonstrate social responsibility?***



## Classroom Discussion

Can you think of any special occasions when people sing? In your family? Culture? Community? Country?

Does your family have any music or singing traditions that you can share?

What messages do you hear in the music that you listen to?

What types of messages do you **want** to hear in the music you listen to?

How can music help us make changes in the world?

### Class Activity: *My Voice is 1,000 Instruments*

- VAPA Skills: *Creating, Performing*

1. Have your class name as many different instruments as they can. (For example: drums, trumpet, saxophone, cello, accordion...)
2. Have your students try making the sounds of each instrument with their voice only. (If the students have not heard the instruments before, watch videos for reference.)
3. Have the students choose an instrument and perform it in front of the class. (This can be done quickly around the room with the students standing at their desks or in a circle. A few seconds per student is plenty.)
4. Allow the students to form small groups and make a 20 second composition combining their vocal instruments. Have the groups perform with their “band” in front of the class.
5. Allow the students to discuss their experience of making the different vocal sounds and what it was like to work with a small group to create a composition.



## **Class Activity: What is a capella?**

- VAPA Skill: Responding, Connecting

1. Review the a capella techniques listed above with your class.
2. Review the 3 Influencers of contemporary a capella in this study guide and watch the videos provided.
3. Have your students find examples of the a capella techniques in the videos.
4. What else do your students notice from these examples that might be different than singing and music that they are already familiar with?

## **Who is SoVoSó?**

In this assembly, you will see three SoVoSó members including Sunshine Becker, Bryan Dyer and Luqman Frank. Other great SoVoSó singers (past and present) include David Worm (founder), Joey Blake, Ashling Cole, Vernon Bush, Destani Wolf, Zoe Ellis, Tammi Brown, Nicolas Bearde, Adrienne Shamszad, Alexa Morales and more!



SoVoSó, from left: Bryan Dyer, Sunshine Becker, David Worm, Ashling Cole, Vernon Bush and Zoe Ellis.



## Thank You!

Thank you for joining Rhythmix Cultural Works and SoVoSó.  
We look forward to seeing you next time!



This study guide was developed by SoVoSó and Rhythmix Cultural Works.

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## About Rhythmix Cultural Works

Rhythmix Cultural Works brings people of all ages together to experience and explore music, dance, visual art and educational opportunities. The organization seeks to build community by inspiring engagement in the arts as a way to learn about each other and the world. With a strong commitment to provide programming relevant to the local population, Rhythmix strives to promote cultural awareness, encourage participation in the arts, and support local artists in the presentation of their work.

Since Rhythmix opened its doors in 2007, the community-based arts facility has built its reputation through the artistic excellence and cultural depth of its programming. To date, more than 150,000 people have engaged in arts experiences, attending high-quality performances of world music, dance, theater, exhibits and community events, as well as enrolling in classes for youth and adults in the arts, crafts, and movement-based practices from other cultures.

## About PAL - Performance, Art & Learning

Rhythmix Cultural Works believes that exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience and a catalyst for cultural celebration. In support of this vision, Rhythmix developed PAL as an assembly-based youth arts education program in collaboration with the Alameda Unified School District. PAL fosters awareness of world cultures and empowers underserved youth through exposure to educational music and dance performances.

Thanks to the belief in the power of arts education and generous support from our funders and sponsors, PAL has served over 90,000 students since it launched in 2012.

For more info about Rhythmix, please visit: [www.rhythmix.org](http://www.rhythmix.org)

