

# Teacher Resource Guide



## Project Summary - The Orange Shirt Day Music Project

for Grades 4-8

Two courageous Indigenous Elders share their personal memories of life in Kamloops and St. Cyprien Residential Schools. One of the two, Elder Nk'xetko, describes how being gifted with a drum by an Elder gave her a voice and helped her healing process.

Students are asked to give voice to their own feelings by creating music inspired by the drum pattern played by the Elder. They are then invited to share their music with the two Elders by recording brief videos using their phones; first introducing themselves, then recording their computer screen as they play their piece.

This project helps children to explore feelings of empathy. It invites students to **listen** deeply to the Elder Stories, **reflect** on what they've heard, **discover** their own emotions, **apply** their discoveries in music form using YouthBeat and then **share** it with their peers, their community, and even the Elders, to spark change.

**The Royal Conservatory** has been collaborating with Indigenous communities and Elders since 2010 to ensure that their culture and stories are included in public education.

## Elder Biographies

**Nk'xetko** is a singer, drummer, storyteller, quilter, and a survivor of the Kamloops Indian Residential School. She discovered that traditional culture, language, and the arts have been like medicine that brings healing. A trained teacher with her Master's in Education, Mary Jane not only lectures on Indigenous history, residential school life and traditional culture, she assists in lesson planning and curriculum development. She is a proud Elder in Residence for the Learning Through the Arts Program and Langara College. Nk'xetko also enjoys teaching her three grandchildren cultural crafts, story, songs, and dances to make the circle complete. Her book, *Xwist Memin Kin I want to Go Home: Memories of Kamloops residential School and Joeyaska Ranch*, sharing her story is available online.

**Issapaakii**, a name given to her by her grandmother, means Crow Woman. Issapaakii attended St. Cyprien Residential School in southern Alberta. She has spent her career working with Indigenous People. In 2009 she received the Esquao award for her work in education and won Elder of the Year in Fort McMurray at the Ra Ra awards in 2012. She is proud to be the first Elder to take part in Learning Through the Arts' Elder-in-Residence program which she helped to develop. She has led workshops about Indigenous Culture and the impact of residential school for Fort McMurray Catholic, Fort McMurray Public School, Northland school division the Banff Centre, Keyano College, Vancouver School Board, and INDspire. She has travelled to Thunder Bay Ontario to meet with Elders and help the Lakehead School District develop their own Elder-In-Residence program. Her wish is for our Indigenous children to know their culture, tradition, history, and language.



## Learning Objectives

Students are often challenged to express their feelings in an authentic way using words. We've heard from many teachers that they lack the tools to support students around learning that provokes strong emotion, such as Residential Schools.

In this project, students are invited to reflect, ask questions, and use music to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The project also offers them a way to make a difference by creating and sharing healing music with survivors and community.

## How to use the Resources

### LISTEN

Start with the *Residential School video* introducing Elder Nk'xetko and Elder Issapaakii.

### REFLECT

Have students reflect on the inquiry questions at the end of the video. Have them brainstorm words, sentences, thoughts that they would like to share with the Elders.

### LISTEN

*Play video # 2: Drum Story* in which Elder Nk'xetko tells the story of the drum beat and why it is so important in creating healing beats in music.

### REFLECT

Have students think, pair, and share with a partner some of what they learned about the drumbeat.

### DISCOVER

Have students open the [YouthBeat Orange Shirt Day Music Project](#) three-step tutorial and create their own song based on the heartbeat drumbeat. Click above for the tutorial.

What does it mean to you? What are you feeling?

### APPLY

Students can work in teams of up to four if you are short of computers or have limited WiFi bandwidth.

### SHARE

When students have completed the Orange Shirt Day music project tutorial, have them share their music creation with the class and express their thoughts, feeling and discoveries.

Time permitting, invite students to create short videos using their phones in which they introduce themselves and then film the computer screen as their piece is playing.

Please send links to these videos to [shelley.macdonald@rcmusic.ca](mailto:shelley.macdonald@rcmusic.ca). Shelley will share as many as possible with the Elders. Please share the music as well with local Elders and community parents in your school board or region.

## Suggested Student Assessment Questions

- a) Did the students learn the curriculum about residential schools, and were they able to reflect, share and communicate their thoughts and ideas clearly in the class discussion and/or to their Think, Pair, Share partner?
- b) Were they able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly through the music they created using the YouthBeat Orange Shirt Day Music project?
- c) Did they show evidence of understanding the concept of healing music and the idea of a heartbeat pattern on the drum?
- d) Did they follow the directions and try out the various tools?
- e) Did they experiment, or just accept the first idea they came up with?
- f) Did they encourage each other, and give and receive constructive feedback?
- g) Were they able to find out how to use a technology feature on their own or from peers, or did they get frustrated and stop trying?".

## Project Extension

If students have enjoyed creating and exploring the Orange Shirt Day Music Project tutorial and would like to go even further with their music creation, they can access the [YouthBeat App](#) to create their own heartbeat drumbeat and more.

***Please note:*** The first time a student saves work by pressing Save Pattern, the app will create a personal URL. Once bookmarked, this allows the student to retrieve work later.

We'll have two new offerings available after Thanksgiving: Music Basics and The Math Behind the Music. Both offer additional sets of learning activities in the same format as the Orange Shirt Day Music Project tutorial.

If you would like to receive the link when these free online resources are posted, please subscribe to this page, or email [shelley.macdonald@rcmusic.ca](mailto:shelley.macdonald@rcmusic.ca). Both are free of charge thanks to our generous sponsors.

**Thank you for being part of the Orange Shirt Day Music Project, and for helping to ensure your students learn about the lasting impact of residential schools on the lives of Indigenous Elders and their families and communities, and all Canadians.**