

CHIC STREET MAN

ART FORM: Music

STYLE: Blues/Folk

CULTURE: Universal

MEET THE ARTIST:

Chic Street Man is a uniquely talented artist with an international following. His music transcends cultural and attitudinal barriers, bringing home his message of harmony and ethnic diversity through acoustic bluesy ballads, funky rhythms and jazzy upbeat originals. Chic incorporates a variety of musical forms all of which have roots that can be traced back to the ancient African tradition of storytelling with call and response. The stories are used for the purpose of spinning a tale, but always to instill in the listener the spirit of an honorable life and the value of living in harmony with others. Chic has been a featured performer in the US, France and in other parts of Europe, including the Montreux, Paleo and Bern Jazz Festivals in Switzerland, and the United Nations Human Rights Center in Geneva. Whether singing at a United Nations conference on human rights or engaging students at a local high school assembly, he connects. He has the rare ability to engage all audiences; adults, teens, children, seniors and entire families to make them laugh, think and feel good inside.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

Chic Street Man considers himself a musical ambassador for peace and human rights. He uses his guitar, voice and body as his instruments, creating an atmosphere of trust and encouraging group participation with his songs. He explores his love for people, music and the planet through his songs. Chic focuses on tunes such as "Don't Worry, Be Happy" by Bobby McFerrin, which allow the audience to connect to the world around them, and see how they fit in. Two of his songs that will be featured in this performance are: "Shake a Hand" and "Follow Me." He believes that it's personal "involvement that creates understanding; and understanding that promotes growth." Using music as his medium, Chic Street Man shows us how much better the world is when we listen, speak and sing in unity. His performance encourages inclusiveness, respect, and positive thoughts. He sings about what he knows, values and believes in.



PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

More and more studies point to the benefits that can be gained from listening to, studying, and participating in the creation of music. The California State Visual and Performing Arts Framework states this very well:

"Existing in every culture and generation, music embodies the distinctly human need to organize sounds to express the dimensions of human feeling. ... music provides opportunities for success and engages the imagination of students who may have difficulty with other aspects of the curriculum. The art of music inspires students to become sensitive listeners, able to make aesthetic judgments and appreciate the essential nature of music."

A good song, then, provides more than just a pleasant experience. It is a wonderful way to communicate ideas, tell stories, and share both our feelings and thoughts. Chic believes that all people have the ability and desire to communicate, and that music provides the perfect medium for positive, encouraging messages. Through example, his performance stimulates self-expression, confidence and creativity. His songs most often come from experiences he has had or things he has observed and thought about.

Music comes in many forms. Each style, however, is still driven and shaped by dreams, visions, emotions and ideas. These ideas are shared through melody, harmony, orchestration and instrumentation of each piece of music. The styles of music explored in the performance by Chic Street Man have emerged from cultural traditions that, for the most part, can be traced back to Africa. In the ancient tradition of storytelling, the idea is not just to tell a tale but also to use the accompanying music,

songs and story to pass on the value of living in harmony. Together, the music, songs and stories convey the importance of an honorable life, the value in respecting, caring and encouraging the people who surround us.

This same tradition continues today in Chic's music, which carries forward the idea that songs, and the stories they tell, can make you laugh, think, or feel better inside. Ultimately, they can even inspire you to new heights.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What parts of the performance caught your attention? What were your favorite songs? What did you think, or feel, as you listened to the music and the messages in the songs? Are there other songs that you have heard that tell a story, or pass on a positive message? If so, what are they? Have you ever listened to jazz music? To hip hop? What kind of music is your favorite?
- When you listen to music, does it ever change the way you feel? For instance, if you are feeling sad, does the music cheer you up? If it's an upbeat song, does the music make you want to dance? Why do you think music can affect, and change, our moods so easily?
- The stories and songs of Africa, as told by a griot (historian and storyteller), are used to teach, encourage, entertain, and heal the listener. Many African stories also include songs sung by the various characters. Can you name any modern songs that have a similar positive message?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY:

Humans have learned to express themselves in many different ways: poetry, architecture, dance, painting, drawing, acting, sculpture, singing, storytelling, mime, graffiti, playing a musical instrument, composing, film-making, and playwrighting, to name just a few.

Lead students in a discussion about strong, positive messages they have observed in any of the forms of self-expression noted above. Ask them to write a paragraph describing one example of a positive artistic expression. If possible, ask students to bring in a photo, recording or article about their selection. Ask them to explain why they think the message is positive, what they feel it can do for others, how it can impact observers or listeners, and what type of audience they feel will be most likely to appreciate the message presented.

California Arts Standards: Artistic Processes

- Cr** Creating
- Pr** Performing/Producing/Presenting
- Re** Responding
- Cn** Connecting

Learn more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ArtsStandardsCA>

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

Pr Divide the class into small groups. Allow each group to select a different folk tale and read it together; they should then present a synopsis to the class. Follow up the reading with a discussion about each story that was presented. Pay particular attention to the moral of each story. State it in your own words and give life examples.

Pr Using the stories examined above, or other class curriculum, have students work in small groups to develop their own interpretation of the tales in a *hip hop* or *jazz* style. Focus on the message or moral of the story. Ask the students to provide original or recorded music as background when they present their version of the story for the class.

Cn Historically, new musical styles have usually evolved from existing styles. So it is with *hip hop*, which can be traced from the *griots* of Nigeria and the Gambia. Assist students in researching and organizing a timeline that lists musical styles of different, but sequential, time periods. Listen to examples of the various styles and look for similarities and differences.

Cr Instrumental music can also tell a story through *tone, pitch, rhythm, melody* and *harmony*. Listen to a variety of musical selections (*jazz, rock, classical, marches*) that have no lyrics. Imagine and tell, or write, a story whose events could have inspired the music you heard.

Re Some companies use *hip hop* music in commercials. Ask students to look for examples to discuss. How is *hip hop* used in commercials? (repetition, rhythmic, attention-getting language.) Why are companies using *hip hop* to sell their products? Who are they trying to reach? Name companies that may use, or probably will not use, *hip hop* to sell their products. Discuss why or why not.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Ehrhardt, Karen. *This Jazz Man*. Harcourt Books, 2015.

Tolan, Sandy. *Children of the Stone: The Power of Music in a Hard Land*. Bloomsbury USA, 2016.

Weatherford, Carole; Sean Qualls, Illustrator. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant—A Song of John Coltrane*. Henry Holt & Co, 2008.

"Chic Street Man." The Music Center, The Music Center, www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/Chic-Street-Man/.