

# URBANGATEWAYS

## SONGS AND RHYTHMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

CAROL WESTON



### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

*Songs and Rhythms*, designed especially for younger students with little exposure to music, introduces students to the basic concepts of singing along, clapping to a rhythm, and rhyming words in a song. Students sing along, clapping and moving to both familiar and new songs, sometimes accompanying Carol on small instruments she brings with her. She also introduces the guitar and banjo, completing this introduction to music with discussions of singing, rhythm, and playing instruments.

Children have the opportunity to use rhyming words to enhance their verbal skills and increase their cognitive development, and to gain self-awareness through their active participation in familiar songs, rhythms, and body movements.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- PA system OR 1 microphone with stand
- 1 large sturdy table OR 1 small table and 2 desks

### MEET THE ARTIST

Carol Weston, a teacher who now educates by performing, has extensive experience performing for children. She has conducted music workshops for people working with children, taught guitar classes to teachers for classroom use, and is currently a guitar instructor at the Old Town School of Folk Music.

Carol has also presented musical programs for school children throughout the Midwest, and performed as a singer for adults in such clubs as the Drake Hotel's Avenue One and the Lake Point Tower Club in Chicago and the Carlton Club at the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

## CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

All the pieces in this program are strongly rhythmic, traditional American folk ballads. The verses of the songs all follow regular patterns of rhythm and rhyme. Rhythm and rhyme are taught through songs, demonstration, and sing-along and clap-along activities. Carol sings three main types of songs:

- 1. Fill-in-the-blank puzzles.** Carol will ask for a color, and then a word that rhymes with that color, and she will put both words into the verses of the song. Older students will have the opportunity to guess the right color based on the preceding rhyme (for example, she will sing “I lost my shoe, and it was \_\_\_\_,” at which point students can guess “blue”).
- 2. Response songs.** Carol plays and sings a verse that asks the students to clap at the right time, and then to stamp their feet at the right time, and then to wiggle at the right time, and so on.
- 3. Cumulative songs.** As Carol sings the verses get longer and longer, accumulating the words from previous verses. One common example of a cumulative song is *I Know An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly*.

On stage, Carol plays the banjo and the guitar, which are acoustic string instruments. Her guitar and banjo have several parts in common. Each has a body, or sound box. The banjo’s sound box is round and looks like a small drum, while the guitar has a larger, curved sound box. The guitar and banjo also both have a neck, a head, and strings. The neck is the skinny part along which Carol’s other hand runs to make the strings tighter or looser to change the pitch. The head is the top of the instrument, where the strings are connected to little screws that she turns to tune the instrument. She also provides other basic instruments for children to play along with her at the end of her performance. The kazoo, tambourine, rhythm sticks, and mbira (thumb piano) are all incorporated into a big finale.

Finally, Carol introduces students to the limberjack, a doll that dances rhythmically on a paddle. The limberjack, like all the basic instruments and songs she uses in her performance, comes from American traditions that can still be seen in Appalachia and other rural areas of the country.

## Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

### Music Making

#### Sing (IL 25A, 26B; Nat’l 1)

- Sing songs in a group and demonstrate ability to sing loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow.

### Interpretation & Evaluation:

#### Listen and Describe (IL 25A, 26A, 27A; Nat’l 6)

- Identify and exhibit appropriate audience behavior for listening to music.
- Listen to musical selections and determine the mood of the music (happy vs. sad).

### Making Connections

#### Cultural (IL 26B, 27A; Nat’l 9)

- Listen to musical excerpts and identify how music contributes to celebrations.

## RESOURCES

### Books:

*The Cat Came Back* by Fred Penner  
*Jenny Jenkins* by Jerry Garcia and David Grisman  
*Juba This and Juba That* by Helaine Becker

### Music / Recordings:

Anything by Ella Jenkins – good for rhythms, singing along and student participation

## SHOW INTRODUCTION

On the day of the performance, please have someone read the following introduction when welcoming the performers onstage. “Today we have a show from Urban Gateways. Carol Weston presents *Songs and Rhythms for Young Children*. She is here today to sing and teach us some new songs. Please give her your full attention, and welcome Ms. Carol Weston to the stage.”

## VOCABULARY

### ACOUSTIC

Not amplified; acoustic instruments play on their own and do not need electricity

### APPALACHIA

An area in America around the Appalachian Mountains where people from the British Isles settled

### BANJO

An instrument that has a round body, a long neck, and five strings played by plucking the strings

### BEAT

The pronounced rhythm that is the characteristic driving force in jazz or rock music

### BRITISH ISLES

England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, countries on two islands just off Europe

### FOLK MUSIC/FOLK SONG

In America, the term folk songs often refers to the ones from Appalachia

### GUITAR

A guitar is played by plucking or strumming the strings; some kinds of guitars use electricity

### HEAD

The top of a string instrument where the strings are attached

### LIMBERJACK

A doll that dances rhythmically on a paddle; limberjacks are a part of the Appalachian culture

### MBIRA

Thumb-piano; the mbira was originally an African instrument but the folk culture of Appalachia started using it as well

### MELODY

A sweet or agreeable arrangement of sounds

### NECK

The long, skinny part of a string instrument, along which a performer runs his/her hands to change the string's tightness

### RHYME

Matching of words that sound alike

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

- Choose a simple, familiar children's song and have students create a new verse for it or change some of the rhyming words to see what they can create.
- Echo-clapping: clap a simple rhythm such as: short, short, long, long and have students clap (echo) it back to you. Have students create rhythms. Post them on the board and have class echo it back.
- Have some rhyming word fun with colors. Have students find words to rhyme with various colors. Have them listen for rhyming words in any stories or poems read to them.
- Show pictures of a variety of instruments both acoustic and electric such as the guitar (acoustic and electric) a violin, a banjo, a piano, drums, tambourines, triangles, etc.

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

- Read the story *The Cat Came Back* and discuss how the story is a little different from the song.
- Have students create a new verse for the song and include rhyming words.
- Do more echo clapping with students.
- Read the story of *Jenny Jenkins*. Have students find a rhyming word to go with the color they suggest.
- Create a simple "home-made" instrument to use as they sing some familiar songs or listen to recordings with an obvious, strong beat.