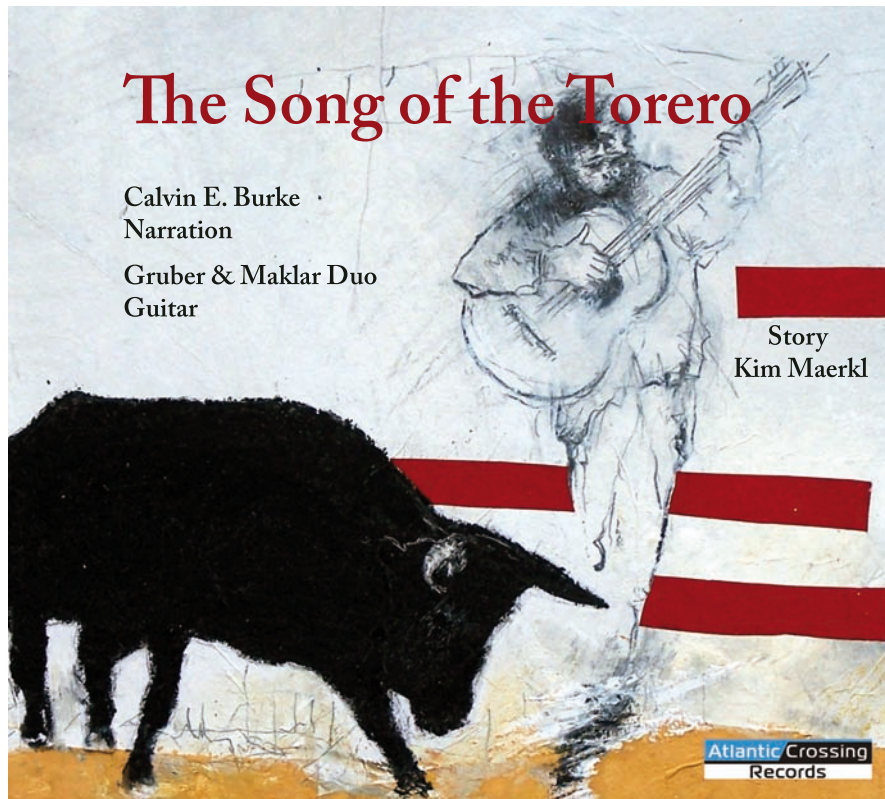


Teacher's Guide

The Song of the Torero

Story: Kim Maerkl

Music: Granados, Rodrigo, de Falla, Albéniz, Llobet



The Song of the Torero tells of the passion Bernardo's grandfather has for the guitar. Bernardo loves to visit his grandfather who lives in a stone house perched on a hilltop near Barcelona. The boy adores hearing stories from his grandfather's childhood, and is mesmerized by his music. One day while strolling through the hills, grandfather reveals an amazing secret.

The Song of the Torero is an unforgettable story that embraces the extraordinary beauty of the guitar, and explores the basic question of life's destiny.

The drama and excitement of the Spanish guitar repertoire is interwoven with the narrative and provides children with a memorable introduction to the classical guitar.

“Music fulfills an important educational function because, above all, it cultivates the spirit.”

John Williams-Guitarist

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Guitar

The Guitar is a stringed instrument that makes music from the vibration of its strings when they are plucked or strummed. There are many different types of guitar, but the classical guitar, also known as the Spanish guitar is the instrument you hear on this CD. The name guitar comes from the Spanish word *guitarra*. The classical guitar has six strings.

Listen to the CD and Discuss the Story

Where does Bernardo's grandfather live?

Barcelona

What did Bernardo's grandfather and his friend Carlos enjoy doing?

Playing their guitars together

When Bernardo's grandfather was a boy, his father wished for him to become a torero. What is a torero?

A Bullfighter

How did the picadors enter the ring?

On Horseback

Can you name some of the participants in a bullfight?

Matadors, Picadors, Banderillas, Torero

Bernardo's grandfather did not want to fight the bull, but he did enjoy one of the training exercises. What was the task he enjoyed?

Practicing with the cape

What instrument announces the bullfight?

The trumpet

One day Carlos suggested an extraordinary activity. What was it?

Playing music for the bulls

Why did Bernardo's grandfather not want to attend the school for toreros?

He wanted to be a musician

When it was time for Bernardo's grandfather to fight the bull, what did he do?

He stood motionless in the arena. Carlos brought him his guitar and then played for the bull.

How did the bull react?

He lowered himself to the ground and listened to the music.

Did Bernardo's grandfather become a bullfighter?

No, he became a musician

Discuss with the children their dreams for the future. What would they do if they were required to pursue a profession that they did not like? Discuss the importance of pursuing a passion in life.

Discuss the Music

What is a composer?

A person who creates music.

The music on the CD is from great the Spanish composers:

Joaquin Rodrigo (1922-1987) was a Spanish composer and pianist. His music was among the most popular of the 20th century. He went blind at the age of three after having diphtheria. He made the guitar an important instrument in classical music and composed one of the most famous concertos for guitar.

Enrique Granados (1867 –1916) was a Spanish composer of classical music and a pianist. He is sometimes called the Chopin of Spain because his music is very passionate and virtuosic.

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) was a famous Spanish composer and virtuoso pianist. He was also a child prodigy. He had a distinguished Spanish style. He showed off tricks such as playing with his back to the piano or playing with a cloth covering the keyboard.

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) was an important Spanish composer. He once said, "The guitar is the instrument most complete and richest in its harmonic and polyphonic possibilities."

Miguel Llobet (1878 –1938) was a classical guitarist, born in Barcelona Spain. He was a renowned guitar virtuoso and gave many concerts. He was also a composer.

Have the children choose their favorite composer and learn more about them at home. Ask them to write a few sentences about their favorite Spanish composer and read them to the class.

How does a guitar produce a sound?

A sound is produced by plucking or strumming the strings.

Did you like the music on the CD? Did the music portray the mood of the story? What was your favorite piece and why?

How many guitars do you hear on the CD?

Two

What do you feel when listening to this music?

What other types of music can the guitar play?

Pop, rock, jazz, country and folk

What kind of music do you listen to? Have the students discuss their favorite music and describe why they like it.

Vocabulary Words: Discuss their meaning

Barcelona

Ritual

Torero - Bullfighter

Olé - Bravo

Vineyards

Plaza del Toros – a bullring

Arena

Embroidery

Muleta – matador’s stick with red cloth attached

Worksheets

Map of Spain - Find Barcelona

Draw a Scene from the Story or Draw a Scene Inspired by the Music

Facts About the Guitar

Be a Music Critic

Parts of The Guitar

Learn to be a great narrator! The story manuscript is included.

Guitar Poster

Find Barcelona on the map of Spain



Spain is located on the continent of _____.

Draw a scene from the story that includes a guitar.

Facts about The Guitar

The Guitar is a stringed instrument that makes music from the vibration of its strings when they are plucked or strummed.

There are many different types of guitar, but the classical guitar, also known as the Spanish guitar is the instrument you hear on this CD.

The name guitar comes from the Spanish word guitarra.

The classical guitar has six strings.

The guitar can play many different kinds of music: classical, jazz, folk, country, rock and pop.

Parts of the guitar are described like the human body: head, neck, and body.

The neck of the guitar has many lines on it called frets. They change the pitch of the string like keys on a piano.

All traditional types of guitar have a body which is hollow. This type of guitar is called acoustic.

Starting in the 1930s, people started making and playing guitars that used electricity and amplifiers to control the loudness. These guitars, are called *electric guitars*.

There have been instruments like the guitar for at least 5,000 years.

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Spanish guitar six electric guitars plucked acoustic 5,000

guitarra frets jazz neck

The Guitar is a stringed instrument that makes music from the vibration of its strings when they are _____ or strummed.

There are many different types of guitar, but the classical guitar, also known as the _____ is the instrument you hear on this CD.

The name guitar comes from the Spanish word _____.

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There have been instruments like the guitar for at least _____ years.

Parts of the Guitar



Draw a guitar and name five of its parts.

Narration

Narrating a story is an art.

What makes a great narrator:

- A narrator should draw the listener into the story by speaking slowly and clearly.
- A narrator must use correct pronunciation for all the words in the story.
- A narrator should be able speak at many different volumes from soft to loud. The words must come to life and should be spoken expressively.
- A narrator should hold the attention of the listener through his interpretation of the words. We must hear the words smiling or crying. The mood of the story must be expressed through inflections in the voice.
- Use a colored pen to write instructions above the words in the story: soft, loud, fast, slow, happy, sad, angry. This will help you to remember to speak expressively when narrating in front of an audience.

What did you like or dislike about the narrator on the CD?

Print the story for each child and have the students take turns narrating a few paragraphs of the story.

The Song of the Torero

Kim Maerkl

When I was a boy, I loved to visit my grandfather. He lived alone in a stone house perched on a hilltop near Barcelona. The bus tossed me out at the bottom of the slope, and I climbed the winding gravel road to my grandfather's house. Always, after the last bend in the road I began to run. My grandfather sat on the front stoop waiting for me, his face wearing a radiant smile. I dropped my backpack, jumped into his lap, and hugged him tightly. Then, as our ritual demanded I went inside, gently lifted his guitar from its case and brought the instrument to my grandfather. The wonder of our weekends began with him playing for me. I sat cross-legged on the dusty ground in front of my wrinkled, beautiful grandfather and the music danced around us in the warmth of the dawn.

After that song, the day unfolded with a magic that still lingers within me. Simple things, like going for a walk were filled with wonder when done with grandfather. We liked to wander through the olive fields trying to guess the age of the old trees. The neighbor's goats roamed around the gnarled trunks and came to nuzzle our pockets for the stale bread we brought just for them. Our hike continued along the paths of the hillside at a pace just perfect for a boy and an old man. Grandfather was never in a hurry, I always had time to examine the insects which happened to come our way, or to collect sticks which we would later whittle on the front stoop. The best part of the day was our arrival at the lake. We'd take off our shoes and dangle our feet in the cool water. Then, in his hushed and raspy voice grandfather would tell me a story. I sat as still as the rock beneath me and listened.

"Bernardo, when I was a boy, my father decided that I should become a torero."

I shook my head in disbelief, "You grandfather, a bullfighter, but you're a musician."

The old man drew nearer to me and whispered, "Yes, I am, but my father didn't accept that for a long time." And then, he plunged into the biggest secret of his life.

Did you like the piece Bernardo! That was me and my best friend Carlos. Each night we would meet at the piazza to play our guitars. The notes spilled onto the stones and echoed off the walls of the buildings. People threw coins into our caps, but that was not why we played. We played for the sheer joy of it. We played to enchant and thrill our audience. Music consumed our thoughts and nourished our hearts. Listen Bernardo. This was our favorite piece when we were boys.

One morning my father stood in the doorway of my room and said, "I have some very good news, I have enrolled you in the school for toreros, you will be a great matador! The lessons begin tomorrow." As you can imagine I was horrified and begged him to change his mind, but he would not be swayed. I was a musician and bullfighting held no magic for me. Dread gripped me the next day as

I approached the training grounds. The teachers sensed my distress, and this made them even more determined to make me into a bullfighter. At least, there was one lesson I truly enjoyed, our exercises with the big red capa. I learned to make the cloth dance around my body like a giant bird. I heard music in my head, and the cape followed the rhythm of my thoughts.

Yes Bernardo, I liked making the cape dance but I did not want to use it to tease the bull, and I surely did not want to kill the bull. But, I simply had no choice, my father's dreams were bigger than mine. When I was eight, he took me to my first bullfight. The opening ceremony was exciting and impressive. A band of musicians in elaborate costumes paraded around the ring playing music that sounded something like this.

The musicians were followed by the matadors and banderillas dressed in stunning costumes and riding on powerful and elegant horses. They were accompanied by picadors on horseback carrying long lances. Shouts of adoration and delight filled the stadium. When the procession stopped, the first matador and his team prepared to fight. The president of the bullring stood up, threw his keys into the arena and a guard unlocked the gate. The bull charged into the ring. He pawed the ground then bolted at the red cape. The matador swept it to the side in one swift motion. The torero, the cape, and the bull danced around the ring, their bodies a magnificent ballet of energy and elegance. The show was spectacular until the picador lodged his lance into the neck of the animal. Deafening shouts of Olé rose from the crowd. I pulled my cap down low so my father would not see that I had closed my eyes. I wished for it to end.

That night huddled on the floor in a corner of my room I played my guitar, its gentle sound comforted me.

Only Carlos knew how I suffered. One night after playing in the piazza he began to laugh, "Bernardo, take me to the bulls of your torero school," he said excitedly.

We stared at each other with eyes full of mischief, fastened our guitars to our backs, and ran. Our hearts were racing when we arrived at the stables. A full moon bulged in the sky and lighted our path as we dashed along the wall and climbed through the window of an empty stall. Dozens of shiny eyes peered at us from the shadows. A few of the animals stomped and snorted, but did not look at all fierce.

"Bernardo, we will now play for the bulls," whispered Carlos excitedly. I looked at him bewildered, but reached for my guitar. My friend did the same, and together we strolled down the straw covered corridor of the barn. We began to play, and I found myself smiling at the bulls as the music whirled around the room.

The animals were very still, and when we finished playing I was stunned and indescribably happy. Carlos shook his head and laughed, “They liked it.”

From then on we played every night for our bulls. Carlos and I never talked about it, but we secretly believed that the bulls eagerly awaited the music as much as we did. We even began composing songs for them. Listen to the lullaby we wrote just for the bulls.

One night I arrived at the piazza with my head hanging. I did not bring my guitar. “What is wrong,” my friend asked gently.

“Tomorrow will be my first bullfight, and I have been chosen to be one of the matadors. I can’t believe it Carlos, I have been pushing the reality of a bullfight out of my mind, but now the time has come.”

My friend understood that words could not comfort me, and we wandered the streets in silence. We strolled beyond the buildings of the town to the quiet of the vineyards. I lay down on the damp ground and wished I could be as far away as the stars. “You can do it,” Carlos whispered and then he played his guitar for me. The music embraced me, like a velvet blanket.

The next morning the Plaza de Toros was filled with people, an enthusiastic crowd always came to see the new generation of Spain’s future bullfighters. I stepped into the dressing room and put on my costume, but I could not look in the mirror. I did not want to see the face of the stranger I had become that day. The room was electrified with the energy and impatience of the young matadors, picador and banderillas, but my head throbbed with the effort of hiding all the feelings simmering inside me.

When we entered the arena, the crowd cheered. Proudly we paraded around the stadium in our lavish suits embroidered with silver and golden threads, our costumes glimmered in the sunlight. When the procession was finished, a trumpet announced the first bullfight. I was assigned to be the last matador of the day, and I nervously waited for the madness to end.

When it was my turn to fight the bull I twirled my muleta as I entered the ring. My breath caught in my throat, and I was trembling, but my first efforts with the cape were deft and well appreciated. The bull charged and brushed my leg as he passed angrily beneath the cloth. The crowd roared and in the next moment it was as if I had been struck by lightning, I was paralyzed, my arms would simply not move. The bull grunted and pawed at the earth kicking up a little cloud of dust. I was frozen and felt like a fool, but my body remained rigid. The audience went wild and shouted for me to continue. The bull snorted, lowered his head, and aimed his horns directly at me. A picador galloped to my rescue, and as he lifted his lance, we heard music. The bull heard it too because he stood very still and raised his head to listen. The picador glared in disbelief as Carlos walked into the ring playing his guitar. The crowd fell silent. My friend stopped in front of me and slowly turned around so I could lift

my guitar from his back. Everyone gasped as I dropped the cape and placed the strap around my neck. We filled the stadium with music, and the audience fell into a deep and curious silence. The bull took a few soft steps, flexed his right leg, and slowly lowered himself to the ground.

When the last note drifted away on the wind, an unnatural silence hung in the air. Suddenly, a man threw his head back and roared with laughter. He clapped and bellowed his approval and the timbre of his voice was so inviting the crowd joined him. Carlos raised his fist triumphantly, and I raised my guitar high above my head.

The next day our picture was on the front page of the local paper. Of course, I was thrown out of the torero school, but the bull was saved. A bull that loved music was deemed so special that he would never be used in the ring again. Carlos and I had a secret little laugh about that one, because we knew that all the bulls loved music.

It took a long time for my father to forgive me, but eventually he did, and I became a musician.

Grandfather and I walked home from the lake, and his astonishing story spun endlessly in my mind. Now, I did not only carry grandfather's name, but also his secret. That night, before going to bed, grandfather gave me the photograph and newspaper clipping from his first and last bullfight. I framed it and put it on my night stand. Each night I look at the yellowed and brittle paper and remember my grandfather. In my dreams, I can hear his guitar.

