

Columbus

Eight Songs for Primary Schools

by

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Introduction

The eight songs of "Columbus" tell the story of Christopher Columbus and how and why he undertook his voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492.

The lyrics of the songs all conform to the newest understandings of the Columbus expedition (rather than the previously-held ideas about proving the world was round, etc.) but they do inevitably leave gaps in the story. In performance, therefore, the songs should be ideally interspersed with drama and/or readings of the children's own work to fill in the gaps and to amplify the various aspects of the narrative.

In this enjoyable way, it is hoped that children will enjoy learning The history as well as covering much of the requirements of the UK National Curriculum for music, especially those aspects concerning preparation of an participation in performance.

The songs cover the following subjects:

1. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS - his origins, family and education.
2. HAVE YOU HEARD? - reaction of people to hearing of Columbus's plans to sail west to find India and Japan.
3. PERSUASION - three examples of Columbus's tour of European capitals to try to win royal support for his venture, unsuccessfully.
4. QUEEN ISABELLA - Columbus's dismay at not gaining support and his eventual introduction to Queen Isabella and her provision of ships and men.
5. SHANTY - Columbus using the Queen's authority to demand 3 ships and 90 sailors from the town of Palos.
6. HYMN - an interlude which expresses a little of the Catholic faith of the time in relation to this voyage.
7. LIFE AT SEA - life on board ship in all its toughness and horror.
8. YOU SAILED FOR DAYS - an acknowledgement of where Columbus sailed to, but questioning whether he really achieved what he wanted to – a summing up.