



Music is Language / Language is Music

WHO AM I?

My name is Elise Witt. I was born in Bern, the capital of Switzerland. I speak five languages fluently and sing in at least a dozen more. All my life, I have been collecting songs from many cultures. I make my living travelling around the world concertizing and teaching, playing at places as diverse as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and in Latin America and Europe as well. I am also a songwriter and have eleven recordings.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

I will be working with your class to show you how much easier it is to learn a foreign language through song. When we learn songs from other countries, we learn to appreciate what makes each culture different, special, and unique. We also see how music is universal. It is a bridge that brings us together as one human family. I will also give you some fun tips on pronunciation and grammar. In addition to learning songs in the language you are studying we may learn a song or two in another language. You'll be amazed how much easier it gets as you learn more languages. Some of the languages I sing in are Spanish, French, Kikongo, Italian, Kiswahili, French, Russian, Japanese, German, Sign Language, and English. Music is also a language and it is used by people all over the world. So get ready for a musical trip around the world!



Vocabulary

CULTURE - how a group of people expresses itself. We do this through songs, stories, dance, language, even food.

GUMBO - The U.S. is a Gumbo because it has citizens from many countries. Gumbo is a Louisiana stew made of rice, corn, okra, tomatoes, hot peppers, onions, and anything else you might have on hand to toss in. Each item maintains its own unique character and flavor, yet also combines with the others to make an interesting mix.

FOLK MUSIC - "Folks" means people. So "folk music" just means *peoples' music*. It is songs that are passed along by friends and family over the years. Songs express how we feel. Folk songs can tell the story of a place or a family or a particular event. They tell us about our history.

MULTI-LINGUAL (bi-, tri-) - *Multi* means "many"; *lingual* means "languages." A multi-lingual person speaks many languages.

IMPROVISE - to make it up as you go along; to use information you already have to find a new answer or to create a new idea. You can improvise in music (take a solo), and also in life.

HARMONY - (In music) two or more musical lines that when sung or played together make a pleasing sound. (In life) two or more people or things or cultures that are different but live together in peace (like gumbo!).

CALL & RESPONSE - a musical form often used in Africa where someone sings a line or phrase and the group responds by echoing it back. You will hear this used a lot in our session.

SIGN LANGUAGE - the language used by people who are deaf or hearing impaired. During our session you will learn some sign language, too.

DIPHTHONG - a vowel made up of two or more sounds eg. day, oh

Thank You

When we travel to another country it is always nice to learn at least some of the language spoken there. Here's how to say "thank you" in:

CHINESE	Hse Hse	(shay-shay)
FRENCH	Merci	(mare-SEE)
ITALIAN	Grazie	(GRAH-tsee-ay)
SPANISH	Gracias	(GRAH-see-ahss)
GERMAN	Danke	(DUNK-uh)
KISWAHILI	Asante Sana	(ah-SAHN-tay SAH-nah)
GREEK	Ίfharisto	(cef-ha-ree-STO)
	Благодаря	
BULGARIAN	Blagodarya	(blah-go-DAR-yah)
FINNISH	Kiitos	(KEE-tohs)
NORWEGIAN	Takk	(tahk)
RUSSIAN	Spasiba	(spah-SEE-ba)
	धन्यवाद	
POLISH	Dziekuje	(jen-KOO-yeh)
PORTUGUESE	Obrigado	(aw-bree-GAH-doh)
HINDI	Shukria	(SHOO-kree-ah)
VIETNAMESE	Gamöd	(gahm-erd)
HEBREW	Toda roba	(toh-DAH rah-BAH)
XHOSA	Kosi	(NGOH-see)
ARABIC	Shukran	(shoo-krahn)



SONGS

Here are some of the songs you will hear me sing and learn to sing yourselves. They come from different cultural contexts and I will tell you the story of each song before we learn it. Don't be surprised if I also throw in a song in Kiswahili (spoken in Eastern Africa), Japanese, or Italian. Once you've learned a new language, each subsequent one is easier.

Soon you will all be multi-lingual wonders!

Español

- Alicheta's Dream
(The Mosquito Song)
- De Colores
- Gracias A La Vida
- Guantanamera
- El Gato
- Somos El Barco
- Volver A Los Diecisiete
- Yo Solo Quiero
- Abran La Ventana
- La Media Luna

Spanish

Français

- À La Claire Fontaine
- Au Claire De La Lune
- Au Revoir Les Bateaux
- Carillon de Vendôme
- Ouvrez La Fenêtre
- Le Chat
- Nous Sommes Les Mêmes
- Vent Fin, Vent Du Matin
- La Vie En Rose
- V'la Le Bon Vent

French



Letters

I enjoy hearing students' reactions to my program. Here are some questions:

- Do you have any new ideas about language as a result of the session?
What are they?
- What was your favorite song? Why?
- What was your least favorite song? Why?
- What other language(s) would you like to learn?
- Other comments?

Send your letters to me at the address below. Many thanks!



Deutsch

- Die Gedanken Sind Frei
- Lili Marlen
- Meine Oma Fährt im
Hühnerstall Motorrad
- Das Nebelfräuli
- Alles Schweiget
- Verkehrte Welt
- Ich Hab' Noch Einen Koffer
In Berlin
- Oeffnet die Fenster
- Du Liegst Mir Im Herzen

German



CD'S

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