



ILLINOIS
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Ken Lam Music Director

MUSIC MATTERS! ONLINE – A Virtual World Tour of Music for Children

**A joint project of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the Illinois
Symphony Orchestra Guild of Bloomington-Normal**

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The Illinois Symphony Orchestra and ISO Guild and Bloomington-Normal

The Illinois Symphony Orchestra is at home in two cities located 1.5 hours from each other: Bloomington-Normal, Illinois and Springfield, Illinois. There is a volunteer guild in each city. Bloomington-Normal has a population of approximately 100,000. The Illinois Symphony Orchestra Guild of Bloomington-Normal has approximately 125 members.



Project Background and Goals

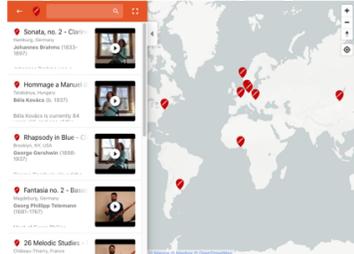
Like many organizations around the country, we struggled with how to fulfill our education mission when in-person schooling ended and our musicians were no longer able to make school visits. A solution was to move our in-person school visit program called Music Matters! to an online format that would both engage students and provide a quality education experience equal to the in-person program. The in-school Music Matters! program featured musicians performing music from countries around the world and talking to the students about the music and composers whose music they performed. The musicians used a map in the classroom to show the countries from which the music or composers came. They also talked a little about learning their instrument and their career as a professional musician.

Project Description

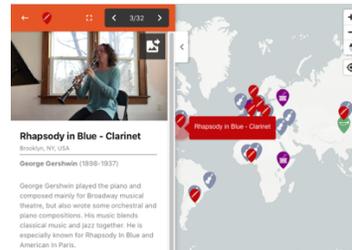
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In the online Music Matters! program students, teachers, or parents click on a specific location on a world map or on a specific instrument family to bring up a performance video and text about the music being played. The screen shot at the left shows the opening screen of the online Music Matters! program. The program can be found at <https://www.ilsymphony.org/education-community/music-matters/>



A Music Matters screen shot after choosing a specific instrument family



A Music Matters screen shot after choosing a specific composition

Collaborations

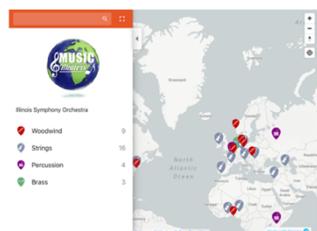
Creating the internet-based program was a collaborative effort of the ISO’s Assistant Conductor, Logan Campbell, ISO musicians, volunteers from the ISO Guild. Maestro Campbell put together the online program, orchestra musicians made videos of their performances, and the ISO Guild volunteers wrote text about the music and composers to accompany the videos.

Project Timeline

Planning began in December 2020 with the choice of software with which to create the program. Mapme was chosen because of its capabilities, ease of use, and affordability. It required no special programming skills yet was able to create the clickable map to link to the musician videos and accompanying text. During the next few months, orchestra members made their videos and ISO Guild members wrote the accompanying text. Logan Campbell put it all together and the program launched in March 2021.

Volunteer Involvement

The orchestra’s VP for Education and Community Engagement had a background in information technology and identified Mapme for the project. Because many of the ISO Guild members are retired teachers and/or parents they were familiar with writing for children and enjoyed working with the Assistant Conductor on this project. Volunteers had always been a part of the Music Matters! school visits and it was important to have their involvement in the online project as well. Six ISO Guild members wrote the text for approximately 30 musician videos.



Financial Information

The only costs for this project were the \$470/year non-profit organization fee for Mapme and the musician fees for their time. Information about Mapme is on the company's website Mapme.com

Future Plans

This past spring, most of the schools allowed school visits and the musicians were pleased to return to the classroom. Feedback from teachers, however, showed that they liked the online school visits in addition to the live visits. With the online program they could introduce specific music and instrument families when they wanted. They weren't dependent upon our schedule. As a result of feedback like this, we will be continuing both formats and look forward to including new content with holiday songs from around the world.