



From Ohio With Love Performance Guide

When folk musician and songwriter Brother Hill began collaborating with Ukrainian musicians in 2019, he had no idea of the humanitarian mission that lay ahead. In a whirlwind of original and traditional music, Brother Hill and Amedee Royer share enthralling stories of using folk music as a tool to bridge cultures and bring people together.

This performance guide includes:

- Artist bios
- A warmup activity and discussion prompt
- Background information
- Key words & phrases
- Suggested Q & A questions
- Post-show discussion questions
- Student postcard activity
- Related Ohio Learning Standards

BEFORE THE SHOW

Meet the Artists



Brett Hill (aka Brother Hill) is a folk musician, singer, songwriter, and humanitarian volunteer from Dayton, Ohio, currently splitting his time between Athens, Ohio, Krakow, Poland, and Lviv, Ukraine. His family roots go 6-7 generations back into Appalachia, and his goal is to shine light on ancestral folk traditions and how they define us today. Hill performs as frontman in the Appalachian folk quintet Hill Spirits and is an American representative of international folk project “Slavalachia,” which has allied Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Appalachian folk traditions since 2019 to promote cultural solidarity and forge new bridges for creative cultural expression.

The “From Ohio With Love” campaign was founded by Hill and fellow musician Benya Stewart within the first week of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Benefit concerts have supported the



hand-delivery of essential tactical medical supplies to mobilized units across the frontlines. Hill has also performed for soldiers preparing for and recovering from battle. His more recent journeys to Ukraine have



included performing at therapeutic retreats for soldiers and civilians who have been affected by war trauma, in collaboration with Creative Residence MC6 in the Carpathian Mountains. The aim of Hill’s humanitarian work is to raise Ukrainian cultural awareness abroad and to create healing cultural events inside Ukraine.

Find out more about Brother Hill and “From Ohio With Love” resources here:

<https://linktr.ee/fromohiowithlove>.



Amedee Royer is a singer, performer, music teacher, choral conductor and Muse alum. Amedee and Brother Hill most recently collaborated to form the Miracle Makers Children's Choir in partnership with East End Miracle Makers and Muse Machine. Amedee is overjoyed to be partnering again with her “brother from another mother.” Amedee believes preserving folk traditions, communal music making, and cultural identity helps strengthen present and future generations to live in the world with courageous kindness and empathy.

Find out more about Amedee at www.amedeeroyer.com.

Classroom Warmup

Art as Humanitarian Aid

On your own: Consider Brother Hill’s quote, “Our voices raised can soften any hardship that we face.” Then read the definition of **humanitarian aid** on page 4. Write a journal entry: What does it mean to “raise our voices” in the face of hardship? How can music help in a time of crisis?

Whole group or on your own: Read the artist timeline on pages 6-7 of this guide.

Discuss: What inspired Brett’s interest in another culture? How did that interest grow into an investment in other people’s survival?

Think While You Watch

During the performance you’ll notice that Brett uses two guitars. What impact does the instrument change have on the feeling or mood of the music?

The Ukrainian-Russian War, In Brief

From Ohio With Love is a humanitarian response by artists to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. What do you know about the war? Learn more by exploring either or both of the following short videos.

- <https://youtu.be/pz5ggW93Fis?si=8i5dIf0tpnMg4Qbk> (duration: 5:03)
This video, produced by CBC Kids News in February 2023, answers key questions about the ongoing conflict in a manner approachable for grades 6-8.
- https://youtu.be/MtIOXtxUBNo?si=IDR6ja_6lJ-8miM7 (duration: 3:36)
This video, produced by BBC News in February 2022, covers the political context of the war with a level of detail suitable for high school.

Key Words & Phrases

The following concepts and terms are helpful to understanding the in-school performance.

- **Alliance:** A union or association formed for mutual benefit of multiple parties, especially between countries or organizations.
- **Belarus:** The Republic of Belarus is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. Belarus gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

- **Appalachia:** Cultural and geographical region spanning Appalachian mountains along the eastern seaboard of the United States, from Georgia to New York, and including much of eastern Ohio. Known for its music, incredible natural environments, resource extraction, fighting spirit, fierce resistance to oppressors, and its banjo-playing, moonshine-drinking stereotypes.
- **Cultural solidarity:** The psychological sense of unity that stems from respect for and support of a culture different than one's own; a belief in the shared interests of separate cultures, classes, social, religious or ethnic groups; a fostering of cooperation with another culture for the mutual benefit of both.
- **Folk music:** A type of traditional and generally rural music that originally was passed down through families and other small social groups. Typically, folk music is learned through hearing rather than reading. Folk music is often associated with calendric or life-cycle rituals, work, games, and folk religion; folk music is also more likely to be participatory than presentational.
- **Ghost of Kyiv:** A mythical fighter pilot who supposedly shot down six or more Russian fighter jets over Kyiv in the first days of the 2022 invasion. Though it did not take long for these reports to be disproved, the legend of this character proved to be an uplifting morale boost for Ukrainians.
- **Grassroots:** A grassroots movement is one that uses the will and fervor of people in a given district, region or community as the basis for a social, political, or economic movement. Grassroots movements and organizations use collective action from a local level to implement change at local, regional, national, or international levels.
- **Humanitarian aid:** Assistance that is intended to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made and natural crises.
- **Oppression:** A situation in which people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom.
- **Protest song:** Songs that aim to send social messages and make a change in a political or social situation. Protest songs can express feelings like anger and hope while demanding action from the listener.
- **Russia:** The Russian Federation is a country spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is the largest country in the world by area, extends across eleven time zones, and shares land boundaries with fourteen countries. Russia has been militarily involved in a number of conflicts in former Soviet states and other countries, including its war with Georgia in 2008 and annexation of Crimea in 2014 from Ukraine, followed by the further annexation of four other regions in 2022 during an ongoing invasion.



➤ **Ukraine:** Ukraine* is the largest country exclusively within Europe, and the second-largest European country after Russia. Ukraine's official language is Ukrainian; Russian is also widely spoken, especially in the east and south. Ukraine gained independence in 1991 as the Soviet Union dissolved, and declared itself neutral. *Note: Not “The Ukraine”

➤ **The Ukrainian-Russian War:** The current conflict in Ukraine began on February 24,

2022, when Russian military forces entered the country from Belarus, Russia and Crimea. Prior to the invasion, there had already been eight years of conflict in eastern Ukraine between Ukrainian Government forces and Russia-backed separatists in the Donbas region, after the annexation by Russia of the Crimean Peninsula and large swathes of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

The Q & A

Artists love to answer thoughtful questions! If you are having trouble thinking of a question, here are some that are sure to be well-received.

- What is it like in Ukraine right now?
- How do you keep in touch with your friends overseas?
- Who are you inspired by?
- How did you learn to sing in another language?
- What kind of training/education did you complete?
- What’s your favorite (or least favorite) part about this work? Why?
- What advice would you have for someone wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Compose Your Question

FROM OHIO WITH LOVE TIMELINE

Timeline by Brett Hill



2019 March - Belarusian folk archivist and musician Siarzhuk Duhushau visits Athens, Ohio, and meets Brett Hill, Benjamin Stewart, and their band Hill Spirits at an epic Slavic-Appalachian musical jam after his concert. “Slavalachia” (portmanteau of “Slavic” and “Appalachian”) is shouted in celebration, and immediately plans begin to create a trans-Atlantic musical collaboration and documentary film.

2020 January - Brett and Ben travel to Belarus and Ukraine for two weeks to see the countries and experience some of their folk traditions. The first official Slavalachia performance occurs to a full house in Lviv on 16 January. Upon a writing retreat in the Carpathian Mountains, an album begins to take shape. (Brett falls in love with the city of Lviv.)

2020 March - Coronavirus lockdown restrictions prevent Slavalachia from reuniting later in the year in Belarus as planned.

2020 August - Protests break out across Belarus after the highly controversial re-election of Russian-backed Alexander Lukashenko. Slavalachia records and releases Appalachian protest song “Which Side Are You On?” with a

music video and translated lyrics in Belarusian and Ukrainian. All members of the project are soon banned from re-entering Belarus.

2021 August - Slavalachia reunites in Ukraine, writes a full album in the Carpathian Mountains, performs it the following weekend at Zaxidfest Music Festival in Lviv, and records it the following week at Shpytal Records in Ternopil.

2022 February 24 - Russia launches full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Three benefit shows are immediately organized across Ohio in Athens, Columbus, and Dayton under the name “Concerts for Ukraine”.

2022 March - \$12,000+ is raised in one weekend for Fathers Care Inc (organizing the evacuation of orphans from Kyiv) and Razom for Ukraine Emergency Medical Response.



2022 April - \$29,000+ is raised through folk concerts for emergency medical supplies for UA First Aide at five more Concerts for Ukraine across Cleveland, Dayton, Athens, and Columbus. Slavalachia album is released.

FROM OHIO WITH LOVE TIMELINE



2022 May - Brett and Ben travel to Poland to deliver supplies and perform a small European support tour across Poland and Lithuania and end up returning to Ukraine to see their friends again, perform, and conduct a music and food delivery mission to refugees and orphans in Dnipro and Nikopol.

2022 October - \$27,000+ is raised through folk concerts, now known as “From Ohio With Love,” for six duffel bags of emergency medical supplies and a Hyundai Tucson, which Brett and Ben deliver personally, alongside UA First Aid, to a frontline regiment in the nearly obliterated town of Bakhmut, 2 miles from Russian forces. There they provide their first concert for active soldiers, performing for troops being trained for the frontline by a legendary commander, who



would be tragically lost to the fight two weeks later.

2022 December - Brett visits and performs for a volunteers retreat at Creative Residence MC6 in the mountains outside Slavs’ke, Ukraine. The idea of Carpathian Spring is born.

2023 January - From Ohio With Love receives 501(c)3 tax deductible sponsorship from Creative Visions Foundation to produce creative projects within Ukraine and receives a \$15k in-kind donation that goes on to create an entire festival, purchase 700 tourniquets, as well as a boat for rescue operations in Kherson after a dam is destroyed by occupying forces and 10,000+ citizens are displaced from flooding.



2023 May - Carpathian Spring Cultural Festival occurs at MC6, highlighting the incredible works of Ukrainian musicians, visual artists, activists, journalists, and intellectuals from all corners of Ukraine who boldly resist imperialism with their art.

2023 November - Vidnova (“Restoration”/“Renewal”) occurs at MC6, a psychotherapeutic retreat for soldiers, their partners, and frontline personnel affected by war trauma.



AFTER THE SHOW

Post-Show Classroom Discussion

Discuss or write a reflection: Review the “Think While You Watch” prompt. What impact did the instrument change have on the feeling or mood of the music?

Follow-up Questions

- Is there a place you would try to help defend if it was in danger? If so, where?
- Did the performance change your mind about what folk music can sound like?
- Did the performance change your mind about how music can be used to help people?
- Why do folk traditions matter?
- In what ways can you use your own talents to create positive change in the world?

Student Survey

Share your thoughts with Muse Machine at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHM7CJS>.

Send a Postcard From Ohio With Love



Write a message of hope and solidarity to Ukrainian citizens using the template at the end of this guide. Muse Machine invites schools to deliver their postcards to the address below. Brett will take all cards received by **March 29** to Ukraine where they will be displayed at the next Carpathian Spring retreat for victims of war trauma.

Muse Machine
c/o Brett Hill
126 N. Main St., Ste. 310
Dayton, OH 45402

Try including some of the following Ukrainian phrases:

Добрий день (Dobry deyn) - “Good day”

Привіт (Privit) - “Hello”

До побачення (Doh pobachennya) - “Goodbye”

Будьмо (Bud'mo) - “Cheers”

Моє серце і думки з тобою (Moye sertse ee doom'ki z toboyu.) - “My heart and thoughts are with you.”



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To



To



-----print postcard pages back-to-back and cut here-----



FOR TEACHERS

Related Ohio Learning Standards

The following standards are linked to the artist’s performance and/or the activities in the performance guide. Teachers may be able to make additional connections.

Music

<i>Enduring Understandings: Critical and Creative Thinking, Literacy</i>	
Perceiving/Knowing/Creating (CE)	
6.3	Identify different functions and uses of music in American and other cultures.
6.6	Describe roles and skills musicians assume in various cultures and settings.
HS.I.4	Listen to and compare various musical styles from the United States, other cultures and historical periods.
HS.II.8	Describe how music reflects the social and political events of history and the role of the musician in history and culture.
Producing/Performing (PR)	
6.6	Attend live performances and demonstrate appropriate audience etiquette.
Responding/Reflecting (RE)	
6.3	Communicate the importance of music in everyday life.
7.4	Explain how and why people use and respond to music.
HS.II.3	Discuss how the purpose, meaning and value of music changes because of the impact of life experiences.
HS.III.3	Assess how elements of music are used in a work to create images or evoke emotions.

Social Studies

Contemporary World Issues: Civic Participation	<p><i>Content Statement # 5:</i> Individuals can identify, assess and evaluate world events, engage in deliberative civil debate and influence public processes to address global issues.</p> <p><i>Content Statement #7:</i> Individuals can participate through non-governmental organizations to help address humanitarian needs.</p>
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Writing

CCR Anchor Standard 4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCR Anchor Standard 10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

CCR Anchor Standard 1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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Social and Emotional Learning

Social Awareness	<p>C2: Demonstrate consideration for and contribute to the well-being of the school, community and world.</p> <p>C3: Demonstrate an awareness and respect for human dignity, including the similarities and differences of all people, groups and cultures.</p>
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