



KANATA

CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS ARTISTS
AND THEIR MUSIC

SPECIAL EDITION: TWIN FLAMES

Special Edition on the Twin Flames

Teacher Resource Guide

By Sherryl Sewepagaham

CONTENTS

Activity 1: Love Letter to Me (Elementary)	Pg 3
Activity 2: “Human” Song Exploration (Elementary & Secondary)	Pg 11
Activity 3: The Story of Ski-Tuuq (skidoo) and Qimmiq (dog) (Secondary)	Pg 18

INTRODUCTION

Teachers across Canada have expressed an interest and desire to bring to their students Indigenous resources that are authentic, respectful, culturally appropriate, meaningful, informative, and features the music of Indigenous artists in Canada. This is why MusiCounts brought together Indigenous artists and educators to create a new resource that will empower any music or social studies educator to explore contemporary Indigenous music in the classroom.

Kanata: Contemporary Indigenous Artists and their Music Teacher Resource Guide is a listening and inquiry-based resource. It is designed specifically for teachers with students in all grades in remote, rural, and urban schools across Canada, regardless of music education training or formal music background. This resource is intended to be used by teachers of all grade levels who wish to explore the music of contemporary Indigenous artists from a uniquely Indigenous perspective. Most importantly, the aim of Kanata is to introduce students to dynamic contemporary Indigenous artists from Canada whose music can be added to their favorite playlists while they learn and understand that Indigenous music is not locked in the past, but is a living, evolving practice with many diverse sounds and genres.

Twin Flames Biography

“Indie rock, synth rock, and folk pop” are how this musical husband and wife duo describe their incredible sound. Jaaji, (Inuk from Nunavik and Mohawk Kanien’keha’:ka from Kahnawake) and Chelsey June, (Métis, Algonquin, Cree and settler heritage) from Ottawa sing in English, French and Inuktitut. Their music builds bridges across cultures, continents, and styles and are celebrated for their sonic landscapes spanning Canada and the Arctic.

Jaaji (pronounced as “yah-ye”) and Chelsey’s passions include working with youth and inspiring them to dream without limitations by sharing music, cultural awareness workshops, and songwriting workshops in schools giving back to communities. They encourage youth to be change makers while sharing their own personal journeys. Twin Flames are advocates for mental health, suicide prevention, sobriety and healthy lifestyles.

Twin Flames have received numerous music nominations spanning over their musical careers, spots on Indigenous music countdowns and awards, including two 2022 Canadian Folk Music Awards for “Vocal Group of the Year” and “Indigenous Songwriters of the Year.”

For more artist biography information, visit their [website](#).

Albums

Omen (2020)

Signal Fire (2017)

Twin Flames (2016)

Jaaji and Chelsey June (2015)

Listening List

“Human ” (Single release)

“Giants” (Omen)

“Broke Down Ski’tuuq (Skidoo)”
(Signal Fire)

Introductory resources:

- Watch: [Twin Flames Up close and Personal](#)
- Read: [Five Questions With...Twin Flames](#)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: Love Letter to Me

“Taanisi means to Dance in Inuktitut, it represents the message we try to share in everything we do. Celebrate life, enjoy it, find what makes you happy. Life is too short!”

- Twin Flames

Level: Elementary

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze, reflect, and discuss song lyrics and their meanings.
- Express their own feelings and understand and respond to the feelings of others.
- Create dance movements to communicate and respond to beat in music.

Subjects and Themes

Health

Social Studies

Arts Education (Dance, Music)

Contemporary Music

Social Justice

Mental Health

Resources and Links

- [Twin Flames' song, "Giants"](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)

Pre-Activity

1. Display lyrics to “Giants” for students to view.
2. Listen to the song “Giants.” Ask students to follow along with the lyrics.
3. Discuss the important messages and words in the lyrics. Ask your students
 - a. What do you think this song is about?
 - b. How does the sound of the music make you feel? How does the sound of the music align with the song’s lyrics?
4. Consider using the following questions as discussion prompts with your class. Alternatively, you can have students think about consider these questions on their own, or respond to some of the questions in writing:
 - a. Do the lyrics spark any thoughts that are important to you?
 - b. Do you know someone who struggles sometimes with feelings of loneliness, sadness, or emptiness?
 - c. Do you sometimes feel that way?
 - d. What are ways we can reach out and support others going through difficult times?
 - e. What are ways we ourselves can reach out to others in a time of our need?
5. Think about the qualities that make you unique. Do you have special talents? What qualities about yourself make you a good friend or family member to others? What are they?

Lyrics - "Giants" by Twin Flames

Just got the news
They called me up today
I hope and I pray
That you will be okay
'Cause this life, it ain't easy
We don't get to choose
The ones that we love
The ones that we lose

[Chorus]

But you are bigger than mountains
You are taller than giants
You are braver than lions
You are, you are
You are bigger than mountains
You are taller than giants
You are braver than lions
You are, you are

[Verse 2]

And I know that you're tired
You've weathered so many storms
And I know you've been fighting
Since the day that you were born
Guess there's some kind of timeline
You can track in the sky
I'm praying for your life
Why won't you try?

[Chorus]

'Cause you are bigger than mountains
You are taller than giants
You are braver than lions
You are, you are
You are bigger than mountains
You are taller than giants
You are braver than lions
You are, you are

[Bridge]

Good days are coming
Don't leave too soon
The flower you're becoming
Needs time to bloom
Don't leave too soon.

[Chorus]

'Cause you are bigger than mountains
You are taller than giants
You are braver than lions
You are, you are
You are bigger than mountains
You are taller than giants
You are braver than lions
You are, you are

Main Activity

- Instruct your students to write a thank you letter to themselves, using the template provided below. Tuck it away in a safe place and read it out loud to yourself when you are feeling down. Feel free to write a fresh, new letter to yourself when you need to.

Letter Template

<p>Date _____</p> <p>Dear _____ (your name):</p> <p>Thank you for being you because you are AHH-MAZING! Thank you for hanging in there.</p> <p>Sometimes I feel down, sad, and low. Sometimes I feel anxiety, panic, scared, depressed, and lonely. We are humans feeling many different emotions. Sometimes I feel:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>I am a good person, a friend, and a family member because of qualities such as:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

I am human. I am unique. I have many gifts and talents such as:

I can help myself to feel better by doing things I enjoy such as:

My favorite songs or artists you listen to that boost up my mood or meet me where I'm at are:

I can help others who feel this way by:

Many people in this world have experienced loss or grief, especially during the pandemic and lockdown. We all experienced loss and isolation in some way, and it did not feel good. Many people felt alone and scared. Many lost loved ones. Maybe you did too.

I should never feel ashamed about or hide my feelings. Feelings are what makes us

human. Even when I feel alone, I am not alone. There are people who care about me, even though they may not always show it. Other kids feel similar emotions I have. It's important to never bury my emotions deep inside for too long because I care about ME. I am beautiful! I am important to this world!

Reach out to others when I am feeling down. I can:

- Talk to a teacher, a school counselor, an Elder, or a trusted adult at school.
- Talk to a parent, family member, or a trusted friend.
- Call the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868.

Read this letter when I need a boost of self-care and self-love. This letter is a reminder to myself to take care of ME because I love ME!

Sincerely,

(your name)

Post-Activity #1: Reflection

- Ask your students to think about how it felt to write their emotions on paper.
- Have a conversation with your students about the similarities between their letter, and the song “Human” by the Twin Flames.
- From there, you can facilitate a conversation about how music can be a unique tool to help everyone work through difficult times. Consider asking your class:
 - How can sad music have a positive impact? How can sad music help people heal?

Post-Activity #2: A Blessing to Yourself

- Have your students:
 - Quietly or silently read their letters to themselves with [“Giants \(Reprise\)”](#) playing in the background.
 - Ask your students to visualize singing this song of hope and support to someone you deeply care about who is going through a difficult time.

ACTIVITY 2: “Human” Song Exploration

“In today’s society, everything and everyone is divided by labels. With “Human”, we want to break that pattern and help people connect no matter their background. We wrote this song to celebrate our languages, our cultures and share with the world how critical it is to build relationships and create allies. The highest truth of all is that we are all human sharing this mother earth.” ~ Twin Flames

Level: Elementary and Secondary

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Explore and discuss endangered languages and impacts of language loss.
- Explore singing song lyrics in Inuktitut.
- Identify the role cultural music can play in telling stories and bringing social justice awareness.
- Create ways to advocate for the preservation of Indigenous languages.

Subjects and Themes:

Social Studies
Arts Education
Human Rights

Social Justice
Language Loss and Death

Resources and Links:

1. [Human](#) by Twin Flames
2. [Twin Flames in the Making of "Human" Mini Doc](#)
3. [CBC Article on the story behind “Human,” the official Anthem for the Year of Indigenous Languages.](#)
4. Canadian Commission for UNESCO: [Student Guide on Indigenous Languages](#)
5. [Controversies Around Endangered Indigenous Languages](#)
6. [The Silent Genocide: Aboriginal Language Loss FAQ](#)

Activity Part 1

1. As a class watch [Twin Flames in the Making of "Human" Mini Doc](#) while paying special attention to how the band members talk about their advocacy of Indigenous languages and how they incorporate their language in their music.
2. Have your students respond to the following questions in small groups, in writing, or in a class-wide discussion:
 - a. What is the impact of including both Inuktitut and English languages in the same song?
 - b. What do the Twin Flames say about how language is detrimental to youth?
 - c. How devastating is language loss to a community when the very last language speaker passes away? How will it impact the cultural identity of those community members remaining and the future of the next generation of that language group?
 - d. What is language death?
3. Individually or in small groups, have your students conduct research exploring the importance of language to cultural identity. Students can use some of the resources linked above as a starting point. Have your students create awareness about other Indigenous groups and non-Indigenous groups who have lost their languages, and explore the impact that language loss can have on different cultures.

UNESCO: 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

An International Year is an important cooperation mechanism dedicated to raising awareness of a particular topic or theme of global interest or concern, and mobilizing different players for coordinated action around the world. In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, based on a recommendation by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. At the time, the Forum said that 40% of the estimated 6,700 languages spoken around the world were in danger of disappearing. The fact that most of these are Indigenous languages puts the cultures and knowledge systems to which they belong at risk.

Click link to UNESCO website for important information on Indigenous languages: [International Year of Indigenous Languages](#)

Activity Part 2

In this activity, you and your class will explore singing the song “Human” in Inuktitut.

1. Explain to your students that learning a new language requires the learner to engage in deep listening. Encourage your students to try to not approach this from an English or French perspective. Instead, step inside the language with open ears.
2. As a class, watch Jaaji’s teaching videos from CBC’s 2019 Canadian Music Class Challenge on how to pronounce the Inuktitut text in the original version of the song, [“Human”](#).
 - [Indigenous version](#) (from the point of view of an Indigenous person)
 - As you watch these videos, encourage your students to listen to the phonetics of how the Inuktitut words are spoken. As the teacher, pause the video often and replay short sections, allowing you to practice pronouncing individual lines as a class.
3. Once you begin to feel comfortable, try singing along. Making errors is how we learn something new. As Jaaji says, “try your best and have fun.”

Phonetic Pronunciation	Inuktitut Text
Oo-how-see-huq-oonga	Uqausiqaqqunga
P-too-huq-jua-mick	Pituqarjuamit
See-vull-e-paw-voon-noo	Sivullipaavunnut
Aw-took-tau-lauq-too-mik	Aturtaulaurtumit
Tee-goo-meaq-qunga	Tigumiarqunga
Ka-u-see-nea-qa-ra	Kajusiniarqara
Ah-nga-u-qaa-kanut	Angajuqqaakanut
Oo-haa-yao-laur-mat	Uqaakaulaurmat

Oo-p-guu-soup-punga	Upigusukkunga
E-noo-gaa-maa	Inuuguama

Lyrics - "Human" by Twin Flames

Uqausiqaqqunga
Pituqarjuamit
Sivullipaavunnut
Aturtaulaurtumit
Tigumiarqunga
Kajusiniarqara
Angajuqqaakanut
Uqaakaulaurmat

I have a language
That was born with time
Passed on through generations
One of a kind
Keep it close to me
Close to my heart
Share for all to hear
I will do my part

Upigusukkunga
I am proud. I am proud
Inuguama
Of who I am

I am human, I am people
I am human, I am people

Upigusukkunga
I am proud, I am proud
Inuugama
Of who I am

Upigusukkunga
I am proud, I am proud
Inuugama
Of who I am

We are human; we are people
We are human

Uqausiqaqqunga
We are people
Pituqarjuamit
Sivullipaavunnut
We are human
Aturtaulaurtumit
Tigumiarqunga
We are people
Kajusiniarqara
Angajuqqaakanut
Uqaakaulaurmat

Upigusukkunga
I am proud. I am proud
Inuguama
Of who I am

We are human, we are people
We are human, we are people
We are human, we are people

Uqausiqaqqunga
Pituqarjuamit
Uqausiqaqqunga
Pituqarjuamit
Uqausiqaqqunga
Pituqarjuamit
Kajusiniarqara
We are human

Post-Activity Discussion:

Teachers: feel free to use any of the below questions as prompts for discussion after you sing parts of “Human” in Inuktitut as a class. You can also assign different questions to small groups of students to discuss amongst each other.

1. Was it a challenge learning Inuktitut?
2. Do you feel people whose first language is not English or French experience great difficulty learning English and French?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you didn’t understand the language spoken around you?
4. Is language a human right? Why or why not?
 - a. Should people of French heritage be given the right to learn and speak French? Should people of Spanish heritage be given the right to learn and speak Spanish? What about Mandarin? What about the Cree language? Should people of Inuit heritage be given the right to learn and speak Inuktitut?
5. Can music empower people and bring awareness to human rights issues such as singing in the language of your heritage? How?

6. Can music bring understanding to people of different cultures? How?
7. Did listening to and thinking about “Human” through a human rights lens help you better understand the issues of social justice and human rights and access to language learning as expressed by Twin Flames in their music and interviews?
8. Are you proud of your heritage, your homeland, and your language?
9. What does “diversity” and “multiculturalism” mean? Is Canada diverse and multicultural?

ACTIVITY 3: The Story of Ski-Tuuq (skidoo) and Qimmiq (dog)

“I was raised by my Inuit grandparents to be out on the land, and what it meant to be as a human being.” Jaaji of Twin Flames

Level: Secondary

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Discuss and explain how cultural identity, including pride for one’s own culture, can be reinforced by listening to music of their cultural group.
- Identify and describe how music reflects the culture of the artists and how it impacts the community.
- Describe how music can create awareness for social and political issues.

Subjects and Themes

Arts Education (Music)
Social Studies
Human Rights
Social Justice

Animal Rights (not including animals as a food source in relation to Indigenous food sovereignty in Canada)

Resources & Links

- [Makivik Dog Slaughter](#)
- [Canadian Inuit Sled Dogs](#)
- [What really happened to the Inuit sled dogs?](#)
- [Oukiqtani Truth Commission](#)
- [Government Apology for Sled Dog Killings](#)
- [MusiCounts Learn Kanata resource on the music of Sila & Rise](#) (page 18)

- To explore Inuit culture in more depth, the original Kanata resource has three areas to further research and explore more topics on Inuit culture, through the lens of music by Sila & Rise: Inuit traditional markings (tattoos), history of the dog sleds, and drums used in drum dancing.

Background

Twin Flames' song, "Broke Down Ski-tuuq" is the story of the man made machine, the skidoos. This invention was created to replace the role of sled dogs, which are so important to Inuit culture. However, skidoos are always breaking down and can never live up to actual sled dogs. The controversial and more concerning underlying issue explored in the song is the slaughter of tens of thousands of Inuit sled dogs by the RCMP between 1950 and 1970. While the RCMP stated the dogs were destroyed for health and public safety reasons (e.g., disease-ridden and starvation), Inuit say the dogs were killed because Inuit relied on them for transportation, to maintain their way of life, and for survival. While some dogs did die due to starvation (as food sometimes became scarce), Inuit knew how to handle the dogs and they were well cared for. Without sled dogs for traveling far distances, Inuit were confined to their homes and local area and could not hunt and practice their traditional way of life. In 2019, the Canadian Government apologized for the mass killings, but was an apology enough to rectify the magnitude of what the Inuit ultimately lost as a result of the dog slaughter?

Pre-Activity

1. Introduce your class to the controversial issue of the sled dog killings through having your students research some of the resources linked above. From there, use the following questions to prompt student responses or class discussion:
 - a. Discuss the historical and lifestyle impacts of the dog killings on Inuit. Discuss the role the RCMP played in this act.
 - b. Do only Inuit use dog sleds for transportation or sport? Who else has used dog sleds?

Main Activity: Exploring themes of social justice and animal rights in Twin Flames’ “Broke Down Ski-Tuuq”

<p>To begin this activity:</p> <p>Explore the meaning of social injustice as a class. What examples of social injustices have happened in society in the past or today?</p> <p>Then, watch the music video for Twin Flames’ “Broke Down Ski-Tuuq” and discuss as a class how social injustice is represented both visually and musically using the following questions as a starting point.</p>	
<p>Visually</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In taking a neutral and unbiased stance, what do you observe happening mechanically and environmentally in the video?2. Which form of transportation is more environmentally friendly? In what way?3. What deeper cause is Twin Flames advocating for in this song?4. What emotions and expressions do you observe by the Inuit audience members as they hear throat-singing in the performance? How do the artistic choices contribute to this?	<p>Musically</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listen to “Broke Down Ski-Tuuq” again, but this time, just the audio.2. In this song, what rhythmic vocal elements do you hear? Even if you can’t understand what Jaaji is saying, what is your experience hearing music sung in this language?3. How does the sound of the music and language help to communicate a social justice message? Is it effective?

Post-Activity

- Watch the Twin Flames on their exciting and meaningful adventure to northern Labrador: [7 Days in the Torngats](#) where they slept in a tent in polar bear country (and noticed the black bear watching from a distance!).
- As a class, reflect and discuss points you learned about the people, the natural environment, and their displacement of their homelands.
- What is [ArtsCan Circle](#), and how does their work support Indigenous youth?