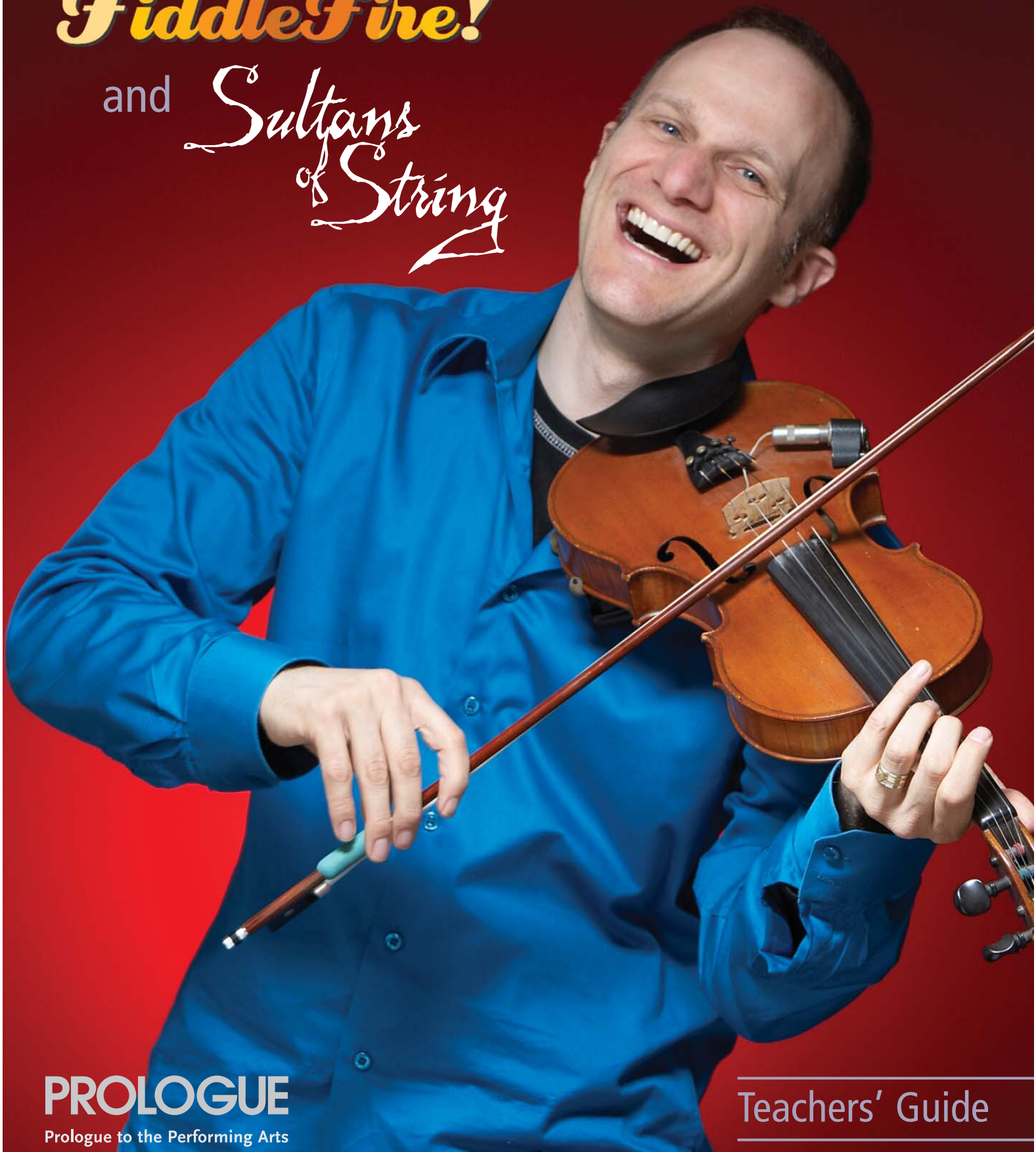


Chris McKhool's

FiddleFire!

and *Sultans
of String*



PROLOGUE

Prologue to the Performing Arts

Teachers' Guide

Chris McKhool's

FiddleFire!

and

*Sultans
of String*

Teachers' Guide

THANK YOU FOR INVITING CHRIS MCKHOOLO TO PERFORM AT YOUR SCHOOL.

The Show

In performance, Chris and his band will perform selections from his CDs, *FiddleFire!* and *Luna*. *FiddleFire!* is targeted to elementary school audiences, while Sultans of String's *Luna* CD can be enjoyed by people of all ages. The musicians will amplify their instruments so everyone can hear and pay attention to the different musical aspects of the performance. A concert is a joyous event, and there will be lots of opportunity for clapping along. Elementary students will be invited to sing along and join the band on stage to perform on percussion instruments from around the world. Students who have been introduced to the CDs beforehand may enjoy the show even more!

The Guide

Chris McKhool's *FiddleFire!* & *Sultans of String Teachers' Guide* has been developed to help educators incorporate some of the concepts of the *FiddleFire!* and *Luna* CDs and concerts into the classroom.

In this guide, you will find demonstrations, games and discussion ideas for a variety of ages and classroom situations. Feel free to try some of these before and after the performance.

We hope you enjoy this guide and find it helpful to support music education in your class. If you have other activity ideas relating to the songs, please get in touch. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

Chris McKhool would like to thank the Vancouver Foundation, BC Arts Council and ArtStarts for their support of the Artists in Education program, which helps support performing artists touring in BC.

Guide written by Chris McKhool and Danny Bakan

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and to my sister, Ingrid.

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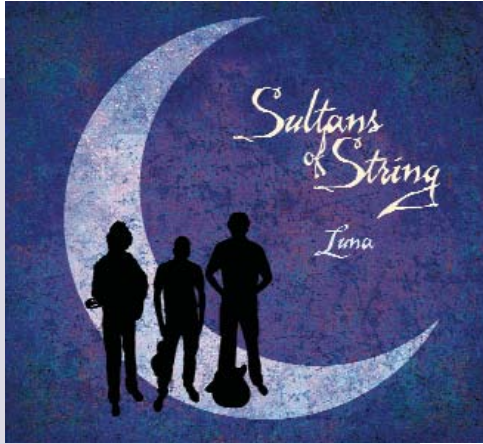
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BIOGRAPHY

Chris McKhool and the **Sultans of String** Atomic World-Jazz-Flamenco



Sultans of String are Canada's ambassadors of musical diversity. The band romps through an energized adventure of Latin, Roma jazz, Middle Eastern and folk rhythms, celebrating musical fusion and human creativity with warmth and virtuosity. Fiery violin dances with rumba-flamenco guitar while a funk bass lays down unstoppable grooves. Acoustic strings meet with electronic wizardry to create layers and depth of sound. World rhythms excite audiences to their feet with the irresistible need to dance.

Sultans of String have been called "groundbreaking... virtuoso... boundary pushing... infectious... visionary... brilliant... and absolutely stunning!" (*The Live Music Report*). Their debut CD *Luna* soared to # 1 across Canada on Top Ten national radio charts, and won the award for *Best Variety Act from Festivals & Events Ontario*. They were finalists in the *Toronto, Ontario, Canadian and International Independent Music Awards*, winning both the best song and best instrumental categories for the *2007 Ontario Independent Music Awards*.

Six-string violinist and bandleader Chris McKhool grew up in a house bursting with music and diversity. His paternal *Makhoul* grandparents immigrated to Canada from Lebanon in the early 1900's. His Egyptian-born mother is a piano and theory teacher. Growing up Chris was fed a steady diet of delicious musicality along with Middle Eastern cuisine and violin lessons.

From a very young age Chris was taught the Canadian values of tolerance, respect for all peoples and celebration of culture. His passion for exploring rhythms and melodies has led him far and wide, collecting instruments and styles from around the world. Travels to the Canadian Arctic, Indonesia, France, England, Cuba, Peru, Guatemala, Costa Rica and the Indian Himalayas to perform and conduct music workshops have deepened his musical and spiritual understanding of our global community. Chris has also guest starred with Jesse Cook, Pavlo, Amanda Martinez and Club Django.

When Chris first played along with founding guitarist Kevin Laliberté's rumba rhythm, their musical mind-meld created the Sultans of String's sound — the intimate and playful relationship between the violin and the flamenco guitar. Sultans of String includes such amazing musical friends as: guitarists Kevin Laliberté (who has toured the world with Jesse Cook and the Chieftains) & Eddie Paton (Robert Michaels), bassists Drew Birston (Chantal Kreviazuk) & David Woodhead (Stan Rogers, Loreena McKennitt), percussionists Chendy Leon (Cuban master) & Jeff Wilson (Maza Meze), Bassam Bishara (master *oud* player from Palestine), and vocalists Amanda Martinez (Latin) & Maryem Tollar (Arabic).

Touring as a trio to sextet, Chris draws from this collective of master musicians to bring Sultans of String to jazz, folk, classical and family audiences around the world including the Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival, Mariposa Folk Festival, and the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts (WA).

BIOGRAPHY

Chris McKhool's **FiddleFire!**



FiddleFire! is a CD and concert show Chris created specifically for elementary school aged children.

Hailed as a "Children's musical star" (National Post) and "Canada's greatest eco-troubadour for young people" (Mississauga Living Arts Centre), Chris McKhool is one of Canada's hottest children's musicians. Chris has been touring across Canada with his children's concerts for ten years, reaching almost 1 million children, and has appeared on *Mr. Dressup*, YTV's *Treehouse*, TVOntario's *Crawlspace* and the CBC.

A champion of environmental issues, Chris won a 2005 Green Toronto Award of Excellence and was a finalist for the Environment Canada Action Award for his work in schools and communities across Canada with his CD and concert *Earth, Seas & Air*. He has also won a Parent's Choice Award in the U.S. for his CD of the same name, produced by Ken Whiteley (Raffi). He has been the recipient of Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, FACTOR and PromoFact Awards.

In 2005 Chris released his children's CD, *Celebrate! Holidays of the Global Village*. Inspired by travels across Canada and around the world, *Celebrate!* is a groundbreaking collaboration with musicians from diverse cultures. It features songs about holidays from across the globe that are celebrated here in Canada, including Bodhi Day (Buddhist), Carnival (Quebec), Chanukah, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Indigenous traditions, Kwanzaa (African-American), Ramadan and Winter Solstice.

Chris has toured throughout Canada including Baffin Island and has appeared at the Ottawa, Vancouver, Thunder Bay and London International Children's Festivals. He has also performed in the U.S, England, Cuba, Guatemala and in Tibetan schools across the Indian Himalayas.

With *FiddleFire!* Chris brings his love of violin to young audiences. Recorded in 2008, this CD features guest performances from some of Canada's finest musicians including Ken & Chris Whiteley, Sultans of String, Anne Lederman, George Gao, Rick Lazar, Roman Borys (from The Gryphon Trio), Ernie Tollar and more. *FiddleFire!* has been performed live at festivals and schools across Canada, including Toronto Harbourfront's *Cushion Concert* series, the *Distillery Jazz Festival*, and was the headliner for Toronto's *First Night* at the Skydome/Rogers Centre.

MUSIC AND THE MULTICULTURAL MOSAIC

It is often said that music is a universal language. There is not a culture in the world that does not make music. Just like language and cuisine, each culture has its own approach to music. Often music is connected to dance, and in many languages the word for music and dance are one and the same.

Canada is a land of many people, with a vast array of cultural influences and backgrounds. As a cultural mosaic, Canada draws immigrants from all over the world, who bring with them their beliefs, languages, folklore, cuisine and music. Many Canadians trace their ancestry back to lands far away and brought musical traditions with their families when they immigrated. It is the fusion and meeting of cultural traditions that makes our country such a strong and vibrant place. Together we weave these traditions into the Canadian mosaic; a mosaic of diversity which in many ways is a microcosm of the world.

Sultans of String's *Luna* and Chris McKhool's *FiddleFire!* are both celebrations of world musical cultures and the joys of being Canadian in this context.

ACTIVITY: Discussion

- What makes a Canadian?
- Discuss how people have moved to Canada from other lands at different points in the country's history.
- Talk about the reasons why people leave their home countries for a new land.
- What impact has French/English bilingualism had in Canada?
- How has multiculturalism affected Canada's identity?

ACTIVITY: Musical Genealogy

- Have students place markers on a wall map to identify their own or their ancestors' countries of origin.
- Discuss the kinds of traditional and modern music that come from those regions.
- Have students bring in photos of the instruments native to the region.
- See if you can find musical connections between *Luna* and *FiddleFire!* CDs and the map.

ACTIVITY: World Music

- Have students bring in CDs of traditional music from their own or their ancestors' countries of origin to introduce the music to the class.
- Discuss the ways in which these styles of music sound similar, and how they differ. You can talk about:

- ◆ What instruments are used?
- ◆ What kind of rhythm is employed?
- ◆ Is there singing? Or is it instrumental?
- ◆ From what time period and country did this music evolve?
- ◆ Do they use the same "scales" or collection of notes that are used in Western music?
- ◆ You can do the same exercise with songs from the *Luna* and *FiddleFire!* CDs. For example, from *Luna* you can listen to *El-Kahira* which uses a Middle Eastern *saidi* rhythm. On *FiddleFire!* you can hear the Chinese violin, or *erhu*, on *My Two-Stringed Erhu*.



ACTIVITY: Music Sampling



- The Internet offers a wonderful tool to sample different kinds of music.
- Download and install itunes for free for Mac and PC from www.apple.com/itunes/download.
- Open iTunes and log on to the iTunes store.
- Enter Search terms such as 'Roma jazz' or "blues" or "Sultans of String."
- A list of songs appears at the bottom of the window. Double click on the song title to play a 30 second sample. This is a great way to hear a small selection of any style of music from around the world for free.
- If you set up an account you can download the whole song selection, usually for 99 cents, by selecting "buy song."

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF MUSIC

All music is created using three major building blocks: Rhythm, Melody and Harmony.

1. RHYTHM

Rhythm is the most important of the three building blocks. When you are bopping your head, clapping your hands, moving your bodies to music, you are moving to the rhythm. Rhythm is the placement of the sounds of music over time. Most music has a steady pulse known as the beat. When you hear the beat in music, that beat can be grouped in different ways. These are called time signatures. Time signatures include beats grouped in 4, called 4/4, as well as 3/4 or waltz time, 2/4, 5/4, 7/4 and others. There are no strong beats in what's called *rubato*, which is free-flowing time.

We had fun recording the song *Dance to the Music* for *FiddleFire!* The first verse is performed in 4/4 swing-jazz, the second verse is a 4/4 march rhythm. The third is a 3/4 waltz form. The fourth uses a 4/4 rumba flamenco rhythm from Spain.

Since the beginning of time music has been played to accompany dancing. Try the square dance instructions in *Dance to the Music*, and then make up some of your own, or download some from the Internet.

ACTIVITY: Drum Circles

- Drums are often played in large communal groups. Often people will gather in a large circle and play together.
- Younger students can make drums from coffee cans and large yogurt containers and hit them with drumsticks made from pencils.
- Older students can make drums out of gallon drums or large water bottles (the kind used in water coolers and for home delivery), and purchase drumsticks at a local music store.
- Have students play a simple rhythm together, drumming to a 1-2-3-4 count, keeping it steady and simple.
- Have individual drummers solo, or make up rhythms to go on top of the steady pulse.
- Drummers can also play a call and response game, where one drummer plays a rhythm and the others echo it back to them.

ACTIVITY: Rhythm Game

- Have you have ever played *Simon Says*? You can play *Simon Says* with rhythms.
- Warm up by clapping the rhythm to the *Spider-Man* melody from *FiddleFire!*

- Clap out a short rhythm, and have the class try and repeat it exactly. Spider-Man works well, as does *Kitchen Party* from *Luna*.
- Students can take turns inventing their own rhythms for their classmates to repeat.

2. MELODY

The melody is the tune of the music, or the part that you are able to sing along to. Melodies are a sequence of notes or pitches, usually following a scale or pattern of notes which sound pleasing. One can take the same melody and perform it in a variety of different musical styles. A melody can be played by an instrument, like the violin melody in *Rainflower* (*Luna* and *FiddleFire!*), or it can be sung as is done on the songs on *FiddleFire!*, or in *Contessa* (*Luna*).

When musicians make up new melodies on the spot, it is called "improvisation". To improvise a solo means to make up new music over the same chords or harmony.

Listen to the improvised solos on *Rainflower*, between the two sections of violin melody. On *Que Vida* (*Luna*) you hear the guitar play the melody first, then the violin plays the melody "in unison", together with the guitar. Then the instruments improvise solos in this order: violin, guitar, and bass. Next is a section where violin and guitar trade phrases, before playing the melody together again in unison.

ACTIVITY: Melody Game

The same melody can be played in many different ways. Take a familiar melody from one of your CDs, a piece you are playing in music class, or a familiar simple sing-along tune like Happy Birthday and play or sing it:

- In a major key (happy sounding)
- In a minor key (sad or moody sounding)
- With a fast "tempo", or speed
- With a slow "tempo", or speed
- With a *legato* feel, very smooth sounding
- With a *detaché* feel, all notes sounding separate
- *Forté*, or very loud
- *Piano*, or softly

3. HARMONY

Harmony is the musical background for the melody. Two or more notes played together are a chord. Notes are like stars, and chords are like constellations. When two or more notes clash it is called *dissonance* and sounds tense; when two or more notes sound good together it is called *consonance* and feels relaxed. All music makes use of this harmonic tension and relaxation to take the listener on a journey of sound. The harmony helps support the melody and can set a nice "mood" for the lead instrument. Guitar and piano are common harmony instruments. Bass is a very useful instrument as it plays low harmony, and also helps keep the rhythmic pulse going in a song.

If you listen to *Excerpt from Cantata No. 147 (FiddleFire!)* you can hear the acoustic upright bass playing a simple harmony along with the melody the cello is playing. The piano and violin section enter later to provide more harmony support.

ACTIVITY: Harmony Game

You can make your own harmony.

- Go to a piano and pick out 4 notes that sound good together.
- Split the class into 4 groups and have them each sing and hold one of these notes. You can sing "Laaa", or use a fun word like "Cheese" if you like.
- Start the first group on the lowest note, and have them hold it.
- One by one add the other groups singing their own notes.



STYLES OF MUSIC

There are as many styles of music as there are cultures. Many of these styles can be heard here in Canada because of our rich cultural heritage.

JAZZ

Jazz is a style of music that first grew out of the blues in the United States and then took on a life of its own. There are many forms of jazz including Dixieland, traditional swing, bebop, post bop and modern jazz. All styles of jazz involve improvisation, or the spontaneous creation of musical phrases with a focus on individual expression. Jazz can be played on almost any instrument, though traditionally horns, piano, guitar, bass, woodwinds and percussion instruments are used. Famous jazz musicians of the past include violinist Stéphane Grappelli, trumpeters Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, sax player John Coltrane and clarinet player Benny Goodman.

On *FiddleFire!* you can hear swing jazz on the songs *FiddleFire!* and *Spider-Man*. You can hear Roma-jazz on *Django* and *Scat in the Hat*, and a 70's funky jazz in the vocal sections of *High Wire*.

HOW INSTRUMENTS PLAY TOGETHER: Conversations in Jazz

In the Jazz tradition, musicians play together using a combination of a set composition, often called the 'head' or melody of the song, and improvisations, which are made up by each individual player as they go along in a free-form expressive manner.

Often the whole band accompanies the melody instrument or vocal over the "form" or chords of the song together, and then take turns improvising through the form in solos, which are backed up by the rest of the band, giving each instrument a chance to play.

Another way of playing together is to trade solos back and forth, swapping between instrumentals in a musical conversation. Listen to the conversation and interplay of instruments in the song *FiddleFire!* after Chris says "Trade 4's". He is referring to trading solos between instruments over sections of four bars each. You can also hear this from 2:25 to 2:50 in *Kitchen Party (Luna)*.

JUST FOR FUN: Jazz Talk

Jazz musicians are famous for coming up with cool "lingo", or music terms. Some of them are:

- "The Head" is the main melody, or the tune of the song or piece.
- "The Changes" are the chords that the pianist or guitarist is playing on the piano. Remember chords are made by playing two or more notes simultaneously.
- "Riffing" means playing cool "licks", or short musical phrases during the song.
- To "Tag the Ending" means repeat the last few bars of the song once or twice. This gives the song a definite ending "feel".

- A solo performer plays alone. A duo is two players performing together. A trio is a band of three, a quartet has four players, a quintet has five, and so on.
- The musicians that play behind the melody player are collectively known as the rhythm section.

SCAT SINGING IN JAZZ:

Jazz singing sometimes involves “scat” singing, a form of nonsense singing that focuses on musical expression. Scat singing lets you create the equivalent of an instrumental solo using your voice. Scat has a long tradition. Jazz performer Louis Armstrong made scat singing famous in the 1920s. Jelly Roll Morton told folklorist Alan Lomax that Joe Sims from Mississippi sung it around the turn of the 20th century. Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway, Eddie Jefferson, Betty Carter, Anita O’Day, Joe Carroll, Sarah Vaughan, Carmen McRae, Jon Hendricks, Babs Gonzales, and Dizzy Gillespie also sang scat.

ACTIVITY: Scat in the Hat

- It is easy and fun to try scat singing!
- Listen to the song *Scat in the Hat* on *FiddleFire!*
- Start by repeating the scatting with the children’s choir on the recording. Then you can try singing nonsense syllables of your own in the scatting sections of the song.
- With older students listen to a classic recording by one of the artists mentioned above. As the students get comfortable with the melody they can start to “improvise” or make up scatting on the spot by singing other notes and rhythms with nonsense syllables.
- Have fun and make it up as you go along!

ROMA JAZZ: Music of the Roma People and Django Reinhardt:

Roma jazz (also known as ‘Roma-swing’) is a style of jazz made famous by musicians like the great Belgian-born guitarist Django Reinhardt and Italian violinist Stéphane Grappelli. Together they co-founded the *Quintette du Hot Club de France*, which was an extremely popular group and had a lasting influence on the music of the day.

Django was of Roma descent, and the music of the Roma people, also known as Gypsies, influenced his sound and the sound of musicians who heard him. In the 1930’s this music took Paris by storm with its innovative combinations of traditional Roma scales with the “swing” of Jazz. Many of Django’s compositions have become jazz standards, including *Minor Swing* and *Daphne*. The Hot Club also performed jazz standards such as *Sweet Georgia Brown* and traditional Roma tunes including *Dark Eyes* (*Ochi Chyornye*), a well-known Russian tune.

The song *Django* (*FiddleFire!*), is a tribute to this great player. Django’s playing was even more impressive when you learn about his past. At one point in his life he lived in a trailer outside of Paris with his wife. One night there was a fire in the trailer and one of Django’s hands and legs became badly burned. As a result the two smallest fingers on his left hand, the hand used to hold down strings and play chords, became unusable. Instead of giving up, he relearned how to play guitar using only two fingers!

The song *My Squid Has a Rash* (*Luna*) is also a tribute to the Roma jazz style, and uses many common techniques such as a repeating “head”, or melody, lots of fiery improvisation, and a playful and quirky approach to the music.

Roma jazz, along with traditional Roma music, is learned by ear, passed down through generations. Many Roma musicians do not read music. Beginners spend hours memorizing songs from recordings and gleaming techniques from more experienced players. Guitar and violin are popular solo instruments, and clarinet, accordion and bass are also common.

More About The Roma

The Romani are an ancient people who trace their early origins to India and in modern times are live mostly in Europe and the Americas. Their language is called the Romani language or Romanes.

In the past Roma people have been called “Gypsies”, in the mistaken belief that the Roma originally came from Egypt, much in the same way Aboriginal people in Canada were falsely called “Indians” by explorers to the New World. When referring to the people, the term Gypsy is sometimes considered pejorative,

Scholars have studied Roma genetics and language to show that this people originated from India. They traveled through Egypt, Morocco, and Southern Spain, eventually throughout Europe and the Americas.

MIDDLE EASTERN MUSIC

There are all kinds of music from the Middle East, just as there are many different cultures from that region. The Arabic-speaking countries of the Middle East and North Africa, the Persian tradition of Iran, the Greek traditions of Cypriot music, the people of Turkey, various Jewish traditions from Israel, the Kurdish, the Berbers of North Africa, and the Coptic Christians in Egypt all have different musical styles and rhythms.

On *Luna* you can hear rhythms and melodies influenced by this region. Arabic music is very melodic and is often played on instruments like the *oud* (guitar-like stringed instrument), violin, *qanún* (zither type instrument), *nay* (Arabic cane flute), and the human voice, along with percussion. The music bases its melodic sound on various *maqam*. These are similar to scales and keys in Western music, but sometimes include quartertones, notes halfway between the notes of the Western scales.

To hear some of this music, listen to *El-Kahira* (the Arabic word for Cairo) from *Luna*. You can hear the traditional *saidi* rhythm played on the *darbuka* (vase-shaped hand drum) as well as on the string instruments. The *oud*, a precursor to the Western guitar, plays the first solo. Violin follows, and then Ernie Tollar plays the third solo on the *nay*. Also note how all the melody instruments play a section of the melody in unison, or together. This is very common in traditional music from the Middle East.

You can also hear the oud in *Alhambra* (*Luna*), a song inspired by the Moorish castle and temple built in Granada, Spain in the 12th century. This was a period of renaissance in Islamic civilization, when it was a world leader in art, science and architecture. The Alhambra was considered the physical representation of Paradise as described in Islamic poetry. Egyptian-Canadian singer Maryem Tollar opens and closes this song. The Arabic words she is singing at the beginning translate to “My eyes, the sky”.

RUMBA FLAMENCO

Rumba Flamenco is known by many other names, such as Roma Rumba or Spanish Rumba. It is a style of flamenco music from Andalusia, Spain that was influenced by the combination of traditional Spanish music, the music of the Roma who traveled through Spain, and Afro-Cuban rhythms that the

Spanish found in Cuba in the 19th Century. This is a music of cultural fusion, and it is only with us today because musicians travel and blend sounds together from different regions to create new and exciting forms. Traditional flamenco has strong, rhythmic undertones and is almost always played while people dance intricate and powerful traditional dances. The guitar is often a featured instrument, and players combine solid rhythmic chording with free flowing improvisational solos to make music that is full of soul and very danceable.

On *FiddleFire!* you can hear the rumba flamenco style at 1:03 on *Dance to the Music*. Note how the rhythm changes for that section, and is driven by guitars and conga (a hand drum). Hand clapping, very common in flamenco, helps energize the music as well. On *Burning Violin*, also from *FiddleFire!*, you can hear Chris and Kevin Laliberté trading flamenco-style guitar and violin solos.

Luna has many songs with a rumba rhythm, including *Que Vida*, *Alhambra*, *Rumba Norte*, *Luna* and *Contessa*.

THE BLUES

You can hear an early blues piano style, boogie woogie, in *Boogie Woogie Blues (FiddleFire!)* You can hear a very fast and more modern Roma jazz version of the blues form in solo sections of *My Squid Has a Rash (Luna)*.

The Blues is a term denoting a huge number of musical styles and genres, all which share their musical and cultural roots in the forced immigration and ultimate integration of African music into the western musical vocabulary. In the 1800's in the days before recorded music, songs known as "field hollers" were common among African-American slaves forced to work in brutal conditions from dawn to dusk. These "hollers" usually involved a solo singer calling out a musical line, to have it echoed by a group of people. Often these songs would accompany the long days of hardship, and gave a rhythm to set the pace of the backbreaking work. This could give a small amount of comfort to a people far from their native land.

Field hollers eventually developed into a form of music that could be played by a solo performer. This early form of the blues, known as country blues, continues the tradition of the repeated line, used musical scales and tonalities that can be traced to Africa and usually dealt with topics of hardship and suffering. Charley Patton, Leadbelly, Son House, Skip James, and Robert Johnson were some of the musicians who played in the Country Blues style.

After the emancipation of the slaves and the integration of white and black populations, the blues traveled north, to the industrial cities of Detroit, St Louis, Kansas City, Chicago and New York. In each region of America, individual differences in styles came to be known as Chicago Blues, Barrelhouse Blues, Memphis Blues and more. Some blues styles used electric guitar and drums, some were played on a solo twelve-string guitar, some used horns, some used slide guitar. The blues went on to influence Jazz music, Rock and Roll, Pop and more. It spread from the Deep South to the wide world.

All styles of blues share a tonality and sensibility. So-called "blue notes" are bent, finding a voice in the sonic space between notes found on the piano keyboard, tonally in-between two piano keys. These "blue notes" opened up new forms of expression, and singers and instrumentalists could make their voices and instruments sound like they were "crying" and "wailing" with these new free forms, sometimes blurring the line between major and minor scales.

Chord progressions such as the 8 bar or 12 bar blues are often used. Musically these are patterns that uses the Tonic (the I chord), Subdominant (the IV Chord) and Dominant (V Chord) chords in set patterns, over which singers can sing and instruments can solo.

CELTIC MUSIC

Mason's Apron/Ste. Anne's Reel (FiddleFire!), Rainflower (Luna and FiddleFire!), and Kitchen Party (FiddleFire!) are songs that are influenced by Celtic music. Celtic music originated in Ireland, Scotland and England. It traveled with waves of immigrants and arrived on the East Coast of Canada and slowly spread westward. There are many wonderful Canadian bands and artists with Celtic influences including fiddle player Natalie McMaster, and the bands Leahy and Great Big Sea.

In many parts of Canada, and particularly in the Maritimes, people gather in homes and other informal settings for musical "jams". A Jam Session usually involves several musicians, and many singers, foot stompers and hand clappers and is less of a musical performance than a party. Food and drinks are served and everyone contributes in making music.

The maritime kitchen party is a special kind of jam, usually involving the playing of "fiddle tunes" such as *Old Molly Hare*, *St. Anne's Reel*, *Turkey in the Straw* and more. These musical tunes often have their origins in the music of Scotland, Ireland, France and England. The music traveled with immigrants to Canada in the 18th and 19th centuries to Canada and formed traditions all of their own.

The kitchen party is closely related to the ceilidh (pronounced kay'-lee). The word ceilidh is an anglicized rendering of a Gaelic word ceilidh for a musical celebration, often played in a big circle. One by one, people take turns either leading a song, or requesting a song as the music goes around the room. Everyone plays and sings along.

ACTIVITY: Make Your Own Kitchen Party

- If you or your students play an instrument you can learn a fiddle tune or two and create your own kitchen party or ceilidh. If you don't play an instrument turn on the CD and clap along! Off *FiddleFire!* you can play *Mason's Apron/Ste. Anne's Reel*, and off *Luna* you can play *Kitchen Party*.
- Have your students clap and stomp their feet, and play simple percussion instruments along with the music. Make up a dance to go along with the song.

WRITING YOUR OWN MUSIC

ACTIVITY: Using Computers To Make Music With High School Students

- There are many new ways to make music using computers. Many computers come with music software, which can use loops, samples and recordings to create new and interesting compositions. With these software tools users can drag and drop small musical sections called "loops" into a timeline. Several loops can be put together in layers and many software tools allow for recording lyrics and spoken raps on top of the loops. Quite a bit of modern music is being produced with these tools and they are easy to get started with.
- Have students experiment with software such as Garage Band or Audacity, or go to splicemusic.com to splice loops together to create musical rhythm tracks to back up raps and lyrics.
- Students can record these creations and share them with their classmates.

ACTIVITY: Piggyback or Zipper Songs

An easy way to make up new songs is to write new words to existing melodies. This technique, called Piggyback or Zipper songs can be as simple or as complex as you want. It is especially good to use melodies for your songs that are "public domain" which means they were written so long ago that they are outside of copyright and therefore open to use by the public.

Try this with your class!

- Divide the class into groups of five students.
- Have each group choose a song they all know the melody to. Older students can use a song that is currently popular on the radio. Younger students can use simple songs such as Frère Jacques, The Wheels on the Bus, BINGO and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.
- The groups then rewrite the lyrics to reflect a specific theme, and write them in bold marker onto a large sheet of paper.
- The groups take turns performing their songs for the rest of the class. They can also sing them during the morning announcements or at an assembly.
- The groups can tape their songs on a tape recorder, and listen to the results.

CLASSICAL

Classical music developed in the 1700's in Europe. Some famous classical composers include Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Stravinsky. In the *Mandolin* song on the *FiddleFire!* CD you can hear an excerpt of Vivaldi's *Mandolin Concerto in G*. Common string instruments in the classical tradition include violin, viola, cello and double bass, all of which you can hear supporting the mandolin in this song.



CELLO

Also on the *FiddleFire!* CD you can hear an excerpt from *Cantata No. 147* (also known as *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*), by Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach was a prolific German composer who lived from 1685 to 1750. He wrote over 200 cantatas, vocal works for performance with an instrumental ensemble. The melody is being played on a cello, with harmony on piano and bass.

THE INSTRUMENTS



IS THAT A FIDDLE OR A VIOLIN?

The violin/fiddle is a bowed string instrument that makes sound as the strings are vibrated by drawing a bow of horsehair across the strings. A special tree resin, called rosin, is rubbed on the horsehair before using it to play, and this helps the bow create friction on the strings and make them vibrate. This instrument is usually referred to as a "violin" when playing classical music, as well as some Latin music and jazz, and called a "fiddle" when it is played in a folk style such as in Celtic music, fiddle tunes, country music and the blues. Violins are usually a "lead" instrument that plays melody or harmony lines using single notes played in a sequence. The violin family includes the violin, the viola, the cello, and the double bass.

The violin has many ancient ancestors and similar instruments can be found in various parts of the world and through various times in history. The viol (also called viola da gamba) is a term used for a family of instruments used primarily in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The Viols also descended from the Spanish vihuela (a guitarlike plucked string instrument). They were played differently than violins, usually held upright like the modern cello and sometimes held across the lap like a guitar. Like a guitar, they often had six strings rather than the four strings typically found in the violins of today.

Another distant relative of the modern violin, developed in the 8th Century, is called the "rebab". The rebab, or spike fiddle, is a string instrument that developed in the Middle East. This instrument spread to North Africa, Europe, and Asia through trading routes.

The erhu is the great grandparent to the western violin from China. It has two strings, and a snakeskin head that resonates over a hollow wooden tube, creating an exotic and expressive sound. Many other bowed instruments can be found around the world... and each has its own musical flavour and sound. Listen to *My Two-Stringed Erhu (FiddleFire!)* to hear Chinese-Canadian erhu master George Gao perform on this instrument.



Chris McKhool plays a specially designed six-string violin made by a Eric Aceto, a luthier, or instrument maker, in New York. It is similar to the viol in that it has 6 strings, but is played like a violin, held under the chin and bowed. It has a pick-up installed which allows it to be amplified through speakers. Sometimes Chris uses effects such as delay and reverb, an octaver to make it sound an octave lower (in the cello range), and a wah pedal (to make it sound like a lead electric guitar).



GUITAR

The six-string guitar is an instrument with ancient roots that can be traced back to Middle Eastern fretless ouds, European lutes and zithers, and the Indian sitar. All around the world instruments such as these exist, all featuring a box-like body to amplify the sound, and plucked strings to make different notes. Guitars are very popular due to the incredible range of mood and sound they produce. Blues, country, rock, jazz, flamenco and classical music all feature the guitar.

Some guitars are played acoustically — the tone is produced by vibration of the strings through the bridge and amplified by sound waves moving through the hollow body of the box. In the 20th century

the electric guitar was invented, which uses an electronic pick-up and amplifier to make the sound vibrations of the strings louder. Electric guitars can have an acoustic body, be “semi acoustic” or solid body, which is basically a solid piece of wood that uses electronics to make the sound loud.

With Sultans of String we use a nylon string flamenco guitar, very similar to the classical guitar. Nylon strings are made of soft plastic, with the lower strings wound with metal, and can be played with fingernails or a plastic pick. We use an electronic pick-up on the flamenco guitar to amplify and process the sound and often record and loop the guitar parts as we are playing. This way the guitarist can play melody guitar lines while listening back to the rhythm guitar parts he has already recorded, and it sounds like two guitarists playing simultaneously! Other effects you can add to an amplified instrument include reverb, delay and distortion.

You can hear Bassam Bishara, a Canadian *oud* master from Palestine, performing on *Alhambra (Luna)*, bringing in the band at 2:53, and then trading with the violin and guitar. The oud is featured again on *El-Kahira*, and starts a solo at 1:53.

ACTIVITY: Make your own box guitars

■ High schools students can find detailed instructions on how to build their own three-string box guitar at www.cigarboxguitars.com. These are real instruments that sound great, and can be played with a pick and a slide. They require the use of power tools, saws, and some guitar parts you can buy at a music store or online.

■ Elementary students can make very simple toy guitars on their own.

Supplies:

- ◆ old shoe box or tissue box
- ◆ rubber bands, scissors
- ◆ buttons
- ◆ a paper-towel tube or stick or ruler
- ◆ a pencil
- ◆ Glue or tape

Instructions:

- ◆ Using an old cardboard box, cut out the shape of a guitar fingerboard. You can also use a stick, ruler, or paper-towel tube.
- ◆ Glue some buttons on the end of the fingerboard for tuning pegs.
- ◆ Glue or tape the fingerboard into the end of an old tissue box.
- ◆ Paint or colour the box.
- ◆ Wrap rubber bands around the box. The tighter they are, the higher the note will be.
- ◆ Put a pencil under the rubber bands on one side to raise them off the box.

PIANO

The piano is an incredibly versatile and expressive instrument used in a wide variety of musical styles. It is related to instruments such as the harpsichord and was invented in the 1700's. The piano is used

in classical music, jazz, folk, film and television, and many complex western musical genres. It is also played in churches, community gatherings and is a popular sing along instrument as well as a backing instrument for fiddle tunes in Canada.

The piano uses a keyboard made of black and white keys. When these keys are pressed a small felt hammer strikes strings of differing lengths and thicknesses to produce a variety of pitches. Pianos can play groups of notes, known as chords, or it can play single notes. Instruments that can play more than one note at a time are called *polyphonic*, and with the 88 keys in the full size piano, the number of notes you can play is only limited to how many hands you have. In some instances two musicians will sit at one piano and use all twenty fingers to produce many notes simultaneously.



In modern times the piano has been further developed into the electronic keyboard. Now, rather than having hammers and strings, the keys trigger an electronic sound which simulates the old sound of the acoustic piano. New keyboards can also be used to produce a wide variety of sampled sounds, such as horn sounds or the sounds of a string section.

On *FiddleFire!* you can hear Jordan Klapman playing a style known as "stride piano" 32 seconds into the song *FiddleFire!* and 47 seconds into *Spider-Man*. You can hear folk piano on *Mason's Apron/Ste. Anne's Reel*, funk piano on *High Wire*, and boogie woogie piano on *Boogie Woogie Blues*. On *Luna*, you can listen to the same baby grand piano being played by Steve O'Connor on *Rainflower*. See if you can hear the piano playing quietly in the background in other songs on this CD.

BASS



The low-pitched grooves and rhythms of the upright acoustic or electric bass help define many styles of music. Usually pitched at least an octave below the other stringed instruments, the bass provides a stable structure of tone and rhythm on which the other instruments play. Often the bass gets to "solo" as well, letting go of the rhythmic bass lines in favour of expressive melodic lines.

You can hear Drew Birston playing a brief solo on upright acoustic bass at 1:55 into *Spider-Man* (*FiddleFire!*), and 1:35 into *My Squid Has a Rash* and 2:00 into *Kitchen Party* on *Luna*. He also solos on electric bass throughout *Luna*, including a "slap bass" solo at 2:40 in *Que Vida*.

DRUMS



The modern drum kit is a set of drums and metal cymbals that are played with drumsticks in each hand, and two or more foot pedals which sound the bass drum and the "high hat" cymbals. A drummer works with all four limbs to produce complex rhythms and patterns that both drive the music and ground it in a steady beat.

The drum kit usually includes:

- A snare drum, which you can sometimes hear in a marching band.
- A couple of medium size drums called tom toms. The bigger the tom, the lower or deeper the pitch, or note.
- A bass drum, that plays the lowest notes, or "bottom end" (usually played with a foot pedal).
- Cymbals of all different kinds and sizes, including a ride cymbal and splash cymbal.
- A special pair of cymbals called a high hat, which is played with both sticks and feet

On *FiddleFire!* you can hear jazz Adam David performing drum solos at 2:07 in the *FiddleFire!* song and at the 1:00 mark in *Spider-Man*. At 1:32 in the *FiddleFire!* song you can also hear Adam "trading" phrases with violin, piano, guitar and bass.

On *Luna* you can hear world percussionist Rick Lazar playing darbuka and conga in the opening of Rumba Norte.

ACTIVITY: Drum Finder

- The drum is one of the most ancient of instruments. It is found in virtually every world culture all through human history. The song *Everybody Loves to Drum* from *FiddleFire!* (see Appendix A) features many of these instruments.
- Follow along with the lyrics and listen to the track to identify all the different types of drums that Chris sings about.
- Older students can use Google to look for pictures of the different kinds of drums.



APPENDIX B:

Sultans of String **Luna** CD Notes

1. **Que Vida** (Laliberté)

This song celebrates life and is the musical equivalent of running in a grassy, sunny park when you are ten years old. Picture a beautiful, fantastical garden with exotic flowers and birds and a crystal clear brook. From the moment Chris first heard Kevin play guitar like this at a club in Toronto he was hooked.

2. **Alhambra** (McKhool & Laliberté)

Inspired by the Moorish castle and temple built in Granada, Spain in the 12th century, at a time when Islamic civilization was leading the world in art, science and architecture. The Alhambra was considered the physical representation of Paradise as described in Islamic poetry. The Arabic words Maryem Tollar sings at the beginning of the song translate to "My eyes, the sky".

3. **Rumba Norte** (McKhool, Arr. Laliberté)

The rumba rhythm originated in Africa and traveled via the slave trade to Cuba and the New World. Kevin refined his rumba rhythm playing as he toured around the world for five years with Jesse Cook's band. The Canadian world music scene is a fantastic place where rumba flamenco, jazz, folk, funk and other forms blend together seamlessly.

5. **Rainflower** (McKhool)

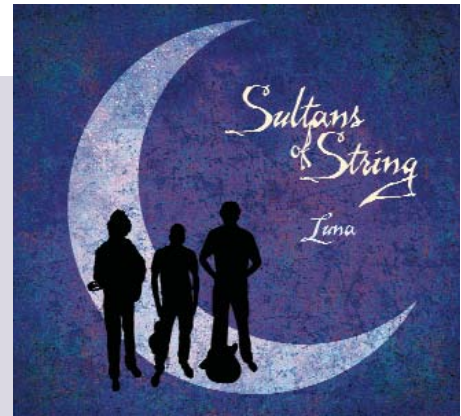
Every time we travel out to the East Coast of Canada its beauty leaves us breathless.

5. **Kitchen Party** (McKhool, bridge by Laliberté)

We pictured Django Reinhardt stumbling upon an Irish pub when we wrote this one. Mandolin innovator Andrew Collins, of *Foggy Hogtown Boys* and *Crazy Strings* fame, joins us with his fiery picking.

6. **Luna** (McKhool & Laliberté)

Written as a tribute to Luna (First Nation name *Tsux'iiit*), the famous killer whale in the Nootka Sound near Vancouver Island. The Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation believed him to be a reincarnation of their late chief Ambrose Maquinna, who said that after he passed away he would come back as a killer whale to bring them traditional teachings. Four days after his death, Luna showed up. This song goes out to the spirit of this beautiful whale.



7. Contessa (Lyrics and melody by Amanda Martinez, Music by McKhool & Laliberté)

Chris and Kevin wrote a previous version of this song in an early jam, and Amanda breathed new life into it with these beautiful and haunting Spanish and English lyrics.

Entre la luna y las estrellas
Tu silencio esta creciendo

I've been watching
While you've been waiting
What lies, beneath your smile?

If only for a moment I'd risk it all again
If only for a moment to feel your heart again

Sin palabras me dices
Sin palabras alejandose
Que buscas dentro de ti?

My fire and your calm
A perfect explanation
Que seria la vida sin ti?

If only for a moment I'd risk it all again
If only for one moment to feel your heart again

*Por una cancion
No vale la pena
Did you know all along
You've made me a stranger
Un engano de amor
Bajo la luna*

Y ahora ni una palabra
Me dejas en este mundo
Pero con tu mirada
Solo con una mirada tuya

Que ay pero que imaginabas
Que me dejas sola en este mundo

If only for one moment...

Sin nada
Solamente con tu Mirada

Translation

Between the moon and the stars
Your silence is growing

I've been watching
While you've been waiting
What lies, beneath your smile?

If only for a moment I'd risk it all again
If only for a moment to feel your heart again

Without words you tell me
Without words you distance from me
What are you searching for within?

My fire and your calm
A perfect explanation
What would life be without you?

If only for a moment I'd risk it all again
If only for one moment to feel your heart again

*For one song
It's not worth the pain
Did you know all along
You've made me a stranger
A betrayal of love
Under the moon*

And now without one word
You leave me in this world
But with your gaze
With only your gaze

What were you imagining
That you'd leave me in this world

If only for a moment...

With nothing else
Only your gaze

8. El-Kahira (McKhool & Laliberté)

Chris' ancestors were from K'fir Mishki and Dar Al-Amar Lebanon, where the family name was spelled *Makhoul*. His mother was born and grew up in Cairo (*El-Kahira*). This song is a tribute to those origins, and uses a traditional Egyptian *saidi* rhythm. Bassam is playing the *oud*, the ancient traditional Middle Eastern precursor of the guitar, and Ernie is playing an Arabic *nay*, a bamboo cane flute.

9. My Squid Has a Rash (McKhool & Laliberté)

Chris performs violin with *The Club Django Sextet* in Toronto, a really fun band that knows how to play fast! This tune draws inspiration from the Manouche (Roma) Roma-jazz music of France, and is a send-up to the Django Reinhardt/Stéphane Grappelli *Hot Club* tunes of the 1930's and 40's.

10. Dos Aguas (McKhool & Laliberté)

Chris and Kevin love the synergy of writing and playing together. The conversation between the guitar and violin in this spontaneous improvisation comes from the magical Zen place where most of this music originates.