



The
John Lennon®
Real Love
Project

**Elementary and Middle School
Songwriting Curriculum**

Theatre Within

*Photo:
Bob Gruen*

Introduction

The John Lennon Real Love Project is a visionary music and songwriting program that uses John Lennon's songs and timeless message of peace and love to inspire creative expression and kindness.

The first part of the program is an inspiring online presentation during which students and teachers learn about John Lennon's life, music and remarkable transformation from bad-boy rocker to house-husband.

The second part of the program is a dynamic interactive workshop in which students compose their own lyrics to "Real Love" and record a new version of the song accompanied by John Lennon's original piano and vocal track.

The program is designed as a vehicle for self-reflection, self-expression, group discussion and fruitful collaboration, supporting goals for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) through a shared creative experience.



*John Lennon at the
Statue of Liberty,
October 30, 1974.*

Photo: Bob Gruen

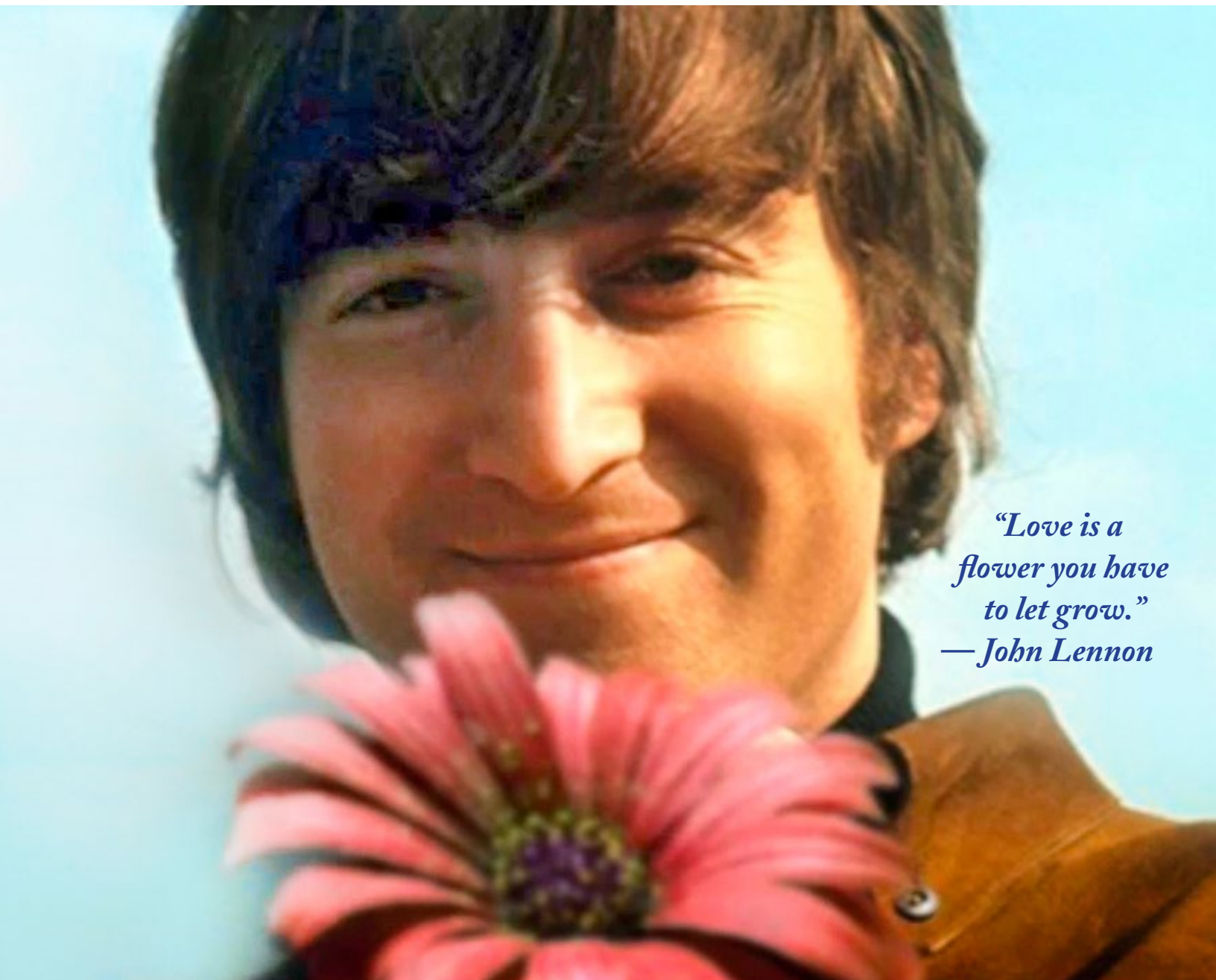
Overview

The school selects one grade level (3rd–8th) to receive the online presentation and workshop.

The online presentation is viewed by everyone from their school via a website provided by the Teaching Artists.

In the workshop, which takes place on a separate day, each class engages in a 45-60 minute session with the Teaching Artists to compose a new couplet for “Real Love” and record it.

The completed recording and video (made by Theatre Within), which includes all classes, is sent to the school for sharing with students, teachers and administrators. The video may be posted on the school’s website and social media to be viewed by parents and friends.



*“Love is a
flower you have
to let grow.”
—John Lennon*

Program Content

Children Will Learn About

John Lennon

- His important place in music and social history
- His African-American music influences
- His emphasis on peace, love, equality and kindness
- The evolution of his music and personal growth

Lyric Writing

- Creative expression and revision
- Identifying and replicating patterns
- Song structure
- Poetic Devices

Musical Composition

- Creating “hooks”
- Writing from a groove

Rehearsal, Revision and Recording

- Vocal blending
- Second takes
- Recording tips

*The Imagine mosaic at
Strawberry Fields —
Central Park, NYC*



About Us

Theatre Within is a non-profit organization committed to providing workshops and programs in creative expression and mindfulness to communities in need. We serve the cancer community, elementary and middle school students, and youth in crisis. Our programs are currently available through the Red Door Community (formerly Gilda's Club NYC), a growing number of regional cancer support communities, Covenant House New York, and elementary and middle schools in the tri-state area.

The John Lennon Real Love Project is a visionary songwriting workshop and program for communities in need. In the workshop, launched in 2014 at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore in the Bronx, participants write their own songs. In the program, launched in 2021 at Livingston Manor Central School in Sullivan County, NY, students write new lyrics to "Real Love" and record a new version of the song accompanied by John Lennon's original vocal and piano track.

Beth and Scott Bierko are Teaching Artists with over 30 years of experience working in public and private schools. Together and with children, Beth and Scott have composed nearly 500 songs, all of which enhance academic and social emotional learning goals for elementary students. Beth Bierko is a certified Kripalu Yoga teacher and Yoga Dance Instructor with additional training in acting and voice. Scott Bierko is a former music teacher, a guitarist and recording engineer with training in voice. Beth and Scott are trained Mindfulness Instructors and the parents of two grown daughters.

Joe Raiola is the Executive/Artistic Director of Theatre Within, which he established as a non-profit in 2006. He is the creator of the organization's *Annual John Lennon Tribute* and John Lennon Real Love Project. He has led countless workshops in deep creative process and currently oversees all Theatre Within programs. For 33 years, Joe was a frequent contributor and editorial staff member at MAD Magazine, retiring at the end of 2017 as Senior Editor. He continues to perform around the country in his acclaimed solo show, *The Joy of Censorship*.

Special Thanks

Yoko Ono

Jonas Herbsman

Bob Gruen

Sean McCraw

Gary Siegel

Lisa M. Scicchitano



*Students at
Family School 32
in Yonkers, NY,
March 23, 2023.*

APPENDIX

NYS Safe Schools Task Force SEL Goals met by the John Lennon Real Love Project

1. Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.
2. Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
3. Demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

NYS Education and Learning Standards Met by the John Lennon Real Love Project

Learning Standards for Music

- Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic ideas and work.
- Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

Reading Anchor Standards

- Standard 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Standard 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats.

Writing Anchor Standards

- Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Standard 4: Develop personal, cultural, textual, and thematic connections within and across genres through written responses to texts and personal experiences.

Speaking and Listening Anchor Standards

- Standard 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively, and build on those of others.

Language Anchor Standards

- Standard 3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening
- Standard 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- Standard 6: Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening; demonstrate independence in gathering and applying vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Lifelong Practices of Writers

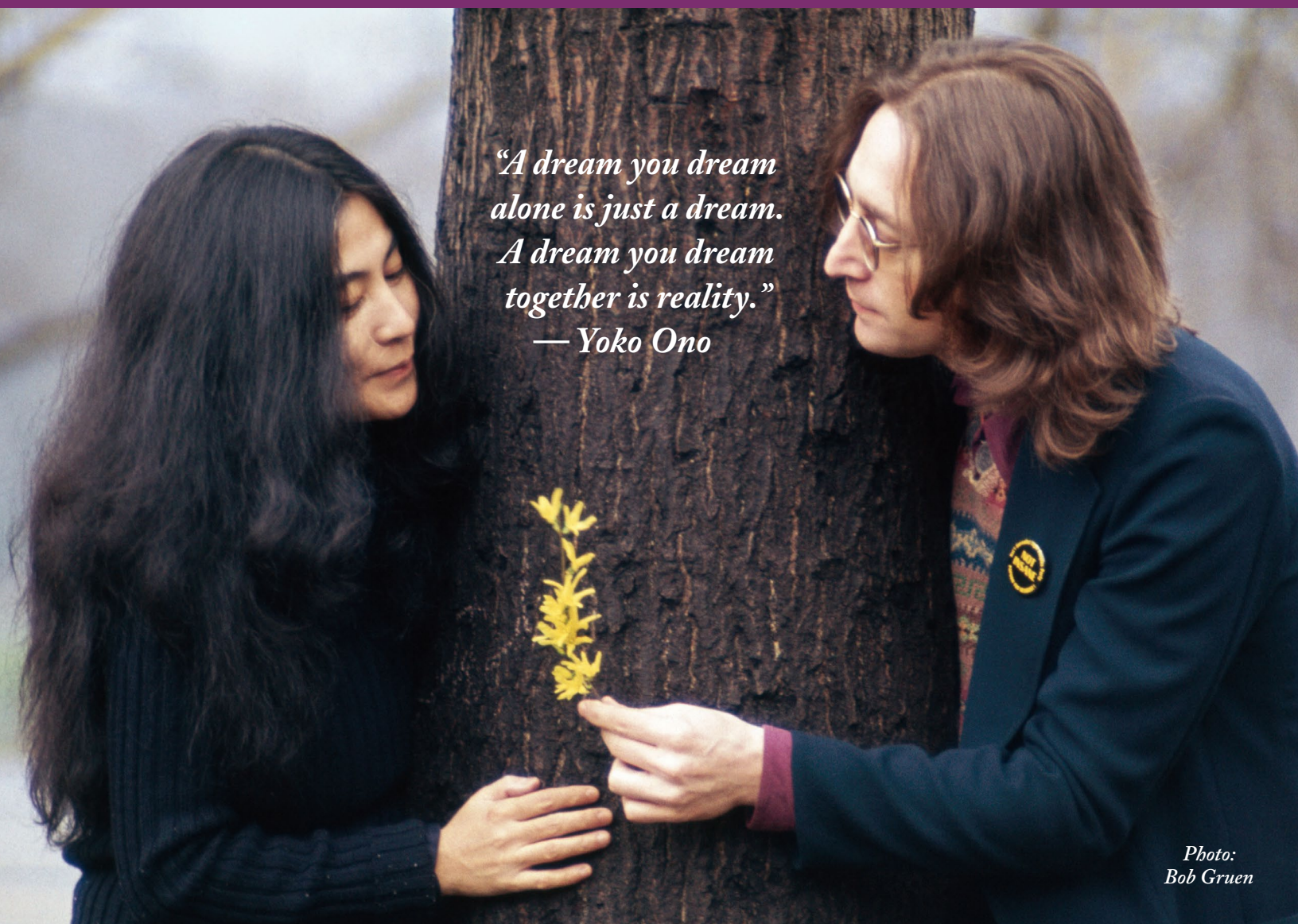
- write for multiple purposes, including for learning and for pleasure
- persevere through challenging writing tasks
- enrich personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary through writing and communicating with others
- experiment and play with language
- strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

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elementary and middle schools.*

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*“A dream you dream
alone is just a dream.
A dream you dream
together is reality.”
— Yoko Ono*

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