



## Teacher/Viewing Guide

### Malika Zarra – Episode 109

#### Musician

**Grade Level: 9-12**

#### **Episode Overview:**

Malika Zarra moved to New York in 2010 because of the rich jazz scene and stimulating and artistically challenging multicultural environment she was looking for as a musician. Ms. Zarra is used to the challenges of new cities, and has always followed her heart and musical passions. She was born into a Moroccan Berber family but moved to Paris when she was a young girl. In France, her family continued to function as a typical Arab family and actively connected with other Arabs through community gatherings. Ms. Zarra credits these early experiences meeting other Arab families from different parts of the world as influencing her style of music. From this young age she began to understand that there was strength in unity among Arab people living in a non-Arab country. She grew up learning traditional Berber songs from her mother, but when she moved to Europe she was also exposed to European and American music which was the impetus for her own blended style. Her search for a truly personal musical expression landed her in conservatories where she studied a variety of musical styles. She was most attracted by the improvisational nature of jazz, which reminded her of traditional Arabic songs. So she mixed the two and now describes her music as North African with jazz harmonies. She still primarily sings in the Berber language, partly as a way to enlighten her audience about Arabic culture. She has faced ignorance and intolerance in her life as a woman and an Arab, but uses music as an experiment to show that people from all cultures can get together and make something inspiring. In the segment, students will notice that her backup musicians are an international amalgam of individuals bringing their own cultural styles with them, all bonded together by Ms. Zarra's skillful musicality. She says that she believes music can bring peace. Her dedication to this notion is what drives her to work hard amongst the competitive multinational New York Jazz scene.

#### **Previewing Questions:**

1. How can music enlighten someone to a different culture?
2. Why does New York have such a rich music scene?
3. What kind of challenges would a female, Arabic Jazz musician face in modern New York?

#### **Vocabulary:**

1. Jazz: American music developed especially from ragtime and blues and characterized by propulsive syncopated rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, varying degrees of improvisation, and often deliberate distortions of pitch and timbre.
2. Improvisation: A creation spoken or written or composed without prior preparation.
3. Berber: A member of a North African, primarily Muslim, people living in settled or nomadic tribes from Morocco to Egypt.
4. Harmony (music): The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions.
5. Musicality: Musical sensitivity or talent.

#### **Lesson Overview/Review:**

After viewing the segment on Malika Zarra, students should be prepared to brainstorm different music types found in American society and their cultural origins. This can be done as a group activity, having students or the teacher record ideas on a board, or in their own journals.

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**Journal Option:** Have students take a moment to recount and reflect upon a situation where they were in the minority and perhaps felt adversity, but were driven to succeed.

**Post Viewing Class Discussion:** Conduct a short discussion to synthesize the information they gained from viewing the video segment. Some possible topics:

1. How many different cultural influences can you recount from the segment? What does that tell us about Ms. Zarra?
2. Many people listening to Ms. Zarra's music cannot understand the words. Is this important? Explain.
3. What did Ms. Zarra learn from her experiences in France?
4. What does Ms. Zarra mean when she says that through music can come peace?

**Activity:** Divide class into groups of no more than four students. Each group will be assigned a different music style found in American culture (ex: jazz, country, heavy metal, hip-hop, folk, pop, soul, big band, blues, Cajun, reggae.) It would be beneficial if the teacher secured examples of each style for groups to listen to. They will then research as a group and prepare a presentation which addresses the following:

1. Music style
2. Country/culture of origin
3. Specific elements and characteristics of the style
4. Are there specific populations or geographic areas where this style is popular?
5. Examples of musicians or songs
6. How successful is this music style? Explain.
7. How does this music make you feel?
8. How does this style bring people together? Does it have a unifying message?

Groups can record the required elements of the presentation on poster paper. Once complete each group should present their poster to the class. Start by playing their sample for the class and ask the class if they recognize it. Then go into the presentation.

Final discussion question for group: Why are some styles more unifying than others? What are the qualities of the music that make it appeal to diverse people? Is this the intent of the musicians?

**Assessment Ideas:** Students will be graded on:

1. Participation in class discussion and activity discussion.
2. Participation in group work.
3. Final group project and presentation.

**Explore Online:** Use the following resources to allow your students to further explore the topic and the Arab American community:

1. Arab Cultural Center: <http://arabculturalcenter.org/>
2. Arab American Museum: <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/>
3. Arab American Antidiscrimination Committee: <http://adc.org/>
4. New York, Jazz Capital of the World: [http://www.pbs.org/jazz/places/places\\_new\\_york.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/places/places_new_york.htm)

**Interdisciplinary Options:** Music Education; Psychology; Sociology

In this episode students will see how one musician is demonstrating how multiculturalism can provide the basis for beautiful music.



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### Common Core Alignment:

- RI7: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account
- W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- SL1: 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.
- SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.