

SONIA DE LOS SANTOS

EDUCATIONAL STUDY GUIDE!



Meet Sonia!

Who is Sonia De Los Santos?

Hola amigos and hello friends! I grew up in Monterrey, Mexico and been singing my whole life! I moved to New York City over 10 years ago and since 2007 I've been touring the world, singing in English and Spanish, playing guitar, mandolin, and jarana, with the Grammy Award winning group Dan Zanes And Friends. I recently released my first family music album titled *Mi Viaje: De Nuevo León to the New York Island* where I tell stories about my experiences growing up in Mexico, moving to another country, learning about other cultures, and in the process, feeling closer to my own heritage. My band and I are so excited to play these songs for you while we explore together many different countries, rhythms and sounds from the Americas! See you at the concert!

- Sonia



SONIA WHEN SHE WAS AROUND 3 YEARS OLD!



The CD: "Mi Viaje"

"Mi Viaje" means my journey, and in this case it started in my home state Nuevo León in Mexico all the way to New York City! This incredible journey is filled with many adventures that are personal, and yet universal... There's stories about: birds, making chocolate, finding new friends that speak other languages, sunny skies, liberty, freedom and tolerance. Each one of us has a different journey and I hope to inspire you by learning about mine! Do you know where you and your family come from? What about the places you'd like to visit?

Where does the music come from?

- The Americas!

My band and I play music from different countries, but mainly from the American continent. Did you know that even though the United States of America is commonly called "America", that word really refers to the whole American continent? That includes: Canada, USA, Mexico, Central and South America! During the show you can hear songs from the entire continent!

What's your favorite Mexican food?

I like everything that's made out of corn! It's specially interesting to me that you can find corn in many other cultures and cuisines around the world. I'm on a quest to trying different versions of corn based foods from all over the world! Second favorite food: avocados. And yes -they go great with corn!



The Instruments in the show...

Jarana: A traditional Mexican guitar with 8 strings and the main instrument in the Son Jarocho style from the state of Veracruz in Mexico. Jaranas come in different shapes and sizes. The one Sonia plays is a “jarana primera”, it was custom made and Sonia has been playing it for 9 years.



Guitar: It's a stringed instrument originating in Spain, usually having six strings, a flat sounding board with a round sound hole in the center, a flat back, and a fretted fingerboard. The one Sonia plays is called the Gibson Hummingbird, and on its pick board, it has a beautiful drawing of a Hummingbird surrounded by flowers.

Leona: A fretless acoustic bass from the same family as the Jarana. The Leona or “Lioness” in English, has 4 strings just like a traditional bass, but it's much smaller. Fun fact: Sinuhé, who's playing the Leona, built that instrument himself made out of different pieces of wood!

Violin: It belongs to the orchestral string family but in this case, it's played in Folk music! It has 4 strings and it can be played with a bow or plucked.



Accordion: This one is a diatonic button accordion and it is mainly used for playing popular music and traditional folk music.



Trumpet: The one with the highest register in the brass family. Trumpets are used in different music styles: like orchestras, concert bands, and jazz ensembles, as well as in popular music.

Trombone: Another one from the brass family with a slide mechanism that changes the length of the instrument to change the pitch. The word trombone comes from Italian *tromba* (trumpet) and *-one* (meaning “large”) meaning “large trumpet”.

Drum Set: A set of drums and other percussion instruments, set up on stands played by a single player with drumsticks held in both hands and feet operating pedals that control the hi-hat cymbal and the bass drum.



Before the performance

Listen to 3 songs...

La Golondrina



[La Golondrina Song link](#)

Themes:

- Golondrinas (swallow birds) & migration
- Son Jarocho (music genre)
- Instrumentation

Lesson 1: Learn about “golondrinas” and their journey

In English, we know golondrinas under the name of swallows. The swallow is known as ‘the bird of freedom’ and it is also referred to as a “migrant bird”. One of its characteristics is that it cannot stay captive, so it flies from one country to another to be at a nice temperature, moving north as the spring turns into summer, and south as autumn gets closer to winter. By instinct, the swallow traces its way over long distances, and yet at the next season returning to the spot where it came from. How do they do this? Well, it is thought that its body uses the earth’s magnetic field to guide it! Swallows have been observed to leave their country on their migration, and to return in the following year to the identical nest from where they started.



What inspired Sonia to write this song?:

“I wrote this song thinking about the afternoons I spent as a child sitting on my grandmother’s porch. We would watch these birds called golondrinas as they would make their nests and stay for a while, and then fly away only to make their nests again in new places. Some people like to call them migrant birds- their pilgrimage sounds very familiar to me...” - Sonia

Lesson 2: Learn about “Son Jarocho”

“La Golondrina” was written inspired by “**son jarocho**” -a regional folk musical style that comes from Veracruz, a state in the Gulf Coast region of Mexico, where three different cultures; Spanish, indigenous and African, came together more than 500 years ago. The verses of these songs called “sones” are often improvised and they include humorous verses and subjects such as nature, sailors, love and community life that still reflect life in the colonial times of the 19th century. There’s many beautiful songs that belong to this style, and one that you might know and recognize is “**La Bamba**”, one of the first “sones” that made it across the US border and became one of the most well-known songs from Mexico worldwide. Many artists have recorded it and here’s one of our favorite versions of it: [La Bamba - Video Link](#)

Lesson 3: Learn more about the instruments!

This style uses a family of instruments that's very particular. It starts with the **jaranas** you learned about to provide a harmonic and percussive base with double strings; the **requinto jarocho**, another small guitar-like instrument plucked with a long pick traditionally made from cow-horn, ; the **arpa jarocho** (harp); the **leona** - an acoustic bass guitar, and other percussion instruments, like the **pandero** and the **quijada** (an instrument made of a donkey or horse jawbone). Some groups add the **marimbol**, a plucked key box bass, and the **cajón**.

Listen to the instruments played in “**La Golondrina**”. The first instrument you hear is a **requinto** from the same family as the **jarana**, and is the one in charge of introducing the melody of the song. Other than the **jarana**, the **leona** and the **violin**, can you guess which other instruments are being played? Who's playing the percussion in the ensemble? Which of these instruments are common in other music? What instruments are different?.



A typical “son jarocho” group with dancers.

Activity 1: The Zapateado - A percussive dance

Now that you've heard the song a few more times, can you tell if dance is used as a musical instrument? -Yes! The song has a dancer who's feet are on top of a “**tarima**” (raised wooden platform) producing a percussive accompaniment to the instrumental parts of the song. When the singers are singing, the dancer typically does a softer dance so it doesn't cover the voices, but when they stop singing, the dancers take the spotlight!

Here's how you can dance to this song and many others in this style. The rhythm is commonly taught as “**café con pan**” (coffee with bread). The sound that “**café con pan**” makes when you say it, will help you learn the way to move your feet with the music. Since the word “café” has two syllables you need to stomp your foot twice. “con” and “pan” have only one syllable, so when you say those words you have to stomp your foot only once. We'll start with the left foot doing LL/R/L and quickly changing to start with the right one, doing RR/L/R and on, and on, and on. Use the chart below to guide your feet!

Café	con	pan	Café	con	pan
LL	R	L	RR	L	R

Here's a video that shows a dancer doing this pattern slowly, then at a faster pace. Notice how she first teaches the rhythm clapping only and later, try to follow her steps.

[Café con pan - dance lesson link](#)

Once you have the “**café con pan**” rhythm under your belt, watch this video to see how to incorporate your arms into the dance. This will typically happen during the chorus of the song when the bird starts flying!

[Café con pan \(with flying arms\) - dance lesson link](#)

TAN FELIZ

[Tan Feliz Song link](#)

Themes:

- Acoustic vs electric instruments
- Singing in different languages
- Learn a partner dance!

Lesson 1: Acoustic instruments vs. electric instruments

First, listen to “**Tan Feliz**” and see if you hear any differences in the instruments being played compared to “**La Golondrina**”. Are there any new instruments you recognize? There’s a brass instrument at the beginning of the song, can you guess which one it is? What about guitars and drums? Do you know what’s the difference between acoustic and electric instruments? When the instruments are considered electric it’s because they need electricity in order for them to make a bigger sound, like an electric guitar, that’s connected to an amplifier and fills the room with sound once it’s plugged into an electric outlet.

In this song, there are both acoustic and electric instruments! Can you guess which ones are acoustic and which electric? Another fact to consider is that music has been around for a very long time, long before electricity was available to most of us. Nowadays, we’re used to listening to music depending on electricity, like in our computers, tv’s, ipods, etc, but have you thought about how people listened to music back when there was no electricity? Yes, they had to make their own! They would gather to sing, clap and play their instruments in more intimate settings where they could be heard and share songs and stories...

Lesson 2: Singing in different languages

Do you know how many languages this song is being sung on? That’s right, two! Spanish and English. The question here is, if there is a rule for singing songs only in one language? The answer is: No! You can sing in as many languages as you want. In fact, one fun way of learning other languages is by asking your friends who speak a different language than you do to sing part of any song in their language. You can take turns trading verses and then sing together while you learn from each other! That’s exactly what happened in this song! Can you think of any other songs that are sung in more than one language? *Fun fact: Our friend Dan Zanes is singing the verse in English!*



Activity 1: Learn a partner dance!

This song is about sharing music with our friends and I thought a partner dance would make a really fun way to enjoy it. So find a partner and learn this dance! Feel free to dance with your partner throughout the whole song, but during the chorus the motions that I will explain below will help you!

Dance instructions:

1. Stand in front of your partner facing each other.
2. Extend your arms to the front so that you're barely touching each others fingertips (this will leave enough space for you to dance in front of each other).
3. When you hear the chorus of the song follow the instructions below!

Te tengo a ti - Extend your right arm pointing to your partner

Tú me tienes a mí - Point to yourself

Tenemos todo - Open your arms wide to point everywhere around you

¿Qué más podemos pedir? - Hands out to the sides as if you're asking "What else?"

Tenemos tiempo - Point to your imaginary watch in your left hand

Que compartir - Hold hands with your partner

Y es que no hay nadie que me haga tan feliz - Dance around each other holding hands!

- Here's a video that can help you with the motions: [Tan Feliz Dance video link](#)

- And a photo for some inspiration....



ESTA ES TU TIERRA

[Esta es Tu Tierra - Video Link](#)

Themes:

- Who is Woody Guthrie?
- "This Land is Your Land"
- The song in Spanish
- The United States map

Lesson 1: Who is Woody Guthrie?

Mr. Woody Guthrie was born in 1912 in a small town in Oklahoma called Okemah. He is a singer-songwriter and musician whose musical legacy includes hundreds of political, traditional, and children's songs. Many of his songs are about his experiences during the Great Depression when he traveled with displaced farmers from Oklahoma to California and learned their traditional folk and blues songs, earning him the nickname the "Dust Bowl Troubadour".



Mr. Woody Guthrie playing his emblematic guitar.

Lesson 2: "This Land is Your Land"

Mr Guthrie wrote "**This Land Is Your Land**" one of its most famous songs and it's so well known that some people consider it an alternative national anthem for the United States of America! He wrote it in 1940 based on an existing melody, a Carter Family tune called "When the World's on Fire", in critical response to Irving Berlin's "God Bless America."

The song you've been listening to "**Esta Es Tu Tierra**" is my version in Spanish of "**This Land is Your Land**" with lyrics I wrote. It has the same amount of verses than the original version, except they are in another language! Many other versions have been made in reference to other countries and it has been sung in different languages over the years. Here's the original version: [This Land is Your Land by Woody Guthrie link](#)

Activity 1: Learn the chorus of the song in English and Spanish!

As we've learned, this song was originally written in English, but now you can learn the Spanish version of it too! Once you know it, feel free to share this version with your family and friends and ask them if they know the chorus of this song in any other language they can teach you!



This is the original lyrics that Woody Guthrie wrote in English:

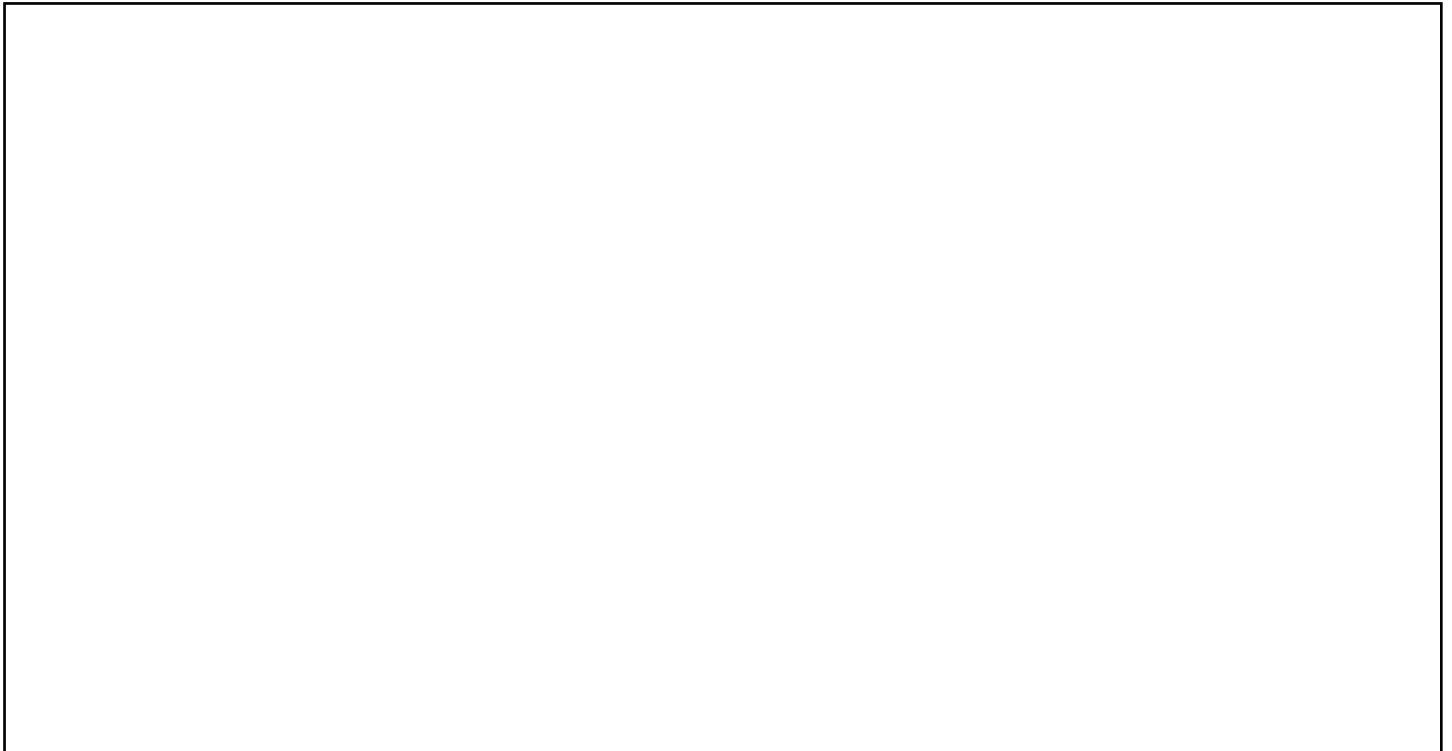
This land is your land, this land is my land
From California to the New York island
From the redwood forests to the gulf stream waters
This land was made to you and me

And these are the lyrics Sonia wrote for this song in Spanish!

Esta es tu tierra, esta es mi tierra
Desde California hasta Nueva York
Desde las montañas a todos los mares
Esta tierra es para ti y para mí

Activity 2: Draw the United States map!

Can you draw the United States map shape by memory? Give it a try! Also, mark the state where you live and all of the ones you have visited or want to visit in the future. You can also color the map and add any elements that you like from each state, they could be famous buildings, food, nature or people!



General Activities

At the show...

- Play close attention to the instruments being played.
- Who's playing what instrument?
- Does someone play more than one instrument during the show?
- What's your favorite one?
- How many languages have you heard during the show?
- Can you understand everything you hear?
- Can you tell who speaks more than one language?

To reflect after the show...

- What was your favorite song?
- Are you curious about visiting any of the countries where the songs come from?
- If you were a bird and could fly anywhere, where would you go?
- Are you curious about learning another language?
- Can you remember the chorus to any of the songs at the show?
- Did you learn any of the hand motions or dances?
- Do you have friends who speak another language you don't speak? Which language? Can you ask them to teach you a few words?

Activity: Write a song!

Writing a song doesn't have to be too complicated. You can start with a simple idea for a theme. It can be a song about nature, something you like, somebody you like to spend time with, you're favorite time of year, favorite animal or even food! It's always good to write songs by ourselves, but it's even more fun to get help from a friend or relative! If there's someone around you, ask them to help you and do it together! When you're done and have something to share, don't forget to sing it to your family and friends. Tip: If you have a friend who speaks another language come up with a version of it that has more than one language in the song.



Here's a recipe!

CHOCOLATE

There's nothing I want more on cold Winter days than a cup of my mom's Mexican hot chocolate! Even though we are far away now, the memories of making it with her as a child bring me so much joy... Here's the way I remember making a big pot of chocolate.... and here's a song to help you make it!

[Chocolate Video Link](#)

4 servings

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of Milk (there's different kinds, your choice!)
- 1 tablet of Mexican chocolate (I prefer Abuelita or Ibarra)
- Cinnamon (optional)
- Sugar (optional)

How to make: Heat 4 cups milk and 1 tablet of chocolate in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Mix constantly with until mixture is frothy and starts to boil (don't forget to sing!) Remove from heat; add sugar and cinnamon to taste. Serve immediately. *Tip: Stir with a wooden spoon and froth with a "molinillo".*

