

Aversboro Elementary School

1605 Aversboro Road

Garner, NC 27529

March 4, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

My school recently hosted an appearance by the Russian Duo for all the students in our Pre-K through fifth grade elementary school, located in a suburb of Raleigh, NC. We learned about the Russian Duo at an artists' showcase sponsored by the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County in August. The Russian Duo showcased a ten minute segment of their school performance and made themselves available to talk with teachers and parents on cultural arts committees. Schools were able to book the Russian duo for a performance under the grant category of chamber music.

As the music teacher at my school and a member of the cultural arts committee responsible for preparing the students for each performance, I was delighted to see that the Russian Duo has a website that contains pictures of the performers, pictures and information about Russian instruments, and video clips of past performances. These materials, along with selections from our music textbooks and a PowerPoint presentation the Russian Duo sent, helped me to prepare our students for their performance.

The Russian Duo incorporated many engaging, interactive elements for elementary aged students into their program. Students were invited to sing, play body percussion, dramatize the playing of the balalaika, play Russian folk instruments, learn Russian vocabulary words, conduct, problem-solve, and ask questions.

Oleg is a virtuoso balalaika player and Terry is an accomplished classical pianist. Both performers demonstrated extraordinary skill at playing their instruments. They were also highly skilled at managing audience behavior and sharing cross-cultural connections with our students.

The students learned Russian words for hello, goodbye, yes, no, and the names of instruments. They learned about the balalaika and collaborated with the artists to experience Russian music. The study materials the Russian Duo provided gave students many connections to Russian culture. Students learned that music is an international language.

I would ask the Russian Duo to perform again because of the nature of their international collaboration, their virtuoso performance skills, and the integration of many content areas into their performance. They embody the 21st century skills of global awareness and collaboration. The Russian Duo represents the highest calibre of arts education. Their program makes many

curriculum connections and is highly engaging for students. Both artists demonstrate strong communication and interpersonal skills as well as a high degree of professionalism in their interaction with our school family.

I highly recommend the Russian Duo as outstanding performers and experienced educators. Their program will inspire students to learn more about the Russian culture and the art of collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Hopkins".

Kathy Hopkins

Elementary Music Specialist

NBCT in Early and Middle Childhood Music