

# Greek Music in Pueblo

Created by Julie Kuhlman

General Music Educator, Pueblo County School District 70



**Interview:** Penny Zavichas | April 13, 2022 [View](#)

Soundscapes Oral History Collection [View](#)

**Topics:** Greek American culture, Greek Orthodox church, Greek music

## Interview Summary:

Penny Zavichas is a community leader of Pueblo, Colorado's Greek American population. She recounts her childhood in Pueblo and experiences growing up in the Greek American community, including musical and religious activity. She describes her professional career as a golfer and her current community work at Pueblo's St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

<b>00:02</b> Introduction	<b>38:47</b> Holy Week at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
<b>02:27</b> Early life and musical experiences	<b>48:22</b> St. John the Baptist and the Greek American community
<b>06:29</b> Live music	<b>52:06</b> Church festivals at St. John the Baptist
<b>08:40</b> St. John the Baptist in transition	<b>54:42</b> Sounds and celebrations in the Pueblo Greek American community
<b>12:25</b> Music and social life in school	<b>1:04:34</b> Funeral laments and final remarks
<b>17:21</b> Growing up in Bessemer	
<b>21:46</b> Golf Career	
<b>37:00</b> Staying connected to the Greek Orthodox church	



## Teaching Ideas

---

### My Culture

#### Recommended Grade Levels: 3-5

Penny Zavichas was raised in Pueblo in a Greek community, centered around St. John the Baptist Greek Church. Through this community, she learned about the traditions of Greek and Greek American culture. Penny discusses hearing Greek folk music sung by her grandmother and listening to Μοιρολόγια–*mirológia* (laments) [**1:04:34** in the video interview)]. Music was also part of her life at school and church, where she played violin and brass instruments. Ms. Zavichas recalls learning dance, music and history through classes at the church. Today, the music used in ceremonies and celebrations is the same or similar to those used within Greek Culture for thousands of years.

#### What is Culture?

- Discuss the meaning of culture
  - Definition: The customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group
  - Use this video to assist in discussion: [Understanding Traditions and Cultures Video](#)

#### Penny Zavichas' Greek Culture

- Watch selections from the Pueblo Soundscapes interview in which Penny Zavichas discusses Greek American cultural practices
  - **12:25** Music and social life in school
  - **52:06** Church festivals at St. John the Baptist
  - **54:42** Sounds and celebrations in the Pueblo Greek American community
  - **1:04:34** Funeral laments and final remarks
- Based on information from the interview, talk about aspects of Greek American culture as experienced by Penny Zavichas.
  - Optional: Fill out the [My Culture Worksheet](#) from Penny Zavichas' perspective.

#### Sharing Our Cultures

- Using the [My Culture Worksheet](#), lead students to discuss their families' cultures and traditions.
  - Optional: Fill out the [My Culture Worksheet](#) for yourself so that students can visualize the process.
- Extension Activity: Students present their research on their family cultures and traditions, sharing a food or musical example with the class.



## **Greece and Greek Instruments**

Recommended Grade Levels: 3-8 (Could be expanded for upper grades with individual research instead of class learning)

Students will explore Greek culture, history and music through video resources and class discussions.

### Learn about Greece:

- Complete a [KWL](#) chart about Greece (either as a class or individually)
- Watch a video about Greece
  - [Musical Intro to Greece](#) (Silly song with pictures and facts about Greece)

### Explore Greek Music:

- As a class, read about ancient Greek music (article with discussion questions)  
[Ancient Greek History](#)
- Review portions of Interview of Penny Zachichas
  - **12:25** Music and social life in school
  - **52:06** Church festivals at St. John the Baptist
  - **54:42** Sounds and celebrations in the Pueblo Greek American community
  - **1:04:34** Funeral laments and final remarks
- Watch videos about Greek Instruments
  - [28 Musical Instruments of Greece](#)
  - [Bouzouki](#)
  - [Lyre](#)
  - [Aulos](#)
  - [Kithara](#)
  - [Toubeleki - Doumbek](#)
- Discuss and compare/contrast Greek instruments to instruments that students already know
  - Chordophones = Strummed (e.g. stringed instruments)
  - Aerophones = Blown into (e.g. woodwinds, brass)
  - Membranophones = Struck on a membrane (e.g. drums)
  - Idiophones = Shaken or struck (e.g. percussion instruments)
- Apply to the Penny Zavichas interview video: Which instruments does she mention? Which categories do they belong to? What are they used for?

## **Dance *syrta*!**

Recommended Grade Levels: All



Community dance is important to Greek culture in Greece and in the United States. The *syrtaki* dance is a combination of three dance styles. Originally choreographed for the 1964 film *Zorba the Greek*, syrtaki is a very common dance performed in celebratory and stage settings. While the footwork is relatively simple, the tricky (and exciting) part is that the music contains a brisk accelerando leading to a frenzied dance finish.

- Watch [a performance of syrtaki](#)
- Teach the dance moves OR have students watch and learn from a video [tutorial](#)
  - For reference:  
Bounce knees to beat  
Begin with right foot  
Right step, left touch. Left step, right touch.  
Right step, left touch. Left step, right touch.  
Right step, left toe, cross tap. Left step, right toe, cross tap.  
Right step, left toe, cross tap. Left step, right toe, cross tap.  
Right step, left foot back, left foot swoosh, hold.  
Left step, right kick. Right step, left kick.  
Left step, right foot, back right foot swoosh, hold.  
8 count turn clockwise with right hands up together.  
*Repeat*  
(May add slow spins alone to find new spots to dance.)
- Perform the syrtaki dance together as a class.

### **Additional Resources**

About Penny Zavichas:

- Website: [Colorado Golf Hall of Fame](#)
- Website: [Pueblo Sports Association](#)

About Greece and Greek Music::

- Website: [Ancient Greece for Kids](#)
- Website: [Smithsonian Folkways Recordings of Greek Music](#)
- Website (Teaching Resources): [The Kennedy Center–Music of Greece](#)

### **About the Author**

Julie Kuhlman is a general music specialist in Pueblo County School District 70. With more than 20 years of experience in public education, Julie has taught preschool, Kindergarten, elementary music and worked in building administration. With a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Kansas and a Masters of Educational Administration from Adams State University,



Julie loves sharing her passion for music. Julie currently serves as the District 4 Representative on the General Music Council for the Colorado Music Educators Association and plays flute and sings with the Pueblo Municipal Band and loves to work with students of all ages in the realm of music theater.

Julie's Blog: [Creative Clutter and Music](#)

Julie's Teachers Pay Teachers Store: [TPT Creative Clutter and Music](#)