

Hello, Teachers!

This guide was created to help you make the most of your MPR Class Notes Artists visit.

The goal of the concert experience is to inspire, motivate, and entertain students through live performance.

This curriculum is comprised of a PowerPoint presentation and this Teacher's Guide. The curriculum supports the concert experience by extracting four concepts or ideas directly related to the concert and its contents. Activities and information about these concepts align with Minnesota music standards, and help make music come alive for students. These concepts provide focus and establish learning goals that connect to the concert experience.

Each concept is explored in three ways: Learn, Listen, and Do. Visuals, audio, and information for the Listen and Learn components are presented in the PowerPoint. Use this in the classroom to present and illustrate ideas. There are six Lesson/Activity plans that correspond with the Do section in this Teacher's Guide.

The four core ideas/concepts for Class Notes Artists: Mill City String Quartet are:

1. The **instrumentation** of a traditional string quartet. Identify by sight and sound the **violin**, **viola**, and **cello**.
2. Musicians in a string quartet (and other small music ensembles without a conductor) signal each other by giving **cues**.
3. String instruments have a number of special techniques, including **pizzicato** and **double stops**.
4. Music is a universal form of expression, but unique to its culture.

We hope you find these tools enrich the concert experience for your students.

NAME A STRING INSTRUMENT

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will successfully name the instrumentation of a string quartet.
2. Students will correctly identify violin, viola, and cello by sight and sound.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Start with instrumentation of the traditional string quartet. Create a bulletin board with pictures but no labels. Create instrument name labels separately and ask students to attach labels correctly. Finished product might look like this:



2. Work on visual identification by repeating the first activity with each instrument alone.
3. Move on to aural identification. Find a variety of music with solo violin, viola, cello, or an ensemble piece that prominently features one of those instruments. Here are some suggestions for each instrument:

Violin:

- Felix Mendelssohn: *Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64*
- Jay Ungar: *Ashokan Farewell*
- Nicolo Paganini: *Caprice No. 24*

Viola:

- Arnold Bax: *Viola Sonata in G minor*
- Hector Berlioz: *Harold en Italie*

Violin and Viola:

- W.A. Mozart's [Sinfonia Concertante](#), K. 364 features a brilliant “conversation” between the violin and viola. Here’s a great performance, with the violin/viola dialogue starting around 2:30.

Cello:

- J.S. Bach: Any of the *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*
- Camille Saint-Saëns “The Swan” from *Carnival of the Animals*
- Edward Elgar: *Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85*

EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS/NOTES:

1. Repeat the sequence of activities with any kind of performing ensemble: SATB vocal ensemble, brass quintet, jazz combo, rock band. Take note of any variations in instrumentation of common ensembles.
2. Use the activities—especially the listening/aural identification component—to study any specific piece in greater depth and really hone students’ instrument identification skills. A few fun examples to try:
 - a. Steve Reich: *Music for 18 Musicians*
 - b. Darius Milhaud: *La Creation du Monde (Creation of the World)*,
 - c. Igor Stravinsky: *L’Histoire du Soldat (A Soldier’s Tale)*
 - d. Franz Schubert: *Trout Quintet*
 - e. Edgar Varèse: *Poème électronique*
 - f. Henry Cowell: *The Banshee**

*The Cowell piece is for solo piano but uses unorthodox techniques. It will challenge students listening skills in a new way.

STANDARDS:

These activities include aspects of the following Minnesota State Standards for the Arts.

1. K–3. 4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique. 1. Respond to or critique a variety of creations or performances using the artistic foundations. Music. 0.4.1.3.1. Compare and contrast the characteristics of a variety of musical works or performances.
2. Grades 4–5. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique. 1. Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using the artistic foundations. Music. 4.4.1.3.1. Justify personal interpretations and reactions to a variety of musical works and performances.



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Music for learning.

PEGS, NECK, BODY, TAIL

ACTIVITY/LESSON PLAN

OBJECTIVE:

1. Students will recognize and identify verbally and through song the following parts of the violin, viola, and cello: pegs, neck, body, tail, fingerboard, *f* holes, bridge, and scroll.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Sing “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” with your students. Tell them that this song, one they’ve probably known for years, can really help learn the parts of a string instrument.
2. If you have access to a violin, hold it up and point to each part, deliberately and slowly, as you sing to the same “Head, Shoulders” tune:

Pegs, Neck, Body, Tail, Body, Tail.
Pegs, Neck, Body, Tail, Body, Tail.
Fingerboard, *F* Hole, Bridge, and Scroll,
Pegs, Neck, Body, Tail, Body, Tail.

If you don’t have access to a real violin, a blown up picture or poster works too. This works with cello or viola too.

3. Repeat by asking a volunteer to come up and point to the parts as the class sings. Or ask a volunteer to sing while you point. Get gradually faster.

STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota State Standards for the Arts.

1. K–3. 1. Artistic Foundations. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 0.1.1.3.1. Identify the elements of music, including: melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts.
2. K–3. 1. Artistic Foundations. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2 Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm and expressive intent.
3. K–3. 3. Artistic Process: Perform or present. 1. Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 0.3.1.3.1. Sing and play a varied repertoire that includes simple rhythms and melodies.

PIZZICATO/DOUBLE STOPS LISTENING PARTY

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

Here's a short, simple listening activity geared to younger students to help reinforce recognition of basic string techniques and tone color/timbre.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will correctly identify *pizzicato* and *double stop* sounds by listening.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Explain that string instruments can perform a special technique- *pizzicato*- which means that they pluck their strings instead of using the bow.
2. Introduce the double stop technique, which is when string players play two strings simultaneously. Listen to a few examples of each (good examples listed below.)
3. Create index cards:

pizzicato

Double stops

Play random examples from the list below and ask students to flash the appropriate card based on what they hear.

Pizzicato

- a. *Pizzicato Polka*, Johann and Josef Strauss
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CAXpuPqfv0>
- b. "Humming Chorus" from Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. Make sure to listen to a version with orchestral accompaniment, like this one:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBO94mlQqtY>
- c. The Largo movement of "Winter", from the *Four Seasons*, by Antonio Vivaldi. This one is sort of a trick question because the melody is bowed (*arco*) but the accompaniment is *pizzicato*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNeAbvwmwXl&list=RDGNeAbvwmwXl>

- d. The very fun *Plink, Plank, Plunk* by Leroy Anderson.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzS2HiV_aUo
- e. The second movement of Maurice Ravel's String Quartet (II. String Quartet in F - *Assez vif, Très rythmé*), which is used in the Class Notes Video *In Tune: What Music Shares with Art*
<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/radio/services/cms/education/>

Hagen Quartet: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhN0RRILhDg>

Double Stops

- a. *Partita no. 3*, "Gavotte en rondeau", J.S. Bach
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb3LAzCABsM>
- b. *Chaconne for Solo Violin*, J.S. Bach
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bVRTtcWmXI>
- c. Fiddle music and bluegrass use a lot of double stops. Sometimes the music goes so fast it's hard to pick out the double stops, but this version of *Wayfaring Stranger* by Alison Krauss starts out with a couple of obvious, easy-to-hear double stops.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brAXHYv-JYc>

STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota Standards for the Arts:

1. K–3. Artistic Foundations 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 0.1.1.3.1. Identify the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form, and their related concepts.
2. K–3. 4 Artistic Process: Respond or Critique. 1. Respond to or critique a variety of creations or performances using the artistic foundations. Music. 0.4.1.3.1. Compare and contrast the characteristics of a variety of musical works or performances.

VENN DIAGRAMS

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand that music from around the world shares common elements, but also reflects cultural differences.
2. Students will reinforce fundamental analytic, descriptive, and identification skills.
3. Emphasis will be given to genres such as mariachi, taiko, gamelan, electronic music, and opera.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Listen to a selection of pieces from a variety of genres, including those listed below and those of your own choosing.
2. While listening, create a list for each genre, identifying characteristics, including, but not limited to: instrumentation, melody, rhythm, texture, dynamics, and form.

MARIACHI—MEXICO

- Frequent use of brass instruments, strings, guitars
- Utilizes dance forms
- Celebratory function in society
- Uses 2/4 time signature often
- Intense, dramatic vocal style
- Ensemble performance

TAIKO—JAPAN

- Primarily percussion- drums (skins)
- Used in battle to set marching pace and signal
- Specific rhythmic patterns
- Ensemble or solo performance

GAMELAN—INDONESIA

- Primarily percussion-cymbals, metallophones, gongs
- Female singer, male chorus
- Celebratory function in society
- Unique tuning system, non-Western harmony

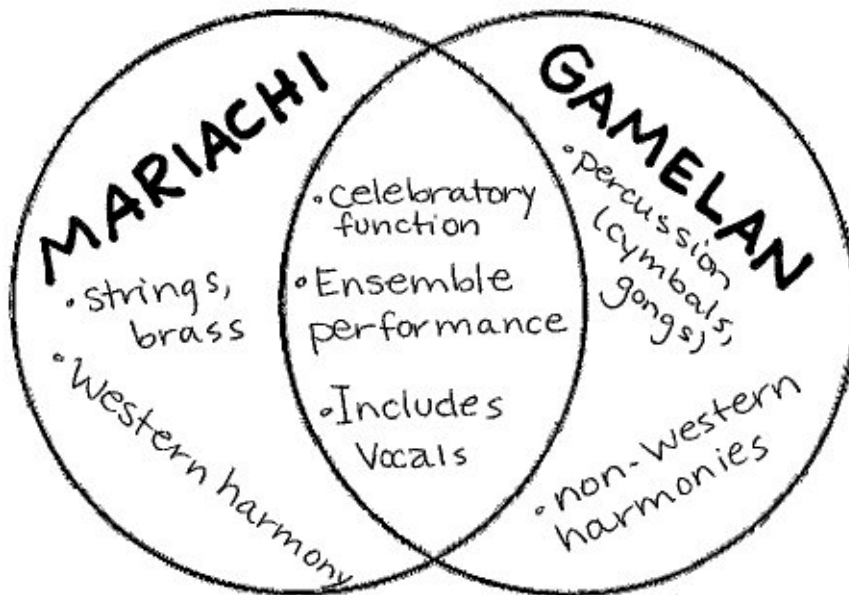
OPERA

- Part of the Western classical tradition
- Intense, dramatic singing with solo, ensemble, and chorus parts
- Full orchestra accompaniment
- Theatrical/tells a story
- Combines art forms

ELECTRONIC MUSIC

- Electronically-generated sound
- May combine acoustic and electronic instruments
- Repetitive rhythmic and harmonic patterns
- May or may not include vocals

3. Once students have a command of the characteristics of each genre, ask them to use Venn diagrams to visually represent areas of commonality and areas of difference. Here's one example:



STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota Standards for the Arts:

1. K–3. 4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique 1. Respond to or critique a variety of creations or performances using the artistic foundations. Music. 0.4.1.3.1. Compare and contrast the characteristics of a variety of musical works or performances.
2. Grades 4–5. 1. Artistic Foundations 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 4.1.1.3.1. Describe the elements of music, including: melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts.
3. Grades 4–5. 1. Artistic Foundations 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music.4.1.1.3.3. Identify the characteristics of a variety of genres and musical styles such as march, taiko, mariachi, and classical.
4. Grades 6–8. 1. Artistic Foundations. 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 6.1.1.3.1. Analyze the elements of music, including: melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts.
5. Grades 6–8. 1. Artistic Foundations. 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 6.1.1.3.3. Describe the characteristics of a variety of genres and musical styles such as electronic, jazz, opera, and gamelan.

CAN YOU CUE?

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand the function of cueing in a small-ensemble setting.
2. Students will demonstrate cueing technique in classroom performance.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Explain that when musicians perform together, they must give signals, or cues, to one another so that they start together and stay together throughout a performance. It's a way of communication and working together. The process of cueing might include an exaggerated nod of the head; a sharp, audible inhalation; and/or deliberate eye contact.
2. Watch one or more videos of string quartets with students. Observe the performers' body language and eye contact. Sometimes you will see very obvious examples of cueing, though often this cueing is subtle, requiring close attention to discern and highlight.

Here's Brooklyn Rider playing the [String Quartet in G minor](#) by Claude Debussy.

And here is the Parker Quartet playing Béla Bartók's first [string quartet](#).

It's easier to notice obvious cues in the Brooklyn Rider performance. The Parker Quartet's cues are more subtle. Every string quartet has its own cueing style and habits.

3. Integrate cueing into classroom performance. Group students into quartets and ask them to choose a favorite classroom piece to perform. They may choose to sing, play on classroom instruments, or combine the two. Remind them that they must be able to start together on their own. Circulate among the groups during rehearsal time and help each quartet refine their cueing technique. Complete the activity by asking each group to perform for the class. Give feedback regarding cueing.

STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota Standards for the Arts:

1. K–3. Artistic Foundations 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2. Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm, and expressive intent.
2. K–3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present 1. Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 0.3.1.3.1 & 0.3.1.3.2. Reflect on a performance based on the feedback of others.
3. Grades 4–5. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 4.1.2.3.2. Sing and play alone and in a group demonstrating proper posture, breathing, technique, age-appropriate tone quality and expressive intent.
4. Grades 4–5. Artistic Process: Perform or Present. 1. Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 4.3.1.3.2. Revise performance based on the feedback of others and self-reflection.
5. Grades 6–8. 3. Artistic process: Perform or Present. 1. Perform or present in a variety of context in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 6.3.1.3.1. Rehears and perform music from a variety of contexts and styles alone or within small or large groups.

STRING CHARADES

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

Here's a simple, movement-based activity geared for younger students to help reinforce basic string techniques.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will correctly identify violin, viola, and cello by both sight and sound.
2. Students will recognize special string instrument techniques, specifically *pizzicato* and *arco*.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Explain that string instruments can perform a special technique—*pizzicato*—which means that they *pluck* their strings instead of using the bow. Watch a few examples so that students understand what *pizzicato* looks and sounds like.

Here's "Allegro Pizzicato" from Béla Bartók's *String Quartet No. 4*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBs53SIEkso>

2. Note that when string players use the bow, it's referred to as *arco*. Watch a contrasting example, the "*American*" *Quartet*, by Antonín Dvořák.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV-kbAydckw>
3. Create two index cards, labeled *pizzicato* and *arco*, respectively. Use them as a prompt for students to act out playing each technique.
4. Ask students to volunteer to come up and pretend/pantomime playing *pizzicato* or *arco* while other students guess.

STANDARDS:

These activities incorporate aspects of the following Minnesota Standards for the Arts:

1. K–3. Artistic Foundations 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2. Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm, and expressive intent.



2. Grades 4–5. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 4.1.2.3.2. Sing and play alone and in a group demonstrating proper posture, breathing, technique, age-appropriate tone quality and expressive intent.



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