

Zenith Contemporary Ensemble

Supporting Materials Packet



Zenith Contemporary Ensemble

(Paula Gudmundson, Flute; Diana Shapiro, Piano; Jim Pospisil, Horn)

Photo Credit: Bosco Jacobson

About the Performers:

Zenith Contemporary Ensemble is an energetic, innovative trio specializing in contemporary repertoire. Learn more about Zenith Contemporary Ensemble on their [website](#).

Learning Goals:

1. Students will identify flute, piano, and French horn by sight and sound.
2. Students will experience and compare a variety of tempos.
3. Students will understand that musical elements can represent elements found in nature.

Preparing for your Class Notes Concert

Thank you for signing up for a Class Notes Concert, brought to you by YourClassical MPR!

This packet includes lessons that will prepare for, enhance, and reinforce the concert experience. These lessons are designed to be a starting point. We know every classroom is different, and we trust that teachers will customize lessons to fit their students' needs.

After your Class Notes Concert, please fill out our teacher survey and have your students complete our student survey. Class Notes staff will send a link with instructions after your concert.

PACKET CONTENTS

- **Lesson One, The Audience**, prepares students to be an engaged and respectful audience. If possible, please do this lesson before the concert experience.
- **Lessons Two, Three, and Four** come from the [Class Notes Lesson Library](#). These lessons work well before or after the concert experience as they provide an introduction to the three instruments in this ensemble.
- **Lesson Five, Ensemble Skills**, is a hands-on lesson to reinforce learning after the concert experience. If possible, do this lesson after the Class Notes Concert.

Questions, comments, thoughts, or feedback?
We love when teachers share their ideas!
Contact Katie Condon at kcondon@mpr.org.



Lesson One: The Audience

Age Range: K-6

Learning Objective: Students will demonstrate active listening and positive audience behavior in a concert setting.

ENGAGE

ASK. "Have you ever been to a concert or performance?"

SAY. "There are two main jobs at a concert: the job of the *performer*, and the job of the *audience*."

DISCUSS. "Share with a classmate about a time you watched a performance. What did the performer do? What did the audience do?"

EXPLAIN & EXPLORE

SAY. "It's the job of an audience to listen to and notice sounds. Our voices or our wiggles can get in the way of hearing and noticing when we're an audience. Before attending a performance, it's helpful to let out our wiggles and sounds!"

SING. Sing "[We Are The Audience](#)." (Score found on next page.)

WATCH. Watch our Class Notes Video: [What to do at a Concert](#).

EXTEND

Choose one or more of the following activities to extend learning.

DISCUSS. As a classroom, create a chart listing positive and respectful audience behavior. Use the [sample chart](#) in the Visuals section as a starting point.

PRACTICE. Practice audience skills by utilizing one of our [Class Notes Virtual Concerts](#). In these lessons, teachers play the role of Concert Host, and students play the role of the audience.

PRETEND. Hold your own classroom concert! Assign performers, audience members, and observers. The job of the observers is to notice good audience behavior. (i.e. "I noticed STUDENT was watching the performer and not talking!")

- ✓ [Follow along](#) with this lesson online!
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Visuals: We Are the Audience

We Are the Audience

K. Condon

Vo. We are the aud - i - ence, it's our job to li - i - sten, Let all your

6
Vo. wi - ggles out be - fore the mu - sic be - e - gins. (WIGGLE!!!) We are the

11
Vo. aud - i - ence, it's our job to li - i - sten. Feel your bo - dy qui - et down,

16
Vo. so sounds can co - ome in.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The first staff (measures 1-4) has the lyrics 'We are the audience, it's our job to listen, Let all your'. The second staff (measures 5-8) has the lyrics 'wiggles out before the music begins. (WIGGLE!!!) We are the'. The third staff (measures 9-12) has the lyrics 'audience, it's our job to listen. Feel your body quiet down,'. The fourth staff (measures 13-16) has the lyrics 'so sounds can come in.'.

Suggestion for song usage:

The first time the song is introduced, ask students to watch and listen, and encourage them to keep a steady beat (maybe by rhythmically bouncing one fist on top of another.) Perform just the first half of the song. When you get to the “wiggle” part, ask them to join you. Repeat the first part of the song again- this time they can join you in the singing. After the second wiggle, explain, “This time the song starts the same, but ends differently.” Slow down and get considerably quieter on “Feel your body quiet down...” so that you are at a slow whisper by the end of the song.

Visuals: We Are The Audience

We Are the Audience when....

- We listen to and notice sounds.
- We research in advance: Who is visiting your school? Where are they from? What type of music can you expect?
- We follow directions on where and how to sit so you can see and hear.
- We are curious! What questions would you ask the performer?
- We notice the *timbre*, or unique and special sounds, made by each instrument or voice.
- We make predictions. What do you think will happen next?
- We share your experience with someone at home.
- We show appreciation at the end by clapping.

Lesson Two: French Horn

Age Range: K-6

Learning Objective: Students will listen to and learn about the French horn.

ENGAGE



ASK. "Raise your hand if you've heard about an instrument called the 'French horn.' (*Pause.*) Did you know that most of the world just calls it a horn, and it's actually not French? Today we'll listen to and learn about this instrument!"



EXPLAIN & EXPLORE



LEARN. Listen as Karen from Concordia Wind Quintet [demonstrates her instrument](#).

EXPLAIN. "There are four main parts of the French horn: the mouthpiece, tubing, valves, and bell. Can you locate each part in [this picture](#)? Each part has a *function*, or job. The **mouthpiece** is where the player puts their mouth and buzzes their lips. The **tubing** is the big long brass tube that is all wrapped up in coils. Air travels through the tubing. If the tubing was unwrapped, it would stretch out about 18 feet! The **valves** are three levers that change the length of tubing that air travels through when you press them. The **bell** is the end of the instrument, where the sound comes out."

EXPLORE. Watch Horn player Sarah Willis play the French horn in some unexpected ways, such as: an [airplane hangar](#), a horn [made of ice](#), and with [Cookie Monster!](#)

EXTEND



Choose one or both of the following activities to extend learning.

REVIEW. For younger students, ask them to whisper three things they learned about the French horn to a neighbor. For older students, ask them these comprehension questions:

- To which instrument family does the French horn belong?
- What does a French horn player need to do with their lips to make a sound in the mouthpiece?
- How many valves are on a French horn?

LISTEN. Watch a young horn player named Lauren perform [Romances No. 2](#) by Robert Schumann.

- ✓ [Follow along](#) with this lesson online!
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Lesson Three: Piano

Age Range: K-6

Learning Objective: Students will demonstrate basic understanding about how the piano works.

Note to Teachers: We encourage you to customize this lesson to fit your needs, resources, and teaching style. This lesson is designed to be a starting point. For younger learners, keep it simple! You might skip ahead to the hands-on learning. For older students, you can dive deeper into how sound is created. If possible, demonstrate the hammers and pedals in real life.

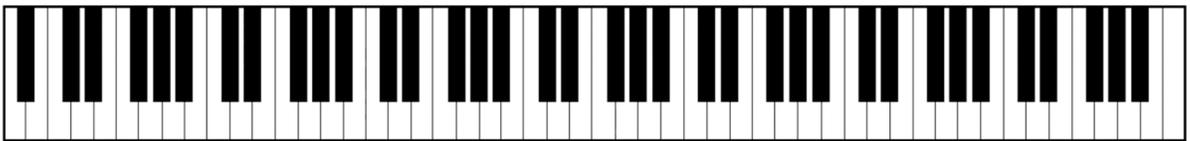
ENGAGE

SAY. “Raise your hand if you have seen a piano in real life. (Pause.) Keep your hand up if you have played a piano in real life. (Pause.) Keep your hand up if you’ve taken piano lessons. (Pause.) It looks like almost everyone has seen a piano, and many have played or even taken lessons! Today we’ll learn a little about how the piano works and have a chance to take turns playing it!

EXPLAIN

If possible, demonstrate on a real piano. If you don’t have access, [download our Piano Visuals](#) to show pictures of the hammers, pedals, and keys.

SAY. “The piano is one of many keyboard instruments. Keyboard instruments usually have **keys** that look like this.”



“Sound on a piano is made by pressing the keys. There are tiny hammers covered with soft felt. When you press a key, the **hammer** hits a metal string, and the vibration of that string is what we hear.” (Show students hammers on a real piano or show page 2 of the Piano Visuals.)

“Pianos also have **pedals**. Pressing different pedals changes the strings in different ways that affect the sound. For example, pressing one pedal makes the sound quieter. (Demonstrate if possible.) Pressing another pedal makes each note ring out longer. (Demonstrate if possible.) Pedals on a piano look like this.” (Show students the pedals on a real piano or show page 3 of the Piano Visuals.)

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Piano, continued

EXPLORE

ASK. [“Look at the picture](#) of the keyboard again. Do you notice a pattern? The black keys alternate between groups of two and groups of three.”

WRITE. Print copies of [this worksheet](#) for students. Ask students to circle all groups of two in red. Then, circle all groups of three in blue.

PLAY. If you have access to a piano or keyboard, ask students to hold up their index and middle finger, like a “peace” sign. Taking turns at the piano, ask students to use those two fingers to gently bounce up and down on groups of two black keys. Depending on developmental stage, try each hand alone or both hands together. Use a steady beat chant to regulate playing: “Groups of two, kangaroo!” Use the imagery of a hopping kangaroo. Remind students that kangaroos shouldn’t hop too far off the ground. Students who are not in line for the piano can practice hopping back and forth between the two sets of double black keys on their printed piano.

Repeat this activity by adding the ring finger and using the three interior fingers to find groups of three. “Groups of three, hop like a bunny!”

CREATE. Allow students to start creating their own music. An easy way to start is by playing only black keys. “Black Key Music” can be played alone or with others. One player can start a pattern of sounds using the lower register (“see if you can find the low notes!”) while the other can play a melody using the high notes. Explain that this music is **improvised**, or that we just make it up as we go, so there are no wrong notes. Guide and structure exploration by giving a title to each improvisation. “Elephant Music” on the black keys might sound slow and heavy, using low notes in the bottom register. “Hummingbird Music” might be high, light, and fast. Integrate music vocabulary to help reinforce meaning and terminology.

EXTEND



LEARN. The organ is another kind of keyboard instrument. Check out [Part One](#), [Part Two](#), and/or [Part Three](#) of Class Notes Video Series: The Organ. After watching, compare and contrast the piano and the organ.

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Lesson Four: Flute

Age Range: K-6

Learning Objective: Students will identify the flute by sight and sound.

ENGAGE



ASK. "Look at the picture of a flute. Can you describe it? What do you think it looks like?"



EXPLAIN & EXPLORE



LEARN. "Listen to [Karen from e\(L\)ement](#) as she tells you a little about the flute."

ASK. "The flute is a member of the woodwind family, but it's not made of wood! Can you explain why the flute is a member of the woodwind family?"

LISTEN. "[Listen to this piece of music](#) featuring flute and harp. As you listen, think of three words that describe the sound of the flute."

REFLECT. Instruct students to compare the sound of the flute with the sound of the harp. Have students either write down their thoughts or share them with a classmate.

EXTEND



Choose one or more of the following activities to extend learning.

CREATE. [Make a flute](#) with your class using PVC pipe and power tools.

LEARN. Listen to flutes from different time periods in this [8-minute video](#) featuring Deb Harris of the Concordia Wind Quintet.

MOVE. Expose students to a musical score during [this flute solo](#). Demonstrate following the high and low notes on the screen to trace the melody in the air with their finger.

LISTEN. [Listen to pop singer Lizzo](#) play flute with the NY Philharmonic.

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Lesson Five: Ensemble Skills

Age Range: K-6

Learning Objective: Students will demonstrate ensemble skills through performance. Students will utilize multiple rehearsal strategies to refine performance.

ENGAGE

ASK. “When musicians play together, how do they start at the same time? How can they be sure to play at the same speed, or *tempo*, so that they can stay together? (Listen to students’ responses. If they answer that this is the job of the conductor, acknowledge that this is correct, but then ask further.) “What if it’s a small group that doesn’t have a conductor?”

EXPLAIN & EXPLORE

EXPLAIN. “When musicians play together but don’t have a conductor to lead them, they must give signals, or *cues*, so that they start together and stay together through a performance. It’s a way of communication and working together.”

SHOW. “Here are four main ways that musicians play together with good ensemble skills.” (Briefly explain and demonstrate each techniques for students.)

1. Eye Contact
2. Head nod and/or body movement
3. Sharp in-breath, or inhale
4. Constant listening

WATCH. “In [this video](#), notice how the musicians use eye contact and body movement. What else do you observe?”

PRACTICE. 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 both. 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.

EXTEND

Watch, listen, and notice ensemble skills in one or more of the following performances:

- [Lux String Quartet](#) performing music by Gyorgy Ligeti
- [Mill City String Quartet](#) performing music by Samuel Coleridge Taylor
- [Imani Winds](#) performing music by Valerie Coleman
- [Mill City String Quartet](#) performing music by DBR

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