

La Grande Bande

Supporting Materials Packet



La Grande Bande Alyssa Anderson, Maryne Mossey, Michael Asmus
Photo Credit: Jenny Cvek

About the Performers:

La Grande Bande is an ensemble of varying sizes and combinations. For the 2025–26 school year, La Grande Bande’s Class Notes ensemble will include voice, viola da gamba, and harpsichord trio. La Grande Bande specializes in Baroque music and also plays music from other eras.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will learn that Baroque music comes from a certain time period. Students will be able to identify a few characteristics of music from the Baroque Era, including *ornamentation* and *improvisation*.
2. Students will identify several Baroque instruments by sight and sound, including voice, viola da gamba, and harpsichord.
3. Students will understand that beats can be organized in groups of two or three.

Preparing for your Class Notes Concert

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

The Class Notes team has created two resources to help prepare for and extend the Class Notes Concerts experience:

1. **Meet the Artist PowerPoint.** Build excitement for the concert by introducing the ensemble in advance. Students will learn key information like instrumentation and style of music.
2. **Supporting Materials Packet.** The lessons in this packet come from the [Class Notes Lesson Library](#). The first lesson is designed to be a starting point for discussing audience behavior prior to the concert. All other lessons align with learning objectives for this artist. Use these before the concert to introduce an important musical concept or after the experience to reinforce learning. Every classroom is different. Teachers should customize all content to fit student 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

- 1) What is an AUDIENCE?
- 2) What is IMPROVISATION?
- 3) Listening Lesson: 'Cat's Fugue"
- 4) What are VOICE TYPES?



What is an AUDIENCE?

Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-3
Learning Objective:	Students will demonstrate active listening and positive audience behavior in a concert setting.
Total Video Time:	5:29

INTRODUCE the concept of audience

1. Ask, "Have you ever been to a concert or performance?" Allow students time to respond.
2. Explain, "There are two main jobs at a concert: the job of the *performer*, and the job of the *audience*."
3. Ask students to share with a classmate about a time they watched a performance. What did the performer do? What did the audience do?

After some time for students to discuss with each other, encourage students to share out their experiences with the class, supporting and validating the variety of experiences.

4. Remind students, "There are many kinds of audiences. The type of concert influences how an audience responds."
5. As a classroom, create a chart listing positive and respectful audience behavior. Use the [sample chart](#) as a starting point.

LEARN about being an audience

1. Explain, "Sometimes an audience will dance and sing along with a performer. Sometimes it's the job of an audience to listen and notice as many sounds as possible. When we need to notice sounds, our own voices and body wiggles can keep us from hearing the performer. So it can be helpful to let out some wiggles and sounds before listening."
2. Learn to sing a song about being in the audience: "We Are The Audience." (Download the score [here](#).)
3. Watch our Class Notes Video: [What to do at a Concert](#).

EXTEND learning about being an audience

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. 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.
2. 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!")



Visuals: What is an 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.



Visuals: What is an AUDIENCE?

We Are the Audience

K. Condon

Voice

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.

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.



What is IMPROVISATION?

Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will learn or review the term “improvisation” and generate musical ideas using musical ideas using a limited set of rhythms or pitches.
Total Video Time:	5:37 or 6:10, depending on explanation video chosen
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 25 minutes

DEFINE & DEMONSTRATE improvisation

1. Explain that improvisation is when you make something up on the spot. There are several different ways to improvise. Today we will try one way. The good thing about improvisations is that there is no wrong way to do it.
2. “I can improvise a rhythm by tapping a pattern on my lap.”
(*Demonstrate a short, improvised rhythm.*)
3. “I can improvise a melody by singing random notes any way I want.”
(*Sing a short, improvised melody.*)
4. “If it’s hard to get started, I can pick just a few notes.”
(*Choose two notes on a keyboard or mallet instrument and play them in an improvised sequence.*)

CREATE improvised music

1. Using a keyboard or mallet instruments, ask students to take turns playing “black key music” (*music using only the black keys*).
2. Suggest prompts like “elephant music” (*slow and low*) or “hummingbird music” (*fast and high*). Voices can improvise “elephant” and “hummingbird” music too!
3. You might identify a pattern of notes and ask students to create a melody using only a few notes, such as C, E, and G.

EXTEND improvisation

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. Watch the artists from [Heliopsis](#) (video approx. 2.5 minutes) or [Kroehm Duo](#) (video approx. 2 minutes) explain how they improvise.
2. Listen to [There’s No Tellin’](#) by Kroehm Duo (video approx. 3.5 minutes). Ask students to show you with a signal (*such as wiggling fingers*) every time they think they hear improvisation.
3. Ask older students to notate their improvisations. Use an ABA grid to structure ideas. Encourage students to consider instrumentation, duration of sound, dynamics and tempo. See the completed grid below as an example.

A	B	A
Tambourine: 10 shakes <i>Allegro and forte</i>	Piano: C-E-G patterns <i>Legato and piano</i>	Tambourine: 10 shakes <i>Allegro and forte</i>



LISTENING LESSON: *Cat's Fugue*

Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will listen to Domenico Scarlatti's <i>Cat's Fugue</i> and understand the composer's intent while writing the piece.
Overall Description:	Listening Lessons guide students through one piece or movement of music, using listening maps and suggested activities to cultivate deep listening skills.
Total Video Time:	7:07
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 25 minutes

1. [Domenico Scarlatti](#) was an Italian composer who lived between the years 1685–1757.
2. Much of the music that Domenico Scarlatti wrote was for the harpsichord, a keyboard instrument that has some similarities with the modern piano. Learn about the harpsichord in [this short video](#) with Elizabeth Chua from the Bach Society of Minnesota (video approx. 2 minutes).
3. Domenico Scarlatti also had a cat. Can you imagine what it might have been like if his cat interrupted him while he was trying to compose? Maybe it was something like [this](#) (video approx. 1.5 minutes).
4. In fact, something like this did happen to Scarlatti, because he composed a piece for harpsichord called *Sonata in g minor, K. 30* that has the alternate title *Cat's Fugue*. Before we listen to it, let's learn about the word fugue (pronounced FEWG).

A fugue is a composition that begins with a subject, or one musical idea. In Scarlatti's *Cat's Fugue*, the subject looks like [this](#).

Look at the shape of the notes on the staff. Can you imagine a cat starting in the low register of the harpsichord, walking up to the high part, and then walking back down, a little more quickly?

Once that subject is introduced, Scarlatti uses those notes over and over again, sometimes in bits and pieces. We call those bits and pieces fragments. Sometimes we hear the subject in different registers, meaning sometimes it is higher and sometimes it is lower.

The following video shows us [a visual representation](#) of all the parts of Scarlatti's *Cat's Fugue* (video approx. 3.5 minutes). The subject, which you might imagine as the cat's footsteps, are represented with red dots. As you watch and listen, count how many times you see/hear the subject or a fragment of the subject.

5. If you have access to a keyboard instrument, use Scarlatti's idea and improvise a subject or a melody that might look or sound like a cat walking up and down the instrument.
6. If you want to learn more about music composed for cats, rather than inspired by cats, check out [Classical music... for cats](#).



What are VOICE TYPES?

Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will be able to identify four voice types: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.
Total Video Time:	22:36
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 30 minutes

ENGAGE students through singing

1. Say to students, "On the count of three, let me hear your voice. One, two three."
2. Put your hand to your ear to give a clear visual cue, followed by a palm outstretched for a STOP sign.
3. Ask, "What did you notice?" (*Allow students to share a few observations.*)
4. Ask, "What if we hear just one person's voice?" (*Cue one student with the same start and stop signals.*)

LEARN ABOUT the voice

1. Explain that everyone has their own unique voice. No two voices sound exactly the same. But, all voices fall into a *range*. This means some voices can sing very high notes, some sing low notes, and some sing in-between. Today we will learn about four main voice types.
2. This song features four voice types. Invite students to notice whose voice is highest, lowest, and in the middle. Show [El Grillo](#), performed by the Mirandola Ensemble (video approx. 4 minutes).
3. Now we'll meet each voice type, one by one. We'll start with the highest voice - the soprano. Show [Soprano Demonstration](#) (video approx. 2.5 minutes).
4. Next, Alyssa will explain her voice type, alto. Show [Alto Demonstration](#) (video approx. 2 minutes).
5. Nick sings tenor. Show [Tenor Demonstration](#) (video approx. 2 minutes).
6. Matthew has the lowest voice type, bass. Show [Bass Demonstration](#) (video approx. 2 minutes).
7. Ask students, "Can you list the four voice types, in order, from high to low?"

EXTEND learning about the voice

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. Listen to the Mirandola Ensemble sing [another piece](#) together (video approx. 3.5 minutes).
2. [Class Notes: How to Sing Well](#) discusses voice types and gives tips on how to sing using good technique (video approx. 7 minutes).
3. Check out [this curriculum](#) for additional ideas.