

Box Cat Music

Supporting Materials Packet



Box Cat Music (Elise Butler-Pinkham, Rob Morton)

Photo Credit: Jenny Cvek

About the Performers:

Box Cat Music is a songwriting duo made up of Rob, a teacher at Saint Paul Public Schools, self-taught guitarist, pianist, and songwriter; and Elise, a former kindergarten teacher and classically trained cellist, who also sings and plays percussion. Together, they create customized songs for a wide variety of occasions. The ensemble will help students use fundamental music concepts to tell a story through song. All Box Cat Music concerts include a live songwriting experience for students, reflecting their ideas and input.

Learning Goals May Include:

1. Students will identify and explore the building blocks of a song, including rhythm, chords, and melody. Students will explore how differences in tempo and instrumentation can affect the impact and feel of a song.
2. Students will explore ideas and stories to collaboratively create a song that will be performed and/or recorded.
3. Students will use music as a tool to express emotions, stories, and humor through songwriting.

Preparing for your Class Notes Residency

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

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

1. **Meet the Artist PowerPoint.** Build excitement for the residency 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 residency. All other lessons align with learning objectives for this artist. Use these before the residency 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 Residency, 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 residency.

PACKET CONTENTS

- 1) What is an AUDIENCE?
- 2) Music & Literacy: Create a Musical Story
- 3) Music & Art: Compose Your Own Music
- 4) Music and Emotions

Students with a strong grasp of fundamental music concepts will be well-prepared to fully participate in this interactive residency. Use any of the lessons in the Class Notes Lesson Library, especially the [Music Fundamentals section](#), to introduce or reinforce key concepts like melody, harmony, dynamics, or tempo.



MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS: 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.



MUSIC & LITERACY: Create a Musical Story

Age Range: Elementary, Grades K-6

Learning Objective: Students will generate and develop original artistic ideas in response to written and verbal prompts.

INTRODUCE storytelling through discussion

1. Ask students to think of their favorite story, then turn to a friend and whisper their favorite book or story.
2. Say, "Now turn to a different friend and whisper your favorite song or kind of music."
3. Explain that adding music to a story makes it more exciting. Today we will create our own soundtrack for a story to make it exciting and memorable.

CREATE a story "soundtrack"

1. Select a favorite book to read aloud.
2. While reading, pause after key moments and ask students to brainstorm sound effects (body percussion or vocal sounds) that enhance the story.
3. Establish a "start" and "stop" signal to cue students. (i.e: Book: The boy ran away! Sound Effect: Drum on lap quickly for 5 seconds)
4. Gather some classroom instruments or [found objects](#).
5. Read the book again and allow students to explore and improvise sound effects using instruments.
6. Fine-tune the group's musical choices by adding "story cards" (see examples from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* on the next page.) Use words or graphics depending on your students' literacy level.
7. Practice and refine your musical story!
8. Assign a conductor to start and stop cues. Take turns as the reader/narrator.

EXTEND storytelling through additional activities

1. Listen to storybooks that have been commissioned as musical pieces, such as: [Perfect Square](#), [One-Dog Canoe](#), or the classic [Peter and the Wolf](#).
2. Listen to an episode of [YourClassical Storytime](#). Notice how music helps tell the story.

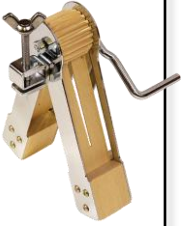
Sample Story Cards & Book List

CREATE A MUSICAL STORY

Example One: Text Only

STORY	SOUNDTRACK	STORY	SOUNDTRACK
Once upon a time, Goldilocks went on a walk through the woods.	<u>RHYTHM STICKS</u> : Steady walking beat, 10 counts	She found a house, and the door was open. So she opened the door and went in!	<u>VOICE</u> or <u>RATCHET</u> : Slow, quiet creaking sound

Example Two: Graphic Representation

STORY	SOUNDTRACK	STORY	SOUNDTRACK
	10 times <i>mf</i> 		5 seconds <i>pp</i> 

K-2 Recommended Books

- ✓ *Miss Spider's New Car* by David Kirk
- ✓ *Moo* by David LaRochelle
- ✓ *Snail Trail* by Ruth Brown
- ✓ *Mortimer* by Robert Munsch
- ✓ *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury
- ✓ *Shark in the Park* by Nick Sharrat
- ✓ *Max Found Two Sticks* by Brian Pinkey
- ✓ *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Eric Carle
- ✓ *Tin Forest* by Helen Ward
- ✓ *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats

3-6 Recommended Books

- ✓ *Skeleton Cat* by Kristyn Crow
- ✓ *The Z was Zapped* by Chris Van Allsburg
- ✓ *Tuesday* by David Wiesner
- ✓ *Be You!* by Peter H. Reynolds
- ✓ *Bee-Bim Bop* by Linda Sue Park
- ✓ *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt De La Pena
- ✓ *Samad in the Forest* by Mohammed Umar
- ✓ *A Different Pond* by Bao Phi

Tips for Selecting Books

Books with a lot of animal sounds work well for vocalization and vocal development. Action-oriented books work well if you have a lot of classroom percussion instruments available.



Compose Your Own Music

Age Range: Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School, Grades 4-12

Learning Objective: Students will compose music inspired by visual art.

INTRODUCE composing with an explanation

"In this lesson, you get to try to create your own music inspired by a famous painting. You don't need to be able to read and write music notation, just have your imagination ready to go!"

COMPOSE with this activity

1. Invite students to look closely and list the elements they see in [this painting by Vincent Van Gogh](#). Students might list mountains, trees, sun, and dry grass.
2. Using [found objects](#), or instruments if you have them, ask students find a sound to go along with each element.

See [here](#) for an example, using a combination of simple auxiliary percussion instruments and found objects. The examples also use a combination of traditional and alternative notation symbols.

3. Say, "Now draw a grid like [this one](#) to make your own composition, inspired by Van Gogh's painting. Make sure to give it a title!"

MORE composing

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. Repeat the composition process above with another piece of art: look carefully at an artwork, list the elements in it, find sounds to go with each element, and write down which sounds happen when.
2. Invite students to perform their compositions with someone in their household with found objects at home. One person can play two parts at a time if necessary!
3. [This Class Notes video](#) and [this lesson](#) explore the elements that music and art have in common.



MUSIC AND MINDFULNESS: Music and Emotions

Age Range: Elementary, Grades K-6

Learning Objective: Students will describe emotions experienced when listening to a musical selection.

Total Video Time: 10:54

INTRODUCE emotions through discussion

1. "How many different feelings, moods, or emotions can we come up with? Let's make a list."
2. Once you have generated a list, go through each word and discuss what kind of music might express that emotion, mood, or feeling.

CONNECT emotions with music

1. Create, print, or project a blank listening chart like the one [attached](#).
2. Listen to a diverse selection of music. (See list below for suggestions.)
3. Think about what emotions you hear and feel. Use vocabulary words to describe each piece. The list of feelings the class brainstormed might help.
4. Draw a picture to go along with each. As you listen and write, consider:
 - Does the emotion or feeling change throughout the piece?
 - What musical techniques did the composer use to create these feelings or emotions?
 - Can you use any music vocabulary words when you describe the emotions or feelings you hear?
 - Does the title of the piece give you any clues?

Repertoire suggestions:

- "[Lines](#)" by Mary Ellen Childs
- "[Yearning for the Peace](#)" by Tan Dun
- "[Mercury, the Winged Messenger](#)" by Gustav Holst

MORE emotions in music

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. Watch the Class Notes Videos [A Journey Through Musical Emotion](#) and [A Recipe for Emotion in Music](#).
2. Invite students to bring their own songs or pieces to listen to together as a class!
 1. Set clear parameters on what music is classroom-appropriate and ask students to submit names of songs (artist included, if possible) for you to put into a playlist.
 2. With each student's musical choice, repeat the "connect" activity above, having students listen, write, and draw their emotional ideas.
 3. After each selection, invite the class to discuss what they felt in response. You may also invite the student who brought that selection to share what the selection means to them.

Printable Listening Grid - Blank

MUSIC AND EMOTIONS

Title	Emotions/ Feelings/Moods	Comments/ Pictures