

The Mirandola Ensemble

Supporting Materials Packet



Mirandola Ensemble (Jenny Ubl, Andrew Kane, Nick Chalmers, Alyssa Anderson)
Photo Credit: Nik Linde

About the Performers:

The Mirandola [mih-RAN-doh-lah] Ensemble, established in 2011, is a Minneapolis, Minnesota-based professional choral ensemble dedicated to promoting choral music. The Mirandola Ensemble specializes in Renaissance repertoire and music from around the world. Learn more about The Mirandola Ensemble [here](#).

Learning Goals:

1. Students will learn about and identify four voice types: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.
2. Students will understand that we can use our singing voices differently when singing different genres of music, music from different time periods, and different geographical locations.
3. Students will learn and demonstrate ensemble skills, including eye contact, active listening, body gestures, and positive collaboration habits.

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 are VOICE TYPES?
- 3) What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?



MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS: What is an AUDIENCE?

Age Range: Elementary

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

ENGAGE students

- 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?" (*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.*) "There are many kinds of audiences, and the type of concert influences how an audience responds!"
- CREATE. As a classroom, create a chart listing positive and respectful audience behavior. [Use the sample chart in the Visuals section](#) as a starting point.

EXPLORE sounds

- SAY. "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."
- SING. Sing "[We Are The Audience.](#)" (Score found in the Visuals section.)
- WATCH. Watch our Class Notes Video: [What to do at a Concert.](#)

EXTEND learning

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

- 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!")



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 FUNDAMENTALS: What are VOICE TYPES?

Age Range: Elementary

Learning Objective: Students will be able to identify four voice types: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.

ENGAGE students

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

EXPLORE sounds

- EXPLAIN.** "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."
- LISTEN.** "This song features four voice types. Notice whose voice is highest, lowest, and in the middle." (Show [El Grillo](#), performed by the Mirandola Ensemble.)
- LEARN.** "Now we'll meet each voice type, one by one. We'll start with the highest voice- the soprano." (Show [Soprano Demonstration](#).)
- LEARN.** "Next, Alyssa will explain her voice type, alto." (Show [Alto Demonstration](#).)
- LEARN.** "Nick sings tenor." (Show [Tenor Demonstration](#).)
- LEARN.** "Matthew has the lowest voice type, bass." (Show [Bass Demonstration](#).)
- REFLECT.** "Can you list the four voice types, in order, from high to low?"

EXTEND learning

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

- LISTEN.** Listen to the Mirandola Ensemble sing [another piece](#) together.
- WATCH.** [Class Notes: How to Sing Well](#) discusses voice types and gives tips on how to sing using good technique.
- SING.** Check out [this curriculum](#) for additional ideas.



What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?

Age Range: Elementary

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

ENGAGE students

DISCUSS. “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?”

EXPLORE sounds

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 ways musicians give cues so that they play well together.”

(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. Instruct students to watch for eye contact and body movement in [this video](#) featuring a string quartet. (3:30 min.)

PRACTICE. Place students into small groups 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 group refine their cueing technique. Complete the activity by asking each group to perform for the class. Give feedback regarding cueing.

EXTEND learning

Choose one or more performances to watch. Notice and discuss ensemble skills.

- [Lux String Quartet](#) performing music by Gyorgy Ligeti (5 min.)
- [Mill City String Quartet](#) performing music by Samuel Coleridge Taylor (4 min.)
- [Imani Winds](#) performing music by Valerie Coleman (3 min.)
- [Mill City String Quartet](#) performing music by DBR (3:30 min.)