About the Performers:
Heliopsis plays original music for various traditional instruments from Sub-Saharan Africa, cello, and voice. Their music ranges from raucous and dance-like to serene and peaceful. Each tune has an element of improvisation, so no two performances are exactly the same.

Learning Goals:
1. Students will learn to identify the cello and various African instruments (mbila, timbila) by sight and sound.
2. Students will identify musical opposites, such as contrasts in dynamics and pitch.
3. Students will learn about and participate in the process of improvisation and creation of new musical works.
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.

• **Lesson Two (Cello)** draws from the [Class Notes Lesson Library](#) and fits well with the learning objectives of this artist. This lesson works well before or after the concert experience.

• **Lesson Three, Improvisation** is a hands-on lesson to reinforce learning after the concert experience. If possible, do this lesson after the Class Notes Concert.
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!
✓ Visit our Class Notes Lesson Library for more lessons!
✓ Need help adapting a lesson? Link no longer working? Contact Katie Condon, music education specialist
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.
## 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: The Cello!

Age Range: K–6

Learning Objective: Students will be able to identify the cello by sight and sound.

ENGAGE

ASK. “Have you ever heard of an instrument called the cello? Whisper to a neighbor what you think the cello looks like and which instrument family it belongs in. If you don’t know, make a prediction!”

EXPLAIN & EXPLORE

EXPLAIN. “The cello is a member of the string family. Instruments in the string family make their sound when a string is plucked or pulled by a bow. The cello is much larger than the violin and can make really low sounds.”

WATCH. Listen to Mikaela from Heliopsis describe her instrument!

WATCH. Listen to composer and musician Zoë Keating describe and play her original piece for cello, Escape Artist.

REFLECT. Use the following questions to guide discussion or journaling:

• In the beginning of the video, the composer explains the title. Can you think of a time you wanted to escape something?
• Zoë mentions moving between a city and a forest. Where do you want to live? What does it sound like there?
• Did it surprise you that one person could create so many layers of sound? Can you guess how she does it?

EXTEND

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

WATCH. Continue learning about the cello by watching Class Notes: Technique, Virtuosity, and Soul featuring cellist Nygel Witherspoon.

LEARN. Learn more about composer and musician Zoë Keating.

✓ Follow along with this lesson online!
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Lesson Three: Improvisation

Age Range: K–6

Learning Objective: Students will learn or review the term “improvisation” and generate musical ideas using a limited set of rhythms or pitches.

EXPLAIN & EXPLORE

EXPLAIN. “Improvisation is when you make something up on the spot. The good thing about improvisation is that there is no wrong way to do it!”

DEMONSTRATE. “I can improvise a rhythm by tapping a pattern on my lap.” (Demonstrate a short, improvised rhythm.) I can improvise a melody by singing random notes any way I want.” (Sing a short, improvised melody). “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. Using a keyboard or mallet instruments, ask students to take turns playing “black key music” (music using only the black keys). Suggest prompts like “elephant music” (slow and low) or “hummingbird music” (fast and high). You might identify a pattern of notes and ask students to create a melody using only those, like in the piano image here. Voices can improvise “elephant” and “hummingbird” music too!

EXTEND

Choose one or more of the following activities to reinforce and practice improvisation.

WATCH. Watch CN Concert Artist Heliopsis or Kroehm Duo explain how they improvise.

LISTEN. Listen to There’s No Tellin’ by Kroehm Duo. Ask students to show you with a signal (such as a raised hand) every time they think they hear improvisation.

CREATE. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A SECTION</th>
<th>B SECTION</th>
<th>A SECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tambourine: 10 shakes Allegro and forte</td>
<td>Piano: C–E–G patterns Legato and piano</td>
<td>Tambourine: 10 shakes Allegro and forte</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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