

Train House Friends

Supporting Materials Packet



Train House Friends McKain Lakey, Kevin Gamble, Mikey Marget
Photo Credit: Jenny Cvek

About the Performers:

What do you get when you cross a classically-trained cellist with a rural-raised banjo player and a jazz pianist who grew up playing gospel music? You get "Train House Friends", a trio of Minneapolis-based buddies with very different musical and cultural backgrounds who love playing music together. Mikey Marget, McKain Lakey, & Kevin Gamble explore cross-genre collaboration- musically supporting one another on traditional songs, improvisations, and original compositions alike.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will identify banjo, cello, and piano/keyboard by sight and sound.
2. Students will understand how musicians work together to *improvise*.
3. Students will understand that different styles, or *genres*, of music have identifying characteristics and that musicians can mix different elements of musical style to create something new.

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) Instrument Exploration: Cello
- 3) Instrument Exploration: Piano
- 4) What is IMPROVISATION?



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.



Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will learn to identify the cello by sight and sound.
Total Video Time:	8:21 "explore" section only; 18:53 including all "extend" videos
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 25 minutes

INTRODUCE the cello

Say to students, "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!"

EXPLORE the sound of the cello

1. 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.
2. [Listen](#) to Mikey from Heliopsis describe their instrument (video approx. 1.5 minutes).
3. Listen to composer and musician Zoë Keating describe and play her original piece for cello, [Escape Artist](#) (video approx. 7 minutes).
4. 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 learning about the cello

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. Enjoy [this light-hearted video](#) featuring 2CELLOS playing *Pirates of the Caribbean* (video approx. 3 minutes).
2. Ask students to move gracefully in a circle, like swans gliding around a pond while listening to [The Swan from Carnival of the Animals](#) (video approx. 2.5 minutes).
3. Continue learning about the cello by watching [Class Notes: Technique, Virtuosity, and Soul](#) featuring cellist Nygel Witherspoon (video approx. 4.5 minutes).
4. Learn more about composer and musician [Zoë Keating](#).



Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will demonstrate basic understanding about how the piano works.
Total Lesson Time:	Approximately 30 minutes
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.

INTRODUCE the piano

- 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!

EXPLORE the sounds of the piano

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.

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.)*

(Lesson continues on next page)



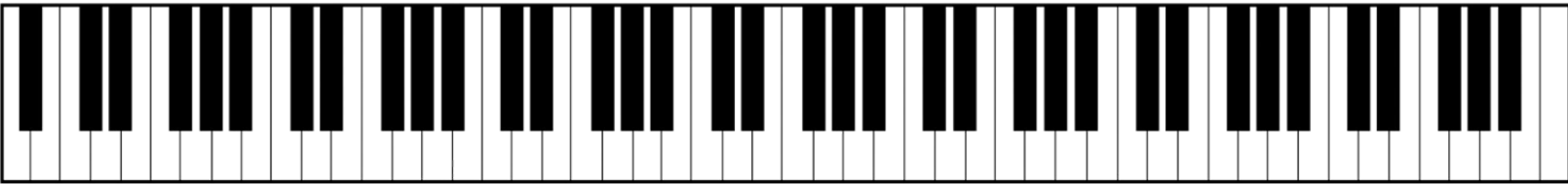
EXPLORE the sounds of the piano, cont.

1. [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.
2. 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.
3. If you have access to a piano or keyboard, ask students to hold up their index and middle finger, like a “peace” sign.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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!”
8. 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.
 1. 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.
 2. Explain that this music is **improvised**, or that we just make it up as we go, so there are no wrong notes.
 3. 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.
 4. Integrate music vocabulary to help reinforce meaning and terminology.

EXTEND learning about keyboard instruments

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.

Keys of a Piano



Hammers



Pedals



NAME: _____ CLASS: _____



NAME: _____ CLASS: _____





MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS: 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>