

Minnesota Winds Trio

Supporting Materials Packet



Minnesota Winds Trio

(Jennifer Gerth, Alexandra Berndt, Alexander Henton)

Photo Credit: Jenny Cvek

About the Performers:

Minnesota Winds Trio is a clarinet, French horn, and bassoon trio representing Minnesota's professional concert band, Minnesota Winds. Spotlighting three wind instrument families (single reed, double reed, and brass), the trio showcases the breadth of sounds that are found in a concert band. Sharing a wide range of music and musical perspectives, the trio performs works from the Western classical music tradition alongside new music created by diverse living composers.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will identify the clarinet, horn, and bassoon by sight and sound and understand how each instrument makes its sound.
2. Students will observe musicians use ensemble skills to perform well together.
3. Students will understand that music can communicate feelings, tell stories, or describe experiences.

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: Clarinet
- 3) Instrument Exploration: French Horn
- 4) Instrument Exploration: Bassoon
- 5) What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?



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 clarinet by sight and sound.

Total Video Time: 10:32

EXPLAIN the clarinet

1. The clarinet is a long, straight, *cylindrical* tube, meaning it is shaped like a cylinder. The clarinet is usually made of African hardwood and has a bell that flares at the bottom. At the top of a clarinet, there is a mouthpiece with a single reed attached by a ligature. When a player blows on the reed, it vibrates and creates a sound. Even though it is a complex instrument, there are three main parts.
2. Look at [these images](#) and think about how these three parts would fit together to make a clarinet. The bell in a clarinet does not have a clapper (or the piece of metal inside) to make it ring. Remember, the cylinder, the bell, and the mouthpiece of a clarinet are all made of wood. The clarinet belongs to the woodwind family because its sound is made when wind (or breath) makes a piece of wood vibrate.
3. Look at the parts of the [clarinet on the diagram](#). Can you draw your own picture of a clarinet? Here is a really good [step-by-step guide to help you draw your own clarinet](#). Can you label at least a few of the parts? Be sure to include the mouthpiece, the keys, and the bell.

EXPLORE the sound of the clarinet

1. [Here is a piece for solo clarinet](#). As you listen, think of three words that describe the sound of the clarinet. Write them down, say them out loud, or tell somebody what you think the clarinet sounds like.
2. The clarinet has a nickname. Sometimes it's called a 'licorice stick.' Can you think of why it might have this nickname? Look at your picture of a clarinet and then at [this picture](#) if you need a hint.
3. Listen to a famous clarinetist, Anthony McGill, share [some of his thoughts](#) on teaching and performing music.
4. Listen to McGill again [here, playing Solo de Concours by Andre Messager](#) [may-sah-zhay]. The clarinet has a very wide range, meaning it can play very high notes and very low notes. Notice the [melodic contour](#), or the shape of the melody, in this piece.
5. Write down or tell someone three things you learned about the clarinet.



French Horn

Age Range: Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective: Students will listen to and learn about the French horn.
Total Video Time: 10:42

INTRODUCE the French horn

Raise your hand if you've heard about an instrument called the 'French horn.' (*Pause.*) Did you know that most of the world just calls it a horn, and it's actually not French? Today we'll listen to and learn about this instrument!

EXPLORE the French horn

1. Listen as Karen from Concordia Wind Quintet [demonstrates her instrument](#).
2. There are four main parts of the French horn: the mouthpiece, tubing, valves, and bell. Can you locate each part in [this picture](#)? Each part has a *function*, or job.
 - The **mouthpiece** is where the player puts their mouth and buzzes their lips.
 - The **tubing** is the big long brass tube that is all wrapped up in coils. Air travels through the tubing. If the tubing was unwrapped, it would stretch out about 18 feet!
 - The **valves** are three levers that change the length of tubing that air travels through when you press them.
 - The **bell** is the end of the instrument, where the sound comes out.
3. Watch horn player Sarah Willis play the French horn in some unexpected ways, such as: an [airplane hangar](#), a horn [made of ice](#), and with [Cookie Monster](#)!

EXTEND learning about the French horn

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. For younger students, ask them to whisper three things they learned about the French horn to a neighbor. For older students, ask them these comprehension questions:
 - To which instrument family does the French horn belong?
 - What does a French horn player need to do with their lips to make a sound in the mouthpiece?
 - How many valves are on a French horn?
2. Watch a young horn player named Lauren perform [Romances No. 2](#) by Robert Schumann.



INSTRUMENT EXPLORATION: Bassoon

Age Range: Elementary, Grades K-6

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

Total Listening Time: 10:30

INTRODUCE the bassoon

1. Show students this [picture of a bassoon](#).
2. Explain: "The bassoon is the biggest instrument in the woodwind family, so that means it makes the lowest sounds. The body of the instrument is basically a long tube, but the tube is so long it folds over, so the player can sit and play it. Can you find the 'U' shape at the bottom? That's the place where it folds. The bell is at the top of the instrument."

EXPLORE the sound of the bassoon

1. "Listen to this piece of music called a sonata by Camille Saint-Saëns [kah-MEEL san-SAHN]. There are two instruments: a piano and bassoon. When you hear the bassoon play, can you trace the melody (the high and low sounds) with me in the air?" (3 min.) *Note: The audio for this piece can be found on the [website version](#) of the lesson.*
2. Ask students to describe the sound of the bassoon.
3. "The bassoon uses a double reed, which is two thin pieces of cane bound together with thread. [This picture](#) shows a bassoon double reed from the front and from the side. Bassoon players usually make their own reeds!"
4. Watch [this video](#) by the Minnesota Orchestra featuring their bassoon section. If you are short on time, start the video at 1:40. Sample language to introduce the piece: "This is a very famous piece featuring the bassoon called *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, by the composer Paul Dukas [doo-KAH]. Maybe you have seen the cartoon with Mickey Mouse called *Fantasia*. In the video, the player on the far right is playing a contrabassoon, which is even bigger and lower than the regular bassoon."

MOVE & LISTEN to the sound of the bassoon

Choose one or more of the following extension activities to extend learning.

1. Invite students to move like dinosaurs to [this piece](#). Brainstorm kinds of dinosaurs. Practice moving like each dinosaur. As a class, set boundaries for the movement. Will kids be able to touch one another? Make noises? Run? Discuss how to move safely with the kids, so everyone can have fun and still hear the music.
About this piece: 'L'après-midi d'un dinosaure' [la-pray mee-dee duh dee-noh-soar], means 'afternoon with a dinosaur.' It's one of *Four Short Sketches for the Bassoon*, by Gordon Jacob. (2 min.)
2. The bassoon is sometimes called the 'comedian of the orchestra' because it can play mischievous or even silly sounding melodies. But it can also play beautiful, singing melodies, like [this arrangement](#) of a prelude by the composer Claude Debussy [day-byoo-SEE]. (3 min.)
3. "What are three things you learned about the bassoon? Which piece of music was your favorite, and why?"



What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?

Age Range: Elementary, Grades K-5

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

Total Video Time: 18:37

DISCUSS ensemble skills

1. "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?"
2. Listen to students' responses. If they answer that this is the job of the conductor, acknowledge that this is correct, but then ask further.
3. "What if it's a small group that doesn't have a conductor?"

PRACTICE ensemble skills

1. Remind students that 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.
2. "Here are four ways musicians give cues so that they play well together."
(Briefly explain and demonstrate each technique for students.)
 - A. Eye Contact
 - B. Head nod and/or body movement
 - C. Sharp in-breath, or inhale
 - D. Constant listening.
3. Instruct students to watch for eye contact and body movement in [this video](#) featuring a string quartet. (3:30 min.)
4. 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.
5. Remind them that they must be able to start together on their own.
6. Circulate among the groups during rehearsal time and help each group refine their cueing technique.
7. Ask each group to perform for the class. Give feedback regarding cueing.

OBSERVE ensemble skills

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.)