

YourClassical Class Notes

Lux String Quartet

Supporting Materials Packet



Lux String Quartet (Stephanie Skor, Kirsti Petraborg, Rosa Thompson-Vieira, Ellen Hacker)
Photo Credit: Jenny Cvek

About the Performers:

Lux String Quartet performs classical music focusing on 20th and 21st-century repertoire and works by living composers. Lux likes to create new experiences for their audiences by choosing composers and pieces that are not frequently played. The members of this creative quartet contribute a wide spectrum of musical perspectives and frequently collaborate with local and international artists.

Learning Goals May Include:

1. Students will develop confidence on their instrument through instrument-specific coaching.
2. Students will practice rehearsal and cueing techniques under the guidance of Lux members.
3. Students will learn about leadership and teamwork through the process of rehearsing and performing chamber music.

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](#). All 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) Instrument Exploration: Violin
- 2) Instrument Exploration: Viola
- 3) Instrument Exploration: Cello
- 4) What are ENSEMBLE SKILLS?



Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will learn to identify the violin by sight and sound.
Total Video Time:	14:22

INTRODUCE the violin

Have you ever heard of a violin? What do you know about the violin? What do you wonder about the violin?

EXPLORE the sound of the violin

1. The violin is the smallest member of the string family. Instruments in the string family make their sound when a string is plucked or pulled by a bow.
2. [Watch](#) violinist Huldah explain her instrument.
3. This [piece of music](#) is for violin and stomping foot! It is performed by a young violinist named Anaïs Feller.
4. Tell a neighbor (or write down) three things you noticed about the piece, the performer, or the violin.

EXTEND learning about the violin

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

1. Make your own box violin! Learn about instrument construction and the violin by creating your own. [Here's a tutorial](#) to help you.
2. [Listen](#) to violinist Erika explain how she changes pitch on her instrument.
3. [Learn](#) the difference between the Baroque violin and the modern violin.
4. [Listen](#) to *Estonian Lullaby*, performed by Anaïs Feller.



Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will listen to and learn about the viola.
Total Video Time:	17:21

INTRODUCE the viola

Look at [this picture](#). Do you think the two instruments are the same? Can you name some similarities? Do you notice any differences?

EXPLORE the sound of the viola

1. The smaller instrument in the picture is the violin. The slightly larger instrument is the viola (vee-OH-lah). The viola is a member of the string family. It looks a lot like the violin. Since it is slightly bigger than the violin, it can play a little lower- but not quite as high.
2. [Watch this 3-minute video](#) about the viola, featuring Kirsti from the Lux String Quartet.
3. Show this 5-minute video, [Capriccio in C minor](#), Op. 55, or this 7-minute video, [Peace](#), both featuring young violinist Steven Baloue.
4. Write down or tell someone three things you learned about the viola.

EXTEND learning about the viola

Choose one or more activities to extend learning.

1. [Watch violinist Valerie](#) talk about the viola. She explains the technique *sul ponticello*. Ask students if they can explain what that means and describe how it sounded.
2. Play a round of "Name That String Instrument." Remind students that the [cello](#) shares the same shape as the violin and viola, but is even bigger, and therefore lower.
3. Choose pieces for solo violin, viola, or cello and ask students to guess which instrument they hear. Ask them to explain their answers. Use [this playlist](#) or create your own.



Age Range:	Elementary, Grades K-6
Learning Objective:	Students will learn to identify the cello by sight and sound.
Total Video Time:	14:09

INTRODUCE the cello

"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.
3. Listen to composer and musician Zoë Keating describe and play her original piece for cello, [Escape Artist](#).
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*.
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*.
3. Continue learning about the cello by watching [Class Notes: Technique, Virtuosity, and Soul](#) featuring cellist Nygel Witherspoon.
4. Learn more about composer and musician [Zoë Keating](#).



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.)