

LUX STRING QUARTET

CURRICULUM

CLASS NOTES®

PRESENTED BY CLASSICAL MPR

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AMENDMENT'S ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND.



WELCOME TO CLASS NOTES CONCERTS

We are so excited to bring live music into your school—thanks for hosting a concert. This curriculum includes:

- Learning prompts for *before*, *during*, and *after* the concert experience
- Standards-based, K-6 lesson plans based on themes and ideas from your Class Notes Concert

Everything is designed to help you and your students get the most out of the experience. Please share your experience with us!

Katie Condon, Education Specialist, Classical MPR, kcondon@mpr.org

BEFORE THE CONCERT

LEARN WHAT YOU WILL HEAR

During their Class Notes Concert, Lux String Quartet will play parts of these two pieces:

- György Ligeti: *String Quartet No. 1 “Métamorphoses nocturnes”*
- Ludwig van Beethoven: *String Quartet No. 9 in C major, Op. 59, Razumovsky, No. 3*

MEET THE PERFORMERS



When **Erika Blanco** isn't playing or teaching the violin, she can usually be sighted running, writing, gardening, or giving unapologetic hugs to any and all of her three cats.



Stephanie Skor is a violinist and her favorite thing to do besides playing violin is to swim in Lake Superior.



Kirsti Petraborg plays the viola. She also enjoys salsa dancing, boxing, and making her own clothes.



Eric Graf is a professional cellist. He enjoys reading, traveling and playing tennis.

MEET THE INSTRUMENTS

A string quartet consists of two violins, a viola and a cello. All of these instruments belong to the string family. String instruments make sound when its strings vibrate. The vibration of the strings causes the wood of the body of the instrument to vibrate, amplifying the sound—that is, making it louder. All of the instruments in a string quartet have the same shape, but their sizes are different. Different sizes mean that some of the instruments can play higher notes and others can play lower notes.

String players use their fingers to shorten or lengthen each string, which makes the pitches or notes higher or lower. Musicians also make the strings vibrate by plucking them (we call this technique *pizzicato*) or by pulling a *bow* across the strings to make the string vibrate (known as *arco*).

The white stuff on the bow is horsehair. Horsehair is more coarse than human hair, and its tiny, jagged edges pull the cello string to get a better vibration. String players put rosin on their bows to make the horsehair stickier. The main ingredient in rosin is pine sap.

- **VIOLIN**

- › The violin is the smallest member of the string family, which means it has the highest pitch. There are two violins in a string quartet, but they each play a different part.
- › Listen to some violin music by scrolling down to the “violin” section on the [Lux String Quartet Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.



- **VIOLA**

- › The viola is slightly larger than the violin, so its sound is slightly lower. Though the viola is slightly bigger than the violin, it is still small enough to tuck up under your chin.
- › Listen to some viola music by scrolling down to the “viola” section on the [Lux String Quartet Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.



- **CELLO**

- › The cello has the same shape as the violin and viola, but it is too big to hold under your chin, so the player must rest it on the floor on an end pin. Though it is bigger than the violin and viola, it is smaller than another string instrument, the double bass.
- › Listen to some cello music by scrolling down to the “cello” section of the [Lux String Quartet Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.
- › Watch the amazing Nygel Witherspoon play his cello in [this video](#).



- **STRING QUARTET**

- › A string quartet is a common kind of *ensemble*, or group of musical instruments who play together. Here is the seating chart for a string quartet.



[SOURCE LINK](#)

- › When you see the three instruments together, you can easily compare their size. Can you name each instrument? Which plays highest? How do you know?
- › Each instrument in a string quartet plays its own part. Musicians in a string quartet must learn their part very well so they can play independently, but they must also be very good at collaboration, or working together. Each instrument contributes its own unique sound or color, known as *timbre*. [Watch a video on timbre here](#). Musicians in string quartet must work together and communicate to make music together. In their Class Notes Concert, the Lux String Quartet will talk a lot about how they need to work together to make music together.
- › Listen and watch the [Lux String Quartet](#), who will visit your school for a Class Notes Concert.
- › Listen to some additional string quartet music by scrolling down to the STRING QUARTET section on the [Lux String Quartet Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.



DISCUSS IN CLASS

- How can we use our bodies to listen?
- How can we show respect to performers and other audience members?
- What does it mean to be an *audience*?
- [Watch a video about concert etiquette](#).

DURING THE CONCERT

- **NOTICE**
 - › The way the instruments work together. Sometimes one instrument plays a melody and the other instruments adds sounds to go along with it. Sometimes one instrument plays a musical idea and the other instrument answers—almost like a conversation.
- **WONDER**
 - › How often do these musicians practice?
 - › How did they get their start?
- **THINK ABOUT**
 - › How each instrument makes its sound.
 - › How the size of each instrument affects its sound.
 - › The different *kinds* of sounds each instrument can make.
 - › The feelings or images that pop into your mind as you listen. Do you think the composers wanted to make you feel a certain way with his or her music?
- **IMAGINE**
 - › You are a composer. What sounds would you want each instrument to make? How would you create musical themes to match characters in a story?

AFTER THE CONCERT

- **DISCUSS**

- › How dances in different meters feel or sound different.
- › How dances from different places in the world sound similar or different. What sounds the same? What sounds different?

- **TELL SOMEONE AT HOME**

- › Two things you heard or saw or learned at your Class Notes Concert.

- **DESCRIBE**

- › How the music made you feel. Maybe different pieces of music made you feel different feelings.

- **REMEMBER**

- › How each instrument made its sound. Can you explain how each instrument's sound is produced?

- **CONNECT**

- › Something from the Class Notes Concert to something you've learned in school. Explain the connection to a partner, a teacher, or someone at home.