WELCOME TO CLASS NOTES ARTISTS!

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 Artists concert

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

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BEFORE THE CONCERT

LEARN WHAT YOU WILL HEAR

During their Class Notes Artists concert, The OK Factor will play a selection of pieces from their albums. You can see their albums and listen to some of their music here or here.

MEET THE PERFORMERS

Karla Colahan, the “K” of The OK Factor, has played the violin for 24 years! Her violin was actually made especially for her. She loves designing things on the computer and playing with her golden retriever puppy, Lucy.

Olivia Diercks, the “O” of The OK Factor, has played the cello for 24 years! She loves spending time outside with her husband and taking care of her new baby boy, Charlie.
MEET THE INSTRUMENTS

- Violin/fiddle

The violin is the smallest member of the string family, which means it has the highest pitch. It can also be called the fiddle. There is no difference between a fiddle and a violin—the instrument is often called a fiddle when it plays a certain style of music. Fiddle players often learn by ear instead of reading notes on a page. This means they listen to music and try to imitate it back. It means a musician must use listening instead of written music.
• CELLO

The cello is a member of the string family. When a cellist plucks a string or pulls a bow across a string, the string vibrates and a sound is produced.

Cellists use their fingers to shorten or lengthen the length of the string, which makes the pitches or notes go higher and lower. It 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. Because the cello is bigger than the violin and the viola, its range is lower than those instruments’.

Like other string instruments, a cello uses a bow. 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. Cellists rub rosin on their bows to make the horsehair stickier. When a cellist plucks a string instead of using the bow, we call it pizzicato.

LISTEN TO AND WATCH SOME MUSIC FOR VIOLIN/FIDDLE

• Here is fiddler Alison Kraus playing a variety of fiddle tunes. Notice that some are fast and lively, while others are sort of sad.
• Here is the super-fast and famous fiddle tune, “Orange Blossom Special.” Note the very first notes the violin plays. Do you notice they sound like a train?
• Here is “Ashokan Farewell” by Jay Ungar. Fiddle music sometimes has a sad and melancholy feel.

LISTEN TO AND WATCH SOME MUSIC FOR CELLO

• Here is a video of the amazing cellist Nygel Witherspoon playing part of Zoltán Kodály’s Sonata for Solo Cello.
• Here is some solo cello music by the composer György Ligeti.
• Here is the cello duo 2Cellos playing an arrangement of “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran.
• Here is the Prague Cello Quartet playing some music from Lloyd Webber’s Phantom of the Opera.
• And here is a bunch of cellists, called the Portland Cello Project, playing some Kanye West in a forest. (Be on the lookout for a few brass instruments, too.)

LISTEN TO THE OK FACTOR

• The OK Factor 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 two musicians work together. Notice how sometimes their parts go back and forth, like a conversation.
  › The similarities and differences between the violin and the cello: How are they alike? How are the different?
• WONDER
  › How often do these musicians practice?
  › How did they get their start?
• THINK ABOUT
  › How each instrument makes 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 the violin/fiddle to make?
  › What about the cello?

AFTER THE CONCERT
• DISCUSS
  › Your favorite piece of music from the concert. What did you like best, and why?
• TELL SOMEONE AT HOME
  › Two things you heard or saw or learned at your Class Notes Artist concert.
• DESCRIBE
  › How the music made you feel. Maybe different pieces of music made you feel different feelings.
• REMEMBER
  › How the violin and cello made their sounds. Can you explain how those sounds are produced? How many different kinds of sounds can they make?
• CONNECT
  › Something from the Class Notes Artists concert to something you’ve learned in school. Explain the connection to a partner, a teacher, or someone at home.