



## FIFTH HOUSE ENSEMBLE

Preparing your school for the Quartet's visit

### Program Description

#### "Music Can Tell a Story"

A mixed-instrumentation chamber group, Chicago-based Fifth House Ensemble uses a variety of instruments (winds, strings, and piano) and musical styles to introduce active listening and help students make connections between classical music and academic ideas.

Gather round, everyone, for musical tales of old and new! Students will become the storytellers in this 45-minute engaging and interactive performance as they explore the stories music can tell with and without words. Elements of plot and setting will jump off the page as Fifth House unveils the ways in which a composer creates the mood and tone of a musical narrative. A wide variety of chamber music will give students a springboard for creating characters, dialogue, and even their own musical adventure! Come listen and learn as we make students the stars of the story!

### TERMS

- Cello
- Bass
- Violin
- Viola
- Tempo
- Accelerando
- Ritardando
- Melody
- Accompaniment
- Rhythm
- Ostinato
- Setting
- Mood
- Characters
- Dialogue
- Plot
- Action
- Conflict
- Resolution

Musical selections include excerpts from the following:

- Rondo alla Turca by W. A. Mozart



- Cakewalk by Claude Debussy
- Shepherd's Hey by Percy Grainger
- Arioso by J.S. Bach
- Shepherd's Hey by Percy Grainger
- Rigadon from La Tombeau de Couperin by Maurice Ravel

#### GUIDELINES FOR FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Q: What type of instrument is a viola? A violin?

A: Violins and violas are both string instruments.

Q: What do the violin and viola have in common? How are they different?

A: They are both string instruments that are held under the player's chin and bowed across the strings. The main difference between the two instruments is their size—because the viola is slightly larger than the violin, it plays at a slightly lower pitch and has a more mellow sound.

Q: What type of instrument is a flute?

A: A flute is a woodwind instrument, even though it is made of metal. Flutes used to be made of wood (a long time ago!), but now they are usually made of either silver or gold.

Q: What type of instrument is a clarinet?

A: It is also a woodwind, but uses a single reed that vibrates to make the sound.

Q: How do you make a sound on the bassoon or oboe?

A: You blow into a double reed, and the two parts of the reed (the two "blades" of cane) vibrate against each other, and the sound goes through the body of the oboe and makes it louder. You push down and lift up your fingers to move the keys on the oboe in order to change the pitch.

Q: What do we call a person who writes music?

A: A composer.

Q: How is classical music similar to other types of music?

A: Almost all music has a pulse, or a beat you can tap your foot to or dance to, and lots of music uses a rhythmic ostinato. The sounds and instruments may be different, but lots of the parts are the same.

Q: What is chamber music?

A: Chamber music is when people come together to make music without a leader. A soloist plays music alone. An orchestra follows a conductor. A chamber group is a group of people who make decisions together.

Q: How did the ensemble show characters?

A: Different instruments played with different "voices." Each one had a different sound and played something different. Sometimes the characters had dialogue with each other.



Q: How can you tell which musical character is speaking and which is listening?

A : A musical character who is speaking is playing the melody, or the part of the music that is easy to sing and remember. A character who is listening is playing the accompaniment.

Q: How do composers create action in their musical stories?

A : Composers create plot and action in their stories by creating musical conflict and dialogues between characters, and writing music that helps us think of certain things or feel certain ways.

Q: What part of music acts like the setting?

A: The lowest voice often creates a setting by playing the accompaniment, which gives the piece a certain mood or feel. Sometimes an instrument will play the same notes and rhythms over and over again, creating an ostinato.

#### GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK

Ask your students to send us feedback using some of the following questions or topics.

- What was your favorite piece and why?
- What was your favorite instrument and why?
- What was the job of the viola in many of the pieces?
- What was the flute's job?
- What was the bassoon's job?
- Can you remember the musical name for what the bassoon did so well?
- How did the bassoon's reed make sound?
- How might comparing music to a story be helpful?
- A few things I have learned about classical music include...
- A few things I have learned about characters and dialogue include...
- A few things I have learned about maintaining a setting and plot/action include...
- The term chamber music refers to...
- Some storytelling ideas I can use

Please send artwork / essays / evaluations to:

International Music Foundation

Attn: Maria Valdes-Vargas

30 E. Adams Street, Suite 1206

Chicago, IL 60603