

The Foothills Brass Quintet

KNOW

About the Artist



The musicians of the Foothills Brass Quintet hail from across Canada - the Maritimes, the prairies, the North West territories and British Columbia. While they have careers in orchestras, jazz bands, pop bands and teaching, brass quintet music is their true passion. Foothills Brass members love the sound of pure brass and the joy and artistry of playing in a small ensemble. They have toured across North America and beyond, inspiring young people to open their ears and hearts to the gentle, expressive, fun, exciting and glorious sounds of brass.

About the Performance

- Foothills Brass performs a wide variety of chamber music, happily crossing boundaries between classical, pop, jazz and movie music. The Building Blocks of Music program, designed for elementary students, is about 50 minutes long and can be adjusted for specific ages and timetables. There are in fact several school shows that can be tailored to suit any age from K-12 (and beyond). These interactive school programs are partly concert, partly show-and-tell and always fun. They can be presented in English, French or both combined.
- While students are invited to participate in portions of the performance, there are times where they are encouraged to practice the art of listening.
- Students meet the instruments of the modern brass family and learn how they work. They hear how music can be created from the simple building blocks of tone, rhythm, melody and harmony; they see how they can make their own instruments from common plumbing supplies. Audience members join the fun with rhythm instruments and one volunteer will be transformed into Mozart!
- Technical requirements are basic – 5 chairs, a small table and enough space for the musicians to move freely.

About the Art Form

- Instruments of the brass family can be found in all cultures dating back thousands of years. Brass “choirs” were a staple of the king’s court and the church. The modern brass quintet, featuring two trumpets, a French horn, tuba and trombone, is a chamber ensemble developed in mid 19th century – a brass equivalent to the string quartet.
- The goals are to open students’ minds to many kinds of music, and to help them realize that playing in a musical ensemble is challenging and fun. They may also discover that music can be a rewarding career!
<http://www.foothillsbrass.ca/schools>

Links to Curriculum

Students will:

- learn about the building blocks of music and how to begin to create their own music.
- learn the basics of the physics of sound, and how sound is produced on brass and percussion instruments.
- gain an appreciation of building instruments and craftsmanship.
- hear music from various periods of history.

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- Where do we hear music? Was recorded music always a part of people’s lives? What instruments have you heard?
- Do you listen to the same music as your parents? What kinds of music do you listen to?
- Have you been to a live concert? Is it OK to make noise at a concert? When?

Post-Performance Activities

- Have students make their own instruments from everyday items. “Brass” family instruments can be made from hoses, conch shells, kelp stalks, etc. Rhythm instruments can be made from almost anything (including body parts).
- Students can create their own melodies. They might start by singing a poem instead of reading it.
- Students could sing together the songs from our show. How many do they know? How many do they remember?
- Here is a fun video where a clarinet is built from a carrot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BISrGwN-yH4&feature=youtu.be>

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- How is the sound of our voice produced? Is it similar to how sound is made on a brass instrument? How is the sound produced on woodwind and string instruments?
- Could you make music without one of the four building blocks?
- Some of the music that Foothills Brass played is over 300 years old. Is old music as good as new music? Do people really listen to music or is it mostly background sound? Do people listen to music they like or do they just listen to the music that is played most frequently?

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