

URBAN GATEWAYS

THE BRASS FAMILY SASSY BRASS QUINTET



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The Sassy Brass Quintet performs music from early classical to jazz and popular. Students learn about each member of the brass family as the performers demonstrate the versatility and range of the French horn, trumpet, trombone, and tuba. The players also demonstrate various musical techniques and terms, and adapt their program to suit different grade levels.

MEET THE ARTISTS

The members of Sassy Brass Quintet are among the leading performers of their instruments in Chicago, a city widely known as the center of the finest brass playing in the world. They have performed with the Chicago Symphony, the Lyric Opera, the Grant Park Symphony, and the Chicago Chamber Orchestra. The Quintet has presented over 450 school programs. Throughout the year, they give concerts and perform at other functions for a wide range of audiences.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

The instruments in a brass quintet include the French horn, two trumpets, trombone and tuba. These instruments are members of the brass family of the orchestra because they are made of brass or other metals, sometimes plated in silver or gold. The vibration of the lips in the mouthpiece of the brass instruments produces the sound. Other instrument families in the orchestra include the strings, woodwinds, and percussion instruments. The Sassy Brass Quintet is a chamber group, which means they play chamber music. Chamber music does not refer to a musical style, although it has been generally classified in music history as music of the baroque or classical periods (1600-1850). The term “chamber” refers to the size of the group and the room in which the group performs. For example, a full symphony would play in a large concert hall and therefore, would not be considered chamber music. The musical effect of a chamber group is quite different in this intimate atmosphere. In a chamber group, the music is performed by one player for each part, as opposed to orchestral music in which there are several players for each part. According to the numbers of players, chamber music is classified as follows: trio (three players), quartet (four), quintet (five), sextet (six), septet (seven), and octet (eight).

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION *continued*

The performance of chamber brass music is a relatively recent chapter in music history. Great composers like Beethoven and Mozart wrote a large repertoire of chamber music for woodwind and string quintets, but very little music for brass quintets. Even other composers like Wagner, Strauss, and Stravinsky, who all composed music for the brass family of larger symphonic orchestras, did very little composition in the area of chamber music for brass quintets. Today however, there is a growing repertoire of music for brass ensembles. Composers have taken interest in this performing ensemble and are writing music of high quality.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Assign different brass instruments to students. Have them research the history, famous players, and a song where the instrument is featured.
2. Have a discussion about the differences between brass instruments and string, percussion, or electronic instruments. Do these instruments have similarities?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

All brass instruments were made by making small changes to existing instruments. Take an instrument you saw in the show (or any other instrument) and create a new instrument by making small (or large changes). Encourage them to think about what type of sound their instrument will make, what it will look like, how it is played. Have students draw out a picture of their instrument. If time permits, have students create their instruments using available supplies. Have students share their instrument with class.

VOCABULARY

BAROQUE

of or relating to music of the 17th century; similar to the other art forms of this time, the music is highly ornamented

BRASS QUINTET

a brass ensemble consisting of five musicians

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

a musical group that plays chamber music

CHAMBER MUSIC

instrumental ensemble music intended for performance in a private room or small auditorium and usually having one performer for each part

CLASSICAL

of or relating to music of the late 18th century and early 19th century

DYNAMICS

the volume or intensity of a musical passage; dynamic markings are usually indicated by the composer, i.e. forte: loud; piano: soft

HARMONY

the simultaneous sounding of two or more tones; harmonies can be consonant (free from discord) or dissonant (filled with discord)

MELODY

a succession of musical tones organized in a rhythmically meaningful way

PITCH

the highness or lowness of sound

RHYTHM

the beat or pulse of the music played by the musicians to give the music a sense of pattern and uniformity of sound

TEMPO

the rate of speed of a musical piece or passage, usually indicated by directions given by the composer, i.e. largo: slow; presto: fast; and moderato: medium, not fast or slow

TIMBRE

the distinctive quality of a sound which distinguishes it from other sounds; also called tone color

TRANSCRIPTION

an arrangement of a musical composition for some instruments or voice other than the original

Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

Interpretation & Evaluation

Listen and Describe (IL 25A, 6A, 27A; Nat'l 6)

- Identify and exhibit appropriate audience behavior for listening to music.
- Analyze the uses of elements of music in musical selections representing diverse genres and cultures.
- Compare and contrast the timbre of instrument families (brass, woodwinds, percussion, and strings).
- Identify sources of American music genres and trace the evolution of those genres

Making Connections

Cultural

(IL 26B, @&a; Nat'l 9)

- Describe how the elements of music are used in various genres and styles of music.