



FEATURE

FRETLESS STRINGS: IN AN ORCHESTRA AND BEYOND

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 7-9, 11

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (*Re7*)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (*Re8*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (*Re9*)
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. (*Cn11*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (Vol. 39, No.1)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “Fretless Strings” on pages 10-13. Then, go over the following highlighted words. [**This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.**]

TONE—quality and strength of a sound

TIMBRE—the character of a musical sound or voice

FRET—each of a sequence of bars on the fingerboard of some stringed instruments

ACCOMPANIMENT—a musical part that supports a solo instrument

COUNTERMELODY—a secondary melody

SOPRANO—an instrument of the highest pitch in its family

ALTO—an instrument of the second highest pitch in its family

TENOR—an instrument of the second lowest pitch in its family

BASS—an instrument of the lowest pitch in its family

VERSATILE—able to adapt to many different functions; changeable

PROMINENT—important; noticeable

VARNISH—a liquid finish applied to wood or metal

FREQUENCY—the speed at which a vibration occurs

SENSOR—a device that detects or measures a physical property

DEVELOP

1. Have students close their magazines before asking the following questions:

ASK

What are the four sections of an orchestra? Strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion

What is an instrument called when it does not have horizontal bars on its neck? Fretless

Can you name all four of the orchestral fretless instruments? Violin, viola, cello, bass

Can you identify the range of pitch of each instrument? Violin: soprano, viola: alto, cello: tenor, bass: bass

2. Play “Violin Partita No.2” (Hear the Music on *musicalive.com*).

ASK

Is the violin playing mostly long or short notes?

Does this piece have a fast or slow tempo?

What adjectives would you use to describe the tone of this piece?

Do you think this piece would be equally as effective if played on a different instrument, like a cello? Why or why not?

3. ▶ **Play** “Rebecca Clarke Sonata for Viola and Piano” (Hear the Music on *musicalive.com*)

ASK

In what ways is this piece different from the violin sonata?

Is the viola playing mostly long or short notes?

What adjectives would you use to describe the tone of this piece?

How does it make you feel?

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they review the vocabulary words?

Did they answer the supplemental questions?