

# BLACK DOG STRING QUARTET

*STRINGS AND THINGS: CLASSICAL MUSIC AND MORE*



## About the Performance

Listen and learn! In this new show, students get to sharpen their ears so they can pick out the intriguing complexity of a round, a canon, and a fugue. And they'll be having so much fun they won't realize they're developing vital cognitive skills. Elementary school audiences will quickly realize that Mozart and all that classical stuff — with a few pop tunes thrown in — is really very cool.

Formed in 2007, the Black Dog String Quartet is comprised of some of Vancouver's finest young musicians. The group has appeared on the recordings of artists such as 54-40, Marianas Trench, Bleeding Through, and many others. Individual members have performed live on stage with some of the world's top acts, including Rod Stewart, Kanye West, Sting, Michael Buble, Mariah Carey, The Trans-Siberian Orchestra, and Video Games Live.

## Some of the pieces heard in this performance:

Canon—Pachelbel  
Eine Kleine Nachtmusic—Mozart  
Ode to Joy—Beethoven  
Turkey in the Straw  
La Vie en Rose  
The Four Seasons—Vivaldi  
The Little Fugue—Bach  
Divertimento #1—Mozart

## THEMES:

- *Canon*
- *Cognition*
- *Cooperation*
- *Fugue*
- *Mozart*
- *Practice*
- *Quartet*
- *Rhythm*
- *Skill*
- *Strings*
- *Technique*
- *Theme*
- *Variation*
- *Vivaldi*



## Activity Suggestions

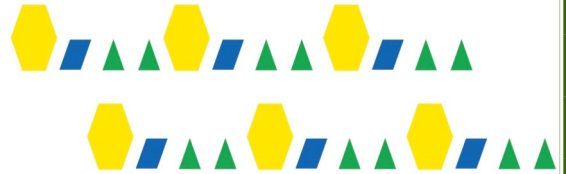
### ***Pattern Block Canons (45 minutes – Grades K-3)***

A canon is a piece of music where one voice repeats the melody of another throughout the whole piece. A fugue is similar, but often includes more voices and is less strict in its repetition.

In their performance the Black Dog String Quarter will play The Little Fugue by Bach. Share this visual representation of the piece with the class: <https://youtu.be/ddbxFi3-UO4>

Canons are an offset *repeating pattern*. With the help of the class co-create a repeating pattern with pattern blocks or similar. A line below this copy the pattern exactly but start after the onset of the first pattern. Ensure each piece lines up with the one directly above it (see image).

Now the fun part! Assign a sound to each different pattern block (e.g. yellow hexagon = clap, green triangle = stomp, etc.) and as a class practice performing the top line of the pattern to a steady beat. Then split the class in two, the first group performing the top line and the second group performing the bottom line.



Have students break into pairs with pattern blocks (and large size grid paper if helpful) to co-create pattern block canons. Encourage them to choose their own sounds for the blocks in order to create and perform a canon of their very own as a pair.

### ***Inner Hearing (15 minutes – Grades 4-7)***

Ludwig van Beethoven became deaf at the age of 45 but still composed some of the most famous music ever heard. This exercise is intended to demonstrate what it would be like to compose music without a sense of hearing.

As a class, sing Mary Had a Little Lamb. Then, sing it quietly. Then, sing it only in your heads. This is our inner hearing!

Again, as a class, sing Mary Had a Little Lamb, but clap once at the beginning (on “Mary”) and again at the end (on “snow”). Then instruct everyone close their eyes. Explain that after a count of four everyone should clap once (for “Mary”) and begin singing the song in their heads only. When they get to the end (on “snow”) they should clap once. While many may clap at the same time, not everyone will be together. This is because it can be difficult to stay in time with each other without being able to hear each other.

### ***Feeling Sound (20 minutes – Grades 4-7)***

Evelyn Glennie is a world-famous percussionist who developed deafness at the age of 12. Her percussion teacher at the time would have her place her hands on the music room wall and play two different notes on the timpani (large drums that play specific pitches) and would ask her where she felt the sound in her body. Through this process of exploration, she developed the skill of feeling sound through-out with her body.

Watch this demonstration by Evelyn Glennie about feeling sound: <https://youtu.be/Gl2a6w6sTAs>

In interviews, Evelyn Glennie mentions that she was lucky to attend an inclusive school and to have a teacher who encouraged her to study music regardless of her hearing loss. As a class discuss other ways in which people may be able to do more than others might initially assume, regardless of limitations.

Artist’s website: <http://www.blackdogstringquartet.com/>

