

Carpe Diem String Quartet

Education programs for 2006-2007

1. Letters and Thoughts

This program features letters by famous composers, including Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Shostakovich. Carpe Diem will introduce students to the writings of these great composers, and tie portions of these letters to excerpts of the composers' music in a way that makes the music seem more personal and interesting to the students. Students of all ages can respond to the idea of using music as an expressive device, in a way that parallels the expression of ideas in writing.

2. Musical Mapping

This program focuses on map and symbol reading. A comparison between maps and musical scores shows students how symbol reading is the key to understanding a document. Then, a musical score is examined in detail, and the students see the symbols that effect how the music sounds. In addition, the students are given opportunities to change markings in the score, and then listen as the quartet plays the changed passages again with those differences. This interactive approach lets the students become fully involved in the program.

3 Elements of Style

Carpe Diem has developed a new student concert program that introduces students to the distinction and differences of musical style. We begin by talking about the idea of style related to clothes, food, language and writing, to give the students concrete examples of style that they see and experience everyday. We then turn to music, with examples from classical, romantic, contemporary, and jazz genres. However, to bring musical style into focus for the student who may not be studying music, we have created our own arrangements of a popular song that all the students will be familiar with, in each of the musical styles that we will be discussing, so that the students can really follow the changes in the musical language. This will enable the students to approach listening to the concert with context, and with a much clearer understanding of the differences between Beethoven, for instance, and Brahms.

4. The Underground Railroad

This is a program that Carpe Diem is developing to be held in conjunction with Martin Luther King Day and Black History Month, and we intend to use this program in school educational concerts as well as traditional concerts. The program will most likely include music arranged by Carpe Diem, including spirituals and work songs, and a commission from a black composer like Daniel Avorgebor, Robert Tanner, Adolphus Hailstork or Cecil Bridgewater. The program is going to trace geographically as well as culturally the role that music played in history of African Americans, with a particular focus on the time of slavery and emancipation. The over all theme of freedom from oppression will also be examined, and a few composers from the European tradition who wrote on this topic will be briefly discussed as well.