

CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET, *traditional bluegrass*

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Combine traditional Celtic fiddle tunes, church harmonies,
and African-American rhythms and blues,
Add honest stories of life, love and home.
Add the banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin and bass.
Mix them all together in the social climate of the southern Appalachian
mountains circa the mid-1940's and there you have it:

BLUEGRASS! An American Original.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

In their 45 minute program, CLEAR FORK's members demonstrate the guitar, 5-string banjo, fiddle, mandolin and up-right bass as well as various song and harmony styles found in Bluegrass music. The program explores the unique African-American and Anglo-American connections which are at the music's foundation. Besides music, the program touches on history, geography, immigration to America and the migration of southerners to the industrialized north.

With the current popularity of American country music there is also a raised awareness of Bluegrass music. CLEAR FORK has been performing around the Great Lakes region since 1985 and has become one of it's premier acoustic bands. They have toured extensively and have performed at some of the country's top music festivals. They have also performed on Garrison Keillor's radio show and their recordings are heard around the world. CLEAR FORK has extensive experience in educational settings and is a member of the Ohio Arts Council's Artists on Tour program.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Students will gain:

- familiarity with a uniquely-American art form.
- appreciation of the diversity of influences behind this music.
- knowledge of the connections between bluegrass music and the history and culture of the US.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: [Opening: Up-tempo instrumental]

The diverse musical elements that make up Bluegrass

Scot/Irish Fiddle tunes -

The story of Scot/Irish immigration
Introduction of Ray and his fiddle
[Ray plays a solo Irish fiddle tune]

Old-time banjo -

The African connection
Minstrel banjo of 1850's
The union of banjo and fiddle in the Southern Appalachian Mountains
[Ray and Jim play a dance tune with only fiddle and banjo]

CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET, *traditional bluegrass*

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Blues -

African-American art form
The form of the blues
Carter Family/Jimmie Rodgers
[Clear Fork plays “Worried Man Blues”]

The Church Harmonies -

Shape Note singing
[Clear Fork sings a quartet *a capella*]

The Birth of the First Bluegrass Band

1946 -

Music of Bill Monroe - introduction of the mandolin
The “5” Bluegrass instruments
Bluegrass as a commercial music form
intro of BG style banjo
[Clear Fork plays an up-tempo Monroe song]

Regional Themes -

Discuss how themes in the repertoire reflect Mountain life
Band plays “Nine Pound Hammer” (coal mining song)

The 1950’s & ‘60’s

The spread of the music to the industrialized north, even
to Asia and Europe
popular songs interpret in the Bluegrass style
Band plays a Beatles song (or similar) BG style

Bluegrass Music Today

Bluegrass in the mainstream -

Film & TV
Beverly Hillbillies (theme)
Bonnie & Clyde (Foggy Mt. Breakdown)
Deliverance (dueling banjos)
Band plays “Man of Constant Sorrow” (from the film “Oh Brother, Where Art Thou”)

Current State of Bluegrass Music-

International Bluegrass Music Association
Bluegrass Grammy Award
Alison Krauss, Vince Gill, etc.
Finish with an up-tempo instrumental

CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET, *traditional bluegrass*

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

LENGTH OF PROGRAM: 45-50 minutes; Question and Answer period is included.

PROGRAM IS APPROPRIATE FOR: High School students; can be adapted for younger school age students or college students.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PROGRAMS THAT CAN BE GIVEN IN ONE DAY:

In same location: 3 With location changes: 2 on the day of performance
(Workshops may take the place of multiple programs)

TECH REQUIREMENTS: *At least one power outlet. * 5 gallon jug of water and 5 cups.

TIME REQUIRED FOR SET UP/TAKE DOWN: Set Up: one hour. Take Down: 20 min.

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED WITH SET UP/TAKE DOWN: None

ADVANCE MATERIALS AVAILABLE: Clear Fork CD and Publicity Packet, Teacher's Guide (contains preparatory information, follow-up ideas, a bibliography and discography)