

## **Educational Offerings**

### **MIND, BODY, AND SOUL**

One of the great mysteries and miracle is how a chamber group communicates on stage silently and efficiently without a conductor. This can be broken down into steps of basic body language cues and breathing the music together and can be taken to another level with real bonding experiences between members of a group through somatic exercises.

#### 1. Challenge Your Skills! WALL-BREAKING ACTIVITY (intermediate to advanced students)

In this fun wall-breaking activity, we draw fun playing directives out of a hat including emotive scales and "same lines, different meanings," a game in which musicians keep the notes and rhythms of their written music and change the character and emotional message. The exercise also can involve silly tasks including switching the left and right hands, holding the bow backwards, playing the notes of a piece backwards, all left hand pizz, and many other fun options. It's a fun way to take the stresses and pressures off of performing in front of each other and break the ice in a group of kids as part of a playing workshop! By the end of this, everyone is sure to be laughing together, their nervousness shedded and hearts open.

#### 2. HiveMind!

The Balourdet Quartet takes participants on a series of somatic exercises that help groups of students open their hearts and minds to each other. The quartet will also demonstrate the effect of these exercises on quartet basics, like Bach Chorales.

### **MASTERCLASS**

#### 1. Traditional Masterclass or Workshop

We feel strongly about sharing our musical values with the next generation and run masterclasses with young musicians at all levels. We have taught with all four members working with students as well as with individual members of the quartet coaching a group or solo instrumentalists. We love to be hands-on with students - we've been known to sit in groups and play, conduct, dance, and sing to inspire our students. We have so much fun working with young chamber musicians and it is a joy to help students open up to music and to each other.

#### 2. Open Rehearsal

Sharing ideas with peers is important in every facet of life. Our rehearsals encourage positivity and discussion as well as openness to all ideas shared. This is a chance for students and the public alike to get a glimpse into our working process as a quartet. This includes how we share ideas and work towards a common goal! We take a passage of music and work on it as we would in our rehearsals, sharing some of the challenges of the music with an emphasis on problem-solving and positive team-building.

## **REHEARSAL SKILLS**

### 1. Communication through Bach Chorales

We begin our rehearsals each day with one short Chorale by JS Bach, but sometimes we can spend hours rehearsing it out! Why do we find this method so essential? We crack the code of unlocking the understanding of each group member as a human being and each role in the quartet applies to virtually any piece of music.

### 2. Voicing and Balance

One of the hardest quartet skills, particularly in complex 20th-century music, is for each voice to be heard appropriately and to make space for other lines. There are many tricks involved in being aware of what to listen for and activate which apply to most textures in music, from canons and counterpoint to melody and accompaniment.

### 3. Breaking Down the Score

A basic understanding of harmony, as well as the forms that are played around with by the great composers, is a fundamental first step of score studying and preparing for a first (or fiftieth) rehearsal on a piece. Beyond this, just a little bit of knowledge goes a long way to unlocking a lifelong joy in appreciating, listening to, and playing great chamber music.

## **COMPOSITION WORKSHOP**

We've found it both rewarding and hugely beneficial for us to work with modern composers, and we'd love to share some of what we've learned with student composers. We love doing workshops with the composers' pieces and sharing our thoughts about each work from the performer's perspective.

## **ALL YOU CAN BALOURDET EXPERIENCE (Performance and Q&A)**

We perform selections of our programming for the season as well as some of our favorite hits of the quartet repertoire, showing the range of the string quartet from the intimate to the orchestral and even the unusual! Audience interactivity is welcome as we share stories of working together and we always take questions. Repertoire for this program has included but is not limited to music by Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, Debussy, Ellington, Haydn, Montgomery, and Stravinsky.

Examples of Past Programs:

Haydn - Sunrise Quartet Mvt I

Debussy - Quartet Mvts II, III

Brahms - A Minor Quartet Mvt IV

Karim Al-Zand - Strange Machines I. Alberti Machine  
Beethoven - Op. 131 Mvt V  
Jessie Montgomery - Strum  
Paul Chihara - Ellington Fantasy: Take the A Train

## **JOIN THE BALOURDET QUARTET**

### 1. Orchestral Workshop

We join forces with orchestras and larger chamber ensembles and help foster a sense of openness in musical communication as well as intimacy in a larger group setting. We join the sections corresponding to our instruments and help guide the young musicians. We have a lot of fun playing in these settings and it is a lot of fun getting to join in on making music with inspiring young artists. In conjunction with the conductor, we help shape the music-making of the group. In addition to sitting in the orchestra, we also lead sectionals for our individual instruments.

### 2. Chamber Music Reading (advanced students)

Ever wonder what it's like to play in the Balourdet Quartet? One to all of the quartet members play with students and read through pieces from the chamber music repertory. In our own development we found reading with experienced mentors often gave us an entirely new idea of what it means to take each other along on a musical journey and opened up new artistic possibilities.