

# TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

## Residency Activities

### Lecture/Demonstrations

#### **Find Your Groove**

##### **An exploration of rhythm in classical and popular forms through lecture/ demonstration**

- Audience: 6<sup>th</sup> grade through college level students
- Number of Participants: up to 1000
- Length: 60 minutes
- Requirements: Please refer to residency tech rider document

The focus in this program is on the fundamental rhythmic differences between European classical and American vernacular forms, using the rich historical connection to the traditional string quartet as the point of departure for a cross-cultural musical journey that begins with Haydn and ends with...Turtle Island! The quartet identifies the basic elements of style, embarking on a simple and methodical layering of the basic building blocks employed in creating a jazz string combo, one instrument at a time. Turtle Island discusses the various performance practices that allow it all to happen, including innovative percussive techniques, emulation of other instruments (saxophone, guitar, trumpet, bass, etc.), neo-classical phrasing, composition and arranging, and basics of improvisation. Other areas of exploration are bowing techniques borrowed from American fiddle styles, 60's rock ala Jimi Hendrix, R&B, clave rhythms of Latin American music, and Carnatic Indian tabla grooves.

#### **A String Quartet is Like a Family**

##### **A special lecture/ demonstration program for younger audiences**

- Audience: Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Number of Participants: up to 700
- Length: 60 minutes
- Requirements: Please refer to the residency tech rider document

This engaging and accessible presentation for children in grades K-6 utilizes the model of the family to help students understand how a string quartet functions and thrives. Turtle Island draws comparisons between the interactions of the quartet and the audience's families, giving children a personal reference point that greatly helps them to gain a simple but profound understanding of the complete dynamics that drive musical groups. The children also learn to discern the many different styles the quartet presents, and young instrumentalists are presented with a new model of what is possible to achieve on string instruments. Members of the audience are invited to participate throughout the presentation, joining in rhythmic clap-alongs, dialogue with quartet members and a question-and-answer period following a rousing rock and roll finish. This presentation can easily be modified to include middle school students.

## Workshop

### It's About Time

Workshop formats for High School/College string programs

Audience: Advanced High School/ College level students

Number of Participants: preferably groups of 25 or less

Lengths: varying – will work with presenter to plan details specific to participants

Requirements: Please refer to the residency tech rider document

How often is it that young string students lose interest in playing simply because the musical options that are given have little relevance to their lives? The chance to improvise can be pure gold for such students. Turtle Island is fiercely dedicated to spreading the word that the bowed string instrument is one of the most versatile on the planet, and there should be no limit to what is possible to play and play well, be it J.S. Bach or Jimi Hendrix. To that end, the quartet offers workshops that fit every need, from one-hour sessions to week-long intensive jazz string seminars at educational institutions worldwide. Using a classic blues piece from their repertoire adapted to a string orchestra format that allows for all the students to participate together, David Balakrishnan, founder of Turtle Island, conveys various aspects of their performance practice including jazz phrasing and improvisatory techniques for melodic playing as well as their trademark rhythmic techniques used to create the sonic background of a jazz rhythm section. In addition, much of Turtle Island's music is available in sheet music form for both string quartet and string orchestra, which can be used for programs that have already made some progress in playing alternative string styles music. Ultimately, this experience can leave the student with a much deeper appreciation of the storehouse of European classical literature that we all treasure and wish to preserve.



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