

Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

October 15, 2015

Article: “Northwest Wanderings: ‘Lost in the music’ together”

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Pre-Reading:

Before reading the article, read the title and look at the photograph. What do you think it means to be ‘lost in the music’? Do you play an instrument or know someone who does? What do you or he or she enjoy about it?

Vocabulary:

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today’s article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the “context,” or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

Sanskrit

bass

tempo

instrumental

cohesive

quartet

soprano

current

candidate

cellist

soloed

varied

fiddling

Comprehension:

1. When is Daana String Quartet's next performance?
2. How did Daana String Quartet get its name?
3. How is the role of the cello described?
4. What is the role of the viola?
5. What does Erin Kelly, the first violinist, do?
6. Where is Coretin Pokorny from?
7. What is the goal of the four musicians?
8. What does Myklebust compare playing together to?
9. What kind of music does Pokorny listen to?
10. What kind of music does Barrett listen to?
11. What type of music do the four play together?
12. When did Alessandra Barrett begin instrumental study?

Post-Reading:

Read the following passage from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:

“They have varied personal tastes, however. When not playing classical, Pokorny ‘listens to a mix of stuff — Baroque, Irish fiddling music, John Williams film scores.’ Barrett listens to ‘different things. Led Zeppelin, old rock, old jazz. I like all forms of music except Christian rock.’ Myklebust listens to Simon and Garfunkel. Kelly likes ‘old hip-hop. Biggie and Tupac.’”

What are film scores? How do you think the members of the Daana String Quartet's musical tastes affect their style and performances? Were you surprised by any of the music the members listen to? What kind of music do you like to listen to? Is it different from the type of music you do or would want to play on a musical instrument?

Building Language Skills:

Read the following passage, and complete the activity below:

“‘The best practice is when you're lost in the music.’ As second violin he's the alto. They are four musicians with ‘the common goal of a unified sound,’ says Myklebust.

Playing together is ‘really incredible. You're in the middle of the current of the river and ride it to the end because you can't stop once you're playing a piece of music.’”

What clubs, teams or groups have you been a member of? What was the common goal? Why is it important, as a team or group, to have a common goal? Myklebust compared playing together to being “in the middle of the current of the river and ride it to the end because you can't stop once you're playing a piece of music.” What would you compare the experience of being in your group to? Why? Write about your experience in a detailed personal essay.

Comprehension Question Answers:

1. Daana String Quartet's next performance is 2 p.m. Nov. 8 Recital Hall — Music Center of the Northwest 901 N. 96th St., Seattle. Admission is free.
2. Daana is a Sanskrit word meaning "generosity of spirit." The cellist Sonja Myklebust gave the group its name.
3. The cello provides the bass and volume. The dynamic and the tempo all start with the cello.
4. The viola is the glue between the other parts. It's cohesive.
5. The violinist gives the cue to start like a conductor, and plays the highest notes in the quartet, as the soprano.
6. Pokorny was born and raised in France.
7. The goal of the four musicians is to have a unified sound.
8. Myklebust compares playing together to being in the middle of the current of the river and riding it to the end because you can't stop once you're playing a piece of music.
9. Pokorny listens to Baroque, Irish fiddling music and John Williams film scores.
10. Barrett listens to Led Zeppelin, old rock, old jazz and all kinds of music except Christian rock.
11. Together the four play mostly classical music.
12. Barrett began instrumental study at age 4.