

ALBERTA BAIR



T H E A T E R

EDUCATION GUIDE



The Slocan Ramblers
Friday, January 8
9:30 AM ONLY

Recommended for Grades 6-12

Tickets: \$7.00 per person

Jane Wallace ABT Student Matinee Series

ABT Education Partner



Alberta Bair Theater for the Performing Arts
2801 Third Avenue North • Billings, Montana 59101
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www.AlbertaBairTheater.Org

The Slocan Ramblers Pre-Show Study Guide

Discussion Points:

History of bluegrass music: Bluegrass emerged as an all-acoustic, string-band style in the 1930s, '40s and '50s, primarily in the Appalachian region of the US (Kentucky is the “Bluegrass State” and lent its name to the genre). Bluegrass emerged through the fusion of other genres: country music, fiddling traditions from the British Isles, American old-time music, African-American blues and jazz.

Bluegrass singing is generally sung in the high range of the voice. This, combined with rich vocal harmonies and often sad subject matter, creates the “high, lonesome sound” it is famous for.

Bluegrass instruments are all acoustic string instruments, and consist of 5-string banjo, mandolin, guitar, upright bass, fiddle and sometimes dobro (a type of slide guitar). Notice how the larger the instrument, the lower the notes it produces, and vice-versa, from the big bass down the little mandolin.

Bluegrass instrumental solos consist of each lead instrument (banjo, mandolin, fiddle and sometimes guitar and dobro) taking its turn playing and interpreting the melody of the song, and improvising around the structure of the tune. This is different from old-time music (a main precursor to bluegrass), in which all the lead instruments play the melody together. Bluegrass solos often feature fast tempos and displays of instrumental prowess, which we call “nice pickin’!”

Roles of rhythm instruments: In bluegrass, each rhythm instrument (bass, mandolin, guitar and banjo) plays a distinct role in building the rhythmic structure of the song. Think of a bluegrass band as a large drum kit, with each instrument playing its part.

In standard 4/4 time:

Bass plays on beats 1 & 3, like a bass drum

Mandolin chops (plays short, staccato chords) on beats 2 & 4, like a snare drum

Try getting half the class clapping on beats 1 & 3 with the bass, and the other half clapping on beats 2 & 4, with the mandolin.

Guitar fills out the sound, playing bass notes on 1 & 3, and strumming on 2 & 4

Banjo rolls with even 8th notes throughout the piece, adding excitement and texture

Try listening to a bluegrass song and picking out each instrument as it plays rhythm and then steps forward to solo and strut its stuff!

The DTB Bluegrass Band is a folk-bluegrass band celebrated for their soulful melodies and intricate instrumentals. Fueled by the musical prowess of Max Capistran, Sasha Dubyk, and Avery Ballotta, this seasoned Brooklyn-based trio, with 11 years of dedicated touring and recording experience, weaves heartfelt lyrics into a tapestry of masterful fiddle, guitar, banjo, and bass playing. Embodying a blend of Americana roots and contemporary finesse, The DTB Bluegrass Band's musical journey transcends borders. From intimate local venues to global stages, their magnetic sound captivates audiences, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of listeners worldwide.

In their early days, The DTB Bluegrass Band didn't rehearse – they busked. Now, whether live or on record, the trio still radiates the energy of a crew of best friends playing bluegrass on the street. Anchoring that energy is their instrumental chops, their strong songwriting, and their varied influences that stretch beyond bluegrass, even beyond American roots music altogether. Whether sharing lead vocals and instrumental solos or blending their voices into high-spirited harmony, The DTB Bluegrass Band is a tight unit that contains more than the sum of its parts.



PreK, K, 1, 2, SpEd

[The Crawdad Hole](#)

[Froggie's Wedding](#)

[Bluegrass Instrument Coloring Book](#)

[Steady Beat & Form with Bluegrass](#)

[Fiddle Tunes](#)

Bluegrass Lesson Ideas

K-2, p. 3

6-8, p. 5

3-5, p. 4

9-12, p. 6

Grades 3-5

[Discover Bluegrass Video Link](#)

[Discover Bluegrass Lessons, Units 1-6](#)

[The Fox and the Hound Dog](#) Music, Language Arts, Technology

[Bluegrass Vocal Harmony and the "High, Lonesome Sound"](#)



Grades 6-8

[Discover Bluegrass Video Link](#)

[Discover Bluegrass Lessons, Units 1-6](#)

[Bluegrass and Breakups](#), English Language Arts

[Immigration in the mid-19th Century](#), Social Studies

Music, Visual Arts, Social Studies, Communication Arts, Technology

[The Good Times are Past and Gone: The History of Bluegrass](#)

[I Am A Man of Constant Sorrow: Bios of Bluegrass](#)

[Bluegrass Topics for National History Day Contest](#)



Grades 9-12

English, American History, Criminal Justice, Music
Bluegrass Murder Ballads: Comparisons & Compositions

English Language Arts

Bluegrass and Breakups

Use of Music in "The Grapes of Wrath"

Informative Speech: Talk About Bluegrass

Brothers, Sisters, & the Lyrics of Bluegrass

iTunes; Your History as a Song, Social Studies

Bluegrass Topics for National History Day Contest