Certified Organic

Kevin Sluder

String Orchestra
Grade 2

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
Violin 3 (Viola TC)
Bass on Cello

Preview Sample

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PROGRAM NOTES

The sun rises on a quaint little organic farm. A rooster crows, a cow moos, and stalks of wheat sway gently in the morning breeze. This family-owned business prides itself on growing and selling food free of unnecessary chemicals, using techniques that will keep the soil healthy for many years.

Certified Organic is an ode to the people that are working day in and day out to provide us with delicious food that is produced thoughtfully and sustainably.

Using primarily the notes of the one-octave Bb Major scale, students will reinforce this less-familiar key using a lighthearted tune, complete with snap pizz and foot stomps!

CONDUCTOR NOTES

In writing *Certified Organic*, I wanted to create an opportunity to reinforce this new finger pattern ("low 1" for violin/viola, backward extensions for cello, and half position for bass) within the confines of what is traditionally thought of as Grade 1-1.5 literature. The rhythms are fairly blocked and the bass is almost always paired with another instrument, so the performers can be confident as they navigate this new key signature.

That being said, there are still many other concepts to dig into. The dynamics are vibrant. The accents are exciting. The foot stomps...well those are just fun!

Advice/Reminders from Mr. Sluder:

- In half position, basses often have either a sharp first finger, or a flat pinky. They should separate and gently point the 1st finger back, leaving a sizeable space between 1st and 2nd. Slightly rocking the hand back-and-forth to help reach the pitch is okay, as long as the thumb stays in place.
- Cellos should not be shifting back for the Eb (on D) or Bb (on A). The backward extension happens almost exclusively with the first finger. Keep 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers curved like normal, with the thumb still behind 2nd finger, while the first finger stretches back.
- Accents are primarily created by using extra bow weight at the beginning of a note, then releasing it. While bow speed can play a role in shaping the tone, bow weight is the key to a good accent!
- The + in m8 for first violin is an indication to pluck that A open with the left hand.
- The weird little symbol in measures 24 and 25 is for Bartok (snap) pizz. Pull the string out/up and away (not too far!) and let it snap back against the fingerboard.
- For the longer rhythms that occur from measures 46 to 51, use a slightly slower bow for the tied half note, and then "recover" that amount of bow on the half note using a lighter weight (to avoid creating a sudden swell in volume).

Preview Sample

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



Kevin Sluder is an orchestra director in the North Texas area and has been teaching in the public school system since 2007. His program at Lawler MS was named the TMEA MS Honor Full Orchestra in 2024 and 2026.

Born and raised in Mansfield, TX, Mr. Sluder obtained his bachelor's degree in music education from the University of North Texas in Denton. A bass player by trade, he also has experience in percussion and guitar, with a deep love of rhythm.

Outside of the classroom, Mr. Sluder spends a great deal of time composing and arranging music. He also runs two podcasts. *Rite of String*, co-hosted with Matthew Moreno, is focused on string education. *SluderMusic* is a showcase of Mr. Sluder's published pieces. In addition to his work in the "classical" world, he has written and recorded several albums that are available on most streaming services.

Mr. Sluder currently resides in McKinney, TX with his wife (and fellow orchestra director) Bethany Hardwick. In his limited spare time, he enjoys taking naps, camping, and playing video games.

Score
Grade 2
Length 2:10

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Kevin Sluder
(ASCAP)



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