

# Study/Curriculum Guide for the Bottom Line Duo



[www.bottomlineduo.com](http://www.bottomlineduo.com)

## Meet the Artists



**Traci Hoveskeland** - first laid hands on the cello when she entered the Port Angeles public schools music program at ten years old. She quickly attracted the attention of many gifted educators only to leave Port Angeles via scholarship to Western Washington University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in music.

Traci first studied with Walter Gray, a founding member of the Kronos string quartet who now plays with the Seattle Symphony, and later studied with Barton Frank, a Piatigorsky prodigy and principal cello of the National Symphony at 19. Barton became one of Traci's greatest influences. Traci has performed for numerous Broadway musicals as principal cellist in the Paramount Theater and the 5th Avenue theaters in Seattle. She has performed Titanic, Martin Gerre, the Sound of Music, and backed up Tony Curtis, Richard Chamberlain, and Patty Lapone in the process. Her reputation as a chamber musician has mandated performances across the USA, Europe, and Mexico. As a recording artist she appears in genres from rock to classical with Grammy Award winning artists. She also is the cellist with the critically acclaimed "Tangoheart" and the all female new music ensemble "Sorrelle." Traci has released four albums with the Bottom Line Duo and has a fifth in the works.



**Spencer Hoveskeland** - first laid hands not on the bass, but on the cello when he entered the Port Angeles public schools music program at ten years old. He also played guitar in local pop groups and played bass in the school jazz band.

Spencer followed Traci, closely, to college where he studied with Chuck Israel's of Bill Evans fame. He began his classical studies with Barton Frank, Peter Marsh, Walter Gray and studied phrasing, solfege, and music engraving with Art Bloom, founding clarinetist of the Dorian Wind Quintet. Spencer has performed for numerous Broadway musicals as bassist in the Seattle's theaters. Fiddler on the Roof with Theodore Bikel, Cinderella with Ertha Kitt, and Chicago with Tom Wopat were memorable. As an orchestral player he was principal bass of the Whatcom Symphony for six years, played for the Bolshoi Ballet when in Seattle, and appears on the orchestral soundtrack for the films "About Schmidt," "Woolly Boys," "Man on Fire," "Blade the Trinity" and "Driven." With an electric bass he occasionally accompanies the screaming guitars of famous rock stars.

**About the Performance:**

The Bottom Line Duo is a performance that invites the students to travel to different times and locations around the globe to hear the foundation and development of modern instrumental music. The concert hall and composers plus the duo's personal relationship and experiences are all part of the program. Students are encouraged to ask the duo questions about performing, techniques, study/practice habits, past performances, composers, and famous musicians. Since the performance covers many genres and musical origins, questions may also cover historical and socially oriented ideas. Much of what students hear throughout the day musically has deep historical roots.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. An increased understanding of written music's origins.
2. An increased understanding of all musical style's common basic structure.
3. Exposure to a "humanities" concept of joining together acting, dance, and history to create art.
4. Develop improved audience skills.
5. An increased understanding of the art of musical performance.
6. Improved personal skills in the art of musical performance.
7. An increased appreciation for the beauty visually and audibly of master crafted musical instruments.
8. An increased understanding of the development of the modern stringed instrument.

**Preparing for the Performance:**

Students should read the accompanying biographical / background material on the artists and participate in suggested classroom activities before the performance.

**Classroom Activities To Enhance The Experience:****Before the performance:**

1. Study biographical and historical information on the composers, famous musicians, and instruments.
2. Investigate where was/is music performed and how it was/is used.
3. Attend a school or community concert.
4. Watch a concert (video). Discuss the differences between a live performance and a "canned" performance.
5. Have each student write at least one question to ask during the performance.
6. Discuss good audience skills and the truth that the best audiences get the best shows.

### **After The Performance:**

1. Discuss the value of the student's interaction and involvement in the performance.
2. Consider the demands of the rehearsed/memorized/improvisational format on the performer. What skills and resources must the performer use?
3. Discuss the variety and value of an individual's personal experience/interpretation of the concert/piece. (The fact that each student has their own unique interpretation/experience). Each individual's experience is as valuable as the others.
4. Have each student write about their experience/interpretation of the concert/piece.



### **Cross Discipline Connections:**

Applications and connections can be made in many subjects including: Language, Drama, History, Literature, and Science. For example; a science class could study how the great scientist Pythagoras counted the vibrations of a string per second and defined the overtone series. This led to tremendous leaps in music composition and performance. A language class could study the effects that a language's rhythm has on its native music.

### **Viol Family**

Preceded violins and still exists today but are used primarily as "period instruments" to play specific "period music." Technique requirements are less exacting and require "musicianship" as opposed to "virtuosity."

Characteristics of a viol as compared to a violin:

1. Back is flat as opposed to curved.
2. Shoulders slope to neck as opposed to meeting at right angles.
3. Wood is thinner and ribs are deeper
4. Six strings as opposed to four.
5. Finger board is fretted (with guts tied around) as opposed to smooth.
6. Sound holes are "C's" as opposed to "F's."
7. Bridge is more flat making bigger chords easier.
8. Strings are thinner and less tense.
9. Stick curves away from the hair as opposed to towards it.

### ***Other attributes of the Viol:***

The viol has greater resonance but less sound production.

Viols came in all sizes with too many names to list. The Viola de gamba and Viola d'Amore (neither to be confused with the Viola of the Violin family) are the most commonly used viols today.

All viols were held up and down and played with an underhanded bow and no end pins!

## Violin Family

The violin family emerged in the sixteenth century. The violin rivaled its predecessor the viol. Both viols and violins were in use at the same time and have no common predecessor. By the end of the seventeenth century the violins persevered and the viols were no longer rivals.

Violin - Soprano and alto voice in an orchestra or quartet.

Viola - Tenor - is bigger in size than a violin but is still played under the chin.

Cello - Bass voice in a quartet.

Unlike all other instruments strings have a wide variety of techniques and sounds including: Bowed notes and effects (i.e. ponticello), pizzicato, double stops, mutes, and harmonics.

The violin has progressed since the time of the great makers Amati, Stradivari, and Guarneri. Over the years the bass bar has elongated and the neck has lengthened, broadened, and angled back. The bridge is higher and more curved. Older violins could produce 3 and 4 note chords but the contemporary bridge makes this impractical. A violin consists of 84 pieces.



**Cello** – is the bass voice of the violin family. Celli were made as early as the mid-1500's. The first known maker was Andrea Amati. Only six of his celli are still in known existence today, although the exact location of three is all that's more commonly known. Antonio Stradivari's celli are among the best known and are worth millions today. He, like many of the great cello makers, was Italian.

The cellos do get solos from time to time, though the violins take precedence as far as that's concerned. Cellos are the second best known instrument of the orchestra. In the Bottom Line Duo the cellist gets the melody whenever she wants!

The cello has always been a vital part of the orchestra, filling out the bass-lines above the double-basses, and a mainstay of the string quartet or piano trio; but until the end of the nineteenth century it was rarely used in sonatas or solo music. The Solo Cello Suites of J S Bach are an early landmark in the repertoire, and a surprising one in many ways, because as an Italian instrument the cello was usually passed over by German composers in favor of the viola da gamba. Bach himself uses the viola da gamba, violone and cello all together in one of the Brandenburg concertos.

The instrument was constantly used in chamber music, especially in the string quartet that had been established by Haydn. The cello equivalent of the Chopin Preludes for piano are the 48 Etudes by David Popper of Germany, who wrote many small pieces that are encountered by every cellist in every conservatory in the world sooner or later. Interest in the cello during the twentieth century was stimulated by virtuosos such as Pablo Casals and Emanuel Feuermann. Through their flawless technique and championing of repertoire they inspired composers to write new works for the instrument.



**The Double Bass** - was invented to play bass viol parts an octave lower. Bach scored this way. The modern double bass is a hybrid between the viol and violin family. It performs not just the doubling of cellos and bass viols but also is used as an independent voice and as a solo instrument. Bass is the least standardized of the stringed instruments. Some are made as viols, some like violins, but most are a combination.

Double basses come in all shapes and sizes and were first popular as a three stringed instrument. Now they have three to five and are most common as a four string instrument. With the tuning of E,A,D,G basses cannot double every note of the cello an octave lower. To remedy this some bassists use a “machine” to extend their lowest string to a C. Solo bassists use a tuning of F#,B,E,A. Dragonetti, Koussevitsky, and Bottesini are a few of the early virtuosos.



Engraving of Dragonetti

Domenico Dragonetti (Born Venice 1763 - Died London 1846) was one of the greatest virtuosos of the double bass who has ever lived. He composed numerous works for solo double bass and was a major contributor to the development of the convex bow that was named after him. Dragonetti changed the status of the double bass during the course of his career. There are various stories of how Dragonetti impressed Beethoven by playing one of Beethoven’s own cello sonatas. Beethoven physically embraced both Dragonetti and his bass and forever showed his new appreciation for the bass by composing more demanding bass parts. Food for thought, Dragonetti traveled with thirty life sized cloth mannequins who attended his concerts and sat in front row seats. Dragonetti also performed in a duo with the great cellist Robert Lindlay. In 1824 the composer Rossini wrote a bass and cello duo for Dragonetti and cellist Sir David Salomons. Dragonetti’s famous duos performed throughout Europe and set the precedence for groups like the Bottom Line Duo to exist.

## Vocabulary

1. Machine – A device created and added to modern double-basses allowing them to extend their low note “e” to a lower “c”
2. Viol Family – The family of stringed instruments that preceded the violin family but has not maintained popularity.
3. Violin Family – The family of instruments standardized by the great makers of Cremona - Amati, Stradivari, Guarneri.
4. Bow – A curved stick with rosin smeared horse hair tied to it. It is used to excite the string to vibrate. Early bows were like the weapon in shape.

Over-handed - **French** is most common now.



Underhanded - **German** was more common in the past.



5. French grip – The over-handed grip that is used by players of the violin family.
6. German grip – Underhanded bow hold used by viol players and modern bass players.
7. Tuning peg – The pegs near the scroll that are used for tuning.
8. Bridge – The angled maple arch that the strings rest upon half way down the instrument.
9. Tail piece – The dark piece on the bottom of the instrument where the strings are tied. It also has a gut that wraps around a peg (or the end pin in basses and cellos) that helps distribute vibrations.
10. Fingerboard – The dark flat board (usually ebony) the player presses the string against to stop the notes.

## Vocabulary continued

**11. Scroll** – The twisty carved design at the end of the neck (head) of the violin and viol families.

**12. End pin** – The pin on the bottom of a bass or cello to rest on while playing. It also transfers vibrations to the floor of the hall to enlarge the sound.

**13. F- hole** – The holes in the top of the instrument that create a larger, fuller, and more focused sound than other shapes. Some acoustic guitars are built this way and are used to play acoustically in loud groups.

**14. Sound board** – The top of a stringed instrument – usually spruce.

**15. Sound post** – A wooden dowel that connects transfers the vibrational energy from the top of an instrument to the back thus increasing the sound.

**16. Scordatura Tuning** – When a stringed instrument is tuned other than the standard tuning.

**17. Rosin** – Hard, sticky tree sap used to help the hair of the bow grip the string.

**18. Cat gut** – In old England the violin was often referred to as a cat and the gut string (usually from sheep) was referred to as a cat gut.

**19. Frets** – Gut or metal bars across a fingerboard to stop the notes.

**20. Mute** – A device that fits on the bridge of a stringed instrument to dampen the vibrations and alter the tone. Traci says, “There’s more than one way to use a mute!”



**21. Chamber music** - Defined in the 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> centuries as music performed in the halls or parlors of the aristocracy as opposed to a concert hall or a church. The 20<sup>th</sup> century definition is narrow in that it specifies what type of small ensemble plays chamber music. Today chamber music is defined as all seriously intended instrumental music of two or more instruments with one instrument to a part.

## A sample concert program:

### Set I

Roman Guitar----- Lazarro - Italy  
Danse Rustique----- William Henry Squire (1873-1963) - England  
Blue Moon ----- Richard Rogers (1902-1979) - United States  
Hungarian Rhapsody ----- David Popper (1843-1913) Austria  
Waltz in A ---- Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846) - Italy  
Gigue from Concerto in A Major ----- Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846) - Italy  
Pepper's Waltz ----- Hoveskeland (1971- ) - United States  
Largo al Factotum [Barber of Seville] ----- Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868) - Italy



### Set II

Brandenburg Concerto in G Movement I ----- J.S. Bach (1685-1750) - Germany  
Contrabajissimo ----- Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) - Argentina  
Morenita Santa ----- Isaias Sameron (? – 1942) - Mexico  
Bambino Nuevo ----- Hoveskeland (1971- ) - United States  
Incidental music from “Tsar Saltan” ----- Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) - Russia

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