

# Dr. Accordion

Follow The Feeling - STUDY GUIDE



# Follow The Feeling

*Follow the Feeling* is a fascinating and fun exploration of “all those feels” that music evokes.

Written by 2x Canadian Digital Accordion Champion Michael Bridge, students learn about musical mindfulness, identifying their feelings and pairing them with music, and using music as a force for good in the world.

Students get to make music themselves in the audience-choir, polyrhythmic clap-alongs, and a live arranging session—where their musical decisions come to life in real-time!

Dr. Accordion has performed for students in every Canadian province and 20 US states—and he plays a custom digital accordion, which sounds like a symphony orchestra, or a jazz band, with drums, bass, accordion, guitar, and outer-space sounds—all 100% live.

# Dr. Accordion

## (Michael Bridge)

### Origin Story

Michael Bridge began playing accordion at age 5, growing up in Calgary. His mom bought his first accordion for him at a garage sale for \$5. A family friend started teaching him to play. Formal lessons began at age 7.

He spent weekends at prairie accordion festivals, playing polkas and learning how to dance! At 15, Michael attended the World Accordion Championships as a spectator. For the first time, he heard classical accordion and fell in love with it. He realized he wanted to start all over again, playing a different type of accordion with buttons on both sides that would allow him to play classical music and study accordion at university. So, at 16, he spent all his savings on a button accordion, on which he couldn't even play Marry Had a Little Lamb. He enrolled at the University of Toronto and was soon playing 100 concerts per year.

### Today

After studying accordion at the University of Toronto for 12 years, Dr. Bridge received his DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) degree in accordion performance in 2023 (and became "Dr. Accordion!").

He has two groups, *Bridge & Wolak* and *Ladom Ensemble*. He performs around the world, and gives lectures at North American and European conservatories, and he teaches Music Business at the University of Toronto.

He has performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, with the Boston Pops Orchestra, with the Canadian band The Barenaked Ladies, in Poland, Czech Republic, Italy, France, Brazil, Ecuador, 26 US states, and all Canadian Provinces.

# Pre-Show Activities

## VIDEO: HOW DOES THE DIGITAL ACCORDION WORK?

Dr. Accordion's digital accordion is very special...

It is a "computer shaped like an accordion."

He has spent over 1,000 hours programming it to make it capable of sounding like many instruments. In this video, Dr. Accordion talks about how he created pipe organ sounds:

Big Organ Pipes: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=68VH0Cox9TA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68VH0Cox9TA) (8')

## VIDEO: WHAT WILL WE HEAR AT THE CONCERT?

In this performance video, Dr. Accordion sounds like a full symphony orchestra, but all sounds are being played live by the digital accordion.

Dr. Accordion will play this song in *Follow The Feeling*. ☺

1812 Overture: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPQ9qMxAvjY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPQ9qMxAvjY) (6')

(Do you recognize the frozen pond? This was filmed in High Park, Toronto!)

## GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of a song that makes you feel joyful? Sad? Excited?
2. Can you describe a time that music made you feel better?
3. How do you think the "mood" of a song is created? What role do tempo, instruments, and performance play in creating the mood?

# Post-Show Activities

## FOLLOW-UP GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. How do you feel when you listen to music of different cultures?
2. How do you think music can bring people together?
3. Dr. Accordion played the theme song from the Mario Bros video games. What were the 3 actions you learned corresponding to the music, and how were they connected to the music?
4. What did you think the accordion would sound like, and how did your impression of the accordion change throughout the concert?

## ENCORE!

### One more song:

In this video, Dr. Accordion is joined by his friends in *Ladom Ensemble* to play a famous modern Argentinian tango written by Astor Piazzolla: *Libertango*.

Piazzolla: *Libertango* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qp8fb2pFTKU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qp8fb2pFTKU)



[www.MichaelBridge.co](http://www.MichaelBridge.co)

Facebook: /michaelbridgemusic

Instagram: @michaelLaccordionist



TO ARRANGE YOUR PERFORMING ARTS EXPERIENCE:

416-591-9092

[www.prologue.org](http://www.prologue.org)

FOLLOW US:

@prologuearts

