

Study Guide for Teachers

“COOL CAT JAZZ”

*Heroes of Jazz – A biographical History of Early Jazz
Middle and High School*



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning

Connecticut

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This program traces the roots of Jazz and the developments in Jazz through the lives of its pioneers and composers.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Cool Cat Jazz is an energetic five piece New Orleans Dixieland and Swing jazz band specializing in great American music of the early twentieth century. With collective professional performing experience ranging from the Sammy Kay big band to the Hartford Symphony orchestra to the Goodspeed Opera House, and teaching experience from the Hartt school of Music to the Neighborhood school to the New Haven and Wallingford school systems, the cool cats have dazzled school children at thousands of performances throughout the world. Their riveting and soulful renditions of classic American songs demonstrate the important values of diversity, freedom of expression and respect for others. A Cool Cat concert will leave students and teachers dizzy with the excitement of jazz.



OBJECTIVES

- Develop analytic listening skills such as being able to distinguish the individual instruments within an ensemble context.
- Have children appreciate and understand popular American music and its relation to American cultural history for the 1890's through the 1940's.
- To have students learn that jazz music is a vehicle for communication, including cooperation, self expression and teamwork.

COOL CAT INSTRUMENTS: Brass (trumpet, trombone), Reeds (clarinet, saxophone), drums (bass drum, snare drum, tom-toms, cymbals, hi-hat), banjo (guitar), double bass.

RESOURCES

Students:

- "Cool, Hot and Blue" a history of jazz for young people by Charles Boeckman
- Ken Burns' Jazz documentary video. Visit, www.pbs.org/jazz

Teachers:

- "A new history of jazz" by Alyn Shipton
- "Jazz a history of America's music" by Geoffry C. Ward and Ken Burns
- "Jazz: A photo history" by Joachim-Ernst Berndt

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

- 1) Listen to early jazz recordings. (ex. Scott Joplin, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington etc.). Discuss and compare with the music of today.
- 2) Locate New Orleans on a United States map and compare to Connecticut.
- 3) Discuss daily life one hundred years ago. (ex. No TV, computers etc.).
- 4) Find books and videos about jazz, (early jazz in particular) from your school or local library.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

- 1) Draw a picture of a favorite instrument and someone playing it.
- 2) Discuss how the music made students feel, (happy , sad, angry etc.).
- 3) Some jazz songs have words (vocals) and some don't (instrumental).
 - ask students if they have ever heard songs without words?
 - ask students how listening to an instrumental is different than listening a vocal?
- 4) Make up a blues song of your own.

CURRICULAR LINKS

Connecticut State Department of Education

Source: The CT Framework - K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards

- 🚩 Goal 1: Nature of Science
Students will conduct scientific investigations which generally involve the collection of relevant evidence, the use of logical reasoning and creativity in devising hypotheses and explanations to make sense of the evidence.

Source: The CT Framework – Dance

- 🚩 Standard 2: Choreography
Students will demonstrate the following partner skills: creating contrasting and complementary shapes, taking and supporting weight, balance and counter balance.
- 🚩 Standard 4: Thinking Skills
Students will explore, discover and realize multiple solutions to a given movement problem, choose their favorite solution and discuss the reasons for their choice.

VOCABULARY and TERMS

New Orleans - The city in Louisiana on the Mississippi River, where jazz was born.

Jazz - Music developed in America; a combination of African and European music traditions.

Mardi Gras - A French term meaning 'fat Tuesday,' The day before lent.

Praline – A New Orleans dessert of chocolate and nuts

Second Line - spectators who dance next to or behind their favorite marching bands in the streets.

Dixieland Jazz - Early jazz from New Orleans

Ragtime - A musical style played mostly by piano players that was popular around the year 1900. It was called ragtime because of the way the players right hand played very choppy or "ragged" rhythms against the otherwise steady march like left hand.

Swing - A style of jazz with a different beat that came after Dixieland (WWII 1930's through 1940's).

Scat singing - the use of consonance and vowels to form nonsense words to imitate the sound of the instruments.

Fanfare - A special song played by brass instruments to announce an important event.

Improvise - To make up words or melodies expressing ones own ideas.

Spiritual - A song originally sung by African American slaves in church.

Blues - A song using events from ordinary peoples lives to express different emotions.

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