



A Guide Through the Culture of the Blues

Curriculum Unit 97.05.11
by Sloan Edward Williams III

In teaching a general music course over the past two years at the high school level, it has been my experience that each student learns to identify his or her personal connection to American culture by seeing a direct link from the popular and contemporary musical forms (which students enjoy hearing today) to “The Blues” and the culture that created this uniquely American musical form.

The rhythms heard today in “Rap”, “House”, “Rock and Roll”, and “Hip Hop” music today can be traced back to West African Music that came to America by way of slave ships.

The first slave ship which landed at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 is also the same year that Johannes Kepler wrote *Harmonices Mundi* {Harmony Of The World}. There is a hint of historical irony, given the gravity of both events and their impact on our American culture today. Kepler’s exploration of music theory lead him to profound scientific insights which would help shape our present American teleologies while the blues musical form and expression was born of the attempt to enslave a people, to bring them down.

The development of the Blues was the creative force that would provide an escape velocity from a world of hate and oppression. This blues created freedom would become a driving force of a culture and a star among art forms that now are enjoyed universally.

Objectives

I would like “A Guide Through the Culture of the Blues” to utilize the study of literature, philosophy, visual arts, science, history, and the language of musical expression in conjunction with my music classes in the following ways:

Lesson One:

Call-and-response, Tracking the rhythm of drum songs from Africa to its use in pop music today.

Many of the selections tracing the history and development of the sound of the Blues might apply in this area as well. I plan to use my personal studies of West African Drumming to assist my discourse on this topic.

Lesson Two:

Where did the Blues come from ? (tracing the history and development of the sound of the blues).

I plan to use brief Discography of "the Smithsonian Collection of Jazz" addition to a few selections on my own. I also plan to use two films, "Ellington Swings Through Japan" from the Yale Film Institute and "Listen Up the Many Lives of Quincy Jones". A book called "In their Own Words" by Milton Meltzer will feature writings of Black Americans from the 1700's.

Early Blues Artists born of hard times "Black and Blue".

This section reading list would include all of the selections noted above plus the Autobiography of Miles Davis, The Biography of "James Baldwin" By David Leeming, and the recording of "A Hand is On The Gate" which features poetic readings of many well known Afro American writers.

Lesson Three:

Variation of the blues style as the Musical form migrated from New Orleans, Chicago, Kansas, and New York to become Jazz.

As stated before some of the information from tracing the history and development of the Blues might also apply in this section.

My personal experience with learning how to improvise jazz and the blues on the viola.

How to make your own blues song.

This section will be the combination of setting text to music and outlining the creative process used to accomplish that goal.

This list of recording and reading materials should further enhance the understanding as well as the import and history of "the interdisciplinary environment" for students. The presentation of African American musical history as well as related studies shall provide students with exposure to an academic and artistic context. This support material will in turn assist students to draw upon their own discoveries in the development of academic skills through the study of The Blues.

Teaching Strategies

In order to have students gain a broader prospective of American culture, which has created the blues musical form "The Guide to the Culture of The Blues" curriculum unit might be presented in the following way(s):

THE TEACHER CAN EITHER TAKE EACH UNIT SECTION SEPARATELY TO SUPPLEMENT AN ALREADY DEVELOPED

CURRICULA OR THIS UNIT COULD BE TAUGHT AS:

A UNIT ON AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY AND MUSIC FROM 1619 TO THE LATE 1990'S.

Lesson Folder and Student Journal

Lesson Folder on Guide to the Culture of the Blues:

Objectives:

For the reader to see the basic structure and outline of the three lessons that follow this Introduction: INFORMATION FOR THE STUDENT AND TEACHER. Each lesson is designed for about a weeks worth of material. Each daily lesson is indicated by days and might fall under (Historical Facts:)

Materials Needed: A sense of adventure and humor. Materials for the whole week can be found in this section.

HISTORICAL FACTS:

TOPOGRAPHY MAKING THE MAP FOR THE JOURNEY

CALLING UP "THE GUIDE"

The study of music, math, and science together might spark the imagination of the students in ways that just the study of each subject in isolation with class discussion alone might not. The analysis and critical thinking skills are also developed with this type of unit.

While students imaginations might be sparked, and their world view expanded, other skills such as the ability to read with comprehension, to think, analyze, and process information critically and express ones personal view and discoveries in writing might go undeveloped. These skills can develop only through consistent work. Without motivation, students will not have the heart or desire to put in the hard work necessary to develop and treasure strong traditional academic skills.

Academic skills learned through this type of curriculum unit will depend on the background, the defined need area(s) of the students, the grade, level and the types of teaching styles and experience of the teacher using this procedure.

The desired outcome from the students taught by each teacher who uses this unit is also as diverse as the approach presented. Some of the defined academic skill areas are as follows:

MUSICAL FACTS:

A RECIPE FOR THE BLUES:

- A. EUROPEAN NOTATION AND HARMONIES USED IN THE BLUES
- B. AFRICAN ELEMENTS HARMONIC AND RHYTHMIC
- C. THE BLACK AMERICAN ARTIST EFFECT "IMPROVISATION" FROM "JIM CROW TO DEATH ROW [RECORDS]".
- D. OPPRESSION AND EXPRESSION FROM THE RHYTHM OF THE HAND TO SWING OF BIG BAND (ELEMENTS FROM ELLA TO ELLINGTON)
- E. SINGING; THE BLUES "OF THEE I SING" FROM COTTON FIELDS TO MOVIE REELS.
- F. USING THE TREBLE AND BASS CLEF IN THIS UNIT
- G. FOLLOW THE (BLUE STARS) DRINKING GOURD, THE EARLY BLACK AMERICAN SCIENTIST, VISUAL, DANCE, LITERARY ARTIST AND IT'S IMPACT ON MUSIC.

OBSERVATIONS:

Documentation Skills:

- a. The teacher might set up each lesson plan in a way that both observation and listening skills grow with good documentation skills at the end of each lesson.
- b. Each student might be given a booklet that has a section for each unit area covered:

LISTENING SKILLS:

One way to link students to the past might be to start with the present or current forms of music and move in retrograde into the past musical history that binds the present with the past. The treble and bass clef might be used for this procedure as well. Our present forms of music such as Rap, Hip hop, Jazz, Country, Rock and Roll, are linked to bass roots such as American Pop music, Big Band Sound, Blues and Spirituals. Once the common tones are found, the link to the past musical and written forms are formed.

VOCABULARY WORDS:

Vocabulary lists:

help to map, draw out, define, identify, or clarify the context of an abstract idea or concept presented in more than one discipline. For example, the concept of having a Leitmotif musical theme used in “Star Wars” can be presented by using the introduction of the film.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS:

Exposure to science:

The use of a journal is a way to encourage students to participate in the development of their powers of observation. With the use of a journal, the teacher can demonstrate the benefits of observation not only in science, which, of course, is the first step to scientific thinking, but can show how that same skill applies to art and music as well.

Scientific relationships such as in the film “Jurassic Park” can take the rather arcane point of view of a paleontologist and bring it into the realm of filmgoer. Film can dramatically present the wonder of the great scientific minds and why their contributions are so great.

The study of sound waves in this film is a point of departure for music as well. Sound waves are used to observe and find dinosaurs in this film. The graphing of sound waves or the use of sonar demonstrates the mathematical form of observation, or using math to view or study that which is normally not visible to our world. Musical notation is also a form of graphing, observation of, or recording of sound waves. The choice of how their powers of observation are used, whether for science, music, literature, or art is theirs.

Student Journal of The Guide to the Culture of the Blues:

Today’s Homework Assignment:

Date:

Name:

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE HISTORY of The Guide to the Culture of the Blues:

At the beginning of the unit the teacher might tell the students which section to write in.

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MUSIC IN TODAY'S LESSON:

Toward the middle of teaching the unit your students should begin to select the section to write in independently.

THINGS THAT I SAW IN TODAY'S LESSON:

Each lesson should have a central theme or concept to be entered and documented in different areas at the end of the lesson. (The teacher might want to start off with each discipline as a single subject and gradually integrate the disciplines as they approach the end of their unit, as the needs of the students might dictate).

THINGS THAT I HEARD IN TODAY'S LESSON:

Given that each person learns in different ways, the multiplicity of a interdisciplinary approach supports a wide range of levels, styles, and types of learning in the class room.

NEW WORDS THAT I LEARNED IN TODAY'S LESSON:

Developmental skills:

This area of learning is one that can not be addressed directly, yet is of utmost importance in terms of the acquisition of academic skills. If a central concept of waves is presented through the lens of differing disciplines, cognitive, listening, memory and analytic, gross and fine motor skills are stimulated.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MATH, NUMBERS, SCIENTIFIC METHOD, WEATHER, Environment:

Since virtual reality machines are at present new, awkward, and very expensive for most classrooms to employ practically in the classroom, film clips are the next best thing. The more senses that are involved, the more learning has the chance to take place in the classroom as a whole.

Lesson One

(Call-and-Response), tracking the development of “Call and Response” in traditional drum songs from Africa of the 1500’s.

OBJECTIVES:

For students to recognize and identify the use of “Call and Response” and its’ history in music such as the Blues, Rap music, early Black Spirituals and Jazz.

Materials needed:

pencils with eraser or dowels (two sticks per student). Hands can also be used instead of pencils or sticks. A hard surface such as a desk top or table.

any type of small portable drum, (for those students that do not have use of their hands and feet, the teacher might use an electronic source that can be used or activated by either eye movement or the mouth).

Cow Bell, two toned if possible.

A picture of a family of African Drums

a recording of West African Drum songs.

Note to Teachers: start off the lesson with each student bringing pencils, sticks to their places, if you are using them. Tell the students that this week we are going to learn about “Call and Response” and its history”.

Day One: today we are going to learn “Historical Facts about Call and Response”. Tell the students “when you take notes, they should look like the following pages”, (see section in lesson two, students will have a worksheet where they can record their notes).

HISTORICAL FACTS

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE HISTORY OF (CALL AND RESPONSE)

In 1619, A Dutch warship sailing vessel brought the first twenty Blacks to Virginia starting the Slave trade. African Americans brought to this country against their will and were also forced to perform (to sing and dance) on the Slave ships.

There was a famous account on an English slave ship Hannibal in the year 1664 that was quoted having Africans linked together in chains “jump and dance” for the amusement of the crew.

Before 1619, Africans at home were skilled in the arts and agriculture and were free. They had on their home land created a rich form of music whose multi layered rhythmic patterns can be traced to popular music today. Each music part fits together like a jig saw puzzle. The instruments used in the 1700's were:

MUSICAL FACTS, {WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MUSIC IN TODAY'S LESSON}

The Bell, (which is the ancestor of the Cow Bell today), was forged out of Iron from their own iron works.

Another Bell

(figure available in print form)

SUPPORT DRUMS HAVE:

a wide range of sounds from low tones to high tones. Some of the drums were put together like kegs with animal skins stretched across the top. Another type of drum was made from full sized tree logs and hollowed out by a process of burning or gouging. The last type of drum was made like a wooded box. Each box then had some form of frame that was fixed in side of the frame and could be tuned to any desired pitch. Most of the drums, however, apart from the ones just mentioned had small pegs on the top. The bell was ingeniously also a tuning tool for the drums.

(figure available in print form)

Gourds with beads laced together on the out side are the ancestor of the modern Maracas).

(figure available in print form)

the Marimba, which was also made in a family of sizes, consisted of wood strips of different sizes connected to resonator gourds. The smaller marimbas could be played with a strap over the shoulders. The ancestors of the modern Marimbas were tuned in fifths, or the pentatonic scale. {To match the sound of the pentatonic scale use all the blacks keys on the piano}.

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The Harp, these small harps may have been the inspiration of the design of the modern Banjo. Most Harps had either a wood base with strings connected to the base or a metal base with skin stretched around and over the base. The strings were then connected to a the stretched skin. This trait bears resemblance to the drum like head of a Banjo. The bridge design may of come from sight of the European stringed Instrument like that of the bridge of the violin.

(figure available in print form)

(figure available in print form)

The pipe was made out of metal, wood or bamboo.

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The music often had "words" which were sung in it's own rhythmic pulse. The words often had many levels of meaning. The words would often be set to a dance step which had it's own unique pattern and rhythmic structure which was distinctly different from both the drums and the words. The dance steps, the instrument accompaniments of the drums, bells, gourds, and the singing never conflicted or got in the way of each other. To hear the richness and observe the complex relationships of the dance to the words and drums one must be trained to see and hear it in it's entirety. Have the students form two large groups so that the groups are facing each other.

1. have both group practice the drum parts “right, left, right, left” as one group.
2. have one group start as in a call and have the second group answer group one: “right, left, right, left” group two: answer back “right, left, right, left”.
3. have group one say “Umoja” while drumming, then group two will answer back “Umoja”. Have groups switch, group two “Call”.

Teacher:

AH-Moo-JA

I say and drum or clap;” clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap I.

Day Two: Today we are going to learn about “The Master Drummers Role in Call and Response”: There are people in Africa who are trained to lead these wonderful music works. They are called (Master Drummers). They are well versed in both written and “Oral History” of the tribe and also must understand all of the symbolic meanings of the dance steps of each song. After many years of training the master drummer is the one who leads or directs, if you will, the other group Drummers who are called (Support Drums), along with the Singers, who are usually the rest of the tribe or the audience, and the dancers. There are sometimes special dancers who will lead the dance group under the direction of the Master Drummers. The Master Drummer gives special signals to cue the entrance of either the dancers, singers (the Audience) or the support drummers. At the leader’s call, which is a person on the big lead drum, the support drummers answer. Some times the drums will play the same pattern as the master drum. Other cue’s given by the drum will have a different beat, yet, will relate directly to the master drum part.

Due to the complexity of original West African Drum parts, both the Master Drummer’s part and the Support Drum’s Part in this lesson will approximate the effect of the “Call and Response”.

(figure available in print form)

Notes: When starting this exercise, make sure that students understand that they are going to imitate the leader. The teacher might also explain that the class will be doing this exercise twice. Both times students shall do this routine without the music. The first time with hands and feet and the second time with either sticks or pencils on the desk and feet.

Teachers: for non music teachers, there are some items that might refresh your music skill memories:

1. Most blues songs are in four four time. This means that on the music staff measures are divided into units called bars or measures. Each unit has four counts. Each measure is divided up by vertical bar lines.

(figure available in print form)

(figure available in print form)

The four on top means four beats to a measure. The four on the bottom means that the quarter note gets a beat. To read the first measure just count and say; one two three four, one two three four, and so forth.

2. Eight notes are grouped together in this exercise and are clapped twice as fast as the quarter notes.

(figure available in print form)

One can count eight notes by placing the word “and” after one. . . . one and two and three and four and.

3. ONE, TWO AND, THREE, FOUR, = CLAP, CLAP CLAP, CLAP, STOMP. The “Stomp” is done with your feet.

4. The Tap, Tap, Tap, Stomp - Right, Left, Right, Stomp. Do not worry about the grip of the pencils or sticks with this routine, keep it simple.

5. Under the word “rest” is the symbol for the Quarter Rest. This translates into one count of silence on the fourth beat.

6. If students are having difficulty in doing this music exercise or you think that they might experience difficulties have them either go back to the top or have them start off with just saying their parts (first) i.e. without the “Stomp” of the feet or the “Clap” of the hands nor the “Tap” of the pencils.

HOMEWORK:

For a homework assignment, have students create their own [call and response] piece. The teacher might give guidelines to use very simple rhythms, such as quarter notes, tied eight notes, and quarter rests. Give students a few days to complete this assignment.

VOCABULARY WORDS:

Call and Response: is a musical form that can be traced both to Europe in the church and in Africa in the plainsong. The call is lead by either the pastor or the lead Master Drummer in West African Music. The Response comes from either the congregation or for the tribe or Audience.

The form of call and response of the early church and the early “praise meetings” of the 1900’s, where blacks were not allowed to praise God in groups, shared some things in common from the divergent past. Both groups had people who could not read or write.

So the leader would lead the group in verse, prayer, or song, one line at a time. This is where lining was born, which can be seen and heard in some form today in the music albeit that need for lining is no longer needed at the is point in time.

MIDDLE PASSAGE: was the forced migration of Blacks out of Africa to American soil in vessels used by Europe for the highly profitable slave trade in the 1500's. Many families were torn apart, died en route from sickness, were severely abused, chained together like animals, and then sold separately as property to Plantation owners. All blacks were considered less than human by their white kidnappers; they wanted Blacks to labor for their personal gain.

Rhythm: a regular pattern formed by long and short notes or beats

Steady Beat: a uniform and recurring flow of notes or sounds

Tempo: the rate speed of a rhythm. such markings might indicate a fast rate of speed of music, a moderate pace, or slow pace of a musical piece or composition.

Time signature: 4 2 Tells how many beats per bar and which

4, 4 note gets one count. For example, the time signature 2,4 reads two beats per measure and the Quarter gets one count.

Umoja: (unity)—to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, and nation.

Vessel: a sailing ship big enough to hold cargo in it's hold "under the deck".

Lesson Two Lesson Folder on Where did The Blues Come From?

(Tracing the History and Development of the Sound of The Blues) and Early Blues Artist Born of Hard Times ("Black and Blue")

Objectives:

part One {Key Concepts are African History, Rhythm, and Lining}; For students to be able to identify: 1.) a steady beat, 2.) a Syncopated beat, 3.) a strong and weak beat within the West African Bell rhythm. 4.) to trace "lining" in the Theme Song in the Jefferson's T.V. show and the Film Clip of Ray Charlies "lining" in "Listen Up—The Many lives of Quincy Jones."

Part Two; {Key Concepts are The use of "Blues" in Literature and learning about the lives of early Blues and Jazz Musicians and Writers at the turn of the Century.

Materials Needed:

A Cow Bell, The Smithsonian Collection of Jazz, The film clip from the 20th Century “Ellington Swings Through Japan”, A Film Clip from “Listen Up, The Many Lives of Quincy Jones,” the CD “Back on the Block” also by Mr. Jones, the book “In Their Own Words” By Milton Meltzer The Autobiography of Miles Davis, The Biography of James Balwin By David Leeming and the recording of “A Hand is on the Gate” a keyboard instrument.

HISTORICAL FACTS:

Day One: Introduction for the week.

Teachers pass out the lesson worksheets and draw the figure below on the board:

(figure available in print form)

Explain to the class over the next week we shall be observing or tracing the origins of how the blues rhythm can be understood from the study of one West African Bell pattern. There are a few concepts that have also contributed the blues by traditional western music. Before we get to musical European influences let us look at a few historical facts of the Blacks in America during the 1700's and the 1800's. At first as slaves, Black people in America were not permitted by law to read or to learn how to read, to meet in large groups to worship God, were not allowed to have or make drums (because drums might be used as a communication tool), or use their native languages. What did survive Middle Passage in terms of music traditions were the African melodies based on the pentatonic Scales (like those found on the “Marimba” which became the “Early Spirituals” which shared the same pentatonic Scales), and the rhythms and musical forms that were formed by the lead drums “Call and Response”. The work songs that evolved, the spirituals, became the foundation of 12 Bar structure of the Blues. The work sheets that were passed out to you contain materials that we will be using such as important musical concepts, musical terms, some scientific thoughts and ideas, as well as key vocabulary words and home journals (which have space for your own comments and additional homework work space).

Day One: “Today we are going to look at “the Work Song”, “the Spiritual” and its connection to the pentatonic scales. Have students read this passage {In Their Own Words} Vol. 1, From Twelve Years a Slave, by Solomon Northup, 1853, (taken from 1930's fieldworkers of the Federal Writers' Project):

Slavery Days

Hired Out

I recollect how Miss Sarah Anne hired out a bunch of her slaves to de railroad dat dey was buildin' thew de woods. Dey hires slaves in one place an' use dem to cut down de timber and saw it up into ties. Den dey hire hundreds of 'em in de next place. Well, when de railroad come to Pamplin, dey hired all de slaves, an' Miss Sarah Anne's too. An' chile, you orter hear dem slaves singin' when dey go to work in de mornin'. Dey all start a-comin' from all d'rections wid dey ax on dey shoulder, an' de mist an' foy be hangin' over the pines, an' de sun jus' breakin' cross de fields. Den slaves start to sing:

A Col' frosty mo'nin'
De nĐ Đ Đ Đ Đ Đfeelin' good
Take yo' ax upon you' shoulder
NĐ Đ Đ Đ Đ Đ, talk to de wood.

An' de woods jus' a-ringin' wid dis song. Hundeds of dem jus' a singin' to beat de ban'. Dey be paired up to a tree, an' dey mark de blows by song. Fus' one chop, den his partner, an' when dey sing TALK dey chop togedder; an' purty soon dey git de tree ready for to fall an' dey yell "Hi" an' de slaves all scramble out de way quick 'cause you can't tell what way a pine tree gonna fall. An' sometime dey sing it like dis:

Dis time tomorrer night
Where will I be?
I'll be gone, gone, gone
Down to Tennessee

De slaves sing dis sorrowful, 'cause some of 'em know dey gonna be beat or whipped, or sol' away. 'Course Miss Sarah Anne ain't sol' none, but ole man Derby what had hundreds wud sell some of his'n ev'y time ole slave trader come 'round. No matter what a slave's hire bring, ole slave trader could beat de price.(1)

Play for the class either a recording or if you can play piano two spirituals "Go Tell it on the Mountain", and "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen". Have students break up into groups and have them go up to the piano. Using the (Sharp and Flats keys [the Black Notes] have students pick out the melodies for both songs.(2)

Day two: "TODAY WE ARE GOING TO LEARN ABOUT THE GRAND STAFF, THE BASS CLEF AND THE TREBLE CLEF"

In the music staff on the board there have been two symbols that have been added to the system. (those students that have studied music might know what the treble and bass clef are and what they do, so, ask the students to identify and explain their function in musical terms). Tell the class that the treble and bass clefs can also be used as metaphors. "On the ship of Middle passage what group of people are represented the treble clef? Conversely, who are the people represented by the Bass Clef?" Another exercise is to have the class break up into groups of different types of sounds such as low sounds, middle ranged sounds, and high pitched sounds. Show the class the grand staff by:

(figure available in print form)

playing notes from the range of the piano. Have each group find their ranges on the board and have them place a quarter note next to the correct range on the staff. Explain to the class that the grand staff can be used as two smaller staves which have just the treble clef or the bass clef.

(figure available in print form)

Day Three: "TODAY, WE ARE GOING TO LEARN AN AFRICAN BELL PATTERN AND SYNCOPATION OF THE BEAT.

HAVE THE STUDENTS FIND A PARTNER.

Tell the class after they have found a partner to work with to march in place. (the teacher can either play a march or use a recording of a march for this exercise). Ask the class if both steps are equal in stress. Ask the students to tell you which beat is "the Strong Beat" and "the Weak Beat". The teacher then can show students on the board an example of 4,4 time and the strong and weak beats. Remind the class of what a steady beat is and how quarter notes relate to eight notes.

(figure available in print form)

Show the class the bell drawing on the board or on this section and have the class count one, two, three, then stop. Have the partner clap on the beat while the other person is counting one, two, three. Then have partners switch. Next, have one partner clap eight notes to the other person's count of one, two, three; (that means there should be two claps two every count). Just like the picture of the bell Pattern on the board have one person clap (the half of the bell pattern that is on the beat with the exception of the last part which occurs and the "and" of three) while the partner is clapping eight notes. Explain to the class that the second half of the bell beat is really off the beat and that part of the beat is also called a syncopated rhythm. Have one person in the group count four, five, six while the other claps eights notes. Next have one person count Four and five and six and one while the partner claps on the off beat or the "ands". NEXT have both people in the group count one and, two and, three and, four and, five and, six and. [Person A] WILL ONLY CLAP EIGHT NOTES WHILE COUNTING, [person B] WILL CLAP OUT THE BELL PATTERN WHILE COUNTING. Have them switch.

(figure available in print form)

Day Four: Today we are going to learn about "Lining" and the "Blue Notes".

Ask the Class if they have heard the theme song for the T.V. show The Jefferson's (Movin on Up)? Using the pentatonic Scale, find the melody on the blacks keys of the piano. The teacher might find a recording or TV clip with the song to play for the class after finding the notes on the piano. Have the class listen for the "Call" and the repeats of the call, which lines the leader or is the "Response". See figure below.

(figure available in print form)

Ask the class what purpose or role does singing what the lead singer part have?

Have the class identify the part of the phrase that is on the beat and the part of that is syncopated.

Introduce the Western Concept of the Major Scale and Major and Minor chords. By lowering the note "E" (where the word Up is) by a half step to "E flat", the song becomes a minor version in European terms. In the Blues, a singer might sing the word "up" somewhere in between {E natural and E flat} producing a Blue note. See diagram below.

(figure available in print form)

The Blues Scale

PLAY: the recording of "I'll be good to you" with RAY CHARLES LINING CHAKA KHAN (BACK ON THE BLOCK) OR (THE FILM CLIP THIS SONG'S RECORDING SESSION IN LISTEN UP—THE MANY LIVES OF QUINCY JONES) Quincy Jones.

Day five: Today we are exploring the use of "Blues" in Literature and learning about the lives of early Blues and Jazz Musicians and Writers at the turn of the Century. Show the 20 minute film clip of "Duke Ellington Swings Through Japan" from the TV show the (20th Century with Walter Cronkite) up to Duke Ellington famous line "We love you Madly". Have the Class read Page 234 from the Miles Davis Autobiography: "This time I added some other sound I remembered from being back in Arkansas, when we were walking home from church and they were playing these had gospels. So that kind of feeling came back to me and I started remembering what that music sounded like and felt like. That feeling is what I was trying to get close to that feeling had got in my creative blood, my imagination, and I had forgotten it was there. I wrote this blues that tried to get back to that feeling I had when I was six years old, walking with my cousin along that dark Arkansas road."

Have the class also read from (The Biography of James Baldwin by David Leeming) page 135.

"And when the Narrator observes Sonny playing in the Village he realizes what it is that the artist faces. Here the narrator serves, in effect, as a mouthpiece for Baldwin's own feelings about the creative process and its cost to the creator:

Sonny moved, deep within, exactly like someone in torment. I had never before thought of how awful the relationship must be between the musician and his instrument. He has to dill it, this instrument, with the breath of life, his own."

While the class is reading, play one selection from Miles Davis "Jack Johnson" and "For Duke (He loved him Madly) three minutes".(3) (see 3 for home work assignment)

Play for the class, while they write in their journals in the listening skills section "Little Boy" Side One, "Ma Rainey", and "Get up Blues" Side Three. Also play "Black and Blue" from a recording by Eubie Blake and his friends Edith Wilson and Ivan Harold Browning.

MUSICAL FACTS and CONCEPTS:

Lining: This is a another form of Call and Response, where the leader will say one line or musical phrase to a group, gathering or church congregation, and the group will repeat the line back exactly the same as the leader in the response to the call.

Strong Beat: a naturally occurring accented note or sound, such as in a march that has two beats, the first beat would be the strong beat.

Weak beat: a unaccented note which is in effect from the strong beat; such as the second beat of a march.

Syncopated Beat: a shift of accent in a passage or composition that occurs when a weak beat is stressed.

Pentatonic Scale: a Pentatonic Scale is build on all of the Black keys of the piano. Starting with F#, if one were to expand the intervals equally they would stack perfectly into Perfect fifths.

Sharp Sign: the sharp sign raises the pitch of a note that it is next to by a half-step.

(figure available in print form)

Flat Sign: lowers the pitch of the note that it is next to by a half step.

(figure available in print form)

Natural Sign: returns the raised or lowered pitch back to its original pitch.

(figure available in print form)

Treble Clef: the symbol which is standard clef.

(figure available in print form)

Bass Clef: the symbol which makes the staff represent the low notes.

(figure available in print form)

Swing: is a style of playing in Jazz where musicians play notes with a special kind of pulse and feeling that sounds like syncopation on all the notes yet stays in time on the beat.

VOCABULARY WORDS:

Autobiography: the story of a person's life written by his or her self. Biography: a written account of a person's life.

Jim Crow: words taken from the title of a song popularized by a white "Blackfaced" minstrel—became the term for this segregation based on color.

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which a term or symbol is transferred to an object.

Novel: a fictional prose narrative of considerable length.

Poem: a composition designed to convey a experience chosen for its sound or suggestive power as well as its meaning.

Prose: ordinary speech or writing as distinguished from verse.

Verse: one line of poetry.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS:

The use of the pentatonic scale for tuning the Mariba in Africa suggests that there was an understanding of temperament. If one understands the Harmonic Overtone Series, one would naturally organize evenly spaced intervals [itches] made of perfect fifths and arrange them so the voice can easily sing them, thus the pentatonic scale.

One of the first recognized Black American Scientists was Benjamin Banneker quote from In our own words Vol. 1 "The writer was Benjamin Banneker, born in 1731 in Maryland. As a young farmer he had shown astonishing mechanical skill when he built a clock out of wooden materials. A Quaker who settled nearby loaned him some books on astronomy and some surveying instruments. Fascinated by the world of mathematics, Banneker was soon able to correct errors in texts and predict a solar eclipse. His genius won him appointment to the commission to plan and survey the new city of Washington. By the 1790's he was

editing a series of almanacs which earned him popular favor at home and abroad.”

Student Journal of Where Did The Blues Come?

(Tracing the History and Development of the Sound of the Blues) and Early Blues Artist Born of Hard Times “Black and Blue”

Today’s Homework Assignment:

Date:

Name:

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE HISTORY of (Tracing the History and Development of the Sound of the Blues) and Early Blues Artist Born of Hard Times “Black and Blue”

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MUSIC IN TODAY’S LESSON:

THINGS THAT I SAW IN TODAY’S LESSON:

THINGS THAT I HEARD IN TODAY’S LESSON

NEW WORDS THAT I LEARNED IN TODAY’S LESSON:

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT MATH, NUMBERS, SCIENTIFIC METHOD, WEATHER, ENVIRONMENT:

Lesson Three

Lesson Folder on The Blues Style as it migrated from New Orleans North to New York, My Personal experience with learning how to improvise Jazz and Blues on the viola (using your own experience to teach improvisation), and How to make your own song.

Objectives:

Part One; To have students make a connection between the style of the Jazz and Rap Film Clip “Life is a Traffic Jam” and the Blues song by Leadbelly’s song “New York City” in order to trace the uniting elements of musical back to King Oliver’s Jazz Band. Part Two; To have students make a connection to the learning process and the teacher. Part Three; To have students generalize what they have studied in the first two lessons about the relationship of musical form “The Blues” to historical events of Black Americans.

Materials Needed:

Films, CD's, LP's, shall be made reference to in each lesson given in this section. Students might use music staff paper for their music compositions.

HISTORICAL FACTS:

Day one: Have a film clip from "Gridlock'd" or the sound track CD "life is a Traffic Jam" set up. (note that if you are using the film that the section that you want is at the end of the film. Warning: I would use this for high school students only, or explain that there is some profanity in this film clip. If you still want to use this section with younger students, stop the film before Tupac starts his section of the song). "Today we are going to compare and contrast two types of musical compositions that have words as well as music. One is from the movie "Gridlock'd" and the other is a song composed and sung by the legendary Huddie Leadbetter "Leadbelly" and his 12-string guitar.(4)

Have students contrast and compare the two works:

"What similarities are there in the two works?"

"What are the differences or contrasts in both pieces?" The Homework Assignment will be to compose a song with words, give them a week and a half to complete this assignment. Have students work on sections of the song which should be due every few days so that you can guide the creative process.

Day Two: "Today we are going to listen to different types of blues from around the country; mostly the South and the Midwest and the East. The names of the songs tell you what city or place they came from. The recordings to represent the different styles are the following: (The St. Louis Blues, sung by Bessie Smith; The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz)—The St. Louis Blues on the Violin by Papa John Creach; 1971 Grunt Records RCA Victor.

The Mississippi Blues, No 3.: Mansition (1926-1937); Origin Jazz Library OJL-17.

('Don't Lie to Me" New Orleans Blues by Fats Domino {this features the "Bluebird Beat" or the Chicago school of studio-contrived blues in the late 1930's}; Vol. 1 Urban Blues—Blues Uptown—Legendary Masters Series IR Imperial, Liberty Records),
(Boozoo Stomp [LA] performed by Boozoo Chavis; Vol. 2 Rural Blues—Saturday Night Function, Legendary Masters Series I R Imperial Records).
(Memphis Blues written by G. Norton and W. C. Handy performed by Eubie Blake and his friends Edith Wilson and Ivan Harold Browning; Eubie Blake Music EBM-3)
(Bound No'th Blues words by L. Hughes Performed by Gloria Foster; A Hand is On the Gate Side 3 / Verve Forecast/folkways Records MGM Division.)

Day Three: Teachers who do not have a back ground in music may use their own major field, I will use my background as an example of what one might share with students: "Today we are going to talk about journals. I thought it might be fun for the class to know about how I became interested in improvisation, thus I have some information such as: before I started to improvise, I played both the guitar and the violin. I used to listen to Bach, Aretha Franklin, Miles Davis, and Sly and the Family Stone. I enjoyed listening to pop music on the radio. One day there was a special

on improvisors, such as Johnny and Edgar Winter's, Jimmy Hendricks, and B.B. King. I had the radio on while I was 'supost' to be practicing the violin. Suddenly I heard this sound of the electric guitar from the song "Purple Haze" and by accident I hit the same intervals on the violin. From that point on I was on the road to rocking on the strings & bow. I joined a rock group for the fun of it the summer before I went to Interlochen Arts Academy. Over the fall I sought out the Jazz Band Teacher "Dave Sporny". He liked my original songs on the guitar yet also helped me to learn how to improvise on the violin. He gave me tapes and records of Jean-Luc Ponty, Stephanie Grappelli to listen to. Jerry Goodman was a violinist who could improvise in John McLaughlin's group Mahavishnu Orchestra. Then I became a fan of this group of musicians for life. In College, I would soon discover teachers, Jaki Byard, Jackie McLean, Walter Bishop, Paul Jeffrey (who let me organize a string section for his Big Band and gave me a solo spot during performance), Willie Ruff, and Dwiki Mitchell. I kept a journal of songs that I wrote in high school. My high school teacher Mrs. Sharp encouraged us to keep a log or journal, I'm glad I did. I would encourage all students to keep a journal. It is fun to look at many years on.

Day Four: "Today we are going to take a poem and turn it into a performance piece."

Lesson Three

Call: "WHO IS THE GUIDE" By Sloan Williams

Response: THE GUIDE IS WHO

All: CALLING UP THE GUIDE TO THE CULTURE OF THE BLUES

Call: I CAN HEAR THE GUIDE COMING DOWN THE RAILROAD TRACKS SOUNDING

Response: STOMP, CLACKA CLACKA CLACKA STOMP, CLACKA CLACKA CLACKA

Call: THE TRAIN'S BOUN NORTH WILL THE GUIDE BE COMIN BACK SOUNDING

Response: STOMP, CLACKA CLACKA CLACKA STOMP, CLACKA CLACKA CLACKA Call: "WHO IS THE GUIDE"

THE GUIDE IS WHO

CALLING UP THE GUIDE

TO

THE CULTURE OF THE BLUES

I CAN SEE THE GUIDE

STANDING BY THE YOUNG OAK TREE

JUSTA SHAVIN THAT WOOD DOWN

TI'L IT'S THIN AS IT COULD BE

MAKIN CHAIRS FROM THE SHAVINS

MAKIN BASKETS FROM THE SHAVINS
"WHO IS THE GUIDE"
THE GUIDE IS WHO
CALLING UP THE GUIDE
TO
THE CULTURE OF THE BLUES
THE GUIDE HAS MADE A QUILT
AND THE PATTERNS ARE IN CODE
IT TALKS OF MIDDLE PASSAGE
AND
THE PATH TO FREEDOM TOLD
SHHHH WATER
STAR WADE
"WHO IS THE GUIDE"
THE GUIDE IS YOU
CALLING UP THE GUIDE
TO
THE CULTURE OF THE BLUES

Have students break up into small groups. Students can add movement, or have solos. The first time through, just use words. The group might make up an melody or music as well in the second performance.

OBSERVATIONS:

Ask the class if there are any visual patterns that relate to the poem. Does the first stanza look like a train? Does the second stanza look like a tree? Does the third stanza look like a ship looking down from the top or from the front stern ? What science does the study of the stars come under?

LISTENING SKILLS:

Is there a section of words in the first stanza that sound like railroad tracks?

Student Journal of The Blues Style as it migrated from New Orleans north to New York, My Personal experience with learning how to improvise Jazz and Blues on the viola (using your own experience to teach improvisation), and How to make your own song.

Today's Homework Assignment:

Date:

Name:

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE HISTORY of The Guide to the Culture of the Blues:(5)

1. For a home work assignment have students listen to three songs from Wynton Marsalis's "Blood on the Fields" (#3 you don't Hear No Drums [have students relate the stomp of the refrain to the use of the ax, pick ax, or hammer for the railroad tracks] (#5 Soul for Sale), and (#7 Work Song * Blood on the Fields*).
2. Here is a diagram of a piano pointing to the notes students will use to discover the pentatonic scale (like the Marimba's keys)

(figure available in print form)

(the black keys = Pentatonic Scale)

(figure available in print form)

3. For a homework assignment have students listen to the Kind of Blue Album by Miles Davis and have them write what feeling does listening to the album evoke?
4. The recording of "Leadbelly" is RCA Victor (vintage series—The Midnight Special).

Teacher's Bibliography

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A History of the American Negro, (In Their Own Words) by Milton Meltzer 1964 Apollo Edition. Vol.'s 1,2, and 3.

Black Magic {a Pictorial History of the Negro in American Entertainment} by Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer, Prentice Hall Press

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Lena, {Her Autobiography} by Lena Horne and Richard Schickel, Signet.

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Apple Tree, by Marion Bonaparte, (JorDan) Press Baltimore Maryland

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How and Why African People Came to North America, Anacostia

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Recordings

A Hand is On The Gate, Arranged and Directed by Roscoe Lee Browne, Verve/Folkways Records

Back on The Block, by Quincy Jones, 1989 Qwest Records

The Billie Holiday Story, Decca Records

Blackbirds of 1928, Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, Anelaide Hall, Music by Jimmy McHugh, Lyrics Dorthy Fields, With Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, Cab Calloway, Mills Brothers, Cecil Track Choir, Don Redman and His Orchestra, and Ethel Waters, Hall of Fame Series, Columbia

Blood On The Fields, Wynton Marsalis & The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Columbia Records

Ella ^ Nice, {CD} Pablo Records

Eubie Blake and his friends, Edith Wilson & Ivan Harold Browning, EBM Records, N.Y.

Jack Johnson, Miles Davis, Columbia

Leadbelly, RCA Victor, Vintage Series

Lena Horne:, The Lady and Her Music, Quincy Jones Productions

Muddy Waters, Folk Singer, Chess LP Records

Sail On, Muddy Waters, Chess LP Records

The Essential Charlie Parker, Verve Records

The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, Columbia Special Products

Painters and Photographers

Black in White America, Leonard Freed, Grossman/New York

Black Americans, An Illustrated History of; By John Hope Franklin, Time/Life Books

Jacob Lawrence, American Painter—Seattle Art Museum/University of Washington Press, Wheat

Pictorial History of The Black American, by The Editors of News Front, Year Encyclopedia

Southern Roads/City Pavements, by Roland L. Freeman, International Center of Photography, New York, New York 1981

The other Hampton, Photographs by Judy Tomkins/Text by Calvin Tomkins Grossman/ New York, New York

With Grief Acquainted, Stanford Winfield Williamson, James Stricklin, Don Sparks, and Jerry Cogbill, Follett Publishing Company

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