

Objective

- Introduction to swing jazz and big bands through student reading and listening example

Materials

- **PowerPoint:** Lesson 5 – *Swing* page 15
- **JAZZ CLUB Listening Example:** *It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)* page 16
- **Student Worksheet:** Lesson 5 - *Lesson and Listening Assessments* page 17

I. PowerPoint Swing

1. Show the students PowerPoint Lesson 5 and have students take turns reading the slides.
2. Have students complete the Lesson ASSESSMENT individually or as a class.

Jazz was at the height of its popularity during the swing era (often called the **big band** era) of the 1930s and 1940s. Swing music, like Dixieland, was intended for dancing. The tempos ranged from andante (slow) to presto (fast) and the meter was generally 4/4. The mood of the music was often very upbeat and exciting.

The great popularity of the music led to bigger and bigger bands. The average **big band** included 4 trumpets and 4 trombones in the brass section; 5 saxophones in the woodwind section (often the saxophone players also played clarinet and flute) and piano, bass, drums and sometimes guitar in the rhythm section, as well as at least one vocalist.

Because of the large number of musicians, most of the music **big bands** played was written down, not improvised. One or two individual instruments were given space in a song to play a **jazz solo** (improvise.) These solos often used the **major blues scale**. The **major blues scale** creates a happy mood like the **major scale**; not melancholy and sad like the **minor blues scale**. This fit the more upbeat mood of most swing jazz songs.

major scale: G A B C D E F# G
minor blues scale: G B^b C D^b D F G
major blues scale: G A B^b B D E G

Big bands such as Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington and Tommy Dorsey performed for Allied Troops during World War II. The end of World War II marks the decline of **big bands** and the swing era.

ANSWER KEY Student Reading Lesson ASSESSMENT

1. Identify the most popular style in jazz history. (*Swing*)
2. When did the swing jazz era begin? (1930)
3. Define “jazz solo.” (*One musician improvising [making up] the melody*)
4. Swing era jazz solos often use the _____ scale. (*Major blues scale*)
5. Name the instruments in a normal big band. (8)
(4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 5 saxophones, piano, bass, guitar, drum set and vocalist)
6. Which major world event marks the decline of the big band era? (*The end of WW II*)

II. JAZZ CLUB Listening Example

Title: “Sing, Sing, Sing (With a Swing)”

Composer: Louis Prima

Performer: Benny Goodman Orchestra

available on: *Sing, Sing, Sing* (RCA Bluebird 5630-2-RB)

YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITzP7ecGQiw&feature=related [2:12 Process/Assessment below]

iTunes Ken Burns “Jazz” CD 2 track 9 [Process/Assessment available at www.theJazzCatsBooks.com]

Suggested YouTube Search Sing Sing Sing, Gene Krupa [1st video - other choices: search Goodman 4th]

SUGGESTED TEACHING PROCESS JAZZ CLUB Listening Example

1. Explain that the piece is swing/big band jazz and discuss the instrumentation.
Brass section: 4 trumpets - *Harry James* and 2 trombones
Woodwind section: 4 saxophones, clarinet - *Benny Goodman*
Rhythm section: piano, guitar, bass, drum set - *Gene Krupa*
2. Explain that the Benny Goodman orchestra was one of the most popular bands due to the many great musicians in the band including Benny Goodman on clarinet, Gene Krupa on drums and Harry James on trumpet. Benny Goodman also featured a small group that travelled with the big band that was the first integrated touring band.
3. Review tempos and the conducting patterns for 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 meters. Discuss presto.
4. Instruct students to listen for the instruments, tempo, meter, mood and style.
5. Explain that three instruments will be improvising – listen for the instruments.
6. Play recording while conducting a presto tempo in a 4/4 meter.
Video locations: 0:00 A Section, 0:29 drum solo, 0:36 Trumpet/drum solo, 1:00 clarinet/drum solo, 1:54 B section
7. Have students complete the Listening ASSESSMENT individually or as a class.

ANSWER KEY JAZZ CLUB Listening ASSESSMENT

1. Identify the instruments you hear. (7) (*4 Trumpets – Harry James, 2 trombones, clarinet - Benny Goodman, 4 saxophones, piano, guitar, bass and drum set – Gene Krupa*)
2. Determine the tempo and the meter. (*Very fast [presto], 4/4*)
3. Which instruments improvised a jazz solo? (3) (*Drums, trumpet and clarinet*)
4. Describe the mood. (*Exciting, happy, etc.*)
5. Name the style of this piece. (*Swing, big band jazz*)

Related Activity: Blues Cats Recorder Songbook

CATS MEOW Pages 5-9

- Recorder/vocal song G A B
- Swing era - Minor blues style
- *Performance and Accompaniment* CD tracks

