

Objective

- Introduction to the life of Duke Ellington through student reading and listening example

Materials

- **PowerPoint:** Lesson 6 - *Duke Ellington* page 18
- **JAZZ CLUB Listening Example:** *Take the 'A' Train* page 19
- **Student Worksheet:** Lesson 6 - *Lesson and Listening Assessments* page 20

I. PowerPoint Duke Ellington

1. Show the students PowerPoint Lesson 6 and have students take turns reading the slides.
2. Have students complete the Lesson ASSESSMENT individually or as a class.

Edward "Duke" Ellington was born in Washington, D.C. in 1899. He studied piano as a child although he was more interested in art and playing baseball. Duke played and composed the style of jazz after Dixieland called swing. He became the greatest **composer** in jazz history writing over 2,000 jazz songs for his band. Many Ellington songs are still popular and played by jazz **musicians** today.

Duke's fame spread as his band performed at The Cotton Club, a world famous jazz club in New York City. Every week Duke **composed** two hours of music for the 13 **musicians** of his big band. Duke's fame spread as the music was broadcast nationwide on a live radio show called "From the Cotton Club."

The Duke Ellington Orchestra was one of the most popular bands during the swing era of the 1930s and 1940s. Duke and his big band travelled all over the world playing more than twenty thousand performances before his death in 1974. Duke's son Mercer, a **composer** and trumpet player, took his place leading the band as the **conductor**.

Listen to the Duke Ellington Orchestra playing one of their most famous songs called "Take the 'A' Train." The song is named for a subway train in New York City called, of course, the "A" train.

ANSWER KEY Student Reading Lesson ASSESSMENT

1. Identify the instrument Duke Ellington played. (*Piano*)
2. About how many jazz songs did Duke Ellington compose? (*over 2,000*)
3. What was "From the Cotton Club"? (*A radio broadcast from the Cotton Club of the Duke Ellington Orchestra*)
4. When was the Duke Ellington Orchestra the most popular? (*1930s and 1940s*)
5. Name the style of jazz they played. (*Swing - Big Band*)
6. Where and when was Duke Ellington born? (*Washington, D.C. in 1899*)

II. JAZZ CLUB Listening Example

Title: "Take the 'A' Train"

Composer: Billy Strayhorn

Performer: Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

available on: *The Blanton – Webster Band* (RCA Bluebird 5659 2-RB)

YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRGFqSKnJhK [2:49 Process/Assessment below]

iTune *Ken Burns "Jazz"* CD 3 track 3 [Process/Assessment below – **accept the end:** gets softer, no solo]

Suggested YouTube Search Take the "A" Train, Duke Ellington and His Orchestra [1st video]

Smithsonian website video [clip 6 same as *YouTube*] and **audio** [clip 1 same as *Ken Burns "JAZZ"*]

http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentgallery/exhibitions/ellington_strayhorn_7.html

SUGGESTED TEACHING PROCESS JAZZ CLUB Listening Example

1. Explain that the piece is swing/big band jazz and discuss the instrumentation.
Brass section: 5 trumpets - *Ray Nance* and 3 trombones
Woodwind section: 5 saxophones
Rhythm section: piano - *Duke Ellington*, bass, and drum set
2. Review tempo and meter and the conducting patterns.
3. Instruct students to listen for the instruments, tempo, meter, mood, which instruments play a jazz solo and the style of jazz.
4. Explain that the *Ray Nance* the trumpet soloist will be using a mute for the first half of his solo. The trumpet mute alters the sound making it softer with a more nasal quality.
5. Play recording while conducting a presto (fast) tempo in a 4/4 meter. *Video locations:*
 0:00 Introduction, 0:05 A section, 0:28 B section, 0:39 A section, 0:50 Trumpet solo with mute, 1:32 Interlude, 1:38 A section with solo no mute, 1:59 B section w/solo, 2:10 A section w/ solo
6. Have students complete the Listening ASSESSMENT individually or as a class.

ANSWER KEY JAZZ CLUB Listening ASSESSMENT

1. Identify the instruments you hear. (6) (5 Trumpets - *Ray Nance*, 3 trombones, 5 saxophones, piano - *Duke Ellington*, bass and drum set)
2. Determine the tempo and the meter. (Very fast [presto], 4/4)
3. What was the song "Take the 'A' Train" named after? (A subway train in New York City)
4. Which instrument improvises a jazz solo? (Trumpet)
5. The trumpet changes the sound by using a _____ during part of the solo. (Mute)
6. Name the style of this piece. (Swing/big band)

Related Activity *JAMMIN' WITH THE JAZZ CATS* Orff Improvisation Songbook
BLUES IN A MAJOR WAY Pages 24-27

- Orff mallet instrument (recorder) song D E G A B^b B
- Swing/blues style
- Performance and Accompaniment tracks.
- Improvisation lesson

