

Objective

- Introduction to the life of John Coltrane through student reading and listening example

Materials

- **PowerPoint:** Lesson 14 – *John Coltrane* page 42
- **JAZZ CLUB Listening Example:** *Giant Steps* page 43
- **Student Worksheet:** Lesson 14 - *Lesson and Listening Assessments* page 44

I. PowerPoint John Coltrane

1. Show the students PowerPoint Lesson 14 and have students take turns reading the slides.
2. Have students complete the Lesson ASSESSMENT individually or as a class.

John Coltrane was born in 1926 in North Carolina. He came from a musical family. As a child, he studied clarinet and saxophone. During World War II, Coltrane played in a Navy band stationed in Hawaii. After the war, Coltrane played in blues, jazz, and rhythm and blues bands. In 1955, he joined Miles Davis and in 1959 played on the classic modal album “Kind of Blue.”

In his twenties Coltrane or “Trane”, as he became known, was a practice fiend. Trane would lock himself in his room and practice for 16 hours straight. Sometimes he would forget to eat. Trane practiced so much that a dentist told him to cut back or he would start losing his teeth.

Coltrane became very spiritual in the 1960s. His most important album, titled “A Love Supreme,” was dedicated to his spiritual feelings. The music, though, is far from what you might expect. Coltrane and pianist McCoy Tyner played the style called modal jazz, creating extremely long and complex solos.

Coltrane would use all his emotions changing from quiet and **meditative** melodies to fierce, wailing squeals on the saxophone. The arrangements were often improvised with only the melody sections planned. The rest of the song was a result of each musician listening and reacting to the other.

Solos could last for twenty minutes without getting boring or repetitive. Coltrane and Tyner set the standard for modal jazz and modern jazz playing in general.

Unfortunately, Coltrane died in 1967 of liver disease at the age of forty.

ANSWER KEY Student Reading Lesson ASSESSMENT

1. When and where was John Coltrane born? (*1926 in North Carolina*)
2. Identify the instruments Coltrane played as a child. (*Clarinet and saxophone*)
3. Sometimes Coltrane practiced for ____ hours in one day. (*16*)
4. Which important modal album did Coltrane record with Miles Davis? (*“Kind of Blue”*)
5. Describe Coltrane’s solo style on the “A Love Supreme” album.

(*Very long solos using every emotion ranging from meditative to wailing and shrieking*)

II. JAZZ CLUB Listening Example

Title: "Giant Steps"

Composer: John Coltrane

Performer: John Coltrane Quartet

available on: John Coltrane: *Giant Steps* (Rhino R2 75203)

YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kotK9FNEYU [4:51 Process/Assessment below]

iTunes Ken Burns "Jazz" CD 4 track 7 [Process/Assessment below]

Suggested YouTube Search Giant Steps - John Coltrane [1st video (Animated Sheet Music) - other choices: 2, 5]

SUGGESTED TEACHING PROCESS JAZZ CLUB Listening Example

1. Explain that the piece can be classified as bebop though it has very unusual harmonies. The unusual harmonies combined with the extremely fast tempo making soloing very difficult. The students will hear:

Woodwind section: tenor saxophone - John Coltrane

Rhythm section: piano, bass and drums

2. Explain that Coltrane plays so many notes that his peers called his style "sheets of sound."
3. Explain that although the song is in 4/4 you are going to conduct it in 2 and the meter is called 2/2. The term cut time is used because the tempo is too fast to count in 4. The tempo is still prestissimo though you are conducting a moderato 2.
4. Instruct students to listen for the instruments, tempo, meter, mood, the style of jazz and which instruments improvise a jazz solo.
5. Play recording while conducting a prestissimo tempo in a 2/2 and/or 4/4 meter.
Video locations: 0:00 End of another song, 0:09 Melody, 0:23 Melody, 0:36 sax solo, 3:05 piano solo, 3:55 sax solo, 4:20 Melody, 4:33 Melody
6. Teacher gives Listening and Lesson Assessments to students.

ANSWER KEY JAZZ CLUB Listening ASSESSMENT

1. Identify the instruments you hear. (4) (*Saxophone - John Coltrane, piano, bass, and drum set*)
2. Determine the tempo and the meter. (*Prestissimo [extremely fast], 4/4 or 2/2*)
3. Which instruments improvised a jazz solo? (*Saxophone and piano*)
4. Coltrane's peers referred to his soloing style as _____ of _____. (*Sheets of sound*)
5. What makes soloing on this piece very difficult? (2) (*Unusual harmonies and fast tempo*)
6. Name the style of this piece. (*Bebop jazz*)

Related Activity Jazz Cats Recorder Songbook

SIMBA SAMBA Pages 15-17

- Recorder song G A B
- Fusion jazz style
- Performance and Accompaniment CD tracks

