

Just a Closer Walk with Thee, Dirty Dozen Brass Band

Roots of Jazz - Intermediate level, grades 3-6

Objectives:

1. The student will identify the role of the New Orleans brass bands in funerals.
2. The student will contrast the two moods in the recording, *Just a Closer Walk With Thee* and identify what makes the first part sound sad and what makes the second part sound happier.
3. The student will take a familiar song recently learned in music class and decide how to make a sad and a happy version appropriate for a New Orleans jazz funeral.
4. The student will perform the jazz funeral arrangement.

Optional Objectives:

1. The student will compare other brass bands listed below to the Dirty Dozen Brass Band.
2. The student will investigate websites about jazz funerals and learn about the second line.

Time: One or two class periods.

Material Required for Objectives:

Computer access to recording on the Internet and speakers for playback to the class. *The Many Moods of Music* listening worksheet. List of songs students have learned in the past month of music class to choose one for a jazz funeral arrangement.

Procedure:

Activity 1- "In New Orleans, Louisiana, they have had a special kind of funeral now for over a century. When someone dies, people hire a brass band to lead a procession to the cemetery. As the brass band accompanies the casket to the cemetery, they will often play church hymns in a sad and slow way. The band members dress in black in honor of the deceased person, and walk slowly. After the funeral, the band leads the people who attended the funeral back to the person's neighborhood and they play some of

the same hymns with an entirely new mood. The mood is usually very happy and celebratory because they believed the dead person is now in a better place. A hundred years or so ago the faster, celebratory music used to be described as the musicians 'jazzing the hymns up,' which just meant that they were played faster and in a jazz style. Musicians would improvise solos and the music was exciting and would inspire people to join in the parade and become the second line. The second line consists of dancers, often with colorful umbrellas that follow the first line, or the brass band. Listen to this recording of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band playing a hymn, *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*. Think about how the music at first seems to be sad and serious and then turns fast and joyful." Play the recording.

Activity 2 - "This time listen to the recording again and on your worksheet show the mood of the music by drawing a dot every 30 seconds or so that shows the mood of the music you are listening to at that time. If the music sounds sad to you, then put a dot in the sad column. If it sounds happy, put a dot in the happy column. And if it doesn't sound either happy or sad to you, then put a dot in the column 'in the middle.' When you finish listening, draw a line that connects all of the dots so you can see how the mood changed in *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*.

Activity 3 - Discuss with the class how their chart of the moods in *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* looks. Ask students if they thought the band was mostly sad or mostly happy.

Activity 4 - Direct the students' attention to the blackboard or overhead showing a list of songs the students have learned in the past month in class. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Each group will choose one song to create an arrangement for a jazz funeral. Students will perform their arrangements and lead a parade around the room with the rest of the students—moving to the mood of their song—taking the role of the second line. Videotape or audiotape the performances to later evaluate them.

Optional Activities:

Activity 5 - Investigate other brass bands from New Orleans at the web sites listed below. Ask students to make a list of things they notice in the recording. For example, students might notice specific instruments or ways the bands start and stop the songs. Discuss what they hear.

Activity 6 - Investigate websites about New Orleans jazz funerals. Discuss as a class what you have learned about these funerals.

Extension:

Order the video *New Orleans Jazz Funerals* at this web site:

<http://www.pushindaisies.com/candypress/scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=360>

Show the video to the class and discuss afterwards.

Indicators of success:

Students can expressively perform an arrangement of a familiar song in a jazz funeral style.

Listen to other New Orleans brass bands:

<http://www.arhoolie.com/titles/417.shtml>

<http://www.storyvillestompers.com/>

Learn more about New Orleans jazz funerals:

<http://www.neworleansonline.com/neworleans/history/jazzfuneral.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week722/feature.html>

Learn More about the Dirty Dozen Brass Band:

<http://www.rosebudus.com/dozen/FuneralForAFriend.html>

<http://mammoth.go.com/thedirtydozen/>

Video resource:

New Orleans Jazz Funeral Video available at:

<http://www.pushindaisies.com/candypress/scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=360>