

Misterioso, Thelonious Monk

"Thelonious: What a mysterious guy!" - Middle School level, grades 6-8

Objectives:

1. The student will identify what makes *Misterioso* mysterious-sounding.
2. The student will describe how Monk's hats and clothes contribute to his musical style.

Optional Objective:

1. The student will compare *Misterioso* with *Salt Peanuts*.
2. The student will journal about his/her personality and the style of jazz they might compose or improvise.

Time: One class period.

Materials Required for Objectives:

Computer access to Internet recordings and speakers for playback to class (or individual headphones for students to listen on their own). Ability to see Monk's hats and dress pictures either on the Internet or Internet pages printed out. Optional: "Comparing Two Songs" worksheet.

Procedure:

Activity 1 - "Today we are going to learn about some of the most interesting music in jazz, the compositions of Thelonious Sphere Monk. I'll bet that is a name you have never heard before. What do you think the music written by someone named Thelonious Sphere Monk might sound like?" Encourage students to comment. Show pictures of Monk by going to this website and then selecting image library and then selecting photos. Click on individual photos to see some of the hats and unusual things Monk wore. <http://www.monkzone.com/monkzone.htm>. "How do you think the music Monk plays might sound by the way he dresses?" Encourage students to discuss and comment on how his music might sound. Write some of the comments down on the board or overhead. "Let's listen to a song of his called *Misterioso* and see how close you were to predicting how Monk's music might sound." Play *Misterioso* and focus on listening and try not to talk

while the music plays so students will focus closely as well. "How well did we do with describing how Monk's music might sound based on his name and his clothes? Was it what you expected? Why or why not?" Encourage students to talk about the music.

Activity 2 - "Now I would like you to take one picture of Monk that you think best illustrates what his song *Misterioso* sounds like. Describe how the way he dresses and looks fits with *Misterioso* the song. Please journal your thoughts and then we will share them with the class. You will show your photograph and then tell us about how it fits with the song *Misterioso*." Share photos and descriptions.

Optional activity:

Activity 3 - Using the "Comparing Two Songs" worksheet, listen to another bebop recording, *Salt Peanuts*, and compare it with *Misterioso*. How do you think the personalities of the composers, Dizzy Gillespie (*Salt Peanuts*) and Thelonious Monk (*Misterioso*), influence the way they compose and improvise jazz? Do you think their personalities come through in their music? Remember, Dizzy Gillespie had a great sense of humor."

Activity 4 - Journal about your personality and how your music might sound if you were to compose and improvise jazz. Would we be able to hear your songs and instantly tell it was you? Jazz musicians such as Dizzy and Monk had such distinctive styles that people who know their playing well can, just by hearing a few notes, instantly identify them.

Extension:

Learn more about Thelonious Monk by going to the websites listed below and listening to his music and reading about him.

Indicators of Success:

Students will understand that jazz is a very personal music and the musicians' creativity is effected by their personality.

Learn more about Thelonious Monk:

<http://www.monkzone.com/monkzone.htm>

http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_monk_thelonious.htm