

Rockin' Chair, Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden

Call and Response - Intermediate level, grades 3-6

Objectives:

1. The student will identify which singer sings the call and which sings the response.
2. The student will identify scat singing in the recording.
3. The student will identify call and response in the trumpet and trombone solos.

Optional Objectives:

1. The student will perform call and response by playing boomwhackers.
2. The student will learn more about Louis Armstrong by exploring the web pages listed below.
3. The student will learn about how young Louis Armstrong got his first cornet through reading a storybook.

Time: One 30-minute class period.

Materials Required for Objectives:

Computer access to recording on the Internet and speakers for playback to class. Optional: low and high F Boomwhackers.

Procedure:

Activity 1 - Introduce Louis Armstrong to your class. "Louis Armstrong was the first great jazz musician. He played trumpet, sang, acted in movies, and led bands all his life. He was from New Orleans, Louisiana, and came to be loved all around the world. When Louis Armstrong began playing the cornet, he learned by listening to other musicians in New Orleans. He learned by ear, which means he would listen and then imitate what he heard. One way of doing this is through call and response. You listen to something someone says, sings, or plays and then you say something back through words or music. It is a really good way to learn jazz in fact, most of the early jazz musicians learned this way. In those days you couldn't buy books or go to school to learn to play jazz. We are going to listen to Louis Armstrong and his trombonist, Jack Teagarden, have a musical conversation using call and response. You will hear Jack Teagarden singing to Louis and Louis singing his responses back. Then they will switch and Louis Armstrong will sing first and Jack will comment on what he sings. They are two very old men sitting in their rocking chairs talking about the old days. Listen to the recording and see if you can figure out what they are talking about."

Activity 2 - "You might have noticed that some of the words Louis Armstrong said weren't real words at all. He was scat singing, improvising by making up nonsense syllables. Let's listen again, and this time hold your thumb up in front of your chest when you hear Louis Armstrong scat singing. Try to remember at least one of his short scat phrases." Play the recording and then ask, "Who can sing one of his scat phrases?" Let students sing scat

phrases. “When singers want to improvise they can either scat sing or, like Eddie Jefferson, they can use vocalese, using real words.”

Activity 3 - “Let’s listen to *Rockin’ Chair* one more time and see if you can hear call and response in the trumpet and trombone solos. Can you tell which instrument plays the call and which plays the response? (A hint: the trumpet plays the higher music) Which musician played the trombone? Which one played trumpet? This call and response between trombone and trumpet is in the same order as the first verse of singing, in other words, at the beginning of the song who sang the call? That person also played trombone on this recording.

Optional Objectives:

1. Using Miles Davis’s *Summertime* recording, have students sit in a circle facing in. The students should have already successfully practiced passing the F Boomwhackers on counts 2 and 4 (see *Summertime* activities) and are ready to try playing call and response on two Boomwhackers to the recording. “When I say ‘solo,’ whoever has the long Boomwacker (in F) will play a short solo or call. and then the person with the short F Boomwacker will respond with a short solo. When I say ‘one, two, one, two, ready, pass,’ we will go back to passing the Boomwhackers on counts 2 and 4 again until I say solo again, and then we will do another call and response with the two Boomwhackers.” Do the activity repeating *Summertime* as many times as needed.
2. Allow students to explore the first web link listed below on Louis Armstrong (you can also use the other links but listen to the Phoebe Jacobs interview for your own information, don’t play for students because of drug and alcohol references). You might also ask students to explore the websites listed below about Jack Teagarden.
3. Read the storybook *If I Only Had a Horn* (details below) about how Young Louis Armstrong got his first cornet.

Extension:

Play video clip of Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden singing *Rockin’ Chair* from the video/DVD *Satchmo*.

Indicators of Success:

Students can recognize call and response and incorporate it into their own speech/singing/playing.

Learn more about Louis Armstrong:

<http://pbskids.org/jazz/nowthen/louis.html>

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/louis/artsedge.html>

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

<http://www.satchmo.net/>

Learn more about Jack Teagarden:

<http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/2508/>

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

Resources:

Fitzgerald, Margaret, Kimberly McCord, and Shelly Berg. *Chop Monster, Jr.: Jazz Language Tutor for General Music Instruction*. Book and CD. Van Nuys, CA.: Alfred Publishing, Inc., 2004.

Orgill, Roxanne & Jenkins, L. *If I Only Had a Horn: Young Louis Armstrong*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

Satchmo. VHS/DVD, 90 mins. Sony Video Distribution, 1989.