

Summertime - Miles Davis

Feeling Swing, part 1 - Intermediate level, grades 3-6

Objectives:

1. The student will demonstrate ability to move to count 2 and 4.
2. The student will perform body percussion that emphasizes counts 2 and 4 are slightly louder than 1 and 3.
3. The student will pass a Boomwhacker in a circle to counts 2 and 4.

Optional Objectives:

1. The student will learn about the George Gershwin opera *Porgy and Bess* by visiting websites.

Time: One 30-minute class period.

Materials: Computer access to recordings on the Internet and speakers for playback to the class. F Boomwhacker.

Procedure:

Activity 1 - Listen to *Summertime* performed by Miles Davis. Model snapping fingers or lightly tapping fingers in the palm of the hand to counts 2 and 4 for students. Students will probably join you; visually encourage students not participating to try tapping or snapping with you. Play the recording again and ask students this time to see if they can find the groove without your help. Observe students tapping or snapping and help students who are not easily finding 2 and 4 to try it with your help.

Activity 2 - Ask students, “What kind of music were we snapping/tapping to?” When they identify jazz ask them to explain how it felt to snap or tap with the recording. Look for students to identify that it felt jazzy or other descriptions that recognize swing feel. Explain that Miles Davis was a great jazz trumpet player who invented a style of jazz called cool jazz. “Davis was very cool and it is interesting that the song we were listening to was called *Summertime*. Listen to the recording and think about how the music sounds like summer. For example, if you were playing outside on a very hot day would you be moving fast or slow? Does the music move fast or slow?”

Activity 3 - Encourage the students to find a way to show counts 2 and 4 that doesn't move too fast. For example you might pat your thighs on counts 1 and 3 and clap on 2 and 4, but you wouldn't want to touch your toes on 1 and 3 and tap your head on 2 and 4—that is too much moving on a hot day. Find a movement and try it to the recording. “Can you keep cool and do the movement at the same time? Imagine sitting under a big, shady tree listening to *Summertime* and doing your cool movement.”

Activity 4 - Have students sit in a circle facing in. Each person should be close enough to the student on either side to almost touch knees. Use an F Boomwhacker and pass it around the circle on counts 2 and 4. Have the students practice first by imitating the movement of picking up the Boomwhacker on 2 and passing it on count 4 to the person to their right. When it seems like students have mastered the movement add the Boomwhacker in at first without the recording and then with the recording. Just have one Boomwhacker in the circle at a time.

Optional Activities:

Activity 1 - Visit the *Porgy & Bess* website listed below and learn about the opera. Read the storybook *Summertime* (details below).

Extension: Visit the website below (or play songs from the Miles Davis recording, *Porgy and Bess*) and listen to Miles Davis perform other songs from *Porgy and Bess*. As a teacher, you will need to put the songs into context with the story of Porgy and Bess for your students.

Indicators of Success:

Students will easily find counts 2 and 4 and perform body percussion to jazz recordings. Note: Most children have difficulty at first to finding 2 and 4 at quicker tempos. *Summertime* is a good tempo to start with.

Learn more about *Porgy and Bess*:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/musicals/porgy.html#>
http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/wwii/gershwin_1

Read the storybook *Summertime*:

Gershwin, George, DuBose Heyward, and Ira Gershwin. Illustrated by Mike Wimmer. *Summertime*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1999.

Listen to Miles Davis play other songs from *Porgy and Bess*:

<http://miles-davis.com/GilEvans/PorgyandBess/music.html>

For additional ideas for activities 2 and 4, refer to:

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.