

ACTIVITIES

SECONDARY LEVEL

(GRADES 10-12)



Activities for Listening

The Archive contains a wealth of material for students to listen to and learn from, either as an individual, in a small group, or even in a full class setting. Listening activities can be purely illustrative, or educators can also choose to include an assessment/evaluation component whereby students are tested on what they have learned. Use our Listening Response Form to help guide your students' listening experiences.

Listening & Learning

Use selections from the Archive to illustrate:

- different rhythmic and melodic patterns, harmonies, textures and form (choice of selections will vary depending on specific goals)
- different instruments
TIP: Click on the Catalogue Link at the top of the Archive webpage. You can then initiate a search by Instrument which will give you information on which instruments are featured in a performance on the Archive and who the players are.
- different configurations, e.g., solos, duets, trios, quartets, and so on
TIP: Click on Band to obtain an alphabetical list of the bands featured in the Archive. Enter a keyword such as, e.g., 'quartet' into the search bar, to be provided with a sublist of all the quartets with performances on the site.
- jazz as a style of music compared with other styles such as classical, rock, folk or country; initiate a discussion about what it means for a piece to be classified in a certain way; assess students by having them identify and classify new pieces of music, providing justification for their choice.
- characteristics of the variety of styles within the jazz genre, e.g., big band/swing, latin, be-bop, fusion, etc.
- the use of themes and motifs in music; have students listen to and pick out the themes that persist through a piece of music

Listening & Responding

1. Same Old Song? (Individual)

Objective: to have students learn how different artists can interpret the same material differently; how the style of the artists, different instrumentation and different musical choices can affect the end result.

TIP: Click on the Catalogue Link at the top of the site page, then on Track-Clip to obtain an alphabetical listing of all the clips contained on the site. Any song which has been played by more than one artist or group will have a separate listing for each performance

Procedure: Select a piece of music from the Archive that is performed by more than one artist (for example ‘Autumn Leaves’ is performed by Donna Barber Trio and also by the Trombone Workshop Octet; ‘Come Rain Or Come Shine’ is performed by Nancy Walker Trio and Sam Noto Quintet; etc.) Play both versions for the students (or have them listen at home or outside of class time as part of the assignment).

Have students, using the Guided Response Form as a starting point, write a one or two page response where they discuss the differences (and similarities) between the two interpretations, using appropriate terminology learned in class to discuss rhythm, texture, expression, instrumentation, musical choices, etc.

2. The Artist’s Development

Objective: To encourage students to consider and evaluate the changes that an artist goes through over time in their artistic development.

Activity: Students select a performer from the Archive for whom multiple recordings spanning a reasonable amount of time exist. They listen to and compare the performances, noting the things that have changed in the artist’s playing over time, as well as aspects that are more or less consistent, making the artist’s style ‘unique’ and recognizable.

3. Same Instrument, Different Sound

Objective: Students learn and explore how the same instrument can sound very different in the hands of different artists. The definition of ‘instrument’ here can be extended to include the human voice.

Activity: Students select an instrument that is featured by more than one performer on the Archive. From the list of artists, they select two who exhibit different performance styles. Students listen and write a report comparing and contrasting, using appropriate terminology, each individual musicians’ tone and style.

4. The Power of the Human Voice

Objective: Students explore the effect of the human voice and words on their response to music.

Activity: Students select a piece of music from the Archive where one of the recordings features a vocal line and lyrics and one is purely instrumental. Students write a report where they compare their responses to the piece with a vocal line to the one without, and discuss how the presence of voice and words might guide/influence the listener’s response to the same piece of music.

Activities for Research & Critical Thinking

1. Jazz Newsletter (Individual)

Objective: Students combine research skills, writing skills and musical knowledge

Activity: Students research and report on the life and musical career of one of the seven Canadian jazz icons with a documentary featured on the Archive. Students listen to the documentary, view the artist's biography and career highlights and listen to their performances, and then write a report in the form of a journal or newspaper article.

Students' reports can then be combined into a larger 'anthology' with material organized by artist.

2. Jazz Democracy (Class discussion; Individual report)

Objective: To encourage students to think about what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society by comparing it with the role of musicians in a jazz band.

Activity: Initiate a class discussion on the roles of musicians in a musical group in terms of individual freedom (improvisation), cooperation, shared responsibility of members and leadership. Then have students write a short essay where they draw on the similarities and interrelatedness of these roles with those of citizens of a democratic society. As an extension of the assignment, students can also be asked to find out more about and discuss the fact that during WW II, Hitler outlawed jazz music.

3. Be a Music Critic: Fact vs. Opinion (Individual)

Objective: To encourage students to think critically about the various aspects of a musical performance; to increase writing skills; to enhance awareness of the difference between subjective responses to art and objective responses

Activity: Students select a song from the Archive and write a review of the performance as if they were a music critic. Have students separately comment on what aspects of their review are based in fact and objectivity and what aspects of their review are subjective, reflecting their own personal opinion and response.

4. Everything is Connected (Small Group)

Objective: To encourage students to learn about the interrelatedness of different art forms and the effects that one can have on another.

Activity: Students choose a period in time and, as a group, create presentations showing developments and relationships between jazz music and another

art form during the same period. Students can use the Archive Chronology as a starting point. Discuss what influences might have affected both art forms.

5. Music in Time (Individual or Small Group)

Objective: To encourage students to consider how different styles of music within a given time period might effect each other; to encourage them to consider the societal and cultural context within which music is produced.

Activity: Using the Archive Chronology as a starting point, students are asked to situate the jazz being performed within a given time period within the larger musical context of that era, i.e., music associated with 70s, 80s, etc. They should discuss whether there is any influence of various musical styles on each other, and whether one can tell that they are from the same time period. An extended version of the project would see students researching the cultural and societal context within which the music was being produced.

5. Life and Art (Class discussion/Individual Report)

Objective: Students explore how their responses to music might be affected by knowing more about the artist.

Activity: Students select or are assigned an artist with a documentary on the Archive. Before listening to it, they first listen to a selection of performances by that artist found on the Archive; they then listen to the documentary and listen again to the performances. Students write a report in response to the following suggested questions: a) does knowing about an artist's personal life/challenges influence how you listen to their music? b) did you 'hear' different things when you listened to their music before vs. after knowing more about their personal life? c) do you think that an artist's personal choices in life should be considered when evaluating their music or should the music stand on its own?

Activities for Creative Expression

1. Marketing Music (Individual or Small Group)

Objective: To encourage students to consider how design, colour and form might be used in the marketing of a musical event.

Activity: Students select a concert recording from the Archive and design a poster to 'advertise' that concert. The poster should be eye-catching, informative and expressive in some way of the kind of music that that listeners can expect to hear if they attend. Depending on resources and technical

expertise, the posters can be designed using poster board and art supplies or on a computer using a graphic design program.

2. Produce a CD (Individual or Small Group)

Objective: Students combine musical knowledge, research skills and artistic design skills to put together a jazz album

Activity: Students ‘create’ an album by choosing a ‘theme’ for the album and then selecting 10 songs from the Archive that express that theme. Possible themes include a selection of pieces that are all done by the same artist/band or composer; pieces that are all the same instrument, etc.

They then design a CD cover that includes information about the songs, the artists, composers and recording details on the inside.

3. Make a Jazz Video (Group)

Objective: Students explore how music can be expressed visually and learn the elements and processes that go into producing a music video.

Activity: Students select a piece of music from the Archive and design and produce a music video. The video should feature movement, costumes, sets, etc. that reflect the images evoked by the music. Videos can then be played for audiences of other classes of students.

4. Music Tells a Story

Objective: To encourage students to think about how even music without words can still tell a story or bring to mind a certain kind of narrative.

Activity: Students write a short story or screenplay that might be accompanied, as a score, by a selected piece of instrumental music from the Archive. The piece should be roughly the length of the piece, and the action/narrative and mood should shift in keeping with the music. Students can also be asked to supply an additional paragraph explaining why they think that their story/play expresses the selected music.