

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

Jazz and Improvisation

Artist: Carol Comer

Workshop Description

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Contact KCYA for
more information on
this and other
programs.

816-531-4022
www.kcya.org

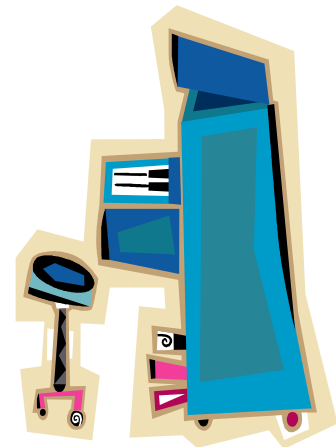
Jazz music is improvised using the melody, harmony, and rhythm. Its history begins in Africa, travels to the Caribbean, takes root in the field songs and work songs of the South, and subsequently finds itself becoming famous in our community.

This rich heritage is shared with the students as they first explore the melodies using the xylophone, bells, and piano. They then play several different rhythms on the percussion instruments and are encouraged to syncopate, or change the rhythm accents.

Students are introduced to the snare drum, on which they not only learn the beat but are again invited to stylize the tempo. They learn to play the electric bass, after which they perform tunes from a

couple of different eras.

Carol has taught all ages to improvise—from Kindergarten to college. Depending upon the skill level of the students, a vast compendium of songs and styles are available to be explored. Students of all ages learn to scat sing and, time permitting, the class composes a 12-bar Blues.



Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Learn the history of jazz and how it came to be popular in our area
- Expand their knowledge and explore performing and composing skills
- Gain confidence and self-esteem through improvisation

Music:

- Knows that music consists of several elements

Life Skills

- Engages in active listening

Special REQUIREMENTS:

Acoustic tuned piano with bench (not stool); portable chalkboard, eraser, chalk; one 4' table; custodian to unload/load equipment 45 minutes prior to workshop; area empty at least 45 minutes prior to workshop; electrical outlets nearby; all workshops in same space

Additional Fee: \$14 for cartage per school.

Artist Bio: Carol Comer

Carol Comer is a composer, teacher, writer, pianist, and jazz vocalist. She has performed for jazz festivals and clubs throughout the area.

Carol has served as music director for a live-broadcast radio show and as a jazz journalist. Her contributions to jazz have been acknowledged in several books.

The Kansas City Jazz Commission honored Carol with the Jazz Heritage Award,

“in appreciation and admiration for contributions that have helped establish and perpetuate the style of music known as Kansas City Jazz.”

Carol especially enjoys working with young people. She has served as an Artist in Education on the state rosters of Nevada and Utah and was honored with the Lighton prize for teaching excellence in 2003 by KCYA.



Carol Comer

Vocabulary

Call and Response: Echoing a theme, dating back to the days of slavery.

Improvisation: The process of spontaneously creating fresh melodies over the repeating cycle of chord changes of a tune.

Jazz: Music that's improvised. It may take several forms including Dixieland, Swing, Bebop and Ragtime.

Percussion instrument: A musical instrument through which sound is produced by hitting it or hitting something else.

Scat singing: Improvising with the voice using monosyllabic sounds instead of words.

Standard: A composition that is continually used in repertoires.

Syncopate: Change the rhythmic accents.

Post-Workshop Activities

1. Visit the Jazz Museum at 18th and Vine in Kansas City, Missouri.
2. Interview a jazz musician using notes or a tape recorder.
3. Write three choruses of lyrics to a Blues.
4. Attend a jam session at a local/regional jazz festival.



List of Resources

MUSIC

Listen to recordings of Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Torme, Betty Carter, Joe Williams, Flora Purim, Tania Maria, Dianne Reeves, Carmen McRae, Al Jarreau, Bobby McFerrin

BOOKS

Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky by Faith Ringgold, J. Davis
Dragonfly Books; (December 1, 1995)
ISBN: 0517885433

Follow the Drinking Gourd by Jeanette Winter
Dragonfly Books; (January 1, 1992)
ISBN: 0679819975

The Sound that Jazz Makes by Carole Boston Weatherford
Walker & Company; (May 30, 2000)
ISBN: 0802787207