

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

Jazz and Scat

Artist: Carol Comer

Workshop Description

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more information on
this and other
programs.

816-531-4022
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Using the voice as a non-verbal instrument began with Louis Armstrong when he forgot (or misplaced) the words to a song called “The Heebie Jeebies”. Since then, jazz singers have enjoyed improvising with their voices, using monosyllabic sounds in place of words.

Initially, students are asked to scat simple melodies to a moving II-V-I harmonic chord structure. Beginning with a ballad tempo in 4/4 time, the exercise gradually evolves into a jazz waltz. Soon after, when the students are comfortable and excited with the concepts, actual songs are used to incorporate phrasing, dynamics, ideation, scatting, and quoting.

After performing a few “standards,” the students are taught how to compose a 12-measure blues with which they improvise a mel-

ody to fully express the song. They can also take an optional scat chorus or two if they choose.

Time permitting, several stylistically diverse scat singers are critiqued. These include Mel Torme, Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Carroll, Urszula Dudziak, and Tania Maria.



Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Gain understanding of scat singing and its significance in jazz
- Explore and expand vocal creativity
- Increase and refine listening skills

National Music Standards:

- Improvises “answers” in the same style to given rhythmic and melodic phrases

Life Skills Standards:

- 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.

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.

Rubato: Free tempo

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

Syncopate: Change the rhythmic accents.

Tempo: The rate and speed of a musical work.

Post-Workshop Activities

1. Do call and response scatting, changing the scat leader until everyone has had the opportunity to lead
2. Choose a standard, something from a musical comedy or a familiar old song, and re-work it as a contemporary piece
3. Invent a new vocal scale utilizing “jazz” notes

Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4



Doo-be, doo-be, doo-bah! _____

G4 F4 E4 D4 C4 C4



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

Dahl, Linda. Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen. Limelight Editions, 1989

Placksin, Sally. American Women in Jazz. Seaview Books, 1982.

Parker, Chris and Woolston, Willa. B Flat, Bebop, Scat: Jazz Short Stories and Poems. Quartet Books, Ltd, 1987

Fredrickson, Scott. Scat Singing Method. Scott Music Publications, 2003.