

When viewing *Jazz Reach: She Said/She Says* and participating in this guide's suggested activities, the following National Standards for Music will be addressed: 6, 7, 8, 9.

Jazz Reach: *She Said/She Says*

Friday, May 16, 2008

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. ET

Grades 7-12

Background Information

What is Jazz?

Dr. Billy Taylor, the renowned jazz artist, educator, and Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, stated, "Jazz is America's classical music." Its birthplace was in the fields as enslaved Africans used music as a way to express themselves but also as a way to maintain and continue their culture. For Africans, music had many purposes and was a part of their daily activities. Africans were forced to adapt to a new way of life and as they endured slavery, they reshaped their songs from their musical heritage. It was the work songs, spirituals, and field hollers that allowed them to communicate and express themselves but it was also these types of songs that formed the musical family that produced jazz.

Women in Jazz



Jazz has produced many greats, most of whom are men, such as Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, and Jelly Roll Morton. It is these virtuoso and legendary musicians who grace the pages of history books and will be remembered for their contributions to jazz. It is thought that because this type of music is primarily an instrumental music and because jazz has been largely shaped by woodwind and brass instruments, women were at a disadvantage, because it was men who were largely associated with these types of instruments. The social expectations of women impacted what they could and could not do and therefore they were encouraged to sing and play the piano instead of studying other types of instruments. Women did not have the same opportunities as men when it came to playing music and those women who did play jazz on saxophone, brass instruments, or drums did not receive the same response as their male colleagues.

In the 1920s, women's roles in jazz were predominantly those of vocalists and pianists. African American female vocalists were collaborating with jazz instrumentalists, usually men, to record "classic blues" and female pianists were also on the scene participating in jazz. One of the most celebrated women to come out of the Chicago jazz scene during this time was Lil' Hardin. Hardin worked with artists like great cornet player Joe "King" Oliver in addition to leading her own bands.

During the Big Band Era, the 1930s and 1940s, more and more women instrumentalists were being recognized and all-female big bands like the Harlem Playgirls were starting to form and tour. It was during this time that Mary Lou Williams, the most influential female jazz musician, began working with jazz legends such as Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk as a musician, composer, and arranger. Williams formed her own groups and worked as a solo artist into the 1970s.

Gender roles began to shift during World War II as women's presence in the work force began to grow during post-war years. The emergence of television created employment opportunities for white women who played in television bands and increased their exposure. However, with this new technology, women were still being stereotyped as happy housewives on television. Jazz was gaining recognition from an international audience and, as a result, musicians like pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi from Japan were being discovered around the world.

The women's liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s changed the status of women in society, history, and cultural expression. This change allowed women's roles in jazz to become more diversified, creating additional opportunities for female musicians who continue to make great strides in the jazz world as vocalists, instrumentalists, and composers.



About the Program

This interactive program highlights the important achievements in jazz by women and features composers, arrangers, instrumentalists, and vocalists from early 20th century through present-day. Through performance and demonstration, students will hear a variety of styles that reflect great jazz vocalists such as Billie Holiday along with music by present-day instrumentalists and composers like Regina Carter.

Instructional Activities

During the program, have your students listen carefully to the recording of Grammy Award® winner Dianne Reeves as she performs a repertoire that reflects the styles of great jazz vocalists, such as Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington, and Betty Carter. Compare and contrast the different styles of each singer. How are the styles different? How are they similar?

Resources

Internet

For more information, connect to:
kennedy-center.org/pwv
artsedge.kennedy-center.org
jazz.net/pub/index.jsp
jazzinamerica.org/jrl.asp
pbs.org/jazz/time/time_women.html

Recordings

Holiday, Billie
Lady in Satin. Sony, 1997.
The Complete Billie Holiday on Columbia (1933-1944). Sony, 2001.
 Mary Lou Williams & The Trumpet Giants.
Mary Lou Williams & The Trumpet Giants Featuring Bobby Hackett & Dizzy Gillespie. Lone Hill Jazz, 2004.

Print

Crowther, Bruce. *Singing Jazz: The Singers and Their Styles*. San Francisco, CA: Backbeat Books, 1998.
 Friedwald, Will. *Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1996.
 Ward, Geoffrey C. and Ken Burns. *Jazz: A History of America's Music*. Knopf, 2002.