



music studio

LESSON PLAN

BEHIND THE MUSIC

Behind the Music: Takin' It to the Streets

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for Band Classes, Middle School and High School
(This lesson can be adapted for string or vocal students)

Improvising in the Birthplace of Jazz

Lesson 4 of 4

Objective

Students will improvise “blues licks” using notes from a minor pentatonic scale.
Students will recognize significant developments in jazz music that took place in New Orleans.

National Standards

3: Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

Materials

Videotape of Takin' It to the Streets

Television

VCR

Transparency of F minor pentatonic scale (F A-flat, B-flat, C E-flat) with transpositions for each band instrument

F minor blues rhythm background generated from Band-in a Box (Buffalo, NY: PG Music), or from Nothin' but Blues, vol 2 of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation, Jamey Aebersold Jazz 1971 (Jamey Aebersold Jazz, PO Box 1244C, New Albany, IN 47151)

Overhead projector

Audio-playback equipment

Prior Knowledge and Experiences

Students have studied the 12-bar blues form
Students can play melodies by ear on their instruments

Procedures

Part I

1. Tell students they are going to view a videotape about musicians who make their living performing on the streets. Tell them to pay special attention clarinetist Doreen Ketchers and her band that performs jazz on the streets of the French Quarter in New Orleans.
2. View videotape *Takin' It to the Streets*.
3. Discuss with students any observations they have about Doreen, her tuba-playing husband, and their band and music. [31:20--40:08] Accept reasonable observations, including growing up in a neighborhood that nurtured music, a family that supported her musical talents, and experience and training in her high school band.
4. Lead students to discuss their observations of Doreen's clarinet improvisations. Accept reasonable observations, including playing melodies by ear, proficient knowledge of scales, and improvising while drawing from years of musical experience.

Part II

5. Tell students they are going to experiment with improvising.
6. Start the recorded background track for the blues in F minor. With a good swing feel, model short blues licks (two-to-four notes maximum length) using the notes F and A-flat concert. Have students echo them back immediately in correct tempo with the background music.
7. Repeat step 1, using a gradually expanding collection of notes. Add notes in this order: F, A-flat, E-flat, B-flat, C.
8. Ask students to improvise softly as a group to the background track using licks they learned in steps 1 and 2 as a model.
9. Have students improvise solos to entire choruses when they feel comfortable. Then have them "trade fours" or "twos"--that is, exchange, or trade, two-or four-measure performed solos.

Indicators of Success

Students improvise blues licks using notes from the F minor pentatonic scale

Follow-up

Have students improvise blues licks in a similar way in other keys.
Teach students various blues tunes by rote. Have them play a selected tune again and then improvise over the changes, imitating the styles of various professional blues or jazz performers.

Extension

Have students explore the developments of the jazz form, in New Orleans, including artists who were originally from and/or jump started their career in this city.

VH1, in partnership with Cable in the Classroom, collaborated with MENC: The National Association for Music Education to develop this series of lessons.

This lesson is adapted from Strategies for Teaching High School Band, compiled and edited by Edward J. Kvet and John E. Williamson (copyright 1998, MENC).



National Standards for Music Education

- 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.**
- 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.**
- 3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.**
- 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.**
- 5. Reading and notating music.**
- 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.**
- 7. Evaluating music and music performances.**
- 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.**
- 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.**