



# music studio

## LESSON PLAN

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### Road to Fame: Harry Connick, Jr.

Lessons for Middle-Level and High School Music Classes--Instrumental and Choral

#### A VH1 Save the Music Special

Lesson 1 of 5

### Objective

- Students will recognize positive influence of parents providing musical opportunities
- Students will identify some ways to improve practicing
- Students will recognize benefits of having a practice schedule

National Standards for Music Education: 7--Evaluating music and music performances;  
9--Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

### Materials

VHS VCR Player

Television

VH1 Cable in the Classroom program Behind the Music: Music in America 1968

Web-based lesson materials

notebooks or journals

## Procedures

1. Play videotape Road to Fame: Harry Connick, Jr., asking students to pay attention to how Connick acquired his music education--his ages, experiences, and opportunities.
2. Discuss with the students when and how Harry Connick started playing music. Some of the points you might want to cover include:
  - began playing on an upright piano when he was three
  - parents had music instruments around the house that he played with
  - mother recognized his "affinity" for music
  - "buckled down" and became serious about music when he was five or six
  - as a six-year-old, parents took him to French Quarter jazz clubs
  - practiced styles and techniques of those around him in a "musical playground"
  - as a 12-year-old, he performed Beethoven at a summer pops concert
  - in high school, Connick sought out after-school program at NOCCA
3. Point out to students that jazz musician and educator Ellis Marsalis (the father of six sons including Wynton, Branford, Delfeayo, and Jason) taught Connick at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) when Connick was in high school.
4. Review with your students the second segment of the videotape where Connick speaks about his teacher and Marsalis speaks about his student.

Connick: "He was the first one to really open my ears, to really establish a work ethic in me."

Marsalis: "I've always thought that Harry was very gifted. There was a certain amount of discipline he did not have. So I would tell him, 'You know that you are going to be seriously embarrassed. You're not going to be practicing and you're going to go and embarrass yourself in front of these kids at one of these competitions. So you need to practice.'"

Connick: "He was the first guy to say 'OK, you are talented. But you will not be a contributor to this art form unless you follow these certain steps.' And he really instilled that in me."

5. Ask students how they think top musicians achieve success. What qualities do they have? (Possible answers include: good practice habits, musical environment, good teachers, love of music, good pitch, confidence, good mental attitude, enjoy performing, good instruments, etc..)
6. Ask students what problems they think are common in practicing and what problems they have when they practice. (Answers might include getting started, finding time, limiting distractions, difficult music, weak skills, lack of a plan, lack of goals, etc....)
7. Discuss with students basic practice planning techniques including:
  - the benefits of establishing a daily practice schedule
  - setting practice goals
  - working on fundamental skills in each session

- practicing slowly
- working longer on difficult sections
- practice smart--don't practice sections you already play well

8. Have students keep a journal for two weeks. In it, have them write their thoughts on what will help them practice more effectively. In one composition they are studying, have them find expression marks and write the definitions. In their journals, have them set goals for learning that same composition.
9. At the end of two weeks, have students write a journal entry on how or if their practicing changed. Did writing about their practice efforts and goals make any difference in their habits or their attitudes?

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

## **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.