



# music studio

## LESSON PLAN

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

Lessons for High School General Music and Choral Classes, Grades 9-12

#### A VH1 Save the Music Special

Lesson 3 of 5

### Objective

- Students will sing a vocal improvisation on a 12-bar blues progression

National Standards for Music Education: 1--Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; 3--Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

### Materials

VHS VCR Player

Television

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

Web-based lesson materials

Chalkboard

## Prior Knowledge & Experience

- Students have seen the videotape Road to Fame: Harry Connick, Jr.
- Students have studied music theory.
- Students have studied vocal technique.

## Procedures

1. Play videotape of Road to Fame: Harry Connick, Jr. Have students note that Connick was influenced by many of the jazz greats including Louis Armstrong, whose raspy vocal style Connick imitates early in the videotape. (Armstrong, according to some jazz historians, invented scat singing.) In the last segment of the videotape, have students listen to Connick's vocal techniques on "Stardust" and "Do You Know What It Means (to live in New Orleans)."
2. Discuss how traditional popular and jazz vocalists play with musical phrasing, creating distinct and signature styles. While Connick doesn't sing scat in this videotape, you may wish to discuss how many traditional pop vocalists as well as jazz vocalists sing using idiomatic phrases.
3. Briefly talk about how jazz vocalists improvise using a blues scale.
4. Write the following motive on the chalkboard:



Have students echo as you sing the motive, pointing to each note of the motive as everyone sings it.

5. Have students echo as you sing the motive, listening carefully to see whether the flatted tones and half steps are in tune. Model the notes that were not in tune and have students echo. Continue until students perform the motive accurately.

6. Play a I-IV-V blues progression in the key of C on the keyboard and sing the motive with it, transposing the motive for the F and G keys. Then have the students join you. Finally, have them sing the motive alone with the blues progression.

7. Have each student sing the motive alone while you play the blues progression. Encourage applause for each individual's effort.

8. Have students sing the motive one more time while you improvise a short vocal motive (a scat) for the first measure of the break (see measures 3 and 4 of the music example), using only the notes in the scale they have been singing. Have students echo your scat singing on the second measure of the break. Do this call-and-response exercise four to six times.

9. Have individual students try their own scat singing on the two-measure break. Let them know that they can use only a few notes at first, just those in the descending blues scale they have been singing. Encourage applause for each student's singing.

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

Lesson Three is derived from *Strategies for Teaching: High School General Music* (MENC: 1997)

## **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.