

Jazz Singing with SmartMusic's *Play By Ear* Lesson Outline

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National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.

DESE-Missouri Knowledge Standards

Goal 1

DESE-Missouri Performance Standards

1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 4.4

Subject Area: Choral/Vocal Jazz Ensembles

Grade Range: 8-12

Singers who perform jazz repertoire can improve their performance in scat singing by learning accurate improvisation.

Materials Needed: SmartMusic, method of projection in classroom-large TV or projector, speaker(s) to play accompaniment and/or recording of group singing back to classroom, SmartMusic microphone or other microphone.

Time Allowance: 2-5 minutes each class period used.

Objectives:

1. Students will actively engage in weekly jazz singing in a sequential progression.
2. Students will sing improvised melodies demonstrating correct jazz interpretation of those melodies

Lesson

Step 1: Using SmartMusic Method Exercises, determine which area is an appropriate starting point for your singers based on their level and curriculum. (Note: Blues Licks Exercises are appropriate for most singers, and Ear Development Exercises are for those singers with no experience.) After selecting an area, click on it to view the entire directory. Click on the first exercise and it will open. Once the selection is open your students can begin to sing as a group in “call and response” style. Choose Click On to enable the metronome click to continue while the students sing. The Cursor will automatically be visible when using any of these exercises. This will

guide singers to visually follow the patterns which show the starting pitch of the melody. Both the Click and Cursor can be removed as the choir progresses.

- **Step 2: Click Record when desired and the students will hear an audible count-off, and then the students can begin to sing through the blues progression.**
- **Step 3: When the exercise is completed, SmartMusic will automatically save the audio recording and then give the option of playing it back for the group; allowing them to immediately hear how accurately they performed the jazz melody together. Click on Preview for the class to hear what they sang. Students receive automatic, immediate feedback on their performance. The recording can be **SAVED**, if desired, as part of “class participation/cooperative learning” points that all students could share. The instructor may offer suggestions on how to improve student accuracy and repeat or advance to the next exercise.**
- **Step 4: To open to the next exercise; and click Next. It will automatically open and be displayed on the screen. The metronome and cursor will remain **ON**, unless you remove them. Choose Play, and your group will have a new melody to echo.**
- **Step 5: Continue to open as many exercises the choir will sing during that class period. (When the instructor re-opens the SmartMusic Exercises to the Blues Licks section, the notation of last exercise performed will be visible in a minimized version along with the directory.)**

Jazz Singing w/SmartMusic Supplemental Instructor Ideas and Activities

Assignment Suggestions

1. The instructor may choose to select a set number of exercises to be performed each week. For example, sing two melodies one day a week and record one for the students to analyze. This would ensure that very few minutes are used for this activity.
2. Click on **TEMPO** to adapt the exercise to the level of students, either faster or slower.
3. A teacher's aide or trusted student could easily operate the SmartMusic Exercises for the choir. The instructor is free to move around the room checking posture, vowel shape, take the roll, etc.
4. Choose **Female Voice** for sopranos and altos, and **Trombone** for bass clef scat singing. (**Male Voice** is PLAYED in the appropriate octave, but a treble clef is displayed. Tenors would be best suited to sing with Male Voice, and then switch to Trombone for the basses to see "their clef" on screen.)

Indicators of Success

Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Actively interpret and sing jazz melodic fragments cooperatively that are within the scope and sequence of their curriculum.
2. Analyze their accuracy by listening to the recording of their singing.
3. Achieve improved accuracy and independence in improvisational scat singing, performing appropriate pitches indicative of the jazz style, and progressing as a group and as individual soloists.

Assessment

1. Students will demonstrate accurate jazz singing as achieved by the entire class using a SmartMusic's Method Exercises, in the **Play By Ear Blues Exercises**.
2. (Optional) Assign students to sing as a soloist at a SmartMusic station. The student could record and **SAVE** the performance for the instructor to hear and assess. Students with **SmartMusic School Sponsored Home Subscriptions** could be assigned to record several exercises, record and e-mail their results to the teacher.

3. (Optional) Assign students to demonstrate melodic retention by using pencils and manuscript paper to notate a blues melodic fragment by the method of melodic dictation.
4. (Optional) Open an exercise and project it for the entire choir to view. Assign students to write down the pitch numbers or solfeggio for the jazz melody while it plays. (The starting pitch of each fragment appears on screen.)

Lesson Extensions

1. Assign individual students to select the exercise of their choice and record and SAVE their jazz improvisational singing; either for assessment or extra credit.
2. Perform the same exercise in several key signatures. The instructor may change the key of any exercise. For example, open “Medium Blues in C”. If desired, click on the Key Signature box, (located at the bottom center of the SmartMusic display) and a list of every key signature will drop down. Click on the letter name of the desired key. The entire exercise will automatically change keys.
3. Play a recording of one or more professional jazz singers for the choir. Encourage students to begin incorporating some of the scat “syllables” used by professionals when they are performing the exercises.
4. Investigate all five areas listed under each “Blues Licks” heading. They are:
 - A. Slow Blues (in F, or any key desired)
 - B. Medium Blues
 - C. Fast Blues
 - D. New Orleans Blues
 - E. Rock Blues(Show, swing or jazz choir directors may find the Rock Blues and New Orleans Blues exercises to be styles that they may be interested in using. Syncopations, rhythm patterns, and melodic pitches are quite varied in each of these genres.)
5. The Ear Development Exercises may be used as beginning melodic dictation practice for ANY choral group or in a music theory class. These exercises begin with a single repeating pitch, then to scale-wise movement, and on to increasingly difficult melodic fragments. (The Ear Development Exercises are presented in the style of traditional ear training, NOT in a jazz format.)
6. A Music Appreciation class or general music class can view and hear the blues melodies and chord progressions used in jazz music. Students may be assigned to experience the typical “call and response” by tapping, clapping, or even singing some of the blues melodies.
7. Introducing the Blues Licks Exercises to non-auditioned choirs may encourage and inspire “non-singers”.
8. Use several exercises as occasional warm-ups for jazz or show choirs.