

The American Songbook

Lesson Plan Series

By Elizabeth M. Kendall

**MICHAEL FEINSTEIN'S
AMERICAN SONGBOOK*****Best Band in the Land—Late 1930s–1940s*****Lesson One: Second Episode****Segment Title***Best Band in the Land – Late 1930s–1940s***Lesson Title***Nothing Joins a Nation Like a Song***Lesson Focus**

Overview: Survey of the Times

Purpose

Students will explore connections between Nationalism and Popular Song

Objective

Students will be able to:

Explain importance of popular music as a unifying factor.

Match similar elements in lyrics.

Research the effect the war had on employment.

Compose a letter reflecting the effect the “Rosie the Riveter” campaign had on the American work force.

MENC StandardContent Standard #6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.Content Standard #8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.Content Standard #9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.**Cross-Curricular Tags**

History – American Culture

Language Arts – letter writing

Materials*The American Songbook Video: Best Band in the Land**A Fellow on a Furlough**Johnny Zero**A Girl in my Arms**They're Either Too Young or Too Old**Coming In on a Wing and a Prayer**Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition**Rosie, the Riveter**Rosie the Riveter Packet*

Computer with Internet and speakers

LCD projector, SMART board, or appropriate technology to view the computer screen

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Lesson Introduction

1. Prior to the first lesson on this segment, have students keep a log of all the times they see large groups of people singing together, either in person or through the media. (If a Distance Learning site is in place, this can be posted as a Discussion Board Question the week before.)
2. Share the findings as a class by having students get in small groups and discuss their observations. Instruct the group to draw a conclusion from the data and post it on the board.
3. Guide the class to the conclusion that music is used to unify a group.
4. Ask students when, as a nation, do they think the people need to feel unified? If students do not include “wartime” in their contributions, guide them toward that response.

Learning Activity

1. Hand out the *Rosie the Riveter* Packet
2. Play *Rosie, the Riveter* while students read the lyrics
3. Have students visit the website *Rosie the Riveter: Woman Working during WWII* (<http://www.nps.gov/pwro/collection/website/rosie.htm>). This can be done either as a class or individually in a computer lab.
4. Have students answer the questions on the *Information Search*
5. *A Letter for Rosie*: Have students compose a letter choosing from one of the four perspectives. They should support their perspective from the *Information Search*.

Measurement

Rosie the Riveter Handout

Rosie the Riveter Grading Rubric

Additional Resources

Travel and History: Rosie the Riveter (<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1656.html>)

Japanese Fighter Planes: The Zero (http://www.acepilots.com/planes/jap_fighters.html)

Lesson Two: Second Episode

Segment Title

Best Band in the Land – Late 1930s–1940s

Lesson Title

Big Band Brotherhood

Lesson Focus

Broad Music Concept

Purpose

To expose students to a brief history of big band music as it relates to ethnicity and to develop listening skills.

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Objective

Students will be able to:

Discuss ethnic elements in music

Generalize elements in big band music

Recognize musical elements and instrumentation in a big band piece as it relates to the performer.

MENC Standard

Content Standard #6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

Content Standard #7: Evaluate music and music performances.

Content Standard #9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Cross-Curricular Tags

History – American Culture

Materials

The American Songbook Video: Best Band in the Land video

“Jumpin’ Jive” by Cab Calloway (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dcLXaJZ1WQ)

“One O’clock Jump” by Count Basie (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQi4jglT0Vo>)

“Opus One” by Tommy Dorsey (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7QjMZ4ckZc)

“Sing, Sing, Sing” by Benny Goodman (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mJ4dpNal_k)

“Nightmare” by Artie Shaw (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0IH8OM8gmI>)

Computer with Internet and speakers

LCD projector, SMART board, or appropriate technology to view the computer screen

Period clothing (optional)

Learning Activity

Open the discussion of racism in the 1930s–1940s by showing *The American Songbook Video: Best Band in the Land* video from 45:00 to 47:00. (Depending on the maturity of the class, the teacher can continue the video from 47:00 to 49:00, which depicts the *Minstrel Show*. A dialogue can be opened about how white actors would put on black face to portray African-Americans on stage, since African-Americans were not allowed in white productions. There were “colored” shows performed by entirely African-American performers, but the races did not mix on stage.)

1. Play “Nightmare” by Artie Shaw without telling students anything about the song/performers and have them predict the performer’s ethnicity.
 2. Explain that big band music was cross-cultural in appeal. Performers of this music were both African-American and Caucasian and people of both races enjoyed it equally.
 3. Present *Big Band Brotherhood* activity
 - 3.1. Distribute *Big Band Brotherhood* Handout
 - 3.2. Students will view four PowerPoint slides for the following artists. Each slide will mention the leader’s instrument, a brief history, and have a picture.
 - Cab Calloway – singer
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Tommy Dorsey – trombone

Duke Ellington – piano

Benny Goodman – clarinet

3.3. Students will listen to the following songs and will try to match a song to the band leader, based on the information presented

“Jumpin Jive” (Calloway)

“Opus One” (Dorsey)

“One O’Clock Jump” (Ellington)

“Sing, Sing, Sing” (Goodman)

Reinforcing Activity

1. Invite students to project what the “purpose” of big band music was. Guide them to the conclusion that it was for dancing.
2. Remind them of the introductory lesson that mentioned couples dancing as a primary form of entertainment in this era.
3. Have students choose two from the above five recordings that they like best.
4. Move tables and chairs to create a “dance hall” in the classroom.
5. Invite them to dance in what they perceive was the appropriate style of the time. (If costumes are available from the drama department, some scarves, suit coats, hats and/or gloves can add the proper feel to the event.)

Measurement

Teacher Observation – *Big Band Brotherhood Observation Grading Rubric*

Resources

Cab Calloway Web Site (<http://www.cabcallowayllc.com/biography/index.php>)

Legends of Big Band Music History (http://www.swingmusic.net/Tommy_Dorsey_Biography.html)

Red Hot Jazz Archive (<http://www.redhotjazz.com/duke.html>)

King of Swing (<http://www.bennygoodman.com/>)

Lesson Three: Second Episode

Segment Title

Best Band in the Land – Late 1930s–1940s

Lesson Title

In the Mood: Songs to Lift Your Spirits or Bring a Tear

Lesson Focus

Advanced Musical Element

Purpose

To explore musical elements that create specific “moods” or “tones.”

Objective

Students will be able to:

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Identify the musical elements that create “mood.”

Evaluate music for its “mood” elements.

Compose lyrics reflective of a specific mood.

Compose a melody reflective of a specific mood.

MENC Standard

Content Standard #1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

Content Standard #3: Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

Content Standard #4: composing and arranging music within specific guidelines.

Content Standard #5: Reading and notating music.

Content Standard #6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

Cross-Curricular Tags

Language Arts – Creative Writing

Materials

Mood Men (graphic representation of Joy, Pride, Loneliness) Overhead, PPT Slide Show or Smart board slide

Recordings and lyric sheets of:

Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition (*American Songbook* video)

Shoo-Shoo Baby (http://s0.ilike.com/play#The+Andrews+Sisters:Shoo-Shoo+Baby:1065073:s34501664.9635815.15459819.0.2.17%2Cstd_cd6890ead29d470d9168a51f8655928b)

Lovely Weather for Ducks (lyrics only: http://www.hotlyrics.net/lyrics/R/Rosemary_Clooney/Lovely_Weather_For_Ducks.html)

Mood Word Handout

Compose a Mood of Your Own Handout

In the Mood Observation Grading Rubric

paper or portable white boards for *Three-Minute Round Table*

Computer with Internet and speakers

LCD projector, SMART board, or appropriate technology to view the computer screen

Lesson Introduction

1. Put students in small groups and distribute *Mood Word* handout.
2. Give students five minutes to come up with as many words possible that reflect the three given moods: Joyful, Pride, Loneliness. Encourage them think of pairs of rhyming words, too.
3. Collect papers, but keep them available for the Reinforcing Activity.
4. Review events of World War II from the previous lesson. Ask students to predict what emotions were going through people’s minds back then.
5. Have students make connections between the “mood” words given, and reasons for people to feel this way during World War II.

Learning Activity

1. Bring up *Mood Men* slide show, or created overhead/smart board slide
 2. Have students come up with musical elements (tonality, tempo, voicing, etc.) that
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might create the desired mood in music. Write the answers in the corresponding *Mood Men*: Joy, Proud, and Lonely.

3. Distribute just the lyrics to the three songs
4. By referencing just the lyrics, have the students predict the mood reflected in each song. Have them write their prediction on the lyric sheet.
5. Ask students to predict the sound of the song, based on the lyrics and the mood it represents, referencing the musical elements in the *Mood Men*.
6. Play the recordings
7. Have students determine if their predictions were correct. (Students might notice that *lonely* is not as sad as they might predict. Explore with them why the music might not be more up beat than they predicted.)
8. Distribute the lyrics and play the songs again, inviting students to sing along.

Reinforcing Activity

1. Put students back in their small groups and redistribute their *Mood Word* paper, along with the *Compose a Mood of your Own* Handout.
2. Instruct students that they are to compose four lines of a song lyric that reflects a specific mood. Each line must fit four 4/4 measures (16 beats each line).
3. When the students complete their four lines, check to make sure that they fit the requirements: reflect the mood and each line fits 16 beats.
4. Review the AABA structure of the previous unit *Is it a Chorus or a Verse? Po-TAY-to / Po-TAH-to*.
4. Invite students to work in their groups to compose/improvise a melody, using the AABA structure, reflecting their appropriate mood.
5. Invite students to perform their song as a group.

Measurement

Teacher Observation – *In the Mood Observation Grading Rubric*
Performance Rubric for *Compose a Mood of Your Own*

“Cab” Calloway

“Cab” Calloway was born Cabell Calloway III on Christmas Day 1907. He was the second of six children, and he knew from an early age that he wanted to be an entertainer.

Calloway is best known for his baritone voice and his ability to “scat”—the singing of seemingly nonsense syllables instead of lyrics. Rumor has it that Cab first started to scat when he forgot the lyrics of the song and just sang “hiddey hiddey ho” in their place. He later capitalized on the moment, using the words in one of his greatest hits, “Minnie the Moocher.”

His upbeat tempo and “jivin” style made him one of the leading singers and bandleaders of his time.

The Dorsey Brothers

Tommy Dorsey was born in 1905, the second son of a musical family. His mother was a music teacher and his father was a band director. He was accomplished on both the trumpet and the trombone.

Tommy's older brother Jimmy was also a talented musician. After playing with other groups, the two formed The Dorsey Brothers Band in the late 1920s.

Unfortunately, like many siblings, the brothers had frequent arguments, leading to Tommy leaving The Dorsey Brothers and starting his own ensemble. He is considered one of the top big band performers of the Swing Era.

“Duke” Ellington

Edward “Duke” Ellington (1899–1974) was a gifted piano player, but considered the orchestra to be his real instrument. Unlike many of the big band artists of his day, Ellington was a composer and an arranger in addition to being a talented performer.

Ellington started out as a jazz performer in the 1920s. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was able to make the transition to big band in the 1930s and, in part, helped define the era with hits like “It Don’t Mean a Thing if It Ain’t Got That Swing.”

After the Big Band Era, Ellington’s Orchestra continued to adapt, remaining successful until Ellington’s death in 1974.

Benny Goodman

Benny Goodman is considered “The King of Swing.” Unlike the Dorseys, who were born into a musical family, Goodman was born (in 1909) to impoverished Russian immigrants fleeing persecution.

Goodman’s remarkable talent on the clarinet got him hired by a dance band when he was only 11. When the Swing Era hit, Goodman was ready to take the world by storm with hits like “Stardust” and “Sing, Sing, Sing.”

Goodman was one of the few band leaders to ignore the color-barriers. He employed the most talented musicians, regardless of race.

NAME _____

Big Band Brotherhood

You will be watching a slide presentation about four big band leaders. You will then hear four songs performed by these leaders and their bands; however, you will *not* be told which leader is performing the song. Use the guide below to take notes.

Your assignment is to:

1. take brief notes about each leader
2. after taking the notes, try to match the bandleader to the song based on the information you gathered.

Slide #1: Cabell “Cab” Calloway

Ethnicity _____ Instrument _____

Important Information: _____

Slide #2: Tommy Dorsey

Ethnicity _____ Instrument _____

Important Information: _____

Slide #3: Edward “Duke” Ellington

Ethnicity _____ Instrument _____

Important Information: _____

Slide #4: Benny Goodman

Ethnicity _____ Instrument _____

Important Information: _____

NAME _____

You will now listen to a piece performed by each leader. Based on your information, try matching the song with the band leader. Your choices are:

- Cabell “Cab” Calloway
- Tommy Dorsey
- Edward “Duke” Ellington
- Benny Goodman

Song #1: *Sing, Sing, Sing*

Who do you think the band leader is? _____

Why? _____

Song #2: *One O'clock Jump*

Who do you think the band leader is? _____

Why? _____

Song #3: *Jumpin' Jive*

Who do you think the band leader is? _____

Why? _____

Song #4: *Opus 1*

Who do you think the band leader is? _____

Why? _____

NAMES _____

COMPOSE A MOOD SONG OF YOUR OWN

You are going to be composing four lines of a song that reflects one of the following moods: joy, pride, loneliness. Your song must follow the four requirements:

- ⇒ must be four lines of text
- ⇒ each line must equal four measures in 4/4 time (your song will be sixteen measure in total)
- ⇒ the second and the fourth lines must rhyme

Use the guide below to help assure that your lyrics fit the required measures. Be prepared to *say* your phrase with the proper rhythms.

4				
4				

The 2nd and 4th lines must have a rhyming end

Now try to improvise a melody for your piece. Remember the AABA structure from the previous unit? See if you can use that structure to help you create a melody. (That means the first, second, and fourth lines will have the same melody, while the third line will have a different but related melody.)

Compose a Mood of Your Own Grading Rubric

(Teacher's Note: As the grading system for the performing arts varies greatly between schools, the following rubric merely establishes the measurable criteria. Additions and subtractions should be made to fit the individual situation.)

Student's Name _____

Criteria	Grade
The students wrote four lines of lyric in 4/4.	
The student used words reflective of a specific mood.	
The student used the proper rhyming sequence.	
The student used AABA structure in composing the melody.	
The students performed their composition with proper rhythmic, pitch, and vocal elements.	
The student cooperated and participated with the group.	
Comment:	
	Final Grade

In the Mood Observation Grading Rubric

(*Teacher's Note:* As the grading system for the performing arts varies greatly between schools, the following rubric merely establishes the measurable criteria. Additions and subtractions should be made to fit the individual situation.)

Student _____

Measurable Criteria	Points/Grade
The student participated in classroom discussion, contributing new ideas to the conversation, and was respectful of the ideas of peers.	
The student thoughtfully completed <i>Mood Words</i> .	
The student thoughtfully completed the <i>Mood Men</i> activity by matching song lyrics to the reflected mood.	
Comment:	
FINAL GRADE	

**Lyrics for *In the Mood: Songs to Lift your Spirits or Bring a Tear*
“Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” “Lovely Weather for Ducks,” and
“Shoo Shoo Baby”**

“Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition”

Down went the gunner, a bullet was his fate.
Down went the gunner, and then the gunner's mate.
Up jumped the sky pilot,* gave the boys a look,
And manned the gun himself as he laid aside the
Book, shouting,

Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.
Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.
Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.
And we'll all stay free.

Praise the Lord and swing into position.
Can't afford to sit around a-wishin'.
Praise the Lord, we're all between perdition,
And the deep blue sea.

Yes the sky pilot said it,
Ya gotta give him credit,
For a sonofagun of a gunner was he, shouting,

Praise the Lord, we're on a mighty mission.
All aboard, we're not a-goin' fishin'.
Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition,
And we'll all stay free.

“Lovely Weather for Ducks”

When it's pouring rain
And people complain
And things aren't worth the shucks,
Don't you yell,
Just say, “Well
Lovely weather for ducks!”

When it's freezing snow,
“Bout zero or so
And the icy side walks glares,
Don't get cold feet”

Just repeat,
“Lovely weather for bears.”

Though all your cares seem double,
There's good in every bad.
So sneer at ol' man trouble
And he'll go away mad.

When your shoelace breaks
And your toothache aches
And you need a few more bucks,
Don't you pout,

Just sing out,
“Heavenly weather for
What could be better for
Lovely weather for ducks.”

“Shoo Shoo Baby”

You've seen him up and down the avenue,
But now he's wearing that navy blue.
She had a tear in the corner of her eye
As he said his last “Good-Bye.”

Shoo-shoo shoo baby.
Shoo-shoo shoo baby
Bye bye baby.
Your papa's off to the seven seas.

Don't cry baby,
Don't cry sigh,
Bye bye baby
When I come back we'll have a life of ease

Seems kind of tough now
To say goodbye this way,
But Pappa's gotta be rough now
So he can be sweet to you another day.

Bye bye baby
Don't cry baby.
Sho sho sho baby
Cause your Papa's off to the seven seas

*“Sky pilot” is a military term for ministers and priests.

ROSIE THE RIVETER

Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb, released
in early 1943

All the day long, □
Whether rain or shine, □
She's a part of the assembly line. □
She's making history, □
Working for victory, □
Rosie the Riveter.

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Keeps a sharp lookout for sabotage,
Sitting up there on the fuselage. □
That little frail can do
More than a male will do
Rosie the Riveter!

Popular WWII recruitment
poster of "Rosie the
Riveter", commissioned by
the U.S. War Production
Commission.

Rosie's got a boyfriend Charlie
Charlie, he's a Marine.
Rosie is protecting Charlie
Working over time on the riveting machine.

When they gave her a production need
She was as proud as a girl could be
There's something true about, □
Red, white, and blue about, □
Rosie the Riveter

NAME _____

INFORMATION SEARCH

Rosie the Riveter: Women Working during World War II

<http://www.nps.gov/pwro/collection/website/rosie.htm>

Why did women need to enter the work force?

Why did the government need to create “Rosie the Riveter”?

Why were women with children encouraged to stay home?

What does “women suffered from *double shift*” mean?

How did men react to women joining the work force?

Rosie the Riveter Grading Rubric

(Teacher's Note: As the grading system for the performing arts varies greatly between schools, the following rubric merely establishes the measurable criteria. Additions and subtractions should be made to fit the individual situation.)

Student _____

Measurable Criteria	Points/Grade
The student completed the letter, clearly stating a stand on women in the work force.	
The student wrote with the proper perspective for the character.	
The student employed proper letter writing format.	
Comment:	