



DECIDEDLY JAZZ DANCEWORKS

TEACHER RESOURCES

To help you understand a little bit about jazz dance and music we offer some information and activities.

Here you will find:

- A short background and history of DJJ
- A short history of Jazz dance
- A list of a range of activities for students and teachers
- Lists of recommended reading for both you and your students, as well as web sites that we have found useful
- A jazz era list with examples of musicians and performing artists to research and/or listen to

Some of the suggested student activities require accompanying jazz music. We have made a couple of suggestions regarding pieces to use, but if you have favourite pieces of jazz music that you feel are appropriate go ahead and use them!

DECIDEDLY JAZZ DANCEWORKS HISTORY

DJD was founded to re-ignite the traditional values of jazz dance. Despite firm roots and a rich history, jazz dance had lost its connections to jazz music and to the vital spirit of the form by the 80's. In 1984, Vicki Adams Willis, Michèle Moss, and Hannah Stilwell joined forces to offer a concert dance opportunity to dancers seeking to steward a new era of jazz dance for the world.

DJD is unique. It is one of only a handful of dance organizations globally that is driven by a jazz mandate. Rooted in the history of jazz dance and music, DJD is constantly innovating and evolving the art form.

Whenever possible, the company works with live music and currently draws from a large repertoire of diverse jazz styles for performances. DJD has toured extensively throughout Canada as well as to Chicago, Japan, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Cuba.

In addition to performing, DJD has a strong educational mandate offering a professional training program to those wishing to specialize in jazz dance, facilitating outreach programs that educate the community about the history and importance of jazz in North American culture and is Calgary's largest recreational dance school. In April 2016, the company moved into the spectacular new DJD Dance Centre, a purpose-built dance facility at 111 12 Avenue, SE Calgary which has already become a dance hub for our city.

"Fundamental to the success of Decidedly Jazz is the élan of its dancers. But equally important is the company's devotion to its cause; furthering jazz music and dance in a manner that is always accessible, consistently entertaining and frequently inspired."

– Calgary Herald

A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAZZ DANCE

Jazz was born in North America of African and European parents. Its roots live in societies where music and dance are integral to everyday life. The history of jazz is a history of fusions. From the initial blending in the 1700's of the music and dance of enslaved African peoples brought together with the sailors who transported them to the Americas, to the Spanish influences which took place in the West Indies resulting in Latin-American music and dance, through to the radical shift of the Jack Cole-led 1950's modern jazz movement – there is a long history of ever-evolving jazz genres.

For many reasons, by the 1980's the majority of "jazz" dance being taught and performed was not incorporating jazz music as its primary source of inspiration or accompaniment. The resulting movement had lost its groundedness, rhythmic sophistication, and focus on individual expression.

Jazz has taken on many guises over the years. Not only are social dance forms from the Charleston to today's Hip Hop considered to be either jazz or cousins of jazz, but all sorts of jazz fusions have also occurred in the past eight decades resulting in such hybrids as Afro-jazz, Latin jazz, modern jazz, ballet-jazz, etc.

Jazz dance as a performing art has often been neglected and misrepresented. Decidedly Jazz is working to re-establish the elegance and excitement of jazz dance while preserving the history and purity of its art form.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

To help you understand, identify, and experience The Clues, here are a few activities that will also get you on your feet moving' and groovin'

“Bended” Knee

- Have students walk from one end of the room/gym to the other without bending their knees
- See how high students can jump without bending their knees for take off
- Can they sit down without bending their knees?
- Now do the above movements allowing for the natural bend in the knee to occur
- What other actions are better accomplished with bent knees?

Torso twist

- Identify where everyone’s torso is on their body
- What bones make up a person’s torso?
- Explore the directions that your torso can move (front and back, side to side, circles, straight lines)
- Can you imagine having a bouncy ball in your torso?
- What are all the different ways you could make it bounce?

Rhythm Circle

- Standing in a large circle, divide into groups of four or so.
- The first four will be group 1, the next group will be group 2, etc.
- Begin by having the entire circle clap a steady 4/4 rhythm (1,2,3,4, 1,2,3,4,,,) at a fairly slow tempo.
- While the rest of the students maintain this steady rhythm, ask group 1 to improvise their own rhythms, each person in group 1 clapping whatever they feel. Remember that the simpler and sparser the improvisation, the better it will sound.
- After a set time, such as eight sets of four, or when a signal is given by the leader, group one joins the group with the steady rhythm and group 2 is given a chance to improvise.
- Once all the groups have completed their improvisation, have group 1 improvise while another group dances to the rhythms in the centre of the circle. Again remember that less is more. Try to focus on reflecting the rhythms clearly with body parts, and always have at least one group maintaining the steady 4/4 clapping.

Rhythm Papers

- Give each child 3 pieces of 8 1/2" X 11" paper
- Leave one piece whole
- Cut one piece into two
- Cut one piece into four
- Decorate pieces in different patterns – keeping the two pieces the same as each other, and the four pieces the same as each other
- Assign these rhythm values:
 - full piece = 4 counts (whole note)
 - 1/2 pieces = 2 counts each (half note)
 - 1/4 pieces = 1 count each (quarter note)
 - Clap each piece with the coordinating rhythm value:
 - full piece (whole note) = 1 clap – 4 counts long
 - 1/2 pieces (half notes) = 1 clap each – 2 counts long
 - 1/4 pieces (quarter notes) = 1 clap each – 1 count long
- Arrange the pieces on the floor in order – shortest to longest – clap the resulting rhythm
- Arrange the pieces in any order you wish – clap the resulting rhythm
- Discuss and explore ways of making different patterns of 4 counts, 8 counts, and 12 counts

IMPROV AND MUSIC CONNECTION

Jazz Moods

- Discuss and create a list of different emotions that we can feel (happiness, sadness, excitement, frustration....)
- Discuss/Explore how we express different emotions with our faces
- Discuss/Explore how we express different emotions with our voices
- Discuss/Explore how we express different emotions with our bodies standing in one spot
- Explore how we express different emotions with our bodies while:
 - walking
 - running
 - transitioning from standing to sitting and sitting to standing

- jumping
- etc.
- Can you find music (any genre) that can display these emotions?
- For something even more fun, secretly assign an emotion to each student and have classmates guess that emotion as the student moves across the room.

Musical Freezes

- Select a piece of music (any genre)
- As a group listen to the music and discuss the quality, feeling, instrumentation, etc (is it happy? bouncy?)
- Have the group stand up, spread out, and encourage them to move their bodies to express the quality or feeling of the music (can they move happy? how many ways can they bounce?)
- While the music is playing encourage exploration of all the different ways that hands can move, feet can move.... legs...arms...head...torso....whole body, still keeping the quality and feeling of the music in mind.
- Guide further exploration and have the students move their bodies in any way that they enjoy (to the music), but at different tempos, levels, energy, size, direction, etc.

Being the Band

- Choose a piece of music that has lots of different instruments that can be distinguished easily. We recommend something like Duke Ellington's "Cottontail"
- Have the students choose one instrument and listen to it as selectively as possible. (is it a trumpet? Is it a piano?)
- Ask them to imagine what that instrument would "look" like if it were translated into movement. Is it soaring in the air or is it trudging along close to the ground? Is it quick and light or heavy and slow?
- After listening to the piece of music several times, ask the students to move their "instruments". Be sure to move only when that particular instrument is audible.

WRITTEN ACTIVITIES

Have the students brainstorm to finish the sentence “Jazz is...” Have their answers written on cards to place on a bulletin board. If this activity is attempted before seeing *Decidedly Jazz*, try it again after the performance and compare the answers. Replace or add to the old answers with any new or improved ones that come out of the second brainstorm.

After the performance, have the students make picture books about the show.

Older students may enjoy researching famous jazz musicians. Assign different musicians to each student, or to different groups of students. Instead of writing their reports, they may want to share the information with the other students by giving a casual oral report. If possible, have them include musical selections featuring their assigned musicians. Some suggestions for musicians to study are Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Bessie Smith, Ella Fitzgerald, Dave Brubeck, Jelly Roll Morton, Dizzy Gillespie, Fats Waller, and Gene Krupa

OTHER ACTIVITIES

“Change”

Using the commands “run”, “freeze” and “change”, have students run around the room in any direction as quickly as possible on your command. Once frozen, you have the choice to say “change”, at which point the students must change very suddenly, something about their stance. They can change their focus, direction, level, position of body parts, anything. For interest, use the “change” command consecutively, and vary the time intervals between each command considerably.

Museum

Imagining that you are all in a museum, have all of the students stand as still as statues while the teacher acts as the custodian, in at the end of the night to dust the statues.. The Custodian looks at all of the statues one at a time and decides, out loud, what he/she thinks each one is. The statues meanwhile, try to slowly change their shape without the custodian seeing them. If a statue is “caught” moving by the custodian they must sit out.

Movement

Stand in a large circle with plenty of room for each person to move. Starting with one person inventing one movement, the person next to them repeats the first movement followed by one that they invent.

Continue around the circle, each person repeating the movements that came before them, and adding their own. If the group is so large that it seems impossible to remember it all, divide them into smaller groups and have each group perform their dance for the others. A variation on this activity is to have each student say their name with their movement.

Obstacles

Brainstorm for obstacles that need to be crossed, such as a puddle or a creek. Try to cross this obstacle in as many different ways as possible. (e.g. One foot to one foot, one foot to two feet, star jump, pike jump, etc.)

Mirror Image

Have students face one another and begin moving very slowly. Try to match one another exactly, as if looking at a mirror image. As an alternate, have the students shadow or follow one another.

Class Picture

Have one student begin by taking an interesting but 'holdable' shape in the centre of the room. One at a time, have the other students join in, creating connecting and complimentary shapes, gradually forming a large and complex "photograph". Try having the photo come to life and begin to move slowly into other shapes.

Move Through Space

Create (or have the students create) a sequence of approximately four movements that move through space. Movements could include, walking, hopping, moving one body part at a time, etc. Have the students do the sequence travelling on a diagonal line across the room. Try variations on the movement such as doing it big, small, fast, slow, sneakily, boldly, loosely, tightly, etc.

TEACHERS READING LIST

JAZZ DANCE

- Andreau, Helene. Jazz Dance: An Adult Beginner's Guide. Englewood Cliffe, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall , 1983(This book has an excellent introduction, including history as well as a comparison of ballet, modern and jazz, Ignore the "how-to" section)
- Cayou, Delores Kirton. Modern Jazz Dance. Palo Alto, California: National Press Books, 1971. (Again this book has a good introduction and history section, but ignore the "how-to" section)
- Emery, Lynne Fauley. Black Dance in the United States From 1619 to 1970. Palo Alto, California: National Press Books, 1972
- Giordano, Gus. Anthology of Jazz Dance. Evanston Illinois: Orion Publishing House, 1978 (A collection of articles written about jazz dance from 1929-1974)
- Knaines, Minda Goodman and Kan, Ester. Jump Into Jazz: A Primer For The Beginning Jazz Dance Student. Palo Alto, California: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1983
- Malone, Jacqui. Steppin' on the Blues. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996
- Stearns, Marshall, and Stearns, Jean. Jazz Dance. New York: Macmillan, 1968(A bit of a tough read but this is by far the most comprehensive book on jazz dance history)Thorpe, Edward. Black Dance. London, England: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1989 (Easy to comprehend, good photos)

JAZZ MUSIC

There is no shortage of books on Jazz Music, here are but a few.

- Abe, K. Jazz Giants: A Visual Retrospective. New York: Billboard Publications Inc., 1986. (Photos only)
- Axelrod, Alan. The Complete Idiot's Guide to Jazz. New York; Alpha Books, 1999
- Berendt, J.E. Jazz: A Photo History. New York: Exeter books, 1982. (Photos only)
- Case. Brian and Britt, Stan. The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz. New York: Harmony Books, 1978 (or latest edition)
- Clayton, Peter and Gammond, Peter. The Guinness Jazz Companion. Great Britain: Guinness Publishing Ltd., 1989

- Dale, Rodney. The World of Jazz. New York: Schirmer Books, 1978
- David, Ron. Jazz For Beginners New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Inc., 1995
- Gelly, Dave. The Giants of Jazz. New York: Schirmer Books, 1986
- Gridley, Mark C. Jazz Styles: History and Analysis. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1991
- Sutro, Dirk. Jazz For Dummies. California: IDG Books Worldwide Inc., 1998
- Tanner, Paul, Paul O.W and Gerow, Maurice. A Study of Jazz. Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers. 1981

STUDENT READING LIST

The books on the following reading list are ones that we recommend for student reading. This list includes books at several reading levels. We have left it up to you to determine which ones are suitable for your students.

Please let us know if you come across other books that we should include on this list.

- Andrede, Giles & Parker-Rees, Guy. Giraffes Can't Dance, Orchard, 1999
- Chuck, Galey and David, Davis. Jazz Cats, Pelican Publishing, 2001
- Diggory Shields, Carol. Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp, Candlewick, 1997
- Dillon, Leo & Diane. Jazz on a Saturday Night, The Blue Sky Press, 2007
- Gollub, Matthew. The Jazz Fly, Tortuga Pr, 2000
- Igus, Toyomi. I see the Rhythm, Children's Book Press, 1998
- Mour, Stanley I. American Jazz Musicians, Enslow Pub Inc, 1998
- Orgill, Roxane. If I Only Had a Horn. Young Louis Armstrong, Sandpiper, 2004
- Boston Weatherford, Carole. Sound That Jazz Makes, Walker Books for Young Readers, 2000
- Buleigh, Robert. Lookin' for Bird in the Big City, Harcourt Children's Books; 1st edition, 2001
- Coleman, Evelyn. To Be a Drum, Albert Whitman & Company, 1998
- Collier, Lincoln. Inside Jazz. New York: Four Winds Press, 1973.
- Cutcher, Jenai. Gotta Dance! The Rhythms of Jazz & Tap, Rosen Central, 2004
- Dillon, Diane. Rap a Tap Tap, Think of That, Blue Sky Press; First Edition, First Printing. Edition, 2002
- Ehrhardt, Karen. This Jazz Man, Live Oak Music Maker; Har/Com edition, 2009
- Friedman, Carol. Nicky the Jazz Cat, powerHouse Books, 2003
- Hentoff, Nat. Journey Into Jazz. New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1968
- Hughes, Langston. Jazz. New York: Franklin Watts Inc., 1982

- Hughes, Langston. The First Book Of Jazz. United States: Franklin Watts Inc., 1976
- Hughes, Shirley. Ella's Big Chance-A Jazz-Age Cinderella, Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers, 2004
- Isadora, Pachel. Ben's Trumpet. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1979
- Isadora, Rachel Max. New York: Macmillan, 1976
- Keeler, Patricia A. & Leita, Julio T. Drumbeat in our Feet, Lee & Low Books, 2006
- Lester, Julius and Cohen, Lester. The Blues Singers: 10 Who Rocked the World, 2001
- Pinkney, Brian. Max Found Two Sticks, Aladdin, 1997
- Weatherford, Carole Boston. The Sound the Jazz Makes. 2000
- Webb, Miller and Riley. Rent Party Jazz, Lee & Low Books, 2001

JAZZ LINKS

Jazz Dance

- www.decidedlyjazz.com
- www.jazzinamerica.org
- www.streetswing.com

Jazz Music

- <http://www.vervemusicgroup.com>
- www.iconsconscious.co.uk/musichistory/index.htm
- www.allaboutjazz.com
- <http://pbskids.org/chuck/index.html#/jazz>

JAZZ MUSIC ERAS

The artists listed below each era are examples that you may want to research and explore with your students. Please note, this is by no means a complete list.

Era

Late 1800's early 1900's – Ragtime:

- Scott Joplin – <http://www.scottjoplin.org>

1920's – Early Jazz

- Jelly Roll Morton – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jelly_Roll_Morton
- Louis Armstrong (early work) – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Armstrong
- Bix Beiderbecke
- King Oliver – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_%22King%22_Oliver
- Dixieland: “White” version of Early Jazz or parallel of what was called New Orleans Combo Style
- The Original Dixieland Jass Band
– http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_Dixieland_Jass_Band
- New Orleans Rhythm Kings

1930's-40's – Swing:

- Duke Ellington – <http://www.dukeellington.com>
- Count Basie – <http://www.countbasie.com/>
- Fletcher Henderson
- Benny Carter
- Chick Webb
- Cab Calloway – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cab_Calloway
- Glen Miller
- Ella Fitzgerald – <http://www.ellafitzgerald.com/>

1940's – Bop:

- Charlie Parker – <http://cmgww.com/music/parker/>
- Dizzy Gillespie – <http://www.dizzygillespie.com>
- Thelonious Monk
- Max Roach
- Ray Brown
- Bud Powell

1950 – Hard Bop:

- Cannonball Adderly
- Horace Silver
- Art Blakey

1960 – Free Jazz:

- Ornette Coleman
- Charles Mingus
- McCoy Tyner
- Today's Jazz Groove:
- Leon Parker

- Wynton Marsalis
- Buckshot Le Fonque
- Rebirth of Cool series of Cd's
- Modeski Martin and Wood

Cousins of Jazz

Funk:

- Earth Wind and Fire
- Commodores
- Funkadelics
- Sly and the Family Stone
- Maceo Parker

Blues:

- Robert Johnson
- Muddy Waters
- John Lee Hooker
- Koko Taylor
- BB King

Hip Hop:

- Run DMC
- Outkast
- Missy Elliott