teacher resource guide  schooltime  performance series

soul on soul: a musical tribute honoring mary lou williams

arts  education  njpac
Mary Lou Williams was a jazz pianist, composer and arranger known for her unique harmonies and orchestrations as well as her extraordinary skill on the piano. Over the course of an impressive career of nearly 70 years, she wrote compositions for many legendary jazz musicians, including Duke Ellington, who once said, “Mary Lou Williams is perpetually contemporary.”

Drummer Allison Miller and bassist Derrick Hodge lead a band of instrumentalists and vocalists in capturing the spirit of Mary Lou Williams in this modern reimagining of her groundbreaking composition. In Soul on Soul, Miller and Hodge bring contemporary instrumentation and harmony to Williams’ devotional hymn.

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**Part 1: About** | Pre-show audio, 6-9 minutes
Includes: An introduction to the performance, artists & venue, welcome message
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos
Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino
Theme and outro music by Slim Beats from NJPAC Hip Hop Arts and Culture Program
Additional music by Epidemic Sound and Podcast Music
Voiceover by Michael Aquino
Welcome message voiced by Deanna Witkowski

**Part 2: Connect** | Post-show audio, 8-12 minutes
Includes: Reflection questions, a look at the life of Mary Lou Williams and a brief selection of vocabulary words
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos
Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino
Theme and outro music by Slim Beats from NJPAC Hip Hop Arts and Culture Program
Additional music by Epidemic Sound and Podcast Music
Share-out prompt voiced by Deanna Witkowski

**Part 3: Spotlight** | Post-show audio, 14-16 minutes
Includes: An exclusive interview with a Mary Lou Williams biographer, discussion starters
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos
Interviewee: Deanna Witkowski
Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino
Theme and outro music by Slim Beats from NJPAC Hip Hop Arts and Culture Program. Sample clip of Lonely Moments composed by Mary Lou Williams; arranged by Deanna Witkowski
Additional music by Epidemic Sound and Podcast Music
### Inspired Ideas in the Classroom

#### Teacher Focus

Before the performance, provide some background knowledge for the class by:
1. Reading the article on Mary Lou Williams from the National Women’s History Museum, or listen to this 5-minute broadcast on Williams’ life from NPR.
2. Reading about her choral work “Black Christ of the Andes.”
3. Filling in the crossword puzzle in Activity Sheet 1. For older students or a more advanced lesson, use the alternative activity on Activity Sheet 1 to create a biography of Mary Lou Williams using the internet.

#### Student Activity

Mary Lou Williams was a jazz pianist whose long and highly active career has encompassed ragtime, vaudeville, blues, big band swinging, bebop, the jazz avant garde and religious music. Read or listen about Mary Lou Williams and complete the crossword in Activity Worksheet 1. Alternatively, you can complete the research project of Mary Lou Williams on the internet.

#### NJ Student Learning Standards

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### Prepare for the Performance

**Before the Performance**

- Briefly discuss with students what they may already know about the performance, and what they expect to see.
- Play the performance of “Black Christ of the Andes” for students, which includes the musical motifs of Soul on Soul. Ask students to listen and try to analyze what they’re hearing. Students can attempt to memorize the melody, or “draw” the melody with a pen or their finger on the air. Discuss traits and qualities of the music.

**Experience the Performance**

- After each performance, have the class discuss the presenter’s work, as well as the social, cultural and historical significance of the person/group they paid tribute to.
- Rehearse your creative composition by yourself and with a partner or small group. Revise your composition based on feedback from your classmates until you are happy with your work. Watch other classmates rehearse and provide positive feedback on their compositions as well. Feedback can be phrased using “I” statements, such as: I like, I notice, I wonder, etc.

**Reflect, respond and read**

- Ask students to reflect on the performance they just watched. Instruct students to read this article about Soul on Soul, and then separate students into small groups where they can share their reflections.

**Focus**

- The final project for this lesson is to write a rap, song or poem to pay tribute to an influential figure. Have students work on Activity Sheet 2, but stop at the last paragraph where it starts the creative composition process. Assist students during their research process.

**Originate**

- Ask students to complete the last section of Activity Sheet 2 by brainstorming their creative compositions. It may take more than two sessions to create and edit their work. Remind students that their work should be original, and that to remember why their chosen influential figure is important.

**Rehearse**

- Allow students to rehearse their creative compositions individually and with partners or small groups. Remind students to give positive feedback to their partners or group members. Encourage students to present their work to you if they want additional feedback.

**Make Magic**

- Before each performance, ask the student to briefly state who they chose to pay tribute to, why they chose that person/group and what they will be performing.
- After each performance, have the class discuss the presenter’s work, as well as the social, cultural and historical significance of the person/group they paid tribute to.

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**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills**

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FIND THE STANDARDS
For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:
NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS curriculums.nj.gov/ELA-Literacy
NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS socialstudies.org/standards
NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS nationalartstandards.org

resources

Websites
National Women's History Museum womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-lou-williams
NPR | Mary Lou Williams, Missionary Of Jazz npr.org/2019/09/11/758076879/mary-lou-williams-missionary-of-jazz?fbclid=IwAR3H8QxHdDmGdmxT5_OFe3N_Vz5v15fZ-Aou3l8F62JulyJcG8bH62W
Mary Lou Williams: Music for the Soul (Biography) womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-lou-williams
Mary Lou Williams, Missionary Of Jazz womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-lou-williams

NJ PAC | About NJ PAC njpac.org/about

Vocabulary

Arranger A person who interprets music that's already written.
Bebop A style of jazz music originating in the 1940s that features fast tempos, shifting rhythms and complex harmonies.
Blues A type of music which was developed by African American musicians in the southern United States. It is characterized by a slow tempo and a strong rhythm.
Chorale A formal song written to be sung by a choir, especially in a church. It usually features harmony.
Composer A person who writes music.
Dynamic In music, dynamic means how quietly or loudly a piece of music should be played.
Instrumentation The particular combination of musical instruments that are used to play a piece of music.
Meter In music, meter refers to regularly recurring patterns and accents such as bars and beats.
Ragtime A type of popular music from about 1890 to 1920, characterized by strong syncopation in even time. This form of music was influential in the development of jazz.
Vaudeville A form of live entertainment that was popular in the early 20th century. Usually performances featured several theatrical, dance and musical acts.
In-School Residencies: NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person and virtual residencies are designed to meet your needs, and you’ll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It’s the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development: Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC’s forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school, and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something… you’ll also have fun and be inspired.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at artseducation@njpac.org. Visit njpac.org/education

Saturday Programs: NJPAC’s Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.


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