teacher resource guide assembly series

from jazz to hip hop featuring mark gross quartet and dj mike-doelo

arts education njpac
discover. create. grow.
The Mark Gross Quartet and DJ Mike-Doelo will take you on a sonic journey exploring two of America's greatest musical innovations—jazz and hip hop—and the language, rhythms and cultural significance of the two art forms, including their close connections. The performance will be interactive and feature a call-and-response dynamic between the audience and performers—like the ones found at a great hip hop concert or musically in jazz between musicians.

**Mark Gross**, who leads his namesake quartet, has been the Director of Jazz Instruction at New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) since 2015. Gross is a dedicated and accomplished jazz saxophonist who has toured the world for over 25 years with leading jazz luminaries, such as Delfeayo Marsalis, Dave Holland, Dizzy Gillespie, Nancy Wilson, James Moody and Regina Carter. He has also performed with the Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, the Duke Ellington Orchestra and the Charles Mingus Big Band, among others.

Gross has recorded over 100 jazz recordings, including two that won GRAMMY® Awards with the Dave Holland Big Band. Gross also recorded albums under his own name: Preach Daddy in 1997, Riddle of the Sphinx in 2001, Blackside in 2012, and Mark Gross with Strings in 2018.

Gross attended the prestigious Baltimore School for the Arts and then continued his studies at Berklee College of Music, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree in music performance. Upon graduation in 1986, Gross began his professional career. He has extensive experience as an educator and has held positions at Princeton University, Prins Claus Conservatory and William Patterson University. Since 2010, Mark has been a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts.

**DJ Mike-Doelo** has been spinning records in the New York City area for the past 16 years. Growing up in Harlem, Mike-Doelo was inspired at a young age to turn his passion for music into a career. Over the last decade, Mike-Doelo has also transcended the art of the DJ as a sound engineer, providing clients and venues with the highest sound quality.

Mike-Doelo works extensively with live performers as the Music Director and featuring DJ of The Hip Hop Culture Center in Harlem. Mike-Doelo also provides sound management for clients including BET, Jack and Jill, Global Artists Coalition, All Things Traffic, The First Annual Tribute to Women in Hip Hop, FDIC, Chase Bank, the NYC Department of Education and the New York Police Department.

Known for his versatility and charisma, Mike-Doelo has rocked crowds at club hot spots such as Katora, Club Blvd, Cherry Lounge and Jimmy’s Uptown. Mike-Doelo constantly adds more creativity to his repertoire. Most recently, his video mixing technology is catapulting him into the future of multi-media entertainment.

**How did your professional training and experience inform your performances?**

**Mark Gross**: I started playing saxophone when I was 6 or 7 years old. I initially learned to play by ear. Growing up in a home where music was often played, mostly gospel music such as Mahalia Jackson or Reverend C. L. Franklin, I was deeply influenced by the emotional impact of what I saw and heard in church. I went to church several times during the week where I’d hear the choirs sing gospel hymns.

After attending the Baltimore School for the Arts, I attended Berklee College of Music. There I was able to study with thousands of people from all over the world who shared my interests and love for jazz music. Along with others I was influenced by a more global view of music that was steeped in the foundation and tradition of gospel music and jazz music. After graduation I moved to New York—a city unique in the energy it brings to music. I was afforded opportunities to be on the bandstand with the masters of jazz such as Dizzy Gillespie, James Moody and Herbie Hancock, to name a few. These musicians nurtured and mentored me. Having been mentored for over 30 years by these elder statesmen, I learned how to be a professional artist on and off the bandstand. I realize that today’s younger musicians do not have the same opportunity to perform with greats like Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, McCoy Tyner or Mercer Ellington, the son of Duke Ellington, which could give them a different perspective on performance.

**Tell us more about the Mark Gross Quartet. How do you feel your sound compares with other jazz groups? What makes your quartet unique?**

**MG**: Typically a jazz quartet consists of an acoustic bass, acoustic piano, jazz drum kit and a horn player—in this case, my alto saxophone. What set any jazz quartet or any band apart from another band are the individuals who make up the group. Their personalities, the combination of their artistry, the music that they play, their influences, etc., all lead to the uniqueness of that band. My quartet was blessed by the masters, so the music we play, the songs that we write, even the way we talk about the music, are reflections of those influences.

**DJ Mike-Doelo**: tell us which artists—both jazz and hip hop—inspired you and made you decide on a career in music.

**MG**: Many hip hop artists are aware of jazz music. They know who the musicians and producers are on the records and sometimes try to emulate their sound either by taking a sample of the recording or just the groove of the song. One example is the great jazz producer, David Axelrod. A lot of hip hop artists use his sound. Often, early hip hop producers looked for some kind of jazzy aspect as their music backdrop. This included drums or something with a swing beat, which is different from four on the floor (a steady, uniformly accented beat in 4/4 time). When you listen to early hip hop music, it swing and a lot of that was jazz influenced.

One of the things we highlight in the program is the similarities between the two genres and how they’re more closely related than not. In jazz, we talk about improvisation, rhythm, melody, harmony, etc. We then parallel that with the same aspects in hip hop, in terms of rhythm, melody, improvisation, and the spoken word, the poetic aspect of hip hop. So there is a definite bridge back and forth between the two genres.

**How do you think the two genres can benefit from each other?**

**MG**: I want them to walk away with a deeper curiosity and interest in jazz music. I want them to know that jazz is an American art form, created by African Americans. It is now inclusive of the whole American/worldly diaspora. They should realize that just like hip hop music, was created out of a cry to be heard by those who were oppressed. These musicians wanted to raise social consciousness of their communities to talk about social issues. Of course, jazz isn’t always heavy, dark and full of outcry. It’s also about happiness and reasons for folks to gather and celebrate each other or simply dance and have a good time. In tying the two music genres together, I’d like students to recognize that a lot of the hip hop this generation loves is often influenced by jazz and vice versa. So they’ll enjoy jazz as much as they enjoy hip hop.

**Do you feel there is a direct line between jazz and hip hop? If so, can you explain?**

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**Many students don’t know much about jazz. What do you want them to learn from your performance?**

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**continued...**
How would you like young audiences to approach jazz and hip hop?

DJ Mike: One of the things that younger people don’t have right now is the record labels, which means they can’t readily follow a path to investigate an artist, following the connections all the way back. When I was listening to early hip hop, I always used to read the labels. I wanted to know who the people who worked on this project were. I’d look at the label and search for the artist online, which was how I’d learn, for instance, which artists were jazz-influenced. So when I talk to young people, I always encourage them not only to listen to the music, but also to investigate its roots. They can do some research online—https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Music has a whole section. Or they can visit other websites like http://www.whosampled.com, where you can input the artist and the song to learn if it was sampled or what the influences were.

What advice would you give to aspiring musicians and performers?

MG: Be open-minded and curious about all genres of music. Don’t listen to jazz or hip hop only. Listen to gospel, fun, jazz, hip hop, rap, classical and country. Even if you aren’t an aspiring musician, you’ll be influenced by the music. Exposure to music and art will enable you to envision other creative things in life where you’ll find success. If you are a serious aspiring musician, I would encourage you to be disciplined, focused and dedicated. If you aren’t, you are not giving yourself a chance to be successful.

In the Spotlight

An Interview with Mark Gross and DJ Mike-Doelo

How would you like young audiences to approach jazz and hip hop?

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Cultural Connections

Born in New Orleans in the early 20th century, the roots of jazz music reach deep through the African-American experience. Its early innovators took inspiration from African and European musical traditions, then over the years, they added different spices—mixing and melding elements of Latin music, Caribbean influences, rock, acid and more. These days, jazz has branched into many forms and variations and is considered by some prominent critics as America’s classical music.

After the Civil War, the first jazz bands emerged with ragtime played on tiny pianos and brass bands trumpeting on the streets. The rhythms, bluesy feel and individualistic style of the music still harked back to African roots, but the instrumentation and harmonies were European. The improvisation at the heart of every jazz form evolved from both traditions.

The structure of jazz is built on individual expression but despite the freedom and improvised nature of jazz music, there are several common elements that help to define something as being jazz: form, rhythm, melody and harmony—four of the most basic elements. The structure is typically more complex than other popular forms of music. And because of its improvised nature, with multiple melodies and rhythms working together, first-time listeners might find it hard to follow.

Jazz today reaches an international audience and its performers hail from cultures and traditions around the world have influenced new musical styles, particularly hip hop music. Contemporary hip hop and slam poetry artists were inspired by poets such as Langston Hughes in their phrasing and the call and response found in the church. Hip hop as music and culture formed during the 1970’s when block parties become increasingly popular in New York City, particularly among African American youth residing in the Bronx.

Block parties featured DJs who played popular music, especially funk and soul music. DJs began isolating the percussive breaks of popular songs, a common technique of Jamaican dub music, introduced into New York by Caribbean immigrants such as DJ Kool Herc, who is considered a “founding father of hip hop.” Turntablism techniques—such as scratching, beat mixing and/or matching, and beat juggling—eventually developed in the musical breaks, creating a base that could be rapped over. Samples from jazz songs have figured prominently in much of hip hop, aided by turntables and then by computers.

Over the years, rap songs have evolved, from the relatively simple beats of classic group Run-DMC to the strange, surrealist songs of Ski Mask the Slump God, a prominent rapper who has developed a following among Gen Z fans in the SoundCloud platform. His rapping is strange and unconventional, compared to more lyrical rappers like Eminem, but his phrasing retains an inventive, off-kilter syncopation that can be directly linked back to the most avant-garde forms of jazz.
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Focus</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
<th>NJ Student Learning Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare for the performance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research:</strong> Divide students into small groups. Assign them each a jazz musician and a hip hop musician. Provide them with the research activity template which they will use to conduct research. <strong>Jazz to Hip Hop Activity 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7. NJSLSA.R6. NJSLSA.R5. NJSLSA.W2. <strong>Social Studies</strong> A.132.D.6.b. <strong>NJ Arts Standard</strong> 1.2 History of the Arts &amp; Culture</td>
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<td><strong>Tech Connect:</strong> Use research to create a short, multimedia PowerPoint to share with the class. If available, assign templates via Google Classrooms so that students can work collaboratively to complete the task.</td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>• Sample Jazz Musicians:</strong> Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Thelonious Monk</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>• Sample Hip Hop Musicians:</strong> Kool DJ Herc, Grandmaster Flash, Salt-n-Pepa, Tupac Shakur, Missy Elliott, Common, Queen Latifah, Jay-Z</td>
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<td><strong>• Prior to the performance, have students share their slides with the class. Presentations should include facts, photos, instrumental and/or video links.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Experience the performance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection:</strong> Consider the following concepts while you are watching the show: Do you think music can tell a story? During the show, listen to see if you can hear any stories. What emotions does the music evoke for you?</td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7.</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7. <strong>NJ Arts Standard</strong> 1.2 History of the Arts &amp; Culture</td>
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<td>• What new learning did you take away?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What are some things you were left wondering about?</td>
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<td>• How did you feel during the performance?</td>
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<td>• What happens in your mind when you listen to a song with or without lyrics?</td>
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<td>• If you were a performer in the show, what would you have done differently?</td>
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<td><strong>Reflect, respond and read</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Explain to students that they are going to be creating a music-inspired art/writing gallery. Explain that they will have multiple opportunities to draw/write original pieces in response to the music and these selections will be used to create a gallery that will be “open to the public.”</td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7. <strong>NJ Arts Standard</strong> 1.3 Performance</td>
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<td><strong>Have students listen to various famous jazz/hip hop compositions from the musicians they researched before the show. As they listen, ask them to draw/write what they “see” and “hear.” Have students share their ideas in small groups. Ask them to identify any common threads (ie: mood/theme) in their work.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Originate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Have students select one piece that they are most proud of. Have them work on editing that piece in preparation of a gallery. Provide them with the activity template to be completed and handed in with their finished piece. Under the heading inspiration, ask students to use the information they gained throughout this unit to explain their thought process used when creating their original works of art:</strong> <strong>Jazz to Hip Hop Activity 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7. NJSLSA.SL2. NJSLSA.SL3. <strong>NJ Arts Standard</strong> 1.3 Performance</td>
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<td><strong>Cross-Curricular Connections:</strong> A collaboration between the visual arts teacher and the writing teacher would afford students the opportunity to create visual and written responses to the music.</td>
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<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rehearse</strong></td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7. NJSLSA.W5.</td>
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<td><strong>Curators will design and organize the works into an exhibit. Guides will practice reading the group created talking points. Assign organizational roles to students in addition to the curators/guides. Hold a “dress rehearsal” in-class prior to inviting in guests.</strong></td>
<td><strong>NJ Arts Standard</strong> 1.3 Performance</td>
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<td><strong>Select a curator for each exhibit (song). Have them collect the art/writing and labels for their section. Provide them with space/materials to display the work. Assign two assistants. Select a guide. This person will be responsible for discussing their chosen exhibit at the Gallery Opening. Assign two editors. Together they will write the “talking points” for the exhibit.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Make magic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Play music by the artists featured in the slide presentations. Invite guests to move through the gallery. Project slides on a smartboard. Allow time for curators and guides to field questions about their exhibits.</strong></td>
<td><strong>English Language Arts</strong> NJSLSA.R7. <strong>NJ Arts Standard</strong> 1.2 History of the Arts &amp; Culture</td>
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<td><strong>Create a program for the gallery opening. Invite parents and colleagues to a Gallery Opening. Create a Guest Book for visitors to sign in and leave feedback/comments about the event.</strong></td>
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All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1. Understanding the elements and principles of dance, music, theatre, and visual art

1.1. Movement

1.2. Space

1.3. Time

1.4. Energy

1.5. Relationship

1.6. Visual Organization

1.7. Visual Composition

1.8. Process

1.9. Interpretation

1.10. Evaluation

1.11. Communication

2. Performance

2.1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

2.2. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

2.3. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

2.4. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical contexts.

3. History

3.1. Relate the influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

3.2. Relate the influence of the arts throughout history and across disciplines.

3.3. Relate the influence of the arts throughout history and across technologies.

4. Appreciation

4.1. Assess the impact of artists, writers, and musicians historically.

4.2. Assess the impact of artists, writers, and musicians regionally.

4.3. Assess the impact of artists, writers, and musicians locally.

4.4. Assess the impact of artists, writers, and musicians personally.

5. Critical Thinking

5.1. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

5.2. Research, support, and present a position in defense of an artwork or development in the arts.

5.3. Analyze and evaluate an artwork and artistic process.

5.4. Evaluate and interpret an artwork and artistic process.

5.5. Relate artwork and artistic processes within a broader context.

6. Communication

6.1. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

6.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex literary and historical content.

6.3. Write analytical texts to determine the central ideas or events in a text and analyze how complex the ideas or events are developed in the text.

7. Collaboration

7.1. Work collaboratively with diverse partners to build, analyze, and present a point of view.

7.2. Develop and maintain relationships with peers and mentors.

7.3. Research, support, and present a position in defense of an artwork or development in the arts.

7.4. Evaluate and interpret an artwork and artistic process.

7.5. Relate artwork and artistic processes within a broader context.

8. Creative Thinking

8.1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

8.2. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

8.3. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

8.4. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical contexts.

9. Technology

9.1. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

9.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as needed.

9.3. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, and orally.

10. Evaluation

10.1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

10.2. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

10.3. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

10.4. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical contexts.

11. Artistic Judgment

11.1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

11.2. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

11.3. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

11.4. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical contexts.
New Orleans jazz
A style of jazz developed in New Orleans early in the 20th century, influenced by blues, ragtime, marching band music, and minstrelsy, and marked by polyphonic group improvisation.

Old School
Refers to the early days of hip hop; some people's definition of old school may be different, depending on their generation. Old school can refer to artists like DJ Kool Herc or even LL Cool J.

Ram
A style of popular music, developed by disc jockeys and African Americans in the inner city in the late 1970s, in which an insistent, recurring beat pattern provides the background and counterpart for rapid, slanty, and often boastful rhyming patter glily intoned by a vocalist or vocalists.

Sample
The act of taking a portion, or sample, of one sound recording and reusing it as an instrument or a sound recording in a different song or piece.

Scatting
Singing without words. Often a vocalist will make up nonsense syllables and even make their singing sound like a musical instrument in this improvisational form.

Spoken word
Poetry intended for onstage performance, rather than exclusively designed for the page. While often associated with hip hop culture, it also has strong ties to storytelling, modern poetry, post-modern performance, and monologue theatre, as well as jazz, blues, and folk music.

Swing
A rhythm made with triplets instead of standard 1/8 notes in most other musical forms.

Syncopation
Rhythms which accent beats in unusual ways, often where you least expect them. Syncopation gives energy and surprise to the music. Plus it keeps the musicians and their listeners on their toes.

Turntablism
The art of manipulating sounds and creating music using turntables and a DJ mixer. Turntablists generally prefer direct-drive turntables over belt-driven or other types. The word turntablism was coined in 1995 by DJ Babu to describe the difference between a DJ who simply plays records at parties and one who performs by physically manipulating the records, stylus, and mixer to produce new sounds. The term coincided with the resurgence of hip hop DJing in the 1990s.
The arts in your school

In-School Residencies: Drama + Social Studies, Dance + Math. It all adds up in NJPAC's In-School Residencies in which professional teaching artists partner with educators to bring the arts into the classroom. Each 7- to 10-week program culminates in a student performance or an interactive family workshop. All programs address state and national standards. NJPAC is the regional provider in New Jersey for international arts programs like the NJ Wolf Trap Program and Dancing Classrooms Global.

Assemblies: NJPAC presents engaging school assembly programs that are presented by professional artists that invite students into the enchanting world of live performance. NJPAC's assembly series promotes cultural awareness and invigorates learning by presenting works that are connected to your school's curriculum.

Professional Development: NJPAC Professional Development engages classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists as integrated teams that combine arts pedagogy, content, classroom management and social behavioral strategies to ignite and inspire arts-rich classrooms. Working as a team empowers teachers to share practice and strategy. Our goal is to inspire artistic and intellectual capacities in students, building competence and confidence in both students and teachers.

Study the arts at njpac

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 film, contemporary modern dance, hip hop, jazz, 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.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call our education sales team at 973.353.7058 or email artseducation@njpac.org. Visit www.njpac.org/education

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