

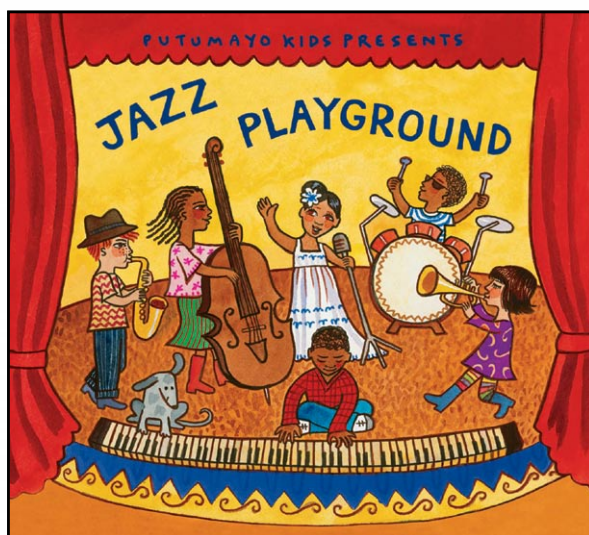
# Jazz Playground Teaching Guide

## INTRODUCTION:




**Jazz Playground** introduces children to examples of a musical genre that began in the United States and has spread around the world. You will visit nine countries on six different continents and hear some of the most common jazz instrument combinations (saxophone, piano, bass, drums, guitar) in addition to some more unique instruments including violin, flute and the West African balafón. There are many kinds of jazz including swing, ragtime, Latin, bebop and boogie woogie, but whatever style and whatever country or continent jazz comes from, it has a sound that students will begin to recognize. This guide provides cultural information, musical terms and activities to engage children in exploring the rich musical variety of jazz around the world.

## TRACK LISTING:

1. Lewis Franco & The Missing Cats \* Stomp, Stomp
2. Chris McKhool \* Spider-Man
3. Triocéphale \* Sur le Pont d'Avignon
4. Jose Conde \* Cumbamba
5. Oran Etkin with Charenee Wade \* Little Lamb Jam
6. Kinderjazz \* Gazooba
7. Gui Tavares \* Dois Meninos
8. Barbara Morrison \* Sing a Song of Sixpence
9. Trapperdetrap \* Zuignapje
10. Selloane with Famoro Dioubaté \* Shortnin' Bread
11. The Mighty Buzzniks \* Agree and Disagree
12. Modern Conya \* Oyatsu no Jikan
13. Ingrid Lucia \* This Little Light of Mine



## ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- #1) Let's Jazz It Up!  #2) Blow That Horn!  #3) Mixing It Up! 

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

### Students will:

- Train their ears to identify basic instruments of jazz
- Gain an understanding of how jazz musicians make a song their own
- Listen to the ways musicians blend different traditions
- Understand that music travels and is shared all around the world
- Discover rhythm as a part of their own world
- Search the map of the world to locate countries where jazz is played

## CULTURE & HISTORY:

Jazz can be energetic, happy, moody, wild or quiet. It can make you want to snap your fingers, tap your toes or get up and dance. Jazz was born in America in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. Its strongest roots are found in the melodies and rhythms sung by Africans who were brought across the ocean to be slaves on Southern plantations. The slaves often sang, matching the rhythm of their digging, hoeing, planting or harvesting to the rhythms of their homelands. European songs, gospel music and U.S. Army brass bands also influenced the sound of jazz. Over time, the music of different people around the world was combined to create a brand new form of American music, which, in turn, traveled back around the globe to become truly international.

Jazz is all about communication. Each jazz musician listens very carefully to what the other musicians are playing and plays something that sounds good with what he or she hears. Jazz is often like a conversation--the saxophone makes a musical statement and the drums, bass and piano answer back. Jazz musicians often use a technique called improvisation, which means the music they play is not written down but composed on the spot! Some famous players have very colorful names like Jelly Roll Morton, Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Count Basie. What would you like your jazz name to be?

## ACTIVITIES



### #1) Let's jazz it up! (USA/Israel)

This jazzy version of *Mary Had a Little Lamb* is a great way for students to see how jazz musicians improvise and have fun playing with a familiar song.

#### **You will need:**

- CD player
- *Little Lamb Jam* (Track # 5)
- Song lyrics
- Map of the world

#### **Activity:**

##### **Explore the lyrics...**

1. Ask if the students know the song *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. If so, can they recite the words? Can they sing the tune? Hand out the traditional lyrics (found on [www.putumayokids.com](http://www.putumayokids.com)) or read the lyrics to the children. Listen to *Little Lamb Jam*. Ask the students what they notice about the words. Which parts in this version are the same as the words in the traditional version? Which are different? Discuss how the new words enhance or change the general feeling of the song. Have students make up some of their own additional words.

2. Ask if students have ideas about why the song is called *Little Lamb Jam*. Explain that jazz musicians use the word "jamming" when they talk about playing music together.

##### **Explore the music...**

1. Explain that jazz musicians often "jam" on a familiar tune—playing with the music by adding new parts or changing the rhythm. Usually, they will make up their own version on the spot. This is called improvisation.

2. Listen to the track again. Have students raise their hands when they hear the traditional parts of the song. How do the new parts the singer has added change the song (mood, meaning, attitude, etc.)? Do they think the changes improve the song or not? How does this jazzy version seem different from the way they've heard it before?

3. Extension: Listen to *Sing a Song of Sixpence* (track # 8) and/or *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* (track #5) and discuss how the musicians transform these familiar songs.

##### **Explore the map...**

1. The band on this song is lead by a musician (Oran Etkin) who plays clarinet and saxophone. He was born in Israel but came to Boston (USA) to study jazz. He has lived in Mali (a country in Africa), Haiti (an island in the Caribbean Sea) and New York City. He likes to experiment with combining music from all the various cultures. Look at the map and trace his journey from Israel to Boston to Mali to Haiti and finally to New York. Ask students where they might like to travel and have them find the route on the map.



## #2) Blow that Horn! (Brazil)

This song from Brazil is about a new kind of music—jazz—being created in New Orleans, Louisiana (USA) and traveling to Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). It tells the story of two boys who love all kinds of music including jazz, blues, choro, samba and batuque.

### **You will need:**

- CD
- *Dois Meninos* (Track #7)
- Song lyrics
- Map of the world
- Art materials: paper and paints, colored pencils, or crayons, etc.

### **Activity:**

#### **Explore the lyrics...**

1. Listen to the song and read the lyrics. Explain that the singer is singing in Portuguese, the official language of Brazil, the largest country in South America. Ask the children what the lyrics tell them about the two boys in the story. Discuss what might be different about the children who live on two different continents and also what they share.

2. Have students listen to the song and ask them to listen for the words that repeat (blues, jazz, samba, choro). These are the names of different kinds of music. Jazz and blues are American forms while samba and batuque are Afro-Brazilian music styles.

#### **Explore the music...**

1. This song is a good example of some of the instruments commonly used in jazz—guitar, bass, drums, saxophone and trumpet. Have students listen to the track, paying attention to the different instruments and seeing how many they can name. Then have students identify the solo trumpet in the beginning and listen to the sound. When the singer begins, have them also listen for drums, bass and guitar accompanying him. These instruments (and often piano) are called the rhythm section. They back up the soloist. Soon the solo instrument changes to one with a slightly lower sound. This is a saxophone.

2. Have students listen to the song and, responding intuitively, draw an abstract picture of what they hear. Explain that they can choose colors, shapes, smooth or jagged lines, fast or slow strokes, patterns, etc. to express the feeling of the music. Talk about what they hear in the song and how that is reflected in the drawing. If time permits, have children do this activity when they first hear the song and know nothing about its meaning, etc. Then, after the discussions above, have them draw again and discuss what is the same or different about their reactions to *Dois Meninos* now.

#### **Explore the map...**

1. Find New Orleans and Rio de Janeiro. If students are familiar with these concepts, compare their latitudes and longitudes. Point out that both are located near water. Ask them to identify those bodies of water (New Orleans at the southern end of the Mississippi River just before it enters the Gulf of Mexico, and Rio de Janeiro on the Atlantic Ocean.)

2. Ask children if they know anything about these cities. Explain that they are both famous for big celebrations at Mardi Gras/Carnival that include elaborate parades, floats and costumes. Both cities also have long musical traditions that are linked to African and European influences.



### #3) Mixing it up! (South Africa/USA)

Jazz is a traveling kind of music. Although it originated in the United States, it has traveled around the world and back. Many jazz musicians from other countries come to live in the US for a while. Selloane is a singer who was born in South Africa. She started singing in church when she was only three-years old! Later she came to the United States and appeared Disney's *The Lion King* on Broadway. She loves to combine the sounds of the continent where she was born with the music of her new home in the U.S.

#### **You will need:**

- CD
- *Shortnin' Bread* (Track #10)
- Map of the world

#### **Activity:**

##### **Explore the lyrics...**

1. Listen to the track and have children focus on the lyrics. What do they notice about the words? Can they hear more than one language? Have students listen to the song and raise their hands when they hear the language change.
2. Explain that South Africans speak many languages—in fact, they have 11 official languages, including English! Many South Africans speak more than one language. Ask if any of the students speak several languages and discuss which ones they speak.
3. Explain that there are three languages in the song—English, Sotho and an invented jazz language called “scat.” Explain that scat singing is when the vocalist improvises using nonsense syllables. These could be *scoobie-dooie-doo*, *bee-bop-a-doo-da*, *ba-da-li-doo-ba-da* or any other sounds that feel right to the singer. Listen to the track—ask if the students can identify the scat syllables? (*wa-la-la*) Ask them to think of some cool scat sounds of their own and make up a pattern that fits in the song or stands alone. Have students perform their scatting patterns and teach them to the other students. Then students can experiment with the sounds—they can string them together one after another, try to do them at the same time, or change them as they go along—that's improvising!
4. Extension: Listen to *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* (track #3) and have students listen for the scat singing. How is it different from the scatting in *Shortnin' Bread*?

##### **Explore the music...**

1. Jazz is often played on piano, bass, guitar and saxophone, but lots of other instruments also sound great getting jazzy. In this American song that was written over a century ago, the solo instrument (that you might at first think is a piano) is a West African instrument called the balafón. This is a xylophone made out of wooden pieces (keys) suspended over dried gourds (resonators) and played with padded mallets. The balafón player on this recording, Famoro Dioubaté, comes from a famous family of musicians in Guinea. Have students listen to the track and raise their hands when they hear the balafón. Does it sound like any other instrument they have ever heard? Why do they think the instrument is made out of wood and gourds? What purpose do the gourds serve? Why are they different sizes? Explain that the gourds provide resonance and that the lower notes need the larger gourds to sound their pitches. Ask if students have ever blown across the top of a bottle to produce sounds. If the bottle is bigger, the sound is lower; if it's a small bottle, the sound is higher.

2. Extension: Talk about rhythm. What rhythms can the students find in ordinary life? (e.g. the patter of raindrops, water dripping in the sink, the sound of someone walking down the hall in high heels, silverware tapping on plates, someone raking leaves, pounding a nail in a wall or shoveling snow, etc.) Ask students how they can make rhythms with their bodies (clapping, stamping, snapping fingers, clicking tongues, etc.) Have students make up short rhythms and share them with each other. Listen to the track and clap along with the rhythm of *Shortnin' Bread*. How does that rhythm make students want to move their bodies? Have students move/dance to the song concentrating on the rhythm.

### **Explore the map...**

1. Have students find the continent of Africa and then the countries of South Africa and Guinea on the map. Note that South Africa is at the very southernmost tip of the continent, while Guinea is on the western coast. Africa is the home of the human species, which experts say developed some 5 million years ago. It is a fascinating continent whose people include some of the shortest and tallest humans in the world. Over 1000 languages are spoken on this continent. Some are spoken by millions of people, while others are spoken by only a few elderly people and are close to extinction. The Sahara Desert—the world's largest desert, larger than the continental USA—is located in Africa. The world's largest mammal and reptile and its tallest animal live there. Have children guess what these animals might be (the elephant, the Nile crocodile, the giraffe respectively.)

2. Have students identify the different continents of the world and observe that they are all different sizes. Have children find the equator and the prime meridian on the map. Note that Africa is the most centrally located of all continents—both the prime meridian and the equator pass through it.



### **CLOSING QUESTIONS**

- Where did jazz start and where did it travel?
- What is the special “language” of jazz?
- What is improvising?
- What are some instruments that you often hear in jazz?
- What kind of songs do jazz musicians like to play?

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