



Classroom Guide

Title: **Hip Cat**

Author: **Jonathan London**

Illustrator: **Woodleigh Hubbard**

Theme: Music is an unpredictable delight that moves its creators and its listeners in such a way that it may never be played or heard exactly the same way twice.

Program Summary: This is the story of a cat that creates a sound all his own and then experiences how the rhyme and rhythm enchant his audience. Jazz, America's most original music form, is the topic of this show. Viewers experience examples of improvisation in music, literature, art, and dance, and meet Joshua Redman, a jazz saxophonist who talks about how music has influenced his life.

Topics for Discussion:

Before viewing the program, have students brainstorm different kinds of music. List their ideas on the board. Talk about what each type of music sounds like. After they have watched the program, have students add to their list.

Discuss why music is an important part of life and why people enjoy playing instruments, singing, and dancing. Ask students to share experiences they have had with music. How does music make them feel?

Invite students to share experiences in which they have performed in front of others, e.g., a music program, dance recital, a play, etc. Discuss feelings they had before, during, and after the performance.

Discuss with students how the musicians, singers, and dancers all became very good at what they enjoyed doing. Invite students to talk about their own skills that have improved with practice.

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Play selections of different types of music and talk about the feelings evoked by each piece. Let the students move creatively according to how the music makes them feel. Discuss the music in terms of emotions it elicits, such as sad, scary, happy, angry, confused, etc. Alternatively, provide students with art materials and have them draw their feelings as they listen to the different types of music.

Provide students with a variety of materials from which they can make instruments, such as rubber bands stretched around small empty boxes to make guitars, balloons stretched over empty cans (secure with rubber bands) to make drums, etc.



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Invite musicians into the classroom to talk about their instruments and demonstrate their skills.

Make cat masks. Paper plates tied around the head with covered elastic thread or grocery sacks that slip over the head make good bases for the masks. Facial features can be drawn or made from construction paper, pipe cleaners, yarn, felt, etc.

Produce a class talent show. Allow students to play musical instruments, sing, dance, tell jokes, read poetry, do puppet shows, do magic tricks, etc. Have students make invitations for the show and invite parents and other classes to attend. When planning the show, stress that everyone has talents.

Supplementary Booklist:

Charlie Parker Played Be Bop by Chris Raschka

Ben's Trumpet by Rachel Isadora

Max Found Two Sticks by Brian Pinkney

Music, Music for Everyone by Vera B. Williams

Related Themes:

- music appreciation
- cats

Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #15 — Ty's One-Man Band
- Program #90 — Berlioz the Bear
- Program #125 — Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin

About the Author: Jonathan London was born in Brooklyn, NY, and started writing poetry as a teenager. He published his first three picture books in 1992 and has since written over 120 books for children, including the popular “Froggy” series.

About the Illustrator: Woodleigh Hubbard is an artist, illustrator, and children’s author. She is the author/illustrator of the best-selling books *Two is for Dancing*, *The Friendship Book*, and *For the Love of a Pug*.