

URBANGATEWAYS

EVOLUTION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSIC: FROM AFRICA TO HIP HOP

BRUCE HENRY & BAND



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The Evolution of American Music is a cross-curricular, multi-media music performance that explores 400 years of African American Music in a lively, informative and interactive concert. The Evolution of African American Music is presented by vocalist Bruce A. Henry who is accompanied by a dynamic instrumental duo.

MEET THE ARTISTS

The band is led by vocalist, composer, and historian, Bruce A. Henry and features Will Kurk- piano, and Will Howard- bass. Bruce's award-winning talent and music has taken him to five continents, garnering a large following in France and the Far East. His fans have heard him on the BBC, performing a Worldwide Radio Live Concert, as well as notable movie soundtracks. Henry has performed on 5 continents in locales such as Manila, Israel, Paris, London, Miami, New York City, Maui, Saipan and Tanzania. Bruce's journey has resulted in an eclectic style of world-influenced jazz vocals and composition. Bruce possesses a three and one-half octave range, a pure voice with versatility and depth that few can match.

Bruce studied voice at The American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and African American History at the University of Minnesota. Vocalist/educator/composer Bruce A. Henry has performed with the likes of Jimmy Jam, Doc Severinsen, The Sounds of Blackness, Bobby McFerrin, Julius Hemphill, Buddy DeFranco and opened for the likes of Roberta Flack, Ramsey Lewis, Chris Botti, Natalie Cole, Stephan Grapelli and Gato Barbieri.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Over the last 400 years, the music of African Americans has evolved into many forms like jazz, soul, hip-hop, gospel, and military music just to name a few. When you listen to Aretha Franklin, John Coltrane, Mahalia Jackson, Celine Dion, John Legend, Beyoncé, Kanye West, Common, Ray Charles, T. Pain, Mary J. Blige, Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone and Rihanna you experience many elements of African music.

Students will learn about historical topics; such as the Middle Passage, Abolitionist Movement, Harlem Renaissance and The Civil Rights Movement. The Evolution of African American Music brings together ideas from all these events in relation to the arts.

GUIDELINES

There is no such thing as an audience: African music was traditionally communal in nature. Every one participated (audience participation) either by singing dancing, playing and instrument or shouting encouragement.

Music is a Part of everyday life: In Africa music was woven into every aspect of life. There were work song, games songs and secret songs. Music was used to educate, communicate and to teach history. Singing was an important part of African life.

RESOURCES

Article: Evolution of African American Music Genres	https://goo.gl/mqHcwm
YouTube Video: History of African American Music in 10 Minutes	https://goo.gl/iNTqve
Presentation about the Evolution of African American Music from the 19th Century to Present	https://goo.gl/ZRbUpN
TEDEd The History of African American Social Dance	https://goo.gl/Q6g9qB

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Show a timeline and play samples of African American Music and ask students which styles they are familiar with.
2. Have students work in pairs to research key contributors to the evolution of African American music. Ask students to find their biography, how they contributed, work samples, photos, etc. Use some of the sites listed under the Resource section.
3. Free-write: What (or who) do you think has been the biggest contributor to the evolution of African American music?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Free-write: Out of all the musicians you learned about in the performance, who was your favorite? Why? (For younger audiences, have them draw a picture of their favorite moment.)
2. Class Discussion: Why is learning about where music has evolved from important? What can it tell us about ourselves? Can it inform the future?
3. Ask students to go home and interview their parent or guardian about the type of music they listen to growing up. Who were some of their favorite artists?

Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Scope and Sequence

Music Interpretation & Evaluation:

Listen and Describe

(IL 25A, 26A, 27A; Nat'l 6)

- Identify and exhibit appropriate audience behavior for listening to music.
- Analyze the uses of elements of music in musical selections representing diverse genres and cultures.
- Analyze the tempo and dynamics in songs that represent diverse cultures and styles.
- Identify sources of American music genres and trace the evolution of those genres.

Music Making Connections

Cultural

(IL 26B, 27A; Nat'l 9)

- Distinguish styles of music in various cultures and periods and identify unique features.
- Describe how the elements of music are used in various genres and styles of music.

VOCABULARY

BLUE NOTES & BENDING NOTES

Indefinite notes in African music sung to convey emotion often made by singing a slur or a slide.

BLUES SCALE

A music scale present in many forms of African American music. The Blue scale using the root, minor 3rd, sharp 4th, 5th and the flat 7th intervals.

CALL & RESPONSE

A solo instrumentalist or vocalist calls out a phrase and a group respond with an answering phrase.

IMPROVISATION

Creating music, pitch and rhythm spontaneously. Done in groups: Jamming, done with the voice "scat", done on an instrument "Solo".

MELISMA

Singing of more than one note per syllable.

POLYPHONY

At least two rhythms playing simultaneously.

POLYRHYTHM

At least two rhythms happening simultaneously.

RING SHOUT

A celebratory, transcendent ritual, first practiced by African slaves in United States, where people move in a circle while shuffling and stomping their feet and clapping their hands. Ring shouts were often done in connection with worship.

SLURS, CRIES, SHOUT

Vocal techniques which are basically self explanatory. These are present in all forms of African American Music. Sliding from one pitch to another Slurs, cries shouts, moans, groans and slide are ways to convey emotion.

SYNCOPIATION

A rhythm that accents normally weak beats in a measure (2 and 4).

ULULATIONS

Non lyric singing utilizing moans and groans and groans to express emotions.