

LEARNING LINKS

**JazzReach:
*Jean Michel
and the
Be-Bop Kings***

TUESDAY
JANUARY 17 2017
11 AM

2016 > 2017

BROADEN THE HORIZONS
OF YOUR CLASSROOM.
EXPERIENCE THE VIBRANT
WORLD OF THE ARTS
AT THE McCALLUM!



McCallum Theatre Institute
Field Trip Series



McCALLUM THEATRE INSTITUTE
PRESENTS

JazzReach: *Jean Michel and the Be-Bop Kings*

TUESDAY
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“Jazz has the ability
to enrich and elevate
[students] in ways
that a lot of pop music
doesn’t.”

H. Benjamin Schuman

Connecting to Curriculum and Students’ Lives!

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY • New York

ARTS • Jazz, musical instruments, painting

Expanding the Concept of Literacy

What is a “text”? We invite you to consider the performances on McCallum’s Field Trip Series as non-print texts available for study and investigation by your students. Anyone who has shown a filmed version of a play in their classroom, used a website as companion to a textbook, or asked students to do online research already knows that “texts” don’t begin and end with textbooks, novels, and reading packets. They extend to videos, websites, games, plays, concerts, dances, radio programs, and a number of other non-print texts that students and teachers engage with on a regular basis.

We know that when we expand our definition of texts to the variety of media that we use in our everyday lives, we broaden the materials and concepts we have at our disposal in the classroom, increase student engagement, and enrich learning experiences.

Please consider how utilizing your McCallum performance as a text might align to standards established for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language.

How do we help students to use these texts as a way of shaping ideas and understanding the world?

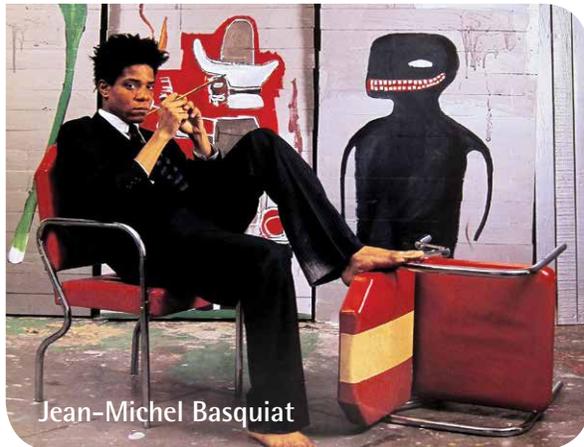
Please use this material to help you on this journey.

NON-PRINT TEXT • any medium/text that creates meaning through sound or images or both, such as symbols, words, songs, speeches, pictures, and illustrations not in traditional print form including those seen on computers, films, and in the environment.

The Work of Art

A Non-print Text for Study

•
What's it made of? How can this work serve as a *Common Core State Standards*-mandated "text" for student study in the classroom?



JazzReach returns to the McCallum with yet another wonderfully thoughtful and varied performance piece. Like past excursions into the worlds of Duke Ellington, female voices of the genre, and the jazz of such international locales as Israel and Benin; *Jean Michel and the Be-Bop Kings* aims to introduce young audiences to the legacies of groundbreaking musicians. This time, in an especially bold move, we are encouraged to view those musicians through the lens of the jazz-like visual art of a significant American painter, Jean-Michel Basquiat. This very latest of their shows, *Jean Michel and the Be-Bop Kings*, is even now receiving its final touches. H. Benjamin Schuman, the informative and enthusiastic leader of the quintet will once again weave his commentary throughout the performance. Video footage of the artist at work – and play – as well as enticing stills of his paintings will be projected as the Metta Quintet offers pieces by those giants in the jazz field whose output exerted such influence in Basquiat's own process. In fact, many of his paintings feature references to the musicians.



H. Benjamin Schuman

Schuman is clearly stoked. Listen to what he has to say...

Jean-Michel's work is particularly compelling, particularly captivating, and conveys a sense of urgency that reminds me of some of the best jazz music. Jean-Michel was a huge jazz fan and some of the music's greatest contributors figured prominently in a lot of his work. You often see paintings [of his] that feature the names of Miles Davis, Charlie Parker and Max Roach. So what I wanted to do was really create a unique program that sort of cross-promoted these two genres. We wanted to use the bebop style as a means by which to promote Jean-Michel's work but we also wanted to use Jean-Michel's work as a means to promote the work of these great [jazz] artists. And I think our objective programmatically was to sort of highlight the way that painters can be inspired by music and the way that musicians can be inspired by painters, and the way that great dancers can be inspired by great musicians. So it's this idea that we try to get inspiration, creative inspiration from many, many different places.

So what makes Jean-Michel's work just so unique is that he really had an individual voice just like every great artist. You see a Jean-Michel Basquiat painting and immediately you know; you know it's him! It's his own style, it's very visceral, urgent, it's very colorful, it has humor, it has passion, it has anger, encompasses so much of what the artist was going through and really sort of reveals just how raw he was and how in touch he was with his own circumstances. It's just, you know, his heart, and his soul is in every piece that he ever created and that's no less true with all the great bebop musicians. And you have to understand the social



conditions that produced bebop were ones that were much oppressed, and so the bandstand really functions like a canvas, and it allowed a platform for these musicians to express themselves with great urgency, with great passion, with great conviction, with great anger, with great sadness. It was really their platform so there are a lot of unique comparisons between the work of a great 20th century artist like Jean-Michel Basquiat and the great jazz musicians."

As always, the five musicians who comprise the quintet – on piano, bass, alto and tenor saxophones, and drums – will awaken the rhythm in our bodies and souls. After all, these are the folks who say, "JazzReach is steadfastly dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation, awareness and understanding of this rich, vital, ever-evolving American art form."



Photo by Myrna Suarez

The Artists

Who has *produced* this text for study?



Suppose you loved something so much you were willing, even driven, to devote your life to sharing it with others. Maybe you already do this? If so, then you already have some insight into how H. Benjamin Schuman feels. Some time ago, this enterprising drummer sold the piano his dying grandmother left for him and with the proceeds he got a logo, an address and a business name. He was bent on building an organization that could bring jazz to youngsters. A bold act, if you ask us. This visionary labored in the wilderness, so to speak, for five years, with just his logo and an unyielding zeal for writing letters and applying for grants. At last, something happened. The ASCAP Foundation came through with a \$5,000 grant. JazzReach was born! Right away it swung into action with its first presentation – *Get Hip!*

Perhaps you even recall that show from a few seasons ago? Here's the recipe: add multimedia elements to one jazz quintet, stir in Schuman's pithy instruction, and voila! You have a kid-friendly entry into that most American of music genres: jazz.

Schuman himself, a native of Lansing, Michigan, first began to thump a drumhead when he was all of 13. In those heady days, a high school education included thorough musical training, and he availed himself of the opportunity. After a stint at Berklee College of Music, he entered into a career as a working musician. The rest of his story you already know.

All of JazzReach's artistic programming is carried out exclusively by the organization's critically acclaimed resident ensemble, Metta Quintet. A cohesive, tight-knit unit featuring some of today's most esteemed, creative artists, the quintet is fueled by a collective, open-minded musical curiosity and dedicated to exploring new artistic territory while maintaining a passionate commitment to arts education, fostering new audiences and nurturing young talent.



Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat was born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 22, 1960. His dad was Haitian and his mom was Brooklyn born of Puerto Rican descent. These cultures played a big role in his artistic development. Basquiat was a self-taught artist. When he was very young, he started drawing on sheets of paper that his dad, who was an accountant, brought home from the office. It was his mom, however, who, as she saw what he was up to, pushed him to do something with his artistic talents.

He first attracted notice through his graffiti. It was New York in the late 1970s. He created this street art under the name SAMO. He tagged trains and buildings with statements whose meaning was open-ended and intriguing. From this, he went into selling sweatshirts and postcards that featured his art on the streets of New York City. He struggled for three years doing this. Then, in 1980, his work was displayed in a group show. Critics and the art-appreciating public liked the combination of words, symbols, stick figures and animals that his art was made of. Amazingly, he began selling his originals for as much as \$50,000.

It just happened that he was finding success as a brand new art movement was getting underway. This was Neo-Expressionism. Some of the young, experimental artists in this movement were Julian Schnabel and Susan Rothenberg. By the mid-80s, Basquiat was collaborating with the pop icon Andy Warhol. Their mutual show included corporate logos and cartoon characters.

He continued to show his work alone too. Exhibits of his work sprang up all over the world. He went to the Ivory Coast in Africa in 1986 for a show of his work. In that same year, he was invited to display 60 of his paintings at a prominent gallery in Germany, the youngest artist ever to be showcased at that gallery!

Tragically, in 1988, he died. He was just 27 years old. In his brief career, many say, he brought the African-American and Latino experience to the elite art world.



CHARLIE "BIRD" PARKER (1920-1955)

"The first time I heard Bird play," said John Coltrane, "it hit me right between the eyes." Bird, of course, was sax player and composer Charlie Parker. Growing up in Missouri, he fell under the sway of Lester Young. By the end of WWII, he and Dizzy Gillespie had put together a quartet that gave birth to bebop. Ultimately what made Bird great was his phrasing. Said Gillespie, "He had just what we needed. He had the line and he had the rhythm. We heard him and knew the music had to go his way."



JOHN BIRKS "DIZZY" GILLESPIE (1917-1993)

Gillespie was no slouch when it came to trailblazing either. Some theorize that it was at the family dinner table that this youngest of nine children learned what speed and humor could get you. "You only have so many notes," said Dizzy, "and what makes a style is how you get from one note to another." On his trumpet he liked playing high, hard, and fast. As JazzReach tells it, it was the way he strung notes together that earned him his place in the pantheon. He was also a visionary with the ability to reach across physical and conceptual boundaries. He and conga master Chano Pozo unleashed some pretty amazing blends of jazz and Afro-Cuban rhythms on the world. This developing of community may be what he had in mind when he claimed for music the power to "help set things right."



MILES DAVIS (1926-1991)

"The difference between me and other musicians is that I've got charisma." Miles Davis didn't hesitate to say what was on his mind, and if it didn't sit well with everyone, well, it was the music he made that mattered in the end. And what music it was! He saw his special gift as that of putting the right folks together and letting them do what they knew how to do. His combos — with ingredients such as John Coltrane and Gil Evans — sure knew how to cook! His 1959 album *Kind of Blue* remains a must-have choice on many listeners' jazz lists.

**"A jazz ensemble functions like a community...
the music is a metaphor for promoting values...
participation and interaction within a community."**

H. Benjamin Schuman

Contexts

- What *information* surrounds this text for study & could help make students' engagement with it more powerful?

Jazz! What is it? Where did it come from? When did it first appear?

The first question might be hardest of all to answer – and that's because almost everyone who thinks he or she knows something about jazz, will come up with a somewhat different definition. Jazz is that big and that encompassing. Webster's says that jazz is characterized by propulsive syncopated rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, varying degrees of

improvisation, and often deliberate distortions of pitch and timbre. This is fine if you're a trained musician and know what all those words mean. Contemporary great Wynton Marsalis says that jazz is music that swings, and if that makes sense to us, let's go with it!

Origins will be interesting to trace down. Let's take a trip through history starting, alas, with a not very happy or proud chapter. We refer to the climax of the Atlantic slave trade which, by the first decade of the 1800s, had relocated half a million Sub-Saharan Africans to the U.S. They brought a wealth of musical traditions with them, the rhythms of which echoed speech patterns, which meant that some parts were on the beat and some off. It was striking, too, that African music was melody only – no harmony. This latter component the new residents encountered in church hymns, and they soon put it to use in pieces of their own: spirituals. They also learned to play European instruments, and following the Civil War, drums and fifes became available. This combination made a big hit in the black community and featured a liberal dose of syncopation. Of course, with the freeing of the slaves, a huge workforce materialized. Quite a wide range of jobs were off limits however. Many African-Americans at that point turned to entertaining as a livelihood. Black pianists played clubs and saloons. Vaudeville was developing, and many blacks found work in theaters as minstrels. Marching bands were another option. By the end of the century Scott Joplin had published his *Maple Leaf Rag*, and the phenomenon of ragtime went international. Talk about off the beat and harmonies that jolted! Even some of the more experimental oldies from the classical world got on the bandwagon; Impressionistic French composer Claude Debussy and Russian enfant terrible Igor Stravinsky put out rags of their own.

Well, while ragtime was catching fire in citadels like Chicago and New York, the blues were developing in the Deep South. Based to some extent on work songs, spirituals, and chants, these new pieces wailed with pentatonic-inspired blue notes and heart-on-sleeve emotionalism. Blue notes are notes sung or played flat – and they came out of the chord progressions specific to the genre. Coronet player W. C. Handy, hearing an early song of this sort, refashioned what he could recall of it, adding his own genius of course, into St. Louis Blues. The blues would have a lasting impact on Western harmony and allow for staggering complexity in jazz.

New Orleans played quite a role in these emergent musical forms, particularly jazz itself. In some of the less, ahem, polite parts of town, amazing things were happening musically. Afro-Creoles like Jelly Roll Morton were infusing the home-grown music with exotic things like the habanera, really shaking it up rhythm-wise. Morton was one of those musicians who were building bridges between blues and jazz. He could play both, and boy did he swing! Swing is something this pianist-composer lifted up to a place of prominence and is a crucial ingredient of jazz. Swing is... – well, once again folks are challenged when it comes to agreeing on a definition. Louis Armstrong said about swing, "If you don't feel it, you'll never know it," and maybe we should leave it there.

In the 1920s, Prohibition settled in. Drinking was outlawed, and speakeasies came to be. This era is known as the Jazz Age, and as you can imagine jazz was the music du jour! Actually, it was a pretty jazzy time in many ways, and not everyone – particularly the stodgy guardians of moral rectitude – was enthusiastic about the new music. By 1924, Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong (1901–1971) was already blazing the trails we mentioned a little earlier and this brings us to the era of the giants of jazz.

To get ready for the performance, students could research these:

- Jazz – collaboration, improvisation, syncopation and musical elements
- Late 20th-Century Art

Here's a 60 minute lesson* in collaboration & problem-solving you could teach to help prepare students for this work:

Line of Inquiry – LOI is an essential question that generates a lesson:

How does JazzReach, in the presentation of *Jean Michel and the Be-Bop Kings*, make connections between the paintings of the former and the music of the latter to help us notice each in new ways?

Start out by having students listen to several music selections of the great jazz masters. My suggestion is to have students close their eyes and listen to the audio, as opposed to watching the video.

Here are links to some examples of bebop:

Miles Davis – *So What*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqNTItOGH5c

Charlie Parker – *All the Things You Are*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTORd2Y_X6U

John Coltrane – *Blue Train*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpZHUVjQydl

The Thelonious Monk Quartet – *Monk's Dream*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxailNkhpXs



Have students write down lists of all the things they hear in these pieces. For example – What instruments are they hearing? How would they describe the sounds of the instruments? In what ways are the musicians playing with each other similar to people having a conversation?

Encourage students to move their hand through the air to the music they're hearing. What kinds of movement are their hands making? Ask them to notice if their hands are making long smooth lines through the air, or short, sharp ones. What other kinds of movements are their hands making?

Have them add these descriptions to their written list.

Have them listen to the next piece of music deliberately listening for what kinds of lines the instruments are making through their playing. Are the lines smooth, curvy, jagged, bumpy, stop and go, continuous, etc.?

Again, have them add these descriptions to their growing list.

As you go along, you'll want undoubtedly to have students share out some of their observations so that others in the room can be inspired in their own listening.

When students have accumulated a good assortment of descriptions of the music they've been listening to, have them review their list.

QUESTION

If this list of descriptions were describing a drawing – could be pencil, could be pen-and-ink, could be a crayon drawing – what might that drawing look like? What kinds of things might you put in that drawing? Would you put in images of people and objects – or would you have it be more abstract? By the way, what does abstract mean when we're talking about visual art?

Students then are directed to create a drawing which is inspired by the descriptions on their paper.

These can be shared with the rest of the class in one of several ways:

- Pair share
- Table partner share
- All works are laid out gallery-style for students to view them
- Select one for the whole group to examine asking them questions about – what they see, what are the details, how do the details work together, and what did the artist have had in mind? An especially fruitful line of questioning would be to ask how the drawing connects to the pieces of music listened to.

After coming to the theater, students could research these:

- JazzReach
- The art of Jean-Michel Basquiat

Here's a 45-60 minute lesson you could teach after students have experienced the work:

Lead a discussion of the performance by asking lots of questions. After a thorough examination of the details, delve into the ways in which the visual art and the music connected. Remind students that Basquiat's art was so successful so quickly because it was different, unique, and individual.

ASK STUDENTS

What are some of the ways we would describe his work?

Share an image or two with the students and have them describe what they see. Here's a link to images of many of Basquiat's artworks – www.wikiart.org/en/jean-michel-basquiat/

ASK STUDENTS

How hard or how easy do you think it would be to create art that didn't look like other people's art? How could you do that? What might it look like, if it was unique to you?

Next, have students produce another drawing. This time, the idea is to make something that is “uniquely you”!

Students can share these as described in the pre-show lesson above.

“Every time we visit Palm Desert, the McCallum always packs the house with students! It is a true testament to the McCallum and the community’s commitment to ensuring that their young people are culturally well rounded, informed, aware and engaged.”

H. Benjamin Schuman

What’s *your* read of this non-print text?

How would you answer these questions – and how could they be adapted as Guiding Questions to spark student discussion?

- Which moments do you recall most indelibly, and why?
- How were the players communicating with each other?
- Were you ever able to hear something that struck you as improvisational? What made it seem that way?
- What did you notice about how the five different instruments interacted – and what new awareness of music did this bring you?
- What did you notice about the artwork of Jean-Michel Basquiat?
- How was his art woven into the program?
- What are some ways in which his artworks resembled the music? And vice versa?
- What was the order of the program (what came first, second, etc.) and how was this structure effective?
- How is the audience an active participant in this performance?
- What methods of education were used by the performers?
- Which musical elements seemed to belong to the world of jazz? To indigenous music?
- How is this version of jazz different from other sorts of jazz?
- If the performers were showman-like, what did they do that conveyed this?
- How did the spatial arrangement of the players appear to affect their playing?
- What effect do you think the audience had on the players?
- If you had to describe the sounds of their instruments in terms of color(s), what words would you use?
- How would you describe their playing?
- How is this format a good one for instructing? For entertaining?
- How are music and the visual arts related? How can shows like this one highlight those connections? What are some connections you are aware of (or can imagine) between jazz and the art of dance? Between jazz and the art of theater? Between visual arts and those disciplines?



Internet

Jazz – a film by Ken Burns

www.pbs.org/kenburns/jazz/home/

This PBS site offers fun, informative info in connection with Ken Burn's acclaimed documentary. You can also explore the cities and scenes that made jazz.

US History: Jazz for Kids

www.ducksters.com/history/us_1900s/jazz.php

Cool site for kids containing lots of info about jazz, links to additional bios of the greats as well as the history of jazz and its contexts.

Culture and Change – Black History in America

http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/history_of_jazz.htm

A wonderful resource designed for teachers, parents, kids, administrators and librarians.

Books

Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat

By: Javaka Steptoe

Reading level: Ages 6 – 9

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016

ISBN-10: 0316213888

One extraordinary artist illuminates another in this textured, heartfelt picture book biography of the 1980s phenom. Employing signature features of Jean-Michel Basquiat's work – vibrant colors, found objects, repeated motifs – Steptoe allows his own emotionally rich style to shine through the artistic and biographical references dotting the illustrations.

Books

Kid Artists: True Tales of Childhood from Creative Legends

By: David Stabler

Reading level: Ages 9 – 12

Publisher: Quirk Books, 2016

ISBN-10: 1594748969

Hilarious childhood biographies and full-color illustrations reveal how Leonardo da Vinci, Beatrix Potter, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and other great artists in history coped with regular kid problems.

Let's Make Music: An Interactive Musical Trip Around the World

By: Jessica Baron Turner

Reading level: Ages 4 – 8

Publisher: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1995

ISBN-10: 0793540577

This unique book/audio package lets children sing and play songs from around the world by making their own musical instruments.

This Jazz Man

By: Karen Ehrhardt

Reading level: Ages 4 – 8

Publisher: Harcourt Children's Books, 2006

ISBN-10: 0152053077

Using a lively version of the children's song *This Old Man*, this book introduces famous African-American jazz musicians as it counts to nine.

The Sound That Jazz Makes

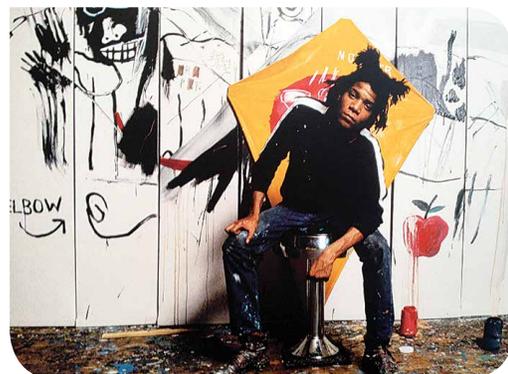
By: Carole Boston Weatherford

Reading level: Ages 4 – 8

Publisher: Walker Books for Young Readers, 2001

ISBN-10: 0802776744

Molding her rhymed text to the rhythms and cadences of *This Is the House That Jack Built*, Weatherford distills an entire course in music history, tracing the roots of jazz back to its origins in Africa and up to its current incarnation in rap and hip hop.



CDS

Going To Meet the Man

Artists: Metta Quintet

Label: Koch Jazz (2002)

ASIN: B000063IV

Inspired by the short stories of author James Baldwin, each musician composed material that reflected the stories' individual mood and tone.

Big Drum/Small World

Artists: Metta Quintet

Label: JazzReach

ASIN: B006RJRL10

"There is a sense that jazz as an art form is something that is stale and stagnant. Metta Quintet looks to challenge this conception of the genre through their *Big Drum/Small World* EP."

— *NeuFutur Magazine*

Subway Songs

Artists: Metta Quintet

Label: Sunny Side Records (2006)

ASIN: B000G1R4FM

Songs about trains have always been a part of the jazz lexicon. Billy Strayhorn's *Take the A Train* was an early tribute to New York's 8th Avenue subway line. On *Subway Songs* the Metta Quintet presents a program of nine original tracks inspired by the many facets of the New York City subway experience.

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"Our mission is to make
jazz accessible."

H. Benjamin Schuman