



THE ORIGINS OF GYPSY JAZZ

Meets National Core Arts Standards 7-9, 11

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work (*Re8*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (*Re9*)
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding (*Cn11*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (December 2017)
- *Music Alive!* Classroom Worksheet #5: Music Review Journal (download at musicalive.com)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “The Origins of Gypsy Jazz” on pages 6-9. Then, go over the following highlighted words. **[This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]**

NOMADIC—living without a permanent home; constantly moving from place to place
AMALGAM—a mixture or blend
NOVEL—new or unusual in an interesting way
ARCHETYPAL—very typical of a certain kind of person or thing
LUTHIERS—makers of stringed instruments such as violins or guitars

DEVELOP

► **1. Play** Django Reinhardt’s “Minor Swing” (Hear the Music track 2 on musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What’s the time signature of the song?** (Fast 4/4.)
- **Which instruments introduce the melody?** (Violin and guitar.)
- **When the band comes in, what guitar parts do you hear?** (One rhythm guitar strumming chords, and one solo guitar.)
- **Is the solo guitar playing a lead melody or improvising?** (Improvising.)
- **How long does the guitar solo last?** (64 measures—nearly half the song.)
- **What other instruments besides guitar do you hear?** (Just bass.)
- **Do you hear any drums on the recording?** (No.)
- **When the violin comes in at 1:35, does it play a melody or take a solo?** (It takes a solo.)
- **From the quality of the recording, does it seem very old or new?** (Very old. The recording is from a collection made between 1936 and 1948.)
- **How does this song compare to your knowledge of jazz?** (Subjective.)
- **Do you like it?** (Subjective.)

► **2. Play** Stochelo Rosenberg’s “For Sephora” (Hear the Music track 3 on musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What is this song’s time signature?** (4/4, at a slower tempo than the last song.)
- **What instrument leads in the beginning of the song?** (Flute.)
- **Can anyone identify the genre influencing the song’s style?** (Latin jazz or bossa nova.)
- **What other instruments are heard on this track?** (Percussion, trumpets, saxophones, guitar, bass, and eventually piano.)
- **What happens during the first few measures of the first guitar solo?** (The rest of the band rests for a few measures.)
- **Is the song defined by a lead melody, or long improvisations on various instruments?** (Long improvisations.)
- **When the piano comes in at 1:12, what is it doing?** (Adding improvisational phrases behind the lead guitar.)
- **How does this recording deviate from the traditional gypsy jazz sound, as created by Reinhardt?** (It features a big band, which adds horns, piano, and woodwinds.)
- **What do you like or not like about it?** (Subjective.)

► **3. Play** the Russian traditional “Dark Eyes,” as performed by Stéphane Wrembel (Hear the Music track 4 on musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What’s different about this song compared to the others?** (It begins with a lead melody as opposed to an ongoing improvised solo.)
- **What begins immediately after the lead melody is played?** (The guitar begins an improvisatory solo.)
- **What other instruments do you hear?** (Bass, banjo.)
- **Is the tempo slow or fast?** (Very fast.)
- **Is this song more like the first or the second selections?** (More like the first.)
- **What makes it more like the first?** (The instrumentation, tempo, rhythm, and overall style is similar.)
- **What’s your favorite part of the guitar solo?** (Subjective.)
- **When the lead melody is played again at 1:30, is it played straight or with variation?** (With variation.)
- **What did you like or not like about this song?** (Subjective.)

CLOSE

Have students fill out copies of the Music Review Journal to deepen their understanding of gypsy jazz.

ASSESS

- **Did the students read the article?**
- **Did they discuss the three listening selections?**
- **Did they fill out the Music Review Journal worksheets?**