

Second Line Arts Collective

Lesson 15: Big Four (Part 2)

Lesson Overview

Building on Part 1, this lesson helps students deepen their understanding of Buddy Bolden's "Big Four" rhythm. Through hands-on rhythm practice, improvisation, and movement, students will connect with the energy of New Orleans jazz and see how the "Big Four" inspires creativity and community.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Refine their ability to play Buddy Bolden's "Big Four" rhythm.
2. Explore how the rhythm inspires movement and improvisation in jazz.
3. Understand the cultural impact of the "Big Four" in shaping New Orleans music.

Materials Needed

- Audio recordings featuring the "Big Four" rhythm.
- Percussion instruments or body percussion (e.g., clapping, stomping).
- Optional: Visual aids of Buddy Bolden and New Orleans jazz scenes.

Lesson Steps

Recap and Warm-Up: The 'Big Four' Rhythm (5 minutes)

- Review the "Big Four" rhythm from Part 1:
 - Count aloud: "1... 2... 1 - 2 - 3 - FOUR!"
 - Practice clapping, stomping, or tapping the rhythm as a group.
- Gradually increase the tempo to match the lively feel of New Orleans jazz.

Add Layers to the Rhythm (10 minutes)

- Divide students into groups to create a jazz ensemble:
 - Group 1: Play the steady “Big Four” rhythm.
 - Group 2: Add a syncopated beat or percussion layer.
 - Group 3: Improvise melodies or rhythms on instruments or by humming.
- Rotate roles so every student experiences each part of the ensemble.

Connect the Rhythm to Movement (10 minutes)

- Encourage students to move to the rhythm:
 - Practice stomping or marching in time with the “Big Four.”
 - Add arm movements, twirls, or freestyle dance inspired by the beat.
- Create a mini parade:
 - Play a jazz recording with the “Big Four” rhythm while students march, dance, or play instruments in a line or circle.

Explore Improvisation and Creativity (5 minutes)

- Highlight improvisation as a key part of jazz:
 - Each student takes a turn leading the group by adding their own variation to the rhythm.
 - The group responds by incorporating the leader’s changes into the ensemble.

Group Reflection and Cool Down (5 minutes)

- Ask students:
 - How does the “Big Four” rhythm inspire movement and creativity?

- Why do you think Buddy Bolden's rhythm was so exciting for people in New Orleans?
- Discuss how the "Big Four" rhythm connects people through its energy and joy.

Extension Activities

- Dance Connection: Pair the rhythm with a second line dance to showcase how movement and music go hand-in-hand in New Orleans culture.
- Music History: Explore how Buddy Bolden influenced later jazz legends like Louis Armstrong.
- Art Connection: Have students design their own jazz band scene inspired by the "Big Four."

Reflection Questions

- How does playing the "Big Four" rhythm feel different when you add movement or improvisation?
- What do you think makes this rhythm so special and exciting?
- Can you think of another kind of music or rhythm that makes you want to move?

Teacher/Parent Tips

- Encourage creativity and confidence during improvisation activities.
- Keep the atmosphere playful and energetic to reflect the spirit of New Orleans jazz.
- Adjust the difficulty of rhythm and movement activities based on the age group.