

Individual Assignment #2: Singing the Blues

Procedure:

- 1) Listen to the form of Bessie Smith and James P. Johnson in Back Water Blues
- 2) Analyze the use of the call and response style and placement of improvisation.
- 3) Discuss the blues song recipe below.
- 4) Compose, practice and perform your own blues song.

Blues song recipe -

Line 1 - The first line of the blues is separated into two short four beat phrases. The first phrase is about four beats long ending with a harmonica riff (Da, Da, Da, Da)

Example – “I woke up this moanin’” (harmonica response 4+, 5-, 5+, 4-)

The second 4 beat phrase is added followed by an 8 beat improvisation

Example “I couldn’ get outta bed” (harmonica improvisation)

Line 2 - The first line is repeated with melodic and thematic improvisation.

Very important note: and the last word of line 1b and 2b **must** be the same.

Example “That nasty clock went off” (harmonica 4+, 5-, 5+, 4-)

“But I couldn’ get outta that bed” (harmonica improvisation)

Line 3 - In the last line, the sorrow is resolved.

Very important: The last word of this sentence must rhyme with the last word of lines 1b and 2b.

Example “ I just threw that thing out the window”(harmonica 4+, 5-, 5+, 4-)

“ and pulled my covers over my head” (harmonica improvisation)

Write and perform your own blues song using your G Blues demo.

1a) _____ (Da, Da, Da, Da)

1b) _____ (8 beats of improv)

2a) _____ (Da, Da, Da, Da)

2b) _____ (8 beats of improv)

3a) _____ (Da, Da, Da, Da)

3b) _____ (8 beats of improv)

Self-assess your project before showing it to the class by using the rubric on page 105

Lesson Plan #11 – Writing a Blues Song (project #2)

- Objective:** The student will create a call and response blues song based on the AAB form of a blues song where the student will sing and play the harmonica.
- Motivation:** The student will create a song about a real experience that can be expressed by the blues.
- Materials:** Music collection (Johnny B. Goode)
Student workbook (page 9)
Blank notebook paper
Harmonica
Harmonica blues riff (page 66)
- Procedure:** Play music as the students are entering
Students list 5 things that gave them a bad day
Write down words that rhyme with the key words above
Follow the form for the blues song on page 81
Practice reciting the song with the background (G Blues track)
Add Harmonica riffs and call and response improvisation
Complete performance by singing and playing song
- Closing summary:** The students should have fun with the blues song. Be prepared to go first and to encourage students to “sell it!” Sometimes I will use a microphone to give them the performance atmosphere other times I will respond to their calls.
- Assessment:** You are looking for students to have a good form presentation. Proper format for riffs and improvisation and a one or two chorus blues song. Follow the rubric on page 104. You are also looking for good audience etiquette. This project can set the standard for other projects where students will be taking a risk.

Project #2 – Singin’ The Blues Rubric

Description	0 - 4	5-9	10-13	14-17	18-20
Worksheet	None	Incomplete Sentences	Complete opening sentence	Modified first sentence	Rhyming sentence with closure
Words	None	Not a blues idea	State a blues based idea	State full phrases blues idea	Full phrased blues idea relates to you
Form	One fact in your own words	Two fact in your own words	Three facts in your own words	Four facts in your own words	Five facts in your own words
Improvisation	none	One idea, one rhythm	Chord responses	Melodic responses	Varied chord and melodic responses
Performance	Nothing	Talk without rhythm section	Talk with rhythm section	Sing blues song Without confidence	Sing blues song with confidence