*ONE MAN’S BLUES*

CONCERT

PERFORMED BY BLUES GREAT

*KENNETH JACKSON*

Resource Material

KENNETH JACKSON

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Blues was born in the Mississippi Delta around the turn of the century. It has roots in West-African and Euro-American musical traditions and the early forms (Delta Blues) were folk-type songs based on the African-American life experience. It uses African rhythms and melodic patterns, free expression (improvisation) within set bar structures and personal subject matter. Older blues forms were country, primitive and archaic expressions. This music was derived from field hollers and work songs.

The Blues contains several features that distinguish it other forms of music:

1. One feature is the Blues’ three-line verse form, consisting of a line repeated once with final rhyming line that explains, justifies or contrasts with the first. (A-A-B)
2. A second feature, is the use of “blue notes” at certain degrees of the scale. These notes are created by bending, wavering, or worrying the pitch between major and minor.
3. Another special feature is the important role of the musical accompaniment as a second voice, answering and commenting on musical and lyrical statements.
4. Finally, the Blues introduced a new frankness into American song.

Delta Blues musicians include Robert Johnson, Charlie Patton and Blind Lemon Jefferson. W.C. Handy (Father of the Blues) arrived in Memphis, TN around 1907 and began an important era of the Blues, including the writing and publication if the famous *MEMPHIS BLUES*, *YELLOW DOG BLUES and JOE TURNER BLUES.* Memphis Slim and B.B. King were strong performers of Urban or City Blues, which grew out of the African-American’s encounter with city living.

PERFORMANCE SYNOPSIS:

*ONE MAN’S BLUES -* is a one-man Blues extravaganza, exploring the historical and cultural impact of one of America’s most indigenous Art Forms. Kenneth Jackson (Blues Man) will enchant audiences of all ages and musical backgrounds with some toe tapping, hand clapping, trumpet blowing, guitar screaming, and spiritual shouting that’s sure to touch everyone’s soul. This is one of the most successful and exciting School performances of all times! The program will consist of Blues standards such as B.B. King’s Sweet Sixteen, W.C. Handy’s St. Louis Blues, Elvis Presley’s Jail House Rock, James Brown’s I Feel Good, as well as original and other Blues standards.

School concerts will be adjusted by grade levels.

# VOCABULARY: (Blues)

1. AD LIBITUM –( ad lib) - “at pleasure”; the tempo or expression may be varied as the performer wishes.
2. ANTIPHONY - to sing, chant or otherwise perform in alternate parts. Call and response.
3. BLUE NOTES - notes created by bending, wavering or worrying the pitch between major and minor at certain degrees of the scale.
4. DELTA BLUES - (archaic) an early form of country blues derived from folk songs, work songs and field hollers
5. DOUBLE ENTENDRE - songs containing words that have more than one meaning.
6. FIELD HOLLER - a call or cry to communicate feelings and messages of all kinds.
7. JUG BAND - groups formed in the early 1920's consisting of a guitar, harmonica, and jug.
8. MEDIUM - the instruments or voices used to perform a particular piece of music.
9. STYLE - the characteristics of a performer or piece of music as influenced by place and time.
10. TWELVE BAR BLUES - a common blues form characterized by a 12-measure cycle.
11. VERSE - the lyrics that develop the main idea of a song.
12. WORK SONG - sung by team workers in rhythm with the motions made during their work.

# STUDENT BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES:

1. Explain the importance of an audience-performer relationship.
2. Let students know that whispering or talking during a concert makes it difficult for the artists to do their job.
3. Sometime the performers will ask for responses. Join in enthusiastically.
4. Emphasize the importance of an orderly entrance into the performance site.
5. At no time are students allowed to come on stage or touch the musician’s instruments.
6. Clapping at the end of a song is the audience’s way to say thank you, we enjoyed it.” It makes the performers long hours of preparation Worthwhile.
7. Please remember that teachers are the best role models for student behavior. If you are enthusiastic and excited about the performance, your students will follow your lead.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Have students bring in a news article or write a paragraph about a Blues performer.
2. Get copies of Blues periodicals for current events and information.
3. Create works of art using Blues music as the theme.
4. Compare the verse patterns in the Blues to patterns in poetry.
5. Describe a world in which the Blues had not been invented.
6. Have students interview their family members about their Blues encounters.
7. Play a recording of a 12-bar Blues song and have your students count the measures.
8. Have the students create Blues verses that deal with conflict resolution. (A-A-B)
9. Discuss how technology has affected the Blues. (recording, distribution, etc.)
10. Let your students do their version of Kenneth Jackson’s *THE BLUES STORY*.
11. Do a Blues bulletin board or create a hallway display.
12. Show how the Blues has influenced other forms. (rock , r&b , country, pop, etc.)

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

1. ARTISTRY
2. COUNTING
3. FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
4. GEOGRAPHY
5. HISTORY
6. LANGUAGE SKILLS
7. NUMBERS
8. OBSERVATION
9. LISTENING
10. PATTERNS
11. PHRASING
12. POETRY
13. REPETITION
14. RHYME
15. SEQUENCING
16. SOCIOLOGY

BIOGRAPHY

KENNETH JACKSON - born in Little Rock, Arkansas, is a dynamic entertainer and master teaching artist. He received his B.A. Degree from Texas College in Tyler, Texas and has extensive professional development training in arts education.

He has a vocal style reminiscent of Lou Rawls and Barry White and he is an accomplished composer, trumpeter, guitarist and pianist who began his professional career at age fourteen.

Mr. Jackson tours nationally and has performed in Japan, England, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Canada, U.S. Virgin Islands, Africa and Ireland.

He has performed with such renowned artists as B.B. King, Ray Charles, Johnny Taylor, Rufus Thomas, Lou Rawls, Solomon Burke, Sam Moore, the Dells and many more.

His award winning Blues in the Schools educational program (*Basically Blues)* has been broadcast on CNN. Also, his concerts, compositions and workshops have been featured in the New Your Times, Washington times, Commercial Appeal, National Endowment for the Arts (Brochure), Inside Memphis, Down Beat, Emerge and Living Blues Magazines.

Mr. Jackson has been featured at Wolf Trap, Vienna, VA., the Kennedy Center and Smithsonian Institute in Washington. D.C.

He is president of K.R.J. Publishing Company and is currently working with the Tennessee Arts Commission, Arts Advantage, Delta Arts Council, Wolf Trap Education and the Alabama Alliance for the Arts.

ARTIST’S STATEMENT:

My mission is to share the legacy of the Blues with all generations throughout the World. This music has brought us together in spirit and harmony. Let us celebrate and Dance.

QUOTES:

Kenneth Jackson is a quintessential showman, a fabulous singer and a performing professional. - Linda Gay Hall, Antilles School, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

His music is energizing, thought provoking, creative, rhythmic, enlightening and delightful. Jo Powers, Collierville Middle School, TN