Welcome to Beyond the Stage. This guide has been designed to provide you with information about the Turtle Island String Quartet and the musical art forms they will be presenting. We hope you enjoy the activities, information and the performance!

Meet Turtle Island String Quartet........... 1
What is Jazz ........................................... 2
Jazz Map ................................................. 3
TISQ Vocabulary ....................................... 4
Improv ..................................................... 5
Langston Hughes, Jazz Poet..................... 6
Crossword Puzzle ..................................... 7
How to Listen to Music ............................. 8
Other Websites of Interest ....................... 9

School Performance:
Monday, February 13, 2006
at 1:00 p.m.
Central Junior High School

Public Performance:
Friday, February 10, 2006
at 7:30 p.m.
The Lied Center of Kansas
The Turtle Island String Quartet derives its name from creation mythology found in Native American folklore. Since its inception in 1985, the ensemble has been a singular force in the creation of bold new trends in chamber music for strings. The group plays a variety of styles including folk, bluegrass, swing jazz, bebop, classical Indian, funk, R&B, new age, rock, hip-hop, bossa nova and salsa music, which has resulted in a repertoire of hundreds of ingenious arrangements and original compositions.

Another unique element of the Turtle Island String Quartet is its revival of improvisational traditions that have not been explored by string players for nearly 200 years. Improvisation is one element that sets the Turtle Island String Quartet apart from other chamber groups. When string quartets were first formed, they were much more spontaneous composers and arrangers, much like today’s jazz musicians. Each Turtle Island member is accomplished in these areas of expertise as well as having extensive conservatory training as instrumentalists.

The ensemble includes founder and Grammy-nominated composer David Balakrishnan, who has more than 30 years of experience as a world-class violinist. He is credited with a new and innovative compositional style that uses various techniques that were previously thought to be impossible or inappropriate for strings. For this he is a pioneer jazz musician, with numerous commissions, honors and collaborations including the “Music Alive” residency, the Nashville Chamber Orchestra and the Detroit Symphony.

Champion fiddler Evan Price has his earliest roots in a variety of musical genres, including square dancing, string quartets and blues bands. He has performed with master fiddlers Stephane Grappelli and Claude “Fiddler” Williams, and pop legends Jimmy Page and Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin. His wide range of experiences has led his talents to the Turtle Island String Quartet, Bay Area Gypsy Swing Band, and the Hot Club of San Francisco.

Award-winning jazz violist Mads Tolling began his musical career earlier than most—as a 6-year-old he began his classical training in Denmark and by 16 he was playing jazz. He later found himself in Boston at the Berklee College of Music, and since has become a world-renowned classical musician receiving many honors, including one from Queen Margaret of Denmark.

Legendary cellist Mark Summer combines his classical roots with his pizzicato technique to turn his cello into something truly phenomenal — percussion. As a founding member of Turtle Island String Quartet, Mark has recorded motion picture soundtracks and performed with Linda Ronstadt and Toni Childs. He even performed on an 11,000 foot mountain with a cello made of ice!

The Performance - The Art of the Groove

Turtle Island String Quartet will be presenting The Art of the Groove, an interactive performance that will explore the fundamental rhythmic differences between European classical and American vernacular forms in a cross-cultural musical journey that includes jazz à la Dave Brubeck, hip-hop, ‘60s rock à la Jimi Hendrix, rhythm and blues and also the rhythms of Latin American music. Throughout all, the back-beat rules!
What is Jazz?

Jazz is an American musical art form that has roots in West African cultural and musical expression, and in African-American music traditions including blues and ragtime. New Orleans was the birthplace of jazz, and the art form was influenced by the many diverse cultures and peoples who lived in this cosmopolitan city. People from everywhere came and went, bringing with them their own styles of music: from Midwestern ragtime and parading funeral bands to African, Latin and Caribbean rhythms; from Mississippi blues, European classical piano, and opera to the gospel of the Baptist Holiness Church — all the ingredients of jazz met and mixed in the streets of New Orleans. By the 1920s, jazz had gained international popularity and, since then, has had a profoundly pervasive influence on other musical styles worldwide. Today, various jazz styles continue to evolve.

Wynton Marsalis, African-American jazz trumpet virtuoso and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, defines jazz as

“... something Negroes invented, and it said the most profound things — not only about us and the way we look at things, but about what modern democratic life is really about. It is the nobility of the race put into sound ... jazz has all the elements, from the spare and penetrating to the complex and enveloping. It is the hardest music to play that I know of, and it is the highest rendition of individual emotion in the history of Western music.”
This diagram visually represents the evolution of “American” music from several parallel perspectives, helping readers absorb history from more than one direction. Much of Turtle Island String Quartet’s performance will touch upon many of the musical forms listed on the diagram.

This diagram is used with permission from WNUR 98.3. The diagram on the site listed here, http://www.wnur.org/jazz/styles/ is interactive and can provide additional information on each musical form.
Back-beat – A loud steady beat.

Bebop – A jazz style developed during the late 1930s and early 1940s, characterized by very fast tempos, complex melodies, and unusual chords. Bebop, which emphasized the inventiveness of soloists, is usually played in small groups.

Blues – A non-religious folk music that rose among African-Americans during the late 19th century and features several African influences: a call-and-response pattern, blue notes, and imitation of the human voice by musical instruments. Classic blues have a twelve-measure, three-line form, with the second line repeating the first.

Call-and-Response – A musical “conversation” when players answer one another; exchanges between instrumentalists.

Chamber Music – is a form of classical music, written for a small group of instruments that traditionally could be accommodated in a palace chamber. Most broadly, it includes any “art music” that is performed by a small number of performers with one performer to a part.

Classical Music – is a broad, somewhat imprecise term, referring to music produced in, or rooted in the traditions of, European art, ecclesiastical and concert music, encompassing a broad period from roughly 1000 to the present day. The central norms of this tradition, according to one school of thought, developed between 1550 and 1825, focusing on what is known as the common practice period.

Groove – is a popular music term, used in the sense of rhythm, for metre and its embellishment by a rhythm section. Richard Middleton (1999) describes, “the concept of groove - a term now theorized by analysts but long familiar in musicians’ own usage - marks an understanding of rhythmic patterning that underlies its role in producing the characteristic rhythmic ‘feel’ of a piece, a feel created by a repeating framework within which variation can then take place.”

Hip-Hop – is a cultural movement that began among urban African Americans and Latinos in the Bronx borough of New York City during the early 1970s, and has since spread around the world. The four main aspects, or “elements,” of hip-hop culture are MCing (rapping), DJing, graffiti and breakdancing.

Harmony – The relation of the notes in a musical piece, or the playing of two or more notes at the same time. The patterns formed by the notes create the key that the piece is in and, with rhythm, give it expressiveness and momentum.

Key – The principal scale of a piece, in which many or most of its notes are played.

Melody – A succession of notes that together form a complete musical statement; a tune.

Pitch – A note or musical tone.

Riff – A repeated brief musical phrase used as background for a soloist or to add drama to a musical climax.

String quartet – A musical ensemble consisting of four stringed instruments, traditionally two violins, a cello and a viola.

Swing – also known as swing jazz, is a form of jazz music that solidified as a distinctive style during the 1930s in the United States. Swing is distinguished primarily by a strong rhythm section, usually consisting of double bass and drums, medium to fast tempo, and the distinctive “swing” that’s common to many forms of jazz.

Tempo – How fast the music is played.
What is Musical Improvisation?

Musical improvisation is the spontaneous creation of music as it is performed. When a musician improvises, he or she invents music at the moment of performance, building on an existing theme in music.

The Turtle Island String Quartet uses this technique of improvisation when it performs its music on stage. Not only do the members individually create their own musical pieces, but the group as a whole works to mix in influences of jazz, hip-hop, Latin and various other musical styles as it performs.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, the word “improvise” has two meanings:

“to compose, recite, or sing especially in verse, or to play an instrument or act extemporaneously,” and “to bring about, arrange, or make on the spur of the moment without preparation”

Improv — the act of making something up as it is performed — is a technique used by actors, musicians and writers alike. It is also an extremely important element of jazz music. Individual musicians in a jazz group will take turns soloing over the rest of the group, improvising what they play as they go along. Though most musicians have a basic structure and idea of what they will play, the notes and chords are quickly and spontaneously constructed as the musician performs his or her part.

Improv activities

Experiment #1.
Improvisation in Conversation

Work with a partner and have a conversation about your favorite subject. Don’t plan out what you are going to say, but stay on the subject and use correct English grammar and sentence structure. Stay aware of where the conversation goes and how your comments are affected by what your partner is saying.

Experiment #2.
Improvisation in Music

Write the words for the song “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” on a piece of paper.

Sing the song with the correct words and melody.

Change a few words, but keep melody and rhythm the same.

(i.e., change “boat” to “car” or “motorcycle” or “surfboard”)

You could change all the words, too:

Propel, propel, propel your craft

Leisurely down the liquid solution.
Ecstatically, ecstatically, ecstatically, ecstatically, Existence is merely an illusion.

Change melody, but keep the original words.
Change rhythm, but keep original melody and words.
Change melody and rhythm, but keep original words.
Jazz poetry is poetry that imitates jazz music in its rhythm and style. Langston Hughes is considered by most to be the first true jazz poet. The jazz influence began to reach all corners of the U.S. and by the 1920s, jazz poetry reflected this influence. Here are two of Langston Hughes’ poems. Read each poem through a few times to get a feel for them.

**My People**
The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people,
The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people,
Beautiful also is the sun,
Beautiful also are the souls of my people.

**Dream Deferred**
What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore - and then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over - like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load

Or does it just explode?

**Figurative Language**
Figurative language, which uses familiar words in unfamiliar ways, makes writing and reading more interesting. The poetry of Langston Hughes includes several examples of figurative language.

**A metaphor** makes comparisons between two things without using the words like or as.
A metaphor may say that one thing is another.
Find an example of metaphor used in “Dream Deferred.” What two things are being compared?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Personification** means giving human characteristics to an idea or thing.
Find an example of personification used in “My People.” Describe the human characteristic given to specific things:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(This activity was developed for the Regina Carter Study Guide at the University Music Society and used with their permission.)
Crossword Puzzle

To help you answer the crossword puzzle questions, you will need to go to the PBS Ken Burns Jazz Series website at http://pbskids.org/jazz/time/index.html... or maybe you really know your jazz history and don’t need to go to the site to answer the questions!

Down
1. This city was under both French and Spanish rule during the 1700s.

3. African American composer who combined European compositional styles with the rhythmic and melodic music that came from the black community.

4. Soulful songs sung by slaves to express their religious beliefs, feelings and desires for freedom.

8. The unfair practice of keeping blacks and whites separate is called.

9. This 1960s movement had a great impact on jazz and jazz musicians.

10. During the 1950s the Milton Berle television program helped to introduce America to this newer style of music.

12. Compositional term for piano pieces that combine some European traditional styles with rhythm that was found in the African American community, made famous by (see 3 down).

Across
2. What we call the worst financial disaster in US history.

5. A term for women in the 1920s that cut their hair and worse shorter dresses.

6. American musical art form with foundations in spirituals and work songs.

7. For the first time in the 1920s, Americans were able to buy these at the store.

11. The name of the campaign African American soldiers started during World War II, and stood for fighting for victory over tyranny abroad and discrimination at home.

13. A Midwest city that was considered, in the 1930s, to have as exciting a jazz scene as New York and Chicago.

14. To drag out certain notes and rearrange music to make it livelier was/is known as?

15. In performing this kind of African American music style, singers used the power of their voices to express their feelings.

16. What became the most popular music of the 1930’s and 1940’s?
1. Consider your first impression:
   • What is your initial response to the music?

2. Describe the work:
   • Is the music instrumental, vocal or a combination of both?
   • Are the dynamics quiet, moderate, loud, or often changing?
   • Is the tempo slow, moderate, fast? Does it change often?
   • Is the melody easy to follow?
   • Is the melody comprised of low tones, medium tones, high tones, or a combination?
   • How many different sections do you hear?
   • Do any of the sections repeat? If so, when and how often?

3. Discover your personal interpretation of the music:
   • How does the music make you feel?
   • Does the music change? If so, how does the change make you feel?
   • What does the music say to you?
   • Are there any messages in the music?

4. Make an informed judgment about the music:
   • Were the artists successful in conveying feelings and emotions?
   • Do you feel differently about the music than when you gave your initial response above?

You Are an Important Part!

The audience is an important part of every Lied Center performance. The performance requires both the artists and the audience to work together. Your role, as a member of the audience, is to actively watch and listen. Any unexpected activity can distract the performers and other audience members. Listening carefully and focusing on the artist and their art will make the performance more enjoyable for you and your neighbor.

You may not be sure whether or not the piece has ended. It is fine to applaud in the middle of the piece if there is something you particularly like, or when one of the musicians has a solo (especially in jazz music) or if you think it is the end, even if it is not. And of course, don’t forget to clap when you know the musicians have definitely finished the piece! The musicians have worked hard, and the final applause lets them know that you appreciate their work. Listen, watch, imagine and enjoy your role in the performance.
RESOURCES

Other jazz and music-related sites
I. General Links


c. Lincoln Center’s Jazz for Young People at – http://www.jalc.org/educ/curriculum/contentsPage.html

II. Audio Links

a. http://www.tisq.com/listen.htm – Features audio bits from the TISQ Homepage, including “You’ve Changed” from their album Danzon, a track nominated for a 2003 Best Instrumental Arrangement Grammy Award. Also includes new live tracks.

b. http://www.npr.org/programs/asc/features/directorspicks/wesat.html National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” Director’s Picks featuring TISQ’s album Art of the Groove (scroll down to the bottom of the page) complete with audio samples.


d. http://media.jalc.org/nea/l1/media_listen.html – A page full of sound links pertaining to jazz, and specifically “The Advent of Jazz,” including but not limited to ragtime, blues, opera and Latin music. The master site for this page also has links to video and photographs of early jazz culture (mostly New Orleans).
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Susan Ralston – Music, Schwegler Elementary
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Adventures in Imagination is the Lied Center’s L.E.A.P. partnership with the Lawrence Public Schools and U.S. Bank. Adventures’ programs utilize the arts to enhance readings, writing, critical thinking and creative expression.

Beyond the Stage

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