

Window on the Work

McCallum Theatre's
Aesthetic Education Program
2019 | 2020

Shakespeare in Jazz: All the World's a Song



Performed by Daniel Kelly Quartet featuring Frederick Johnson

What is a **Window on the Work** — and why have one? Well, like windows in general, it provides a look in (or out!) at something. That something, in this case, is a work of art. The work of art in question will be studied in the classroom and then viewed — live. Classroom teachers, students, and teaching artists will be engaged, together, in determining what that study will ultimately look like. A document like the **Window on the Work** you hold in your hand at this moment will help you play your part in that process. It gives you not just one view but many views into the work of art. It supplies you with answers to the questions you raise. It inspires new questions, suggests new avenues of inquiry. It rounds out the picture. It sparks new ideas. See if the ideas below make sense to you.

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In the planning phase, Windows on the Work can help establish the most effective line of inquiry and richest unit of study

- answer questions about the work of art as they come up
- help you approach the work of art from various vantage points
- spark curricular connections

During the unit of study, Windows on the Work can

- help you expand the study in particular contextual areas
- become a reference for student use

After the unit of study, Windows on the Work can

- help keep the work of art alive in the classroom
- suggest pathways for further study
- help tie together strands of learning later in the year

Shakespeare in Jazz: All the World's a Song

Performed by Daniel Kelly Quartet
featuring Frederick Johnson

TEXTS BY
MARK ALMY,
EXCEPT WHERE
OTHERWISE CREDITED

The Work of Art



Pianist Daniel Kelly wondered how he could better understand the works of William Shakespeare. The songs that make up *Shakespeare In Jazz: All the World's a Song* are his answer to that question. Texts from some of the Bard's most famous works become lyrics set to Daniel's beguiling melodies. "O Mistress Mine", for example, from the brilliant comedy *Twelfth Night*. "I Do Wander" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. "All the World's a Stage" from *As You Like It*. "Double, Double, Toil and Trouble" from *Macbeth*. "Full Fathom Five" from *The Tempest*. "Shall I Compare Thee

to a Summer's Day" from the *Sonnets*. And so on. "I conceived of this project as an introduction to Shakespeare's work for many people – students, in particular," he says, "and also as a unique way for fans of Shakespeare to experience his brilliant genius in a different way."

Members of the Daniel Kelly Quartet bring these songs to life in a performance that interweaves elements from the world of jazz: improvisation, scatting, syncopation and collaborative fun. Daniel, well known to McCallum Theatre Education audiences for his work with storyteller David Gonzalez, anchors things at the keyboard, while singer Frederick Johnson, bassist Jennifer Vincent and drummer Bram Kincheloe fill out the crew. Johnson captivates the audience with his improvisatory singing in introductory selections – and before we know what has happened, he's got us singing along. Then, it's on to the Shakespeare songs themselves – and even there we lend our own voices to the music making!

A tool that Daniel uses when studying a particular text from Shakespeare is the website No Fear Shakespeare – and you can too! Check out this link: www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare

And for some sneak peeks at these songs, visit:

www.danielkellymusic.com/all-the-worlds-a-song-shakespeare-in-jazz

There you'll find a terrific Teacher Resource Guide prepared by Daniel and his assistants, as well.

The Artists



Composer/pianist **Daniel Kelly**, based in New York, always has lots of projects going. For example, he has been gathering stories of everyday people and turning them into musical pieces that blend jazz, classical and folk music. To prepare for that work, he traveled through the U.S. collecting stories from farmers, immigrants, hurricane survivors, teachers, students, seniors and others from many backgrounds, ages 4 to 94. The resulting compositions are performed by Kelly's band of world-class musicians.

He has performed with many well-known artists in the fields of jazz, classical and pop – but he says the experience of meeting with everyday people and creating music inspired by their individual lives has brought him the most personal satisfaction.

His musical style melds jazz and Afro-Cuban. "One of the many things I love about jazz is how the art form is naturally evolving in many directions all the time. Many jazz musicians have incorporated styles from Cuba, Brazil, India and many other places into their work as composers, improvisers and band leaders."

In addition to playing live concerts all over, he has composed film scores and music for the theater. He has put various ensembles together, as his discs *World* and *Duets With Ghosts* show. He is also very much committed to arts education and young audiences. To that end, he performs in schools and in performances geared to family audiences. He has been a Jazz Ambassador for the U.S. State Department, performing a six-week tour through India and Asia.



Singer **Frederick Johnson** has performed on stage with such musical greats as Chick Corea & Christian McBride and has performed as an opening act for Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Aretha Franklin, George Benson, B.B. King and many others.

Says Daniel: "Frederick Johnson and I have been performing together since 2006 and we have developed a certain rapport and dynamic. When I first met Frederick he performed solo with just a hand drum to an audience of 1,000 people. He went on stage, burst into song and before long, every single one of those people were out of their seats, dancing, clapping and singing at the top of their lungs! Audience participation is the core of what Frederick does and it's integral to his mission as a musician. He always brings a positive message to the audience and uplifts them in a way I have only seen him do."

"Frederick has studied the West African Djali tradition in depth, wherein a village musician communicates the news of the village to all the people through song. He has studied with masters of this tradition and it has become integral to his identity as a musician. Getting the audience involved is a core part of Frederick's artistry. Djalis are storytellers, historians, praise singers, poets and musicians. Frederick is all these things and more. (Djalis are sometimes also called bards, a title famously shared by Shakespeare)."

Frederick himself says, "One of the most powerful components in artistic engagement is inclusion. To be able to make the opportunity for spontaneously taking words and creating together amplifies the understanding of how powerful art can be."



Drummer **Bram Kincheloe** has played with Lee Konitz, Branford Marsalis, Ambrose Akinmusire, Wynton Marsalis, Steve Cardenas and many other great jazz musicians. He started and played with the soul-rock band Sister Sparrow and the Dirty Birds for close to a decade. An accomplished singer-songwriter and award winning writer, he also plays piano, keyboards and guitar.



Bassist **Jennifer Vincent** has been an active force on the music scene in New York City for well over a decade. She plays and tours with many jazz and Latin notables and is a member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra – the longest-running and most legendary jazz orchestra in American history. Jennifer, who started as a classically-trained cellist at Oberlin Conservatory, is equally comfortable in the jazz, Latin-jazz and traditional Cuban musical idioms.

Craft



How it works when four musicians perform these songs

"There is a lot of room for improvisation!" Daniel says. "I've composed and structured the songs just like jazz tunes. This leaves a lot of room for each individual musician to bring in their creativity. That's what I love about jazz – the band is performing a composition with a notated melody, chord structure and form, yet within those parameters, each musician can choose which specific notes they will play and how they will interpret the melody and rhythmic style. They interact and have an ongoing musical conversation with all

the other band members while they are playing."

Daniel's process in writing songs to Shakespeare texts

"I start with the text. I speak it over and over again. There is a rhythm to Shakespeare's poetry, and it's fun to discover that rhythm while reciting certain lines and passages. Once I've processed the text, I move to the piano and begin singing the lines. I improvise and explore musically. That's the fun part – to see what emerges! Once I find something I like, I'll record a version of me singing the song. Then I notate it for the band."

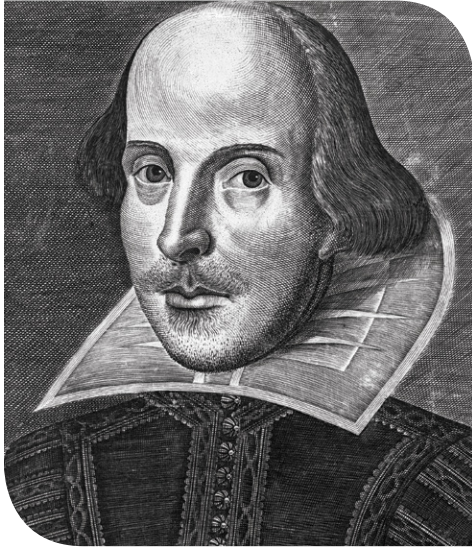
Scat Singing

In jazz, when a singer improvises with wordless sounds or nonsense syllables or without words at all (while singing pitches), that skill is called scatting. An example favored by famed jazz vocalist Sarah Vaughan was "shoo-doo-shoo-bee-ooo-bee." In scat singing, the singer is improvising melodies and rhythms using the voice as an instrument. In fact, singers like Ms. Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald or Mel Tormé base their individual scatting styles on particular instruments featured in the bands they sing with.



ELLA FITZGERALD

Roots



Shakespeare

It's estimated that Shakespeare had a vocabulary of 29,066 words. (You or I today might use just 2,000 words in everyday conversation.) He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, in 1564. No one's sure what date exactly but April 23 is commonly accepted. His dad, a tanner by trade, made gloves. Young Shakespeare probably began school around six or seven at the Stratford grammar school, where he would have learned basic reading and writing skills.

Nobody really knows what he was up to between 1578 and 1582. These are called his 'lost' years. Did he work as a butcher, a schoolmaster or a glover? All we know for sure is that during that time he married a woman named Anne Hathaway, and together they had three children. We also know that by 1592 Shakespeare was an established actor in London.

Of course, he is famous today not for his acting but because of the plays he wrote. We are aware of 37 of them. Were there more, now lost? His output organizes itself into three categories. There are the tragedies (*Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* are examples), comedies (*A Midsummer's Night Dream* and *Twelfth Night*), and the history plays (*Richard III* and *Henry V.*)

Shakespeare also wrote a series of sonnets that are high points of Western Literature. These were produced during various outbreaks of plague in the city, when theaters were shuttered and Shakespeare's playwriting skills were temporarily on hold.

Shakespeare died on his birthday in 1616 and was buried in Stratford. We don't know what got him, but at the ripe old age of 52, he had exceeded the average life expectancy in London at the time (35).

Jazz

Jazz was born in the United States. It's partly planned and partly spontaneous. The spontaneity comes in, as Daniel reveals on page 4, when musicians introduce variation and whatever else may occur in the moment. That is, they improvise. This is the single element that most defines jazz. As musicians engage with the music and with each other, it's like a kind of musical conversation.

Jazz is a blend of different styles of music. These include gospel music, brass bands, African music, blues, and Spanish music. Certain musical sounds pop out to the ear in jazz. For example, bent notes – that is, notes that start on one pitch and slide into another. Another key sound is a blue note – a pitch which is deliberately slightly discordant and then is followed by another note that fits perfectly into the harmony of the piece.



Jazz was invented by African-American musicians in New Orleans, Louisiana in the late 1800s. By the 1920s, jazz had become popular all over – and its center had moved to Chicago and New York City. In fact the 1920s were often referred to as The Jazz Age. Jazz, however, is always evolving. In the 1930s, swing became the thing; in the 1940s bebop; and in the 1950s cool jazz, as practiced by Miles Davis and Stan Kenton.

Sample Lessons

How can your students explore this work in your classroom through ART MAKING, RESEARCH, QUESTIONING and REFLECTION? Check out these ideas:

LESSON ONE: BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Line of Inquiry: How does Daniel Kelly through the act of making art – in his case songwriting – make meaning/ take ownership of Shakespeare’s complex texts?

DISPLAY

*I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon’s sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.*

Have students read silently first. (Or with younger grades, you will want to read it aloud for them.)

QUESTIONING

What words are new to us? What do we think they might mean, based on the line they’re in? Let’s try predicting: Who can tell us what they think these lines mean? Who might be saying them – and why?

Have students read aloud the lines in unison. What are we noticing about the sounds of words?

RESEARCH

Get out your Chromebooks* and let’s go to a special site online which Daniel Kelly uses when he wants to understand Shakespeare’s texts better. www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/

*In classrooms without Chromebooks, you can print out the No Fear Shakespeare version for student use – or you can print out the same information from Daniel Kelly’s *Shakespeare in Jazz Study Guide* found here –

www.danielkellymusic.com/all-the-worlds-a-song-shakespeare-in-jazz

QUESTIONING

What are we discovering about these lines – and their meaning? Who is speaking these lines and to whom? What is happening in the play at this point? What else are we learning about this play?

ART MAKING

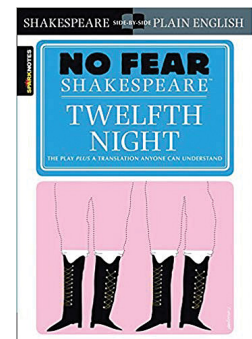
Based on what they’ve discovered, students create pictures (drawings, sketches, paintings?) that show the characters, the presumed action(s) and the setting.

GALLERY

Students in table groups visit other table’s art, noticing other students’ choices.

REFLECTION

Daniel Kelly decided to write a song to this text as a way of understanding the words better. How has our own art making today helped us make more sense of these words?



LESSON TWO: AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Line of Inquiry: How does Daniel Kelly in *All the World's a Song* use the elements of Jazz to create works of art?

QUESTIONING

What did you notice? What instruments did you see? How did each of them sound? What did you notice about the musicians? How did they interact with each other – and with the audience? What were the different things you were asked to do? What did doing those things require of you? What were some of the songs? Titles? Texts? What did the music for a particular song sound like? How would you describe the genre jazz, based on this experience?

RESEARCH

Let's find out some things about jazz. Class researches using the following: this Window on the Work, Daniel Kelly's *Shakespeare in Jazz Study Guide* and his *Teacher Resource Guide* – as well as any additional online sites you may direct them to. For example <https://kids.kiddle.co/Jazz> is a good example.

QUESTIONING

What are we learning about jazz? Students individually create lists of words that describe jazz. (In younger grades, you will want to put describing words offered by students onto the board for a whole-class project.)

ART MAKING

Students create short, free-form poems using their list of words. (Rhyming may be used or not.) The theme of the poem is Jazz. (In younger grades, you will want to guide this process at the board with the whole class.)

REFLECTION

Students share their poems. You can help guide their noticing of a particular poem by asking students open-ended questions about word choice, meaning, and the poet's take on jazz. Finally, ask: What ideas does our own poem writing give us about Shakespeare's job as a playwright/poet?

Glossary

Bard — poet

Bent note — a musical note that is varied in pitch.

Blue note — a note that – for expressive purposes – is sung or played at a slightly different pitch than standard.

Iambic pentameter — line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable, for example *Two households, both alike in dignity*.

Improvisation — create and perform (music, drama, or verse) spontaneously or without preparation.

Scat singing — Improvising words to a song that are nonsense syllables.

Sideman — a member of the band, but not the leader.

Sonnet — a poem of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English, typically having ten syllables per line.

Syncopation — a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.



ARTS | INQUIRY | IMAGINATION

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