

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Subject: Django Fever
Discipline: Music (Gypsy Jazz)

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Still image from SPARK story, 2008.

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

SUBJECT

Django Fever and
The Hot Club of San Francisco

GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

Develop visual, written, listening and speaking skills through listening to specific styles of music. Understand the history of Gypsy Jazz music and the legendary Django Reinhardt.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Bay Area musician Paul Mehling is helping to introduce a new generation of jazz lovers to the music of legendary guitarist Django Reinhardt. Sparks visits with Mehling as the group prepares for the annual Bay Area Djangofest.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance
Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently
Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Gypsy Jazz and the artistry of Django Reinhardt
- To provide context for the understanding of a revival of a musical genre
- To inspire students to think critically about the creation of music and to explore their own musical interests and abilities

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- SPARK story on Django Fever (The Hot Club of San Francisco) on DVD and related equipment, or a computer with Internet access, navigation software, video projector, speakers and a sound card.
- Cassette player, CD player, or computer audio program

MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers.
Pencils, pens, and paper.

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects
Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



See more information on
[Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at
www.kqed.org/spark/education.

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Bay Area musician Paul Mehling is helping to introduce a new generation of music lovers to the work of legendary guitarist Django Reinhardt. Known as one of the godfathers of the Gypsy jazz revival, Mehling, along with his band, Hot Club of San Francisco, attempts to recreate the sounds, tales, and atmosphere of Reinhardt's band, Quintette du Hot Club de France, active mostly in and around Paris in the 1930s and 40s.

Reinhardt was one of the first European-born jazz musicians to gain international acclaim, and was commonly considered to be the most virtuosic guitar player alive. Reinhardt was single-handedly responsible for the invention and popularization of Gypsy jazz -- or "jazz manouche," a style of music that fused Gypsy guitar technique with swing jazz. Reinhardt's influence was felt far beyond the arena of Gypsy jazz, his music continuing to inform guitarists working in a wide spectrum of idioms.

Mehling first discovered Reinhardt's music as a teenager while listening to his father's record collection. Inspired by the rhythms and inflections of Gypsy jazz, these recordings fueled Mehling's desire to learn the guitar. In search of Gypsy jazz players, Mehling moved to Paris at the age of 23. He spent six months honing his skills and retracing the footsteps of his hero. He has since become a teacher, instructing Reinhardt enthusiasts in Gypsy guitar technique.

For about two decades, Mehling has led the Hot Club of San Francisco, which copies the exact, unusual instrumentation of the Quintette du Hot Club de France, combining three guitarists with violinist and string bassist. Though jazz manouche is usually associated with fast, hot guitar licks, Mehling is particularly attached to the more mysterious, melancholy aspects of the genre, incorporating many haunting, wistful tunes into the band's repertoire.

Spark follows Mehling's band to the 2008 San Francisco/Mill Valley Djangofest, one of several festivals around the world that bring together musicians from diverse backgrounds to celebrate Reinhardt's legacy. Playing at Mill Valley's historic 142 Throckmorton Theatre, the Hot Club of San Francisco, along with many other bands working in the jazz manouche style, are helping bring Reinhardt's sounds to a new generation of music lovers.

THE BIG PICTURE

Born in Liberchies, Belgium in 1910, Django Reinhardt grew up in poor Gypsy encampments in the region around Paris. Demonstrating a strong interest in music from a young age, Reinhardt received his first musical instrument at age 12, a banjo-guitar that was a gift from a neighbor. By the age of 13, he had become proficient on the instrument and began playing professionally with older musicians in dance halls around Paris.

At the age of 18, the trailer that Reinhardt was living in with his first wife caught on fire, and though pulled to safety by neighbors, the young prodigy was badly burned. As a result of his injuries, Reinhardt lost the use of two fingers of his left hand. He eventually was able to rehabilitate his hand to the degree that he could use all his fingers to form chords, but soloed only with his two unaffected fingers.

Influenced by the jazz of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Joe Venturi, and Eddie Lang, Reinhardt developed a style of music that came to be known as "Jazz Manouche," or "Gypsy Jazz," that combined American swing with Gypsy guitar technique.

There are many accounts of how the Quintette du Hot Club de France (The Hot Club of France) came into being, though the most probable is that bassist Louis Vola discovered Reinhardt and his brother

Joseph playing guitar on the beach in Toulon, France. Vola invited the Reinhardt brothers to play with his band, which also included violinist Stéphane Grappelli and guitar player Roger Chaput. Before the Quintette, the guitar was considered merely an accompanying instrument in jazz. The combination of three guitars was an innovation that provided for a guitar soloist backed by rhythm guitar that has become crucial to rock and pop music.

Over the years Reinhardt's name has become virtually synonymous with the Quintette du Hot Club de France, but at the core of the quintet was the interplay between Reinhardt's guitar work and Grappelli's violin. Though the original Quintette broke up in 1939 as a result of the outbreak of the Second World War, Reinhardt went to the UK to reunite with Grappelli who had relocated there.

Reinhardt was invited to play in the United States with one of his great musical influences in the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Despite his excitement in playing with Ellington's band, he was disappointed that he was required to play a guitar that was not as clear and resonant as the French Selmer guitar to which he was accustomed, and the results were generally less liked by his fans. Returning to Europe in 1948, Reinhardt put together a new band that had him recording again with Grappelli. These recordings, made in 1949-50, are regarded by many to be Reinhardt and Grappelli's best.

Two years after retiring to Samois-sur-Seine, near Fontainebleau, France in 1951 Reinhardt suffered a massive brain hemorrhage and died. Though only 43 years old when he passed, Reinhardt left a musical legacy that dramatically influenced the course of pop music.



Django Reinhardt
www.wikipedia.org

RESOURCES – TEXTS

Balmer, Paul. *Stéphane Grappelli*. Omnibus Press, 2008.

Balmer, Paul. *Stéphane Grappelli: With and Without Django*. Sanctuary Publishing 2003.

Dregni, Michael. *Django: The Life and Music of a Gypsy Legend*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Dregni, Michael, *Gypsy Jazz: In Search of Django Reinhardt and the Soul of Gypsy Swing*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Gioia, Ted. *The History of Jazz*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Stéphane Grappelli: A Life in the Jazz Century. 128 mins. 2003.

Sweet and Low Down. Dir. Woody Allen. 95 mins. 1999.

SUGGESTED AUDIO RECORDINGS

Django Reinhardt, *The Complete Early Recordings in Chronological Order* [Box Set]. JSP records, 2000.

Le Quintette du Hot Club de France, *25 Classics 1934-1940*. ASV Living Era, 1998.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

Official site of The Hot Club of San Francisco:

<http://www.hcsf.com/>

New Yorker review a recent biography of Django Reinhardt:

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/12/06/041206crbo_books

Wikipedia article on Django Reinhardt:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Django_Reinhardt

Wikipedia article on the Quintette du Hot Club de France:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintette_du_Hot_Club_de_France

Wikipedia article on Gypsy Jazz:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gypsy_jazz

Article about Django Reinhardt from Redhotjazz.com:

<http://www.redhotjazz.com/django.html>

Django Reinhardt biography from allmusic.com:

<http://allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&searchlink=DJANGO|REINHARDT&sql=11:0ifpxqy5ld0e~T1>

VIDEO RESOURCES

Django Reinhardt: Kind of Jazz Guitar. 90 mins. 2007.

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND WORDS AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Accompany

To play a vocal or instrumental part that supports or complements a solo part played by another musician.

Acoustic

A musical instrument that is not electrically modified or enhanced.

American jazz

A broad musical genre developed in the early 1900's that today encompasses many different styles, including hot jazz, cool jazz, Latin jazz, big band, free and bebop.

Bass

The largest member of the string family, the bass or bass viol is both bowed and plucked with the fingers, and provides the lowest sounding notes as well as a rhythmic foundation in a musical ensemble such as an orchestra or a jazz ensemble.

Django Reinhart

One of the most famous guitarists of all times, Reinhart was a Belgian musician born in 1910, who despite a serious injury to his hand in his youth, played guitar in the style known as "Gypsy Jazz" and made the genre famous.

Gypsy Jazz

A style of music that emerged in the 1930's and generally credited to Django Reinhart, known for its combination of swing articulation and chromatic movement associated with gypsy music. Often characterized by its instrumentation of two rhythm guitars, a lead guitar, bass and violin, but sometimes includes accordion, clarinet, saxophone, or cimbalom.

Hot jazz

One of the first genres to be called 'jazz' that developed in New Orleans at the turn of the 20th century. In the beginning, bands were comprised of mainly black musicians but later became more

integrated, as hot jazz spread northward and also became called Dixieland.

Instrumentation

A term used to identify what instruments will be played in a given ensemble or piece of music.

Lead Guitar

The name given to the guitar that will play the lead, or melody of a piece, as well as the solo improvisations during the improvisational section.

Melancholy

A feeling of sadness, depression, pensiveness, or thoughtfulness.

Prodigy

A young person who shows great skill and talent in a given area of study or ability.

Revival

A renewal of interest and practice in a given body of beliefs, artistic or cultural styles after a period of obscurity.

Rhythm

An organized pattern formed by a series of beats or sounds of differing duration and stress.

Rhythm Guitar

The instrument in a musical ensemble that provides the accompaniment or rhythmic and harmonic base over which a lead instrument plays the melody and solos.

String instruments

The instruments in this family all have strings which are strummed, picked or bowed. They include all the viols (violin, viola, bass and cello) and guitars.

Technique

The command of fundamental skills needed to perform on any instrument and with an ensemble

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Call and response, question and answer, solo and tutti (K-5)

Call & Response

In exploring jazz and improvisation, there are some basic elements of playing with an ensemble that are helpful to understand. First, the idea of “Call and response”, in which one person ‘calls’, or, makes a musical or rhythmic statement, and the others ‘respond’, or echo. This can be easily done with clapping if you don’t have access to musical instruments or drums. (Or have your class create their own drums first, and then use them in this activity) Start with basic rhythmic concepts such as quarter notes (sounded as a ‘ta’) and eighth notes (sounded as a ‘ti’). The underlying beat will be the quarter note, or ‘ta’, and there are two ‘ti-ti’s’, or eighth notes in one quarter note. A simple four beat rhythm could read like:

ta ta ta ti-ti

You play (say and clap) and they repeat.

Try another, such as:

ta ti-ti ta ta

Or: ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti ta

Once they have this concept down, trying playing along with a recording of your choice. Challenge students to move their bodies to the rhythm, so instead of clapping, try jumping, blinking, kicking, or stomping the rhythm. If you have older students, you could try this as a melodic call and response, with melodies or words, or as an instrumental call and response using two notes in varying rhythmic patterns that students echo. Increase the rhythmic complexity for older grades, to include half notes, half rests, quarter rests, eighth notes and rests, and syncopation.

Question and answer:

In music there always exists some kind of conversation between instruments. Try the previous

activity, but instead of having students copy what was ‘called’, have each student ‘answer’ with a different pattern. To keep it simple start with just four beats per question and answer. They could add dynamics as well and have a musical or rhythmic conversation. Pass the conversation around with one student leading and individuals answering, or pair up.

Crescendo/Decrescendo

Dynamics are an important part of playing music, and help make it more interesting by creating contrasts and tension. Try a movement exercise with you class using a cymbal and a soft mallet. Begin by explaining the difference between *piano* (soft) and *forte* loud. Demonstrate both of these terms on the cymbal and have students identify both (You could even create small ‘p’ and ‘f’ cards to denote piano and forte and have them hold up the correct card as you play). Then, with everyone standing, holding hands in a tight circle, start by playing piano on the cymbal, and as the sound crescendos or gets louder, everyone has to scoot back with the volume, and keep holding hands until they’ve made a large circle. Then, as you decrescendo, or get softer, they return to the middle. Let different students take turns making playing the cymbal.

Solo and Tutti and Improvising If you have access to Orff instruments such as xylophones, glockenspiels, marimbas or metallophones, you can try a simple improvisation exercise. Remove all keys except for a pentatonic scale, such as C, D, E, G, and A. Start by playing *tutti*, or all together, on an ostinato (a repeated pattern) on two keys such as C and G or D and A, then take turns giving each student a chance to play a *solo* on any pentatonic notes they want. Give them some guidelines, such as eight or 12 beats in which to play a solo, and you could even give them a simple rhythmic pattern to play but allow them to choose the notes. Pass the

solos around and challenge students to play quietly when someone is soloing and louder when they are tutti. If possible, tape-record them, play back and discuss.

Listen and evaluate Now go back and listen to some recordings by Django Reinhart and have students evaluate what they hear. Who takes a solo? What is happening with the rest of the band? What other instruments can they hear and what are they doing? Identify the form of the piece of music. Does it have different sections? Could they name the musical form such as AB or ABA?

RELATED STANDARDS

Music Grade K-5

Artistic Perception

1.1 Read, write and perform rhythmic patterns, using eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes and rests, syncopation

1.6 Recognize and describe aural examples of musical forms, including rondo.

Creative Expression

2.3 Compose and improvise simple rhythmic and melodic patterns on classroom instruments.

Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Identify and analyze differences in tempo and dynamics in contrasting music selections.

History of gypsies

The history of gypsies is a long and hard one. Have students research their origins and Diaspora and investigate the similarities between seemingly diverse music such as flamenco, Gypsy Jazz, or music from any Romany groups across Europe. See a movie such as *Latcho Drom* for a vibrant example of music of the Romany people from India to Paris. Discuss what motivates the migration of populations due to various needs, and how it affects the identity of the people who don't have a homeland to claim. Investigate current events involving gypsies today. Have students present their findings to the whole class. Create a flow chart on the wall of the migration of the Romany people with historical dates indicated.

Django Reinhart and style

It is often said that style is defined by limitations. Django Reinhart overcame serious physical difficulties and became one of the most renowned guitarists of all time. With only two working fingers and thumb on his left hand, he found a new system of fingering that enabled him to play incredibly fast

and maintain the gypsy stylistics, creating a style that is copied more than 50 years after his death.

Find other examples of this idea in world music or popular art forms today, extending the understanding of 'limitations' to such things as environment, access to instruments and raw materials, money, religious conviction and social status. The conversation might include questions like why nomadic musicians might choose small, portable instruments as opposed to pianos and how that affects the kind of music they play.

Likewise, on stage in a theater or other acoustic venue, a method of speaking and singing was developed over the centuries to project sound without the use of microphones as well as the means of movement on stage that had to project emotion and feeling to the people at the back of the house. You could even extend this to subjects such as architecture – why some structures work better in their given environment (like an adobe in the desert Southwest as opposed to a big wooden farm house)

Have students present their findings to the rest of the class using any media and materials available to them OR LIMIT them to only using spoken word, a poem, a song, only photos/visuals, or a puppet show! Have peers review and analyze their presentations.

Sparklers!

Topics for further discussion and exploration:

- **Compare American jazz and Gypsy Jazz** – Split your class up into two groups and have each research and find recording examples of American jazz and Gypsy Jazz from the early 1900's. Have a listening contest and play random selections for the class and have them identify the style. Extend this to other styles of jazz.
- **Explore 1900's music and dance**
See if your students can research and learn some basic movements to the dances of the 1900 - 30's. There were many 'animal dances' from 1910 to 1920 that were popular and later the tango and Charleston became famous. Find recordings and act out a story using animal dances for the different parts. (see www.dancetimepublications.com for actual historical dances on DVD)

- **Act out a story using different themes of music, solo and tutti:**
Pick any favorite story or folk tale and act it out using different musical themes for the individual characters or moments in the story. Assign some students the role of the actors, and others the musicians who must provide the background music. Allow for times for the whole ensemble to play together, or tutti, and at other times when an individual is speaking or moving, for there to be a solo.
- **Bring an artist to your school!** Contact Young Audiences of Northern California to see what music or dance groups could come to present an assembly, residency or a workshop for a hands-on experience. www.ya-nc.org
- **Attend local events** such as the Django Fest or the School of Jazz in Berkeley. Compare and contrast different groups and analyze the performances using specific criteria for making informed critical evaluations of quality and effectiveness of the presentation.

RELATED STANDARDS

Music

Grade 4-6, Historical and Cultural Context

3.2 Identify music from diverse cultures and time periods.

Grade 8

Artistic Perception

1.5 Analyze and compare the use of musical elements representing various genres, styles, and cultures, with an emphasis on chords and harmonic progressions.

Grades 9-12

Historical and Cultural Context

3.1 Identify the sources of musical genres of the United States, trace the evolution of those genres, and cite well-known musicians associated with them.

3.5 Classify, by genre or style and historical period or culture, unfamiliar but representative aural example of music and explain the reasoning for the classification

Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing each with an exemplary model.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California State Content Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.