



Jazz Baby

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Although International Jazz Day has technically passed—it's on April 30th—I could not pass up an opportunity to tell anyone who will listen about this wonderful book.

Part of my weekly library trip now includes a quick walk through of the children's books section. The librarians at the branch I frequent always have new

and interesting books displayed and I often leave with 2 or 3 extra on top of what I originally came in for. Lately, much of my inspiration for new lessons has come from children's literature and this text is no exception.

Summary

Jazz Baby depicts an entire family moving and grooving together, creating a piece of music all their own. Rhythmic and rhyming text provide opportunities for echo imitation, as well as adding body percussion or other sounds. Students will easily engage with the refrain, 'Mama sings high. Daddy sings low. Snazzy-jazzy baby says, "Go, man, go!"' which comes back throughout the book. This part reminded me of a few jazz and blues tunes with similar names that could be played while the book is read. Some of my favorites include:

- Go Boy Go! by Sugar Chile Robinson, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdR-6HrCh5M>
- Go, Man, Go by Slim Gaillard, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwmlKg_hl20
- Go Daddy-o by Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8PJ2MTTAgo>

The inclusion of several important aspects of jazz—scat, bebop, soft shoeing, and swing—will pique students' curiosity and lend itself naturally to a discussion or unit of study on the history of jazz. After using the book as a primer, a natural next step could include leveling up improvisation through the introduction of scat singing. For more information on what that might look like in a classroom, check out Sara Alswager's articles on the AOSA website:

- Teaching Vocal Jazz Concepts in the Schulwerk-Inspired Elementary Music Classroom, https://member.aosa.org/resource_library/viewdetail/610
- Teaching Vocal Jazz Scatting with Elemental Intention – (includes videos examples), https://member.aosa.org/resource_library/viewdetail/638
- Teaching Vocal Jazz Scatting with Elemental Intention, Part II, https://member.aosa.org/resource_library/viewdetail/1297

Classroom Applications

→ Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade

→ Explore echo imitation of text with 5 voices

→ Create a sound story with UPP, vocal improvisation, and pitch exploration

→ Act out or move the story

→ 3rd and 4th grade

→ Have 'nonsense' conversations Q&A style with students using made up words or parts of syllables to talk back and forth (prep for scatting)

→ Use text from the book as building blocks for improvisation – spoken text → body percussion and text → body percussion and audiated text → improvise in a pentaton or with unpitched percussion

→ Create layered ostinati with text from the book or student-created and add instruments

→ 5th and 6th grade

→ Small group compositions using book text

→ Vocal jazz improvisation