

Summer Music Programs

National Standards: 7-8, 10-11

Given the lead time needed, remind students that now is the time to prepare for participation in summer music programs. This summer will find thousands of middle and high school students returning in full force to music camps and on-campus college programs across the country. While COVID and other maladies are still around, things are largely back to normal following the pandemic. In 2021, due to the pandemic, most host schools and camps curtailed in-person operations, and many did not resume them entirely in 2022. So, it appears this summer will mark the first "normal" one for summer music programs, and students and their families are ready.

Prepare

Choosing a summer music program can be a daunting task. Have students research the various points listed in the article to help them decide what kind of program best fits their needs and desires. It's important to also think about whether they would like to forge a career path in music and if so, what direction they might want to take. Why? Have students choose one or two of their top career paths and find subsequent summer school programs that fit those careers.

Key points in the article:

- Today, summer music camps are often offered on college campuses. That gives students a real taste of academic life. Many institutions of higher education sponsor summer programs of study for high school, if not also for younger, musicians. Some call themselves camps, but their students are more likely to stay in college dorms than cabins. Others call themselves institutes, festivals, and the like. They can provide a college experience before high school graduation, which is an added bonus.
- Summer music camps offer a great diversity in the types of music taught. Name the instrument and you can find a dedicated summer program of study. Camps and other summer programs of study have also expanded to include non-performance aspects of music, so there are lots of options when it comes to summer music programs in 2022.
- Socializing is a key benefit of attending a summer music program. It might not be the first consideration on the list, but the social aspects of summer study are huge. Students forge friendships among like-minded musicians as they practice and study together. Such personal connections can last for years, especially in an time when keeping in touch with those living far away is so easy online.

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- BUCOLIC: Regarding the pleasant aspects of the countryside and country life.

- PASTORAL: Referring to land or a farm, used for or related to the keeping or grazing of sheep or cattle.
- STATURE: Importance or reputation gained by ability or achievement.
- CONSERVATORY: Institution for education in musical performance and composition.
- ACOUSTICS: The properties or qualities of a room or building that determine how sound is transmitted in it.

Discuss

Have students focus on the different benefits of attending a summer music program mentioned in the feature. What are some of the benefits of attending a program on a university campus verses in a traditional "camp" setting? Also, what specific area of music do students want to learn about this summer? Which are the top programs in those disciplines? What kind of general summer program are students interested in and why? Do they want to go far from home or stay closer? These are all questions students need to ask when picking a summer program.

Questions

1. When did the famed Interlochen Center for the Arts get its start?
2. Which summer music programs mentioned in the story are known for their camp and "bucolic surroundings?"
3. Name the two leading jazz camps mentioned in the story.
4. Name the non-performance summer programs mentioned in the article.

Answers

1. The Interlochen Center for the Arts started in 1928 as the National High School Orchestra Camp among the pines of a verdant slice of Michigan once home to Ottawa Indians.
2. Interlochen, the Brevard Summer Institute in North Carolina, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute in Massachusetts and the Idyllwild Arts Summer Programs in Pine Cove, California.
3. Today, we find two leading jazz camps at Stanford University in California and Skidmore College in New York.
4. The Composition Fundamentals Workshop at Tanglewood and the Frost Summer Institute of Contemporary Songwriting at the University of Miami.

Expand

Have students research the top three summer music programs that they'd be interested in. What reviews can they find on those programs from past students? Do they know anyone personally who has attended those programs? Why do those programs stand out above others? Have them list their first, second and third choice for a summer music program, in case their top pick falls through.

The Breakaway To Broken Bells

National Standards: 7-8, 10-11

Broken Bells is a special collaboration between James Mercer and Danger Mouse. It's a unique project, as Mercer is the lead vocalist, songwriter, and creative director for The Shins, and Danger Mouse is a longstanding producer, known for his work with Adele, The Black Keys, Gorillaz and more. This feature gives students a look at the history of Broken Bells and other artists who have various side projects.

Prepare

Have students listen to Broken Bells' songs from their three studio releases: 2010's *Broken Bells*, 2014's *After the Disco* and 2022's *Into the Blue*. Then, have them look up songs from James Mercer and Danger Mouse's other projects. What marked differences do they notice? The article discusses some of the differences between Broken Bells and Mercer and Danger Mouse's other work, so have students try to listen for those specific differences.

Key points in the article:

- Mercer and Burton are certainly not the first artists to break from their primary ensemble to form a concurrent secondary unit. Musicians are rubbing shoulders with one another all the time; at festivals, at award shows, at parties thrown by mutual friends. So, it makes sense that friendships are formed, and collaborations ensue.
- Side projects often allow musicians to explore new musical territory and try different sounds and styles that would not be acceptable within their main projects. Mercer told *Alternative Press* in 2022 that the two enjoy "trying stuff out" with Broken Bells, and it's an inspiring feeling.
- A few other famous musicians known for their side projects are Jack White of The White Stripes, who has had several side projects such as The Raconteurs and The Dead Weather, and Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age, and played in Eagles of Death Metal and Them Crooked Vultures while still creating and performing with, or as, The White Stripes.

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- EPONYMOUS: Of a person, giving their name to something.
- SPORADICALLY: Occasionally or at non-regular intervals.
- REVERENCE: Strong respect for someone or something.
- LONGEVITY: Length of service, tenure, etc.; seniority.
- PROLIFIC: Producing in large quantities or with great frequency; highly productive.

Discuss

Have students go beyond Broken Bells and listen to other famous musicians and their side projects. The feature discusses Jack White of The White Stripes and his several side projects, such as The Raconteurs and The Dead Weather, and Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age, who has also played in Eagles of Death Metal and Them Crooked Vultures. Have students

discuss their favorite songs from White and Homme, both with their main and side projects. Are there any songs that they think could have fit not only in those side bands but also the musicians' main groups, or did these musicians totally change their style outside of their main projects?

Questions

1. Broken Bells is a special collaboration between whom?
2. James Mercer is the lead vocalist, songwriter, and creative director for which band?
3. Danger Mouse has worked with Adele, The Black Keys and Gorillaz in what capacity?
4. Name the side projects of Jack White discussed in the story.
5. Name the side projects of Josh Homme discussed in the story.
6. Where and when did James Mercer and Danger Mouse first meet?

Answers

1. Broken Bells is a special collaboration between James Mercer and Danger Mouse.
2. James Mercer is the lead vocalist, songwriter, and creative director for The Shins.
3. As a producer.
4. Jack White of The White Stripes has had several side projects such as The Raconteurs and The Dead Weather.
5. Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age has also played in Eagles of Death Metal and Them Crooked Vultures.
6. James Mercer and Danger Mouse met at Denmark's Roskilde Festival in 2004.

Expand

Have students perform some of Broken Bells' songs. Have them pick a song that really stands out to them, elaborate on why they picked it and perform it for other students. How can students take these songs and make them their "own?" Also, have students look up songs from James Mercer and Danger Mouse's other projects and perform those. Does the music feel very different compared to the Broken Bells songs as they perform?

What It Takes To Break Today

National Standards: 1, 4-6, 11

Releasing music in 2023 is easy as ever because recent changes in the music industry have allowed artists to control their fate. However, with power comes responsibility, and success requires know-how. Releasing music requires that artists create, mix, and master, and protect their tracks before submitting music to streaming platforms. They then must market that music, promote the music, book a show and more. It may seem daunting, but it's possible in ways that weren't available a decade or so ago.

Prepare

Have students discuss what they already know about releasing music online. Do they know how to get music onto streaming platforms such as Apple Music, YouTube and Spotify? If so, which distributors do they prefer, and why? Also, how do students record music to release it? What tools did they, or would they use. Where would they record, and why? In general, have students convey their thoughts about releasing their own music.

Key points in the article:

- Getting your music on streaming and download platforms isn't enough. You must be able to effectively market that music on social media and in other ways. Just because music is released, that doesn't mean people are going to hear it.
- When it comes to music promotion, social media has been a game changer, and will still have great importance in 2023. TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Spotify – DIY artists who wish to release music should have accounts on all of these platforms.
- Above all, keep making music, no matter what. Sarah Facciolo, founder and president of music PR company Facci PR, LLC, says, "My advice is to never stop writing and work as hard as you can. You have to have the passion and drive for this industry. You will always be learning and fighting to stay relevant. If you push yourself and really believe in your art, then this is made for you."

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- **MIXING:** The act of combining singular recorded tracks into one cohesive digital performance.
- **MASTERING:** The altering of a digital performance so as to accommodate the technical specifications and limits of varied audio devices.
- **DISTRIBUTION:** In music, it is the process whereby physical records are sent to retail outlets and digital music is uploaded to the platforms of digital service providers (DSPs) such as Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, and more.
- **AXIOM:** A statement or proposition which is regarded as being established, accepted, or self-evidently true.
- **RELEVANT:** Closely connected or appropriate to what is being done or considered.

Discuss

Read through and discuss the different steps students should follow when releasing music on their own in 2023. That starts with recording music, followed by getting that music online, promoting the music, using social media, booking shows and finding funding. Have students share their experiences with these different aspects of releasing music in a DIY fashion to see if they can help each other by sharing skills and discussing what worked or didn't for each.

Questions

1. Name the digital distribution companies mentioned in the story.
2. Which social media platforms mentioned in the story are the important ones for promoting music?
3. Can musicians still go viral on social media in 2023?
4. Where is DIY musician Ziggy Alberts based?
5. Kickstarter and Patreon assist artists with which techniques?

Answers

1. TuneCore, CD Baby, Distrokid and AWAL, but there are many more out there.
2. TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Spotify.
3. Sarah Facciolo, the founder and president of music PR company Facci PR, LLC, says, ""Yes, DIY artists can still break out on social media, YouTube and TikTok and go viral.""
4. Ziggy Alberts is an Australian singer-songwriter and author who is one of Australia's leading independent artists.
5. Kickstarter and Patreon are examples of crowdfunding websites.

Expand

Have students craft a mock checklist and timeline for releasing a single or album. Have them include what steps they must take when recording, releasing and promoting the new album, and have them come up with a strategy to do so in a timely fashion. How much time will they give themselves to pre-promote the single or album before it comes out? How long does it take to get the music on streaming platforms, and how does that influence their timeline? Have them get a checklist ready for the future.

How to Play “Iris” by The Goo Goo Dolls

National Standards: 1-9

"Iris" is one of melodic alternative rock band Goo Goo Dolls' most recognizable songs. Penned by frontman Johnny Rzeznik, the track was written for the movie *City of Angels* in 1998 and became a huge hit, staying at the top of the *Billboard* Hot 100 singles chart for a record-breaking 18 weeks. The song was recorded in the key of B minor in 3/4 time at 162 beats per minute (BPM).

Prepare

Goo Goo Dolls' "Iris" dropped in 1998, and at the time, it really stood out in the pop world. As previously mentioned, this song was recorded in the key of B minor in 3/4 time at 162 beats per minute (BPM), which is unusual for a pop or rock song written as a waltz. Most pop or rock songs are set in 4/4 time. Then, in several places, including the intro and the solo sections, there is also an added bar in 2/4 time. Have students listen to "Iris" and specially listen for the timing. How does the song sound different from other songs from its era?

Key points in the article:

- Johnny Rzeznik of The Goo Goo Dolls has had a lot of creative success with open tunings. An “open” tuning is where the strings are tuned differently from “standard” tuning (EADGBE) in such a manner that strumming with no strings fingered generates a specific chord. He has worked open tunings into many of the band's most popular radio hits.
- The contrast between the simplicity of the verses and the intensity of the choruses are part of what makes "Iris" exciting. This kind of change throughout the song keeps the listener engaged. The verse starts with the bass and drums playing very simply, and the open notes of an acoustic guitar ringing through the chord changes. Then, the chorus comes in with a big crash of dynamic intensity.
- Vocally, "Iris" covers a wide range. It's a challenging piece. Rzeznik first sings in a lower octave and then jumps up to the same melody an octave higher. When covering "Iris," make sure you set the song in a key where your singer can do the same.

Begin

- Have students listen to Goo Goo Dolls' "Iris." This song is purpose-made to be played acoustically, and perhaps students would like to cover it unplugged. That said, "Iris" can also be performed with a full band and as an electrified number. Have students go through the article and then decide how they want to cover "Iris" to make it their own. Have them put a new spin on it, to sound a bit different from the original.

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- TRANSPOSE: Playing or writing music in a way that makes it sound higher or lower.
- DYNAMICS: The variation in loudness between notes or phrases and sometimes changes in timbre and sometimes tempo.
- MAINSTREAM: The ideas, attitudes, or activities regarded as normal or conventional; the dominant trend in opinion, fashion, or the arts.
- EERINESS: The quality of being strange in a frightening and mysterious way.
- INTERLUDE: A musical composition inserted between the parts of a longer composition, a drama, or a religious service.
- INHERENT: Existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute.

Discuss

What makes "Iris" such a standout hit for Goo Goo Dolls? Have students listen to the rest of the band's discography and discuss why "Iris," appealed to a broader audience. Also, how important are lyrics in a song such as "Iris?" "And I'd give up forever to touch you / 'Cause I know that you feel me somehow / You're the closest to heaven that I'll ever be / And I don't want to go home right now," are beautiful lyrics and tell a story. How much of that has impacted the song's success?

Q&A

1. Who wrote Goo Goo Dolls' "Iris?"
2. Who are the two main, consistent members of Goo Goo Dolls?
3. When did Goo Goo Dolls release their first album, and when did the band get their first mainstream success?
4. What movie was "Iris" written for?
5. How many weeks was "Iris" at the top of the *Billboard* Hot 100 singles chart?

Answers

1. Johnny Rzeznik.
2. Johnny Rzeznik and Robby Takac.
3. They released their first album in 1987 and had their first mainstream success in 1995 with a song called "Name."
4. "Iris" was written for the movie *City of Angels* in 1998.
5. "Iris" stayed at the top of the *Billboard* Hot 100 singles chart for a record-breaking 18 weeks.

Expand:

Have students listen and give their opinions on various covers of "Iris" they find online. The song has been covered numerous times. Also, a fun fact about "Iris" is that the name "Iris" never appears in the song, which is very rare. See how many songs students can think of where the title isn't in the song.