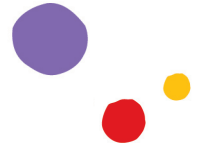




# FROM THE NEW FRONTIER TO THE NEW MILLENNIUM



## ACTIVITY ONE: JAZZ AND THE NEW FRONTIER

Read the following quotes by John F. Kennedy and Wynton Marsalis. On a separate piece of paper describe how each of the speakers uses a historical context to describe the inclusive possibilities for America's future. How, in Kennedy's words, is a conquest of "ignorance and prejudice" similar to the experiences of pioneers during America's westward expansion in the 19th century. What does Marsalis mean when he says that the dedication of great jazz musicians "gives us a glimpse into what America is going to be when it becomes itself"? Do you find common themes in the visions of John F. Kennedy and Wynton Marsalis? If so, please describe what these common themes are. If not, describe how you see these visions as different.

**Address of Senator John F. Kennedy accepting the Democratic Party nomination for the presidency of the United States; Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles, July 15, 1960:**

For I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch three thousand miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West. They were not the captives of their own doubts, the prisoners of their own price tags. Their motto was not "every man for himself"—but "all for the common cause." They were determined to make that new world strong and free, to overcome its hazards and its hardships, to conquer the enemies that threatened from without and within.

Today some would say that those struggles are all over—that all the horizons have been explored—that all the battles have been won—that there is no longer an American frontier.

But I trust that no one in this vast assemblage will agree with those sentiments. For the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won—and we stand today on the edge of a New Frontier—the frontier of the 1960s—a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils—a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.

Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom promised our nation a new political and economic framework. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal promised security and succor to those in need. But the New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises—it is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to offer the American people, but what I

intend to ask of them. It appeals to their pride, not to their pocketbook—it holds out the promise of more sacrifice instead of more security.

But I tell you the New Frontier is here, whether we seek it or not. Beyond that frontier are the uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered pockets of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus. It would be easier to shrink back from that frontier, to look to the safe mediocrity of the past, to be lulled by good intentions and high rhetoric—and those who prefer that course should not cast their votes for me, regardless of party.

**From the book *Jazz: A History of America's Music*, by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns\*:**

Above all, as Wynton Marsalis has said, jazz offers Americans hope: "That's the thing in jazz that got Bix Beiderbecke up out of his bed at two o'clock in the morning to pick that cornet up and practice with it into the pillow for another two or three hours. Or that would make Louis Armstrong travel around the world for fifty years nonstop, just get up out of his sickbed, crawl up on the bandstand, and play. The thing that would make Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker—any of these people that we've heard about, all these wonderful people—give their lives. And they did give their lives for it, because it gives us a glimpse into what America is going to be when it becomes itself. And this music tells you that it will become itself. And when you get a taste of that, there's just nothing else you're going to taste that's this sweet. That's a sweet taste, man."

\*Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, *Jazz: A History of America's Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000)



## ACTIVITY TWO: LISTEN UP!

### Listening One

Fusion borrowed a number of elements from rock and funk—including electric guitars, synthesizers, electric bass, a straight-four rock drum beat, and repeated simple melodies. Listen to the following musical excerpts and describe the instrumentation, rhythms, melodies, and arrangements that might combine rock or funk concepts with jazz.

- Miles Davis, “Spanish Key”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 31**
- Herbie Hancock, “Chameleon”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 33**
- Weather Report, “Boogie Woogie Waltz”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 32**

### Listening Two

Jazz musicians refer to playing “outside” when they test the farthest reaches of tonal harmony in their improvisations. If possible, have a music teacher or student musician demonstrate how “extensions” can be added above simple chords, such as triads, and altered sharp or flat to produce increasingly dissonant harmonies. Jazz soloists developed increasing facility with improvising among these upper harmonic extensions, producing a strange and often disturbing effect to uninitiated listeners. Rhythms might be altered as well. Listen to the following excerpts, and describe moments of the pieces when the musicians play within the expected tonality and moments when they play outside it. Compare these pieces with several others of your choice from previous lessons. Which do you find most interesting? Which do you enjoy the most?

- Eric Dolphy, “Out to Lunch”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 27**
- Cecil Taylor, “Steps”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 28**
- Ornette Coleman, “Lonely Woman”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 25**
- Anthony Braxton, “W-138”  
🔊 **CD2: Track 29**



## ACTIVITY THREE: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

1. Throughout these lessons you have learned how different American presidents acted to support civil rights. President Truman integrated the armed forces, for instance, and President Eisenhower sent troops to enforce desegregation in Arkansas. President Kennedy proposed civil rights legislation, but it was his successor, Lyndon Johnson, who got the civil rights and voting rights bills through Congress. In retrospect, which of the many actions taken during these years strikes you as having the greatest positive impact in the struggle to secure basic civil rights for all Americans? Support your case through research using primary and secondary sources.

2. Learn more about free jazz, fusion, neo-mainstream jazz, and the music of John Coltrane and the other artists described in the lesson. Possible topics include: (1) Coltrane’s evolution from his early years with Miles Davis (“If I Were a Bell,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 15**) through his solo albums (“My Favorite Things,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 43**) to his later role as an icon for the avant-garde; (2) the adulation and criticism of Ornette Coleman for his explorations of free jazz (“Ramblin’,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 26**); (3) the development of fusion (or jazz-rock) through the influences of James Brown, Sly and the Family Stone, Jimi Hendrix, and others, and the manifestation of these influences in the work of artists such as Miles Davis (“Spanish Key,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 31**) and Herbie Hancock (“Chameleon,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 33**); (4) the work of exemplary soloists such as Coltrane (“Resolution,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 23**), Eric Dolphy (“Out to Lunch,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 27**), Wynton Marsalis (“Black Codes,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 37**), Betty Carter (“I Could Write a Book,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 36**), and Cassandra Wilson (“Waters of March,” 🔊 **CD2: Track 40**).

3. Since the 1960s, more and more conservatories, colleges, and universities have undertaken the formal study of jazz. Why do you think this has occurred? Research the jazz programs offered by institutions of higher education in your area. Or research the community music schools and other cultural institutions in your area that may offer lessons or courses in jazz. How does the status and treatment of jazz in your region reflect the broader societal trend? Do you think that jazz belongs in the classroom, on the stage, or both?