

American Celebration: Activity 6 **Rhapsody in Blue**

Learning Objective

Students will become familiar with George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* by listening, moving and acting.

Resources and Materials

- Pictures of different pianos displayed on computer screens and classroom walls
- Accompanying Youth Concert CD
- Assortment of colorful scarves

Vocabulary

Composer – a person who creates music

Performer – player

Immigrant – a person who moves from one country to another

Concert Hall – a place where music is performed; such as the Eugene McDermott Concert Hall located inside the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas

Pre-Assessment

- Ask students if they have heard music played on a piano? If so, when? Where? Is there a piano or keyboard instrument in their home? Do they know how to play a piano?
- Direct attention to pictures of a baby grand piano posted on the classroom walls. Encourage conversation.

Teaching Sequences

1. Play the recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* found on track 8 of the accompanying Youth Concert CD.
2. After the first listening, ask the students if they have heard the composition before. Did they hear the music played loud and soft; fast and slow; high and low?
3. Play the recording again and encourage students use scarves to create movement that indicates loud/soft; fast/slow; high/low. Check for understanding.
4. Tell the students they will hear a performance of “Rhapsody in Blue” when they attend a youth concert at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.
5. Tell the students about George Gershwin, the composer and performer of *Rhapsody in Blue* and share the following, additional information.
 - ♦George Gershwin was born September 26, 1898, Brooklyn, New York and was named Jacob Gershowitz.
 - ♦His parents were immigrants from Russia and Lithuania.
 - ♦George composed most of his music with his brother Ira Gershwin. Ira wrote the words and George wrote the music.
 - ♦The Gershwin brothers composed music for concert halls and the Broadway stage. Many of their compositions have been used in movies; *I Got Rhythm*, *Walking the Dog* from *Beginners Luck*; *Strike up the Band*. Other compositions are *An American in Paris*, *The Al Jolson Story*, *Manhattan*, and *Mr. Holland’s Opera*.
 - ♦George Gershwin died July 11, 1937, in Hollywood, California.

Extension Activity

Play *Rhapsody in Blue* a third time and encourage students to act out the music by using their hands, arms, bodies and scarves.

Evaluation

While listening to *Rhapsody in Blue*, did the students identify and respond appropriately to the music through movement and dramatization?

TEKS Connections

Music 117.103(1D,2D,4C); 117.106(1C,3D,6C,6D); 117.109(1C,3C,6C,6D)