



# All About The Blues Series™

By Fruteland Jackson

“TRY, TRUST and TRIUMPH”

## Course Descriptions

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## **Music Education and Blues in the Schools Programs Rationale**

Music education enables students to interact with sound, simultaneously engaging mind, body, and spirit. Through creating, performing, and listening to music, students experience the ways in which music evokes and conveys thoughts, images, and feelings.

Music education makes a valuable and unique contribution to students' intellectual growth, and integrates intellectual and emotional development. Shared experiences in music significantly contribute to the development of a healthier society through activities that respect and reflect the diversity of human experiences.

Music education enables all learners to explore, create, perceive, and communicate thoughts, images, and feelings through music. These experiences are unique and essential, and make a significant contribution to learners' lifelong development as educated citizens.

- Music education, as envisioned in this curriculum, contributes to the intellectual, aesthetic, human, social, and career development of the educated citizen by providing learners with opportunities to:
  - Develop competency in problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making through experiences with music.
  - Develop literacy in music, including familiarity with the conventions of written music.
  - Connect knowledge gained through experience in music with other aspects of their lives.
  - Use expressive skills gained in music to convey meaning in other aspects of their lives
  - Demonstrate understanding and appreciation of artistic and aesthetic expression
- Develop independence, self-motivation, and positive self-image through experiences with music
- Practice co-operation in social interactions involved in the creation, exploration, and expression of music.

## “Try, Trust and Triumph”

### Course Descriptions

**Blues 101** Is a one-hour lecture /performance that covers the origins of blues music from its early beginnings, e.g. field hollers, work songs, etc. to its current popularity. Through song, lecture and discussion, students learn the history of the Blues while hearing instrumental examples played on guitar or other instruments. Basic definitions of Blues music such as, “What is the Blues?” are reinforced throughout this course. This course is geared toward, middle school and high school students or individuals being exposed to blues for the first time. The biographies of major players in the development of Blues music, e.g., W.C. Handy, Huddie “Lead belly” Ledbetter and B.B. King, are introduced. This program can be conducted in classroom/auditorium environment. This workshop includes an interactive singing workshop and a Q and A period. This is our most popular and recommended workshop for the uninitiated and is designed to reach a mass audience.

**Blues 201** This workshop employs more interaction with students with a focus on singing, writing or playing blues music. Students learn the basic Blues form (Chord Progressions) and how to sing and play blues in its basic styles. The acoustic guitar and/or harmonica are the primary instruments of choice. The anatomies of the musical instruments are taught including instructions on how to tune and maintain them. Students are encouraged to write original songs and how to recognize basic styles (rural and urban); this workshop is ideal for small groups of music students. Music literacy skills are learned through performing and listening sessions. Time frame for this workshop is customized. This course is the recommended follow-up for students interested in music instructions. Prerequisite: Blues 101.

**Blues 301** This course further extends the range of the student by providing more historical information on all areas of study. Geographical regions where blues music evolved e.g., piedmont, delta, etc., are discussed in more detail. Examples of how other musical styles, e.g., rock and roll, rhythm and blues rap, etc., evolved from Blues music are explored and the Blues scale is introduced and compared with the traditional western scale (do-re-mi...). This workshop is ideal for small groups of music students and includes bibliography/discography. Music literacy skills are further developed with an emphasis on the appreciation and analysis of Blues music throughout American history. This course works well with social studies, English and history classes. Artist such as Muddy waters, Robert Johnson, Willie Dixon, Bessie Smith, etc., are introduced. Time frame for this workshop is customized. Prerequisite: Blues 101, 201.

**Blues 401** This course emphasizes the active exploration of performance techniques for showcasing blues music for stage presentation. Students will learn to perform several blues styles, e.g., shuffles, boogie-woogie, etc., or present workbooks, original songs, photography or artwork for evaluation. Evaluation will be based on participating, performing, listening and creative activity. A certificate of participation is awarded for completion of this course. Prerequisite: Blues 101, 201, 301.

**Blues 501** *From Skunkweed to Skyscrapers* the Emergence and Evolvement of Blues Culture in America: Is an adult level lecture/performance that offers a historical overview of blues music; its early renderings from West Africa to its southern legacy and the blues today. This Lecture/ performance are conducted along with a slide presentation that depicts the souls and scenes that gave birth to Blues music. Throughout the program Mr. Jackson also performs blues guitar and demonstrates styles and songs from the different eras and geographical regions of the Blues: the Mississippi Delta, the Piedmont Region and the East Texas coast. He discusses the Minstrel Era, Women in Blues, Chicago Style Blues and the Blues Today. All aspects of this program are brought together into a unique 75-minute overview of this American musical genre. This workshop includes a Q and A period.

**The Life and Legend of Robert Johnson** - This 60 minute Lecture/Performance gives audiences insight into the Life and Times of Robert Johnson. Mr. Jackson uses storytelling to bring the legend of Robert Johnson to clear view. Robert Johnson was a key player in the development of Delta Blues and its link to Chicago (urban blues) Style blues is discussed and celebrated through his compositions. Homage is also paid to his mentors, influences and teachers. The myth and mystery surrounding his death and the legacy of his music are highlighted including the legend surrounding his death. Features selected songs of Robert Johnson.

**Singing the Blues with Stories** This half-hour program is aimed at younger audiences (K thru 3<sup>rd</sup>). In this Lecture/Performance, “Mr. Fruteland” tell young listeners stories about characters that have overcome great obstacles to succeed in their endeavors. These stories are told and sung to blues rhythms with some audience participation. Student workshops on songwriting and listening skills are added. This program features “Street Cries”, “Stewball” or other stories. The point of this lecture is to expose younger audiences to blues rhythms (i.e., boogie-, shuffles, call and response) using storytelling as the primary medium

**Bluz in the Hood** is an artist residency. This program is designed for Community Centers and Housing Authorities with a focus on *high-risk* students who lack problem solving skills and a sense of place and pride. It gives the participants the opportunity to interact with the artists who create a mentoring environment on a first hand basis. The guitar, harmonica and voice are offered. Experienced artists are brought in depending on the instrument and the amount of students. Elements from all blues courses are offered. Showcasing and student performances climax the completion of this course. These programs have been introduced to the Milwaukee Inner City Arts Council, the Baton Rouge Arts Council, the Luther brook Homes, the Housing Authority of Charleston, SC and the Aurora Housing Authority. A program called **Trading Handguns for Harmonicas** was used to show *high-risk* student that they can use their hands to create. This orientation to blues music may provide a window of opportunity for some youth whose environment does not support upward mobility or a college education.

**Artist Residencies** Are tailored for classroom activity or in conjunction with other programs or school curriculum, e.g., history, social studies, music, etc. These residencies range from one-day workshops to six-week programs. Residencies can be tailored to fit specific groups and project goals, including Senior Care facilities and Veteran’s homes. Lesson plan includes goals and timetables (syllabus).

**Slide Guitar Workshops** are held for at least one hour for beginners and intermediate students of all ages. They cover open tunings (G-A-E-D), 12 bar and 8 bar blues, Delta and Piedmont styles of acoustic guitar as well as rhythms, shuffles and turnarounds with an emphasis on improvisation.

**Artist Training:** This workshop is designed for local artist who wish to learn methods for presenting Blues in the Schools programs on an ongoing bases

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Assessment focuses on the critical or significant aspects of the learning that students will be asked to demonstrate or showcase. Students benefit when they clearly understand the learning goals and learning expectations.