Ella Fitzgerald JAMs

“Blue Skies”
“Love for Sale”
“A-Tisket, A-Tasket”
“Dream a Little Dream of Me”
“Misty”

Celebrating The First Lady of Song

Ella Fitzgerald, known as the "First Lady of Song," was a legendary American jazz vocalist whose talent and velvety voice captivated audiences for decades. Renowned for her vocal range, phrasing, and improvisational skills, she became one of the greatest jazz singers of all time. With a career spanning over fifty years, Fitzgerald recorded numerous albums and collaborated with renowned musicians, leaving a lasting mark on the jazz world.
**Song:** “Blue Skies” (1926)  
**Songwriter:** Irving Berlin

*Brief Context:* "Blue Skies" by Irving Berlin, penned in 1926 for the musical revue "Betsy," gained immense popularity in the 1946 film musical of the same name, starring Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire. Irving Berlin's classic tune "Blue Skies" found its perfect match in the velvety tones of Ella Fitzgerald. With her smooth, soulful rendition, Fitzgerald took listeners on a gentle journey through the comfort of sunny days and clear skies.

**Activity:** Listening

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony “Blue Skies” video

**Ella Fitzgerald’s Irving Berlin Song Book**

The Ella Fitzgerald *Irving Berlin Song Book* is a renowned collection featuring Fitzgerald's interpretations of some of Irving Berlin's most iconic compositions. This collaboration between Fitzgerald, one of the greatest jazz vocalists of all time, and Berlin, one of America's most prolific songwriters, resulted in a timeless showcase of musical artistry. Released in 1958, this album remains a landmark in both Fitzgerald's career and the Great American Songbook.
Song: "Love for Sale" (1930)

Songwriter: Cole Porter

Brief Context: Cole Porter's "Love for Sale" is a bold song that shows his talent for mixing humor and elegance. He wrote it at a time when people didn't talk openly about the themes it explores, like selling love. The song describes a world where love is treated like a product, and relationships are shallow. Even though some people were shocked by it at first, the song has become a classic, showing how Porter's music still matters in American culture.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Love for Sale" video

Cole Porter Song Book

The first entry in the Song Book series (and Verve Records' opening album) celebrates the songs of Indiana's own Cole Porter. Recorded in the spring of 1956, The Cole Porter Song Book features a whopping 32 songs including "Too Darn Hot," "I Get a Kick out of You," and "Don't Fence Me In." Its double-album format and extensive liner notes, though common for classical music, were unheard-of for jazz records at the time.
**Brief Context:** Ella Fitzgerald's unparalleled talent extended beyond jazz and into the hearts of children with her interpretations of classic nursery rhymes and songs. Among these, "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" stands as an example of her ability to infuse childhood favorites with her distinctive style and energy. Released in 1938 with the Chick Webb Orchestra, Fitzgerald's rendition captivated audiences of all ages with her infectious swing and joyful spirit.

**Activity: Movement**

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony “A-Tisket, A-Tasket” video

**Suggested Seated Movement**

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Jennie or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- Mime picking up a basket
- Wave arms side to side
- Alternate putting one arm and leg out
**Song:** "Dream a Little Dream of Me" (1931)  
**Songwriters:** Fabian Andre, Wilbur Schwandt and Gus Kahn

**Brief Context:** "Dream a Little Dream of Me," penned in 1931 by Fabian Andre, Wilbur Schwandt, and lyricist Gus Kahn, is beloved across generations. Its dreamy melody has been reimagined by countless artists, but it was Ozzie Nelson's rendition in 1931 that gained widespread recognition. It was the iconic interpretation by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong in 1950 that solidified its place in musical history.

**Activity: Singing and Discussion**

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony "Dream a Little Dream of Me" video
- Perfect Harmony “Dream a Little Dream of Me” lyrics

**Suggested Discussion Prompt**

Ella Fitzgerald is an artist whom many singers and musicians aspire to resemble. Her innovations with the voice's capabilities, creating new arrangements of classic songs and the joy she brought to singing are examples of her timeless contributions to music that leave many people wanting to listen to Ella every day!

Tell someone about a music artist you like to listen to every day.
Dream a Little Dream of Me

Stars shining bright above you
Night breezes seem to whisper "I love you"
Birds singin' in the sycamore trees
Dream a little dream of me
Say "Night-ie night" and kiss me
Just hold me tight and tell me you'll miss me
While I'm alone and blue as can be
Dream a little dream of me

Stars fading but I linger on, dear
Still craving your kiss
I'm longing to linger 'til dawn, dear
Just saying this
Sweet dreams 'til sunbeams find you
Sweet dreams that leave all worries behind you
But in your dreams, whatever they be
Dream a little dream of me

Stars fading but I linger on, dear
Still craving your kiss
I'm longing to linger 'til dawn, dear
Just saying this
Sweet dreams 'til sunbeams find you
Sweet dreams that leave all worries behind you
But in your dreams, whatever they be
Dream a little dream of me
**Song: "Misty" (1954)**

**Songwriter:** Erroll Garner

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*Brief Context:* "Misty" is a timeless jazz standard composed by Erroll Garner in 1954. Garner, a virtuoso pianist, reportedly wrote the melody while on a bus journey. The song gained widespread popularity after Johnny Mathis recorded a vocal version in 1959, which became a chart-topping hit. Ella Fitzgerald's version of "Misty" remains a standout in her vast repertoire, solidifying her legacy as one of the greatest vocalists of all time.

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**Activity:** Singing

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony “Misty” video

**Archives Artifact**

Ella Fitzgerald's seafoam green jumpsuit. This piece contains hundreds of shiny jewels and outlines of lace. It also has floor-length fringe that starts at the waist and is also included on the arms. This is a piece for a more eccentric audience and one of the more eye-catching treasures you'll find in the Songbook Library & Archives.
Misty

Look at me, I'm as helpless as a kitten up a tree
And I feel like I'm clingin' to a cloud
I can't understand
I get misty, just holding your hand

Walk my way
And a thousand violins begin to play
Or it might be the sound of your hello
That music I hear
I get misty, the moment you're near

Can't you see that you're leading me on?
And it's just what I want you to do
Don't you notice how hopelessly I'm lost
That's why I'm following you

On my own
Would I wander through this wonderland alone
Never knowing my right foot from my left
My hat from my glove
I'm too misty, and too much in love
Too misty
And too much
In love
sound. But they do follow some general patterns:
• The sound is grounded in big band swing. But elements like lush woodwinds and small-combo work vary the feel;
• Almost all of the songs are from Broadway shows and all of them are about love – both good and bad;
• The Song Books weren’t recorded with the intent of albums. Free of radio’s 3-minute limit for a song, introductory “verses” that were usually omitted;
• And because the Song Books were each devoted to a single artist, they typically feature both well-known hits and lesser-known gems.

Perfect Harmony
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