



# The Destiny Muhammad Trio



## STUDY GUIDE



# RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS



Dear Teachers and Educators,

Rhythmix is excited to have you join us for the 2021-22 season of **PAL - Performance, Art & Learning**. These assemblies are intended to serve as a catalyst for arts learning and a springboard for integrating arts education into your classroom activities and curriculum.

To help your students gain the most out of these PAL assemblies, we suggest that the learning begin before, and continue after, watching the videos. Utilizing the resources provided, your students can engage more fully with the performance experience, connecting what they see and hear to their personal lives, culture, community and any school subjects you choose.

Aligning with the **California Arts Standards**, activities are included in every Study Guide to help foster students' artistic competencies, cultivate their appreciation and understanding of the arts, and support them to fully engage in lifelong arts learning.

New this year, **Artist Q&A** videos focus on **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Through the Arts** with activities based on CASEL's SEL Framework to help students develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, show empathy for others, establish supportive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

At Rhythmix, we believe exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience, helping us learn about ourselves, each other, and the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

Your PALs at Rhythmix



## Meet the Artists

Destiny Muhammad is a recording and performing artist, band leader, composer and producer. Her genre is cool and eclectic with a feel of jazz & storytelling to round out the sonic experience.



Leon Joyce, Jr plays the drum kit, as well as hand, symphonic and marching percussion instruments.

Chico Lopez plays upright and acoustic bass with many bands in the Bay Area.



## What is Jazz?

Jazz was born in the cultural melting pot of New Orleans in the late 19th and early 20th century. Originating primarily in the African-American communities in New Orleans, jazz combines elements of West African musical traditions, plantation folk songs, American and European classical music and so much more. American jazz pianist, composer and educator, Dr. Billy Taylor, called jazz, "Black America's classical music."

Jazz spread quickly throughout the United States and the world, adapting and changing with each new influence. One element that has remained central to jazz music is **improvisation**.



## Improvisation

**Improvisation** occurs when musicians create music on the spot. When one member of a jazz ensemble improvises, it's called a **solo**. They use their feelings and ideas to create new music.

Let's hear what Bryan Carter of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz Academy has to say about improvisation: <https://video.link/w/YxYDc>



# Playing Together

Jazz is often played by 3 or more musicians, and they work together as a group, or **ensemble**. Each musician listens closely to the musical ideas of the others and responds to what they hear with their own ideas. It's like a musical conversation!

Improvisation allows musicians to express their feelings and personalities. It also allows the members of the band to build relationships.

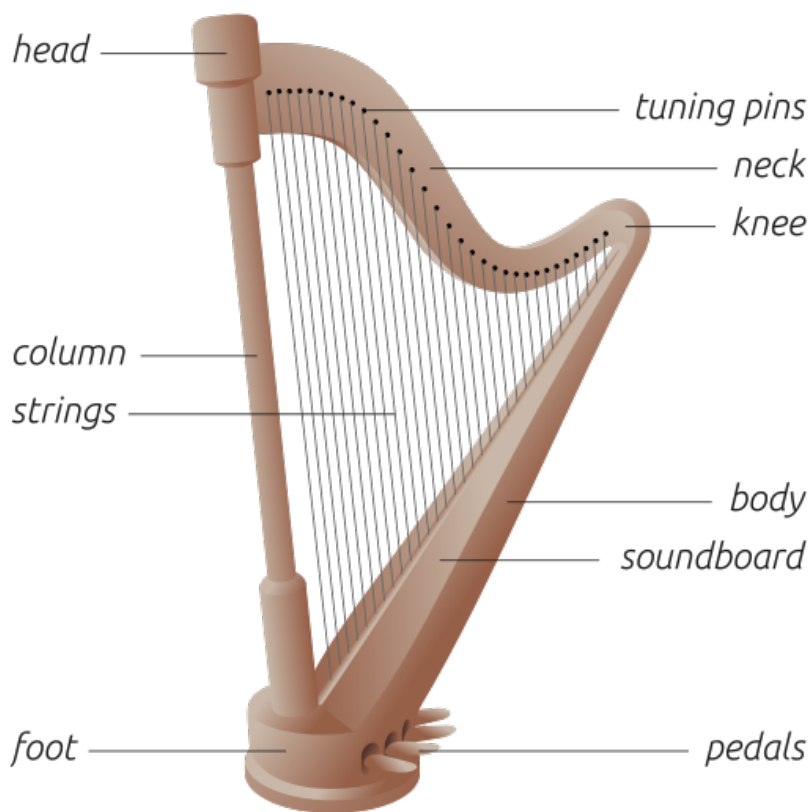
Let's learn more from pianist Eli Yamin of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz Academy: <https://youtu.be/ggnk1fCQENw?t=38>



## Instruments: Harp

Jazz can be played on any instrument, but let's learn more about the three you will hear in the Destiny Muhammad Trio.

The **harp** is a large instrument shaped like a triangle. It has 22–47 strings played by the fingers, and seven pedals for your feet to change the sounds of the strings.



*The basic structural elements and terminology of a harp. Martin Kraft.*

**Harp Demonstration:** <https://youtu.be/N9qaik4xdWk>

**Edmar Castaneda plays a tune on harp:** <https://youtu.be/Wi2K7qU85wl>

# Instruments: Upright Bass

**Upright bass** is a name for a large stringed instrument, also called contrabass and double bass. It plays low-pitched notes in musical ensembles and bands. In jazz bands, these notes are called the "bass line." ([https://kids.kiddle.co/Double\\_bass](https://kids.kiddle.co/Double_bass))



Double bass front and side, Andrew Kepert, Wikimedia

**Demonstration of Upright Bass:** <https://youtu.be/J0e25pST5o4>

**Adam Ben Ezra plays a bass tune:** <https://youtu.be/xjhZhl2Zthg>



# Instruments: Drum Set

A **drum set** is a collection of drums and cymbals that is played with both hands and both feet to create many rhythms at the same time.



Standard Drum Set, Wikimedia Commons

Drum set overview: <https://youtu.be/ry7qf3rH2b8?t=11>

Jo Jones plays a jazz drum solo: <https://youtu.be/eANTTBvIXml?t=14>

# Jazz Harpist: Dorothy Ashby

**Dorothy Ashby** was a pioneer of the **jazz harp**. Traditionally, the harp only appears in music for an orchestra. While some criticized her use of the harp in jazz, she was responsible for establishing it as a solo improvisational instrument, paving the way for future jazz harpists such as Alice Coltrane and Destiny Muhammad.



Dorothy Ashby plays "Stella by Starlight" (1957): <https://youtu.be/G5SLwWC2xag>

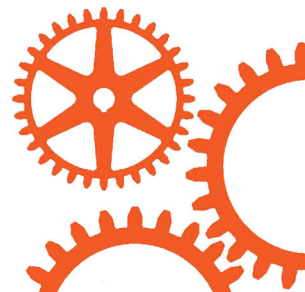


## Jazz Harpist: Alice Coltrane

**Alice Coltrane** came from a musical family and sang and played in the church growing up. She studied piano and played in jazz groups from a young age. She married saxophonist John Coltrane, and they played music together and experimented with new music. For her, that meant finding new, creative ways to play the harp (and other instruments) in jazz music.



Alice Coltrane plays a solo on the harp: <https://youtu.be/4XNG7tmlQx4>





## African Proverbs

A proverb is a short saying that offers a piece of advice or wisdom. Do you know any proverbs? Here are a few examples:

**Absence makes the heart grow fonder.**

*El tiempo lo cura todo. (Time heals all.)*

One of Destiny's songs is based on an African proverb:

**If you wait for tomorrow, tomorrow will come.  
If you don't wait for tomorrow, tomorrow will still come.**

What do you think this proverb means?





## African Proverbs

Here are a few more proverbs to consider with your class. Have students get in groups to discuss and guess what each might mean. Then have your students try to write their own proverbs. Have fun!

*A hyena does not change its spots even if it moves to a different forest.*

**Malawian proverb**

*A chattering bird builds no nest.*

**Cameroonian proverb**

*One who has yet to learn to walk, cannot climb a ladder.*

**Ethiopian proverb**

Additional proverbs can be found at:

<https://kidadl.com/articles/best-african-quotes-and-proverbs-for-wisdom-and-inspiration>



# Thank You!

Thank you for joining Rhythmix Cultural Works and the Destiny Muhammad Trio. We look forward to seeing you next time!



For more information about the Destiny Muhammad Trio, please visit:  
<https://destinymuhammad.net/>

For more info about Rhythmix, please visit: [www.rhythmix.org](http://www.rhythmix.org)



## About Rhythmix Cultural Works

Rhythmix Cultural Works brings people of all ages together to experience and explore music, dance, visual art and educational opportunities. The organization seeks to build community by inspiring engagement in the arts as a way to learn about each other and the world. With a strong commitment to provide programming relevant to the local population, Rhythmix strives to promote cultural awareness, encourage participation in the arts, and support local artists in the presentation of their work.

Since Rhythmix opened its doors in 2007, the community-based arts facility has built its reputation through the artistic excellence and cultural depth of its programming. To date, more than 150,000 people have engaged in arts experiences, attending high-quality performances of world music, dance, theater, exhibits and community events, as well as enrolling in classes for youth and adults in the arts, crafts, and movement-based practices from other cultures.

## About PAL - Performance, Art & Learning

Rhythmix Cultural Works believes that exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience and a catalyst for cultural celebration. In support of this vision, Rhythmix developed PAL as an assembly-based youth arts education program in collaboration with the Alameda Unified School District. PAL fosters awareness of world cultures and empowers underserved youth through exposure to educational music and dance performances.

In response to the ongoing pandemic, Rhythmix launched its PAL program virtually for the 2020-21 school year, expanding its reach to all schools in Alameda County. Thanks to the belief in the power of arts education and generous support from the foundations listed below, PAL has served over 35,000 students since its inception in 2012.



# RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS

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**... and supporters like YOU! Thank you!**

This study guide was developed by the Destiny Muhammad Trio with additional editing, activities and design by Christina Ayala and Rhythmix Cultural Works.

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