

GOIN' SOUTH BAND

A Journey South

Art Form: Music

Style: Traditional

Culture: United States/Americana

MEET THE ARTIST:

The **Goin' South Band** is composed of some of America's finest professional musicians and artist/educators trained in the skills and techniques of the musical arts and sciences. Led by director and fiddle player *John Zeretzke*, the group has toured the west coast for over 6 years performing for thousands of students in schools across California. All the musicians are composers, songwriters, producers, audio engineers, recording artists and experienced performers and soloists. Many of the musicians record and compose music for television, feature films and movies, music for theater and ballet and a variety of other endeavors in the arts. The band members include *Vic Koler, Paul Lacques, Mike McClellan, Fred Sokolow* and *John Zeretzke*.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

The Goin South Band brings audiences a homespun performance of traditional music from the southeastern United States. The music presented may have been created here on American soil, but it was influenced by the native cultures of immigrants who came to this country from all over the world. You will hear music of the French Cajuns from Louisiana, backwoods Appalachian mountain tunes, New Orleans street jazz, Zydeco music of the Creoles, flute music of the Cherokee Indians, the roots of blues and bottleneck guitar styles along with a host of other musical treats and innovations. This fascinating exploration and educational performance includes over 20 unique historical American instruments; it will open students' minds and hearts into the history and roots of southern music. The audience will be taken on a journey through the back roads of the south United States to discover the rich and varied textures of diverse American music.



PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

Music in America has been affected, influenced and changed since the first colonies hundreds of year ago. The first settlers themselves were from different countries in Europe and overseas, so it is easy to understand that much of our current music today is based upon music that was "carried" to America over hundreds of years by people around the world yet created a-new in the states.

In the southern United States, French arrived in a few different waves of population, including those settlers who left Acadia (now Nova Scotia in Canada) looking for land in the Americas. French Cajuns still live in the bayous and farmland of mostly Louisiana today still speaking their own style of French and playing their Cajun accordions. The Cajun *bastrangue* or triangle is still a popular rhythm instrument in these Cajun bands. The strange sounding mouth harp or jaw harp is still played some in the Appalachian mountains. Made from a little piece of u-shaped metal with a fork or "twanger" in the middle, these types of instruments are found in a variety of countries around the world and have been played for thousands of year.

Banjoes in American music came from an idea from West Africa. Even the name *banjo* is believed to have came from an African instrument called *banjar*, a gourd-like plucked lute.

The *dobro* (doe-bro) was a invention that put a speaker inside a guitar for natural amplification of the sound during the early days of the first recordings for records and phonographs.

The washtub bass was a cheap way of making a bass from a old wash tub using a string and a broom handle. Even washboards were used to play a rhythm in earlier

times in American music. This practical "instrument" became very popular with Zydeco music, music of the Creoles in the south. The trap drum set was unique invention also in the days of early jazz music in New Orleans where many drums (snare, bass drum, toms, cymbal) were all set up in front of one stationary player. It changed the course of drumming for years to come!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What were some of your favorite musical instruments? List them.
- What were some of your favorite musical styles? Can you remember what people created these types of music?
- Discuss what innovations and influences changed or helped to create new sounds in America. (ex: The French from France and Canada helped to create and influence Cajun music in the southern United States).
- Does anyone in your household play an "American" instrument? What makes it an American idea? What makes a certain instrument a universal idea? Does playing an instruments a certain "style" make a difference?
- What selections were "dance" selections? What pieces were "listening" selections? Were there pieces that were "marching" or parade selections?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS - HISTORY/SOC STUDIES:

Research the music, literature and history of the Cajun people. The library and internet may provide many resources. Many folk tales and stories tell of the Cajun people, their hard times in America, their joys and sorrows as an immigrant people. Read some of their stories and folk tales, then discuss the following:

What other folk tales and stories from around the world are similar in plot, character or message to the Cajun stories?

What are defining elements or styles of the Cajun folk tales that truly make them "Cajun"? (setting, language, accent, plot, characters, etc.)

What superstitions are popular in tales in the south?

What styles or types of food are popular with the Cajuns and with the south?

Select one area (superstitions, food, language, customs, folk tales) from above; research that area and report your findings to the class.

Legend:

- 🎨 Artistic perception
- ❖ Creative expression
- ▶ Historical & cultural context
- ⇒ Aesthetic valuing
- * Connections, Relations, Applications

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- ▶ Jug Bands in America were popular at the turn of the century and in the early 1920s. What were the instruments in a Jug Band? List them. Collect as many of these instruments as you can; you'll need to make some of them. Try to play a tune with your new homemade Jug band. Much of American music in earlier times was homemade and played by everyone!
- 🎨 Listen to some selections of early Jazz music. Where did jazz come from? What group of people mostly influenced the creation of this music (and Blues)? How did jazz change over the years? List different types or styles of jazz in the world today.
- * What famous Blues musicians are still living today? What type of music played today was influenced by Blues music years ago? Where did Blues get its start in America?

- ▶ *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* is a award-winning movie about the south that is filled with traditional America. View music of the movie. Discuss and list the many different types/styles of music that was seen and heard in the movie. Beside that column, list the occasion the music was being played for. (ex: Chain gang song -- for working). What emotions go with each song? What is the message that is being expressed?



- ⇒ Ask students to write a "review" of the performance for an absent friend or their parents. They should include a description of the music and the instruments, the cultures presented and audience response. They may also want to share their impressions of how the music affected the audience, and which songs seemed most appreciated.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Saxon and Tallant. *Gumbo Ya-Ya, Folktales of Louisiana*. Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna, Louisiana. 1987
<http://www.zworldmusic.com>
<http://blueslyrics.tripod.com>