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## Traditional Funk: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Practical Study of Funk Music in Dayton, Ohio

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# **Traditional Funk:**

## **An Ethnographic, Historical, and Practical Study of Funk Music in Dayton, Ohio**



Honors Thesis

Caleb G. Vanden Eynden

Department: Music

Advisor: Samuel N. Dorf, Ph.D.

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## **Abstract**

Recognized nationally as the funk capital of the world, Dayton, Ohio takes credit for birthing important funk groups (i.e. Ohio Players, Zapp, Heatwave, and Lakeside) during the 1970s and 80s. Through a combination of ethnographic and archival research, this paper offers a pedagogical approach to Dayton funk, rooted in the styles and works of the city's funk legacy. Drawing from fieldwork with Dayton funk musicians completed over the summer of 2019 and pedagogical theories of including black music in the school curriculum, this paper presents a pedagogical model for funk instruction that introduces the ingredients of funk (instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals) in order to enable secondary school music programs to create their own funk rooted in local history. This pedagogical approach expands music education learning by providing students with a diverse curriculum that stresses the importance of African-American popular music, specifically Dayton funk, within an educational setting.

## **Dedication and Acknowledgements**

*To the musicians and people of Dayton, Ohio without whom this project would not have been possible.*

I would like to first thank Dr. Sam Dorf, my thesis advisor, for guiding me through this process and encouraging me every step of the way. I would also like to thank Dr. Sharon Gratto for her continuous support and for providing me with the necessary contacts in order to carry out my research. Lastly, I would like to thank the University Honors Program, the Department of Music, and the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Summer Fellowship Program for providing me with funding and resources throughout the course of my research.



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## Introduction

In September of 2018, the University of Dayton prepared to host the first ever academic funk symposium under the coordination of Dr. Sharon Gratto, the Graul Chair of Arts and Languages at the University of Dayton. I had heard about Dayton's funk history in a few conversations, but really had no exposure to the music and the culture until I attended the symposium. While at the symposium, I went to as many sessions as my schedule allowed, soaking in as much as I could. I attended lectures, panels, and performances by funk scholars such as Rickey Vincent and Scot Brown as well as local Dayton funk musicians, both active and retired. The symposium was well attended not only by academics, but also by regular Daytonians, who came to hear the stories of the funk era and enjoy the music and culture they had grown up with. After the symposium, I was eager to learn more about Dayton's musical history and wanted to immerse myself in the culture as much as I could as a young, white male from Southwest Ohio.

As I began to learn more about this music and the culture surrounding it, I wanted to find a way to integrate it into the classroom, specifically with Dayton in mind. This inspired personal interest in several aspects of community music and its importance in a music curriculum. I discovered that many schools were not teaching the music within their school's community or surrounding areas (i.e. the music from nearby cities). I discovered that integrating music from the community can be quite challenging when designing a music curriculum for a number of reasons. For starters, several communities may not have such different musical histories as others, and even if they do, educators may not have the knowledge or experience to appropriately teach that music. Kate

Fitzpatrick-Harnish, Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of Michigan, writes in her book, *Urban Music Education: A Practical Guide for Teachers*,

If you teach in a school where a strong musical tradition is embraced by the surrounding community, you have a terrific advantage. Although you may not know this music yourself, you can find ways to bring it into your music classroom in authentic ways... By building bridges with the local community in these ways, you may find a richness of musical experience that greatly enhances your students' learning as well as your own (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, p. 60).

Fitzpatrick-Harnish argues there are authentic ways to integrate these local music traditions into the classroom, even if the teacher has not been previously exposed to that music. This inspired me to seek more information on the musical traditions in my own community. Throughout my research, I learned more about Dayton funk music and culture by reading literature on funk and black popular music as well as by listening to music by both national and Dayton funk artists. With the help of Dr. Sharon Gratto, I also was able to meet and talk with several Dayton musicians who experienced the funk era firsthand. These ethnographic methods allowed me to learn more about Dayton's musical history and the culture of both the music and the city from primary resources.

I am not the first person to write about or take interest in the musical history of Dayton. Scholars such as Rickey Vincent, Scot Brown, and Portia Maulsby have worked to write about and transcribe this oral history. Several Daytonians, such as David Webb, who grew up during the funk era are also dedicated to preserving this history and making sure it lives on.

Webb is the Founder of the Funk Music Hall of Fame & Exhibition Center (a.k.a. the Funk Center) which is based in Dayton, Ohio. The Funk Center is dedicated to preserving the history and culture of traditional funk music by displaying funk memorabilia, interviewing national funk artists, and educating younger generations on the impact of the funk era. However, the purpose of this project is not only to transcribe another oral history, but to also come up with a way that funk can live on through school music programs in the city of Dayton, the suburbs of Dayton, and the rest of the nation.

In Part I of this thesis, I answer the question, “What is funk?” When I asked several Dayton funk musicians this question, nearly all of them replied with an answer somewhere along the lines of, “Funk is just a feeling.” While this answer is very characteristic of the music and culture of funk, I figured it may be difficult to teach this feeling to younger music students. As a result, I developed a method of analyzing funk songs in order to better understand this genre by breaking it down into four main elements: instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals (style and lyrics). I use the term “traditional funk” to refer to black popular music of the 1970s and 80s that uses the four main elements of funk outlined in Part I.

The remainder of Part I provides analyses of three traditional funk songs that apply these elements: “Sex Machine” by James Brown (1970), “Fantastic Voyage” by Lakeside (1981), and “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” by Zapp & Roger (1981). Supported with transcribed music examples and song structures, these analyses help define funk using music vocabulary as well as discuss some of the performance practices associated with traditional funk. While some of these songs may contain lyrics that are not appropriate in secondary pedagogy (i.e. “Sex Machine”), they can be used as



examples to understand this musical style so that educators are better equipped to teach funk using the four main elements of traditional funk music.

Part II focuses on Dayton, Ohio, classified as “The Land of Funk” or “The Funk Capital of the World.” Through interviews, I was able to hear from nearly a dozen Dayton musicians who recounted their stories and experiences from the funk era. This narrative transcribes what is mostly an oral history of funk and its impact on both the city of Dayton as well as the national music industry. The term “traditional funk,” referenced in Part I, is used again to refer to a genre specifically rooted in the culture of black popular music from the 1970s and 80s. Rickey Vincent wrote his book, *Funk: The Music, the People, and the Rhythm of The One*, in order to grant funk “a place in history as a musical and social movement” (Vincent, p. xvii). As traditional funk is discussed further, it is important to distinguish the difference between funk as a musical style and funk as a black culture.

The emphasis of Dayton Public Schools (DPS) surfaced as a common theme during many of my interviews. Nearly every person I talked with discussed the importance that music education had on students in DPS. Many of the famous funk groups that came out of Dayton in the 1970s and 80s learned music in the Dayton Public School system. However, as the city began to change with the addition of highways and more affluent families moving to the suburbs, the schools changed as well and made it harder to maintain such large, successful music programs. According to Gloria Smith-Roberts, a Funk Center volunteer, nearly all music programs eventually disappeared from these schools (G. Smith-Roberts, personal communication, May 21, 2019). This shift in the music scene was not only happening in Dayton schools, but the national music

industry as well. As new music technologies (such as music software, drum machines, digital instruments, etc.) became more popular and easily accessible, studios began to drop large funk bands made up of instrumentalists and instead, replaced them with technology that could essentially do their job for them. However, funk had not disappeared completely. Artists continued to use characteristics of traditional funk throughout the hip-hop era, which sampled popular tracks from the funk era.

Funk still thrives within the city of Dayton as part of its identity, especially in 2019 at a critical time in the city's history. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (Memorial Day) Dayton suffered a terrible tragedy as tornadoes swept across the city, severely damaging numerous homes and communities in the greater Dayton area. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the city suffered another tragedy as a mass shooting took place in Dayton's Historical Oregon District. The city was faced with a difficult summer in 2019 and funk was featured prominently in healing and recovery efforts. On September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the city held a funk benefit concert to raise money for the victims of the Memorial Day tornadoes. The concert, hosted by famed funk bassist Bootsy Collins, featured performances by five legendary Dayton funk artists including the Ohio Players, Zapp, the original Lakeside, Steve Arrington (from the group Slave), and Faze-O. The concert was well attended by Dayton locals, eager to relive the live performances of the funk era, and raised over \$100,000 for the tornado victims. Throughout my research, I found it interesting that funk is still such an important part of Dayton's identity as a city, yet this musical and cultural identity is not a part of the pedagogy taught in surrounding school districts.

In Part III of this thesis, I focus on the future of funk by designing a funk pedagogy that can be used as part of a secondary school music curriculum. This

pedagogy places emphasis on funk music, funk culture, the impact of black popular music, music of the community, and student creativity. While understanding funk history is an important aspect of this curriculum, recognizing the needs and interests of the students is also important. This section outlines what this funk curriculum could look like when taught in schools and provides examples of lessons and activities that can be done in the classroom. After interviewing several Dayton funk musicians and finding out what elements of funk are important to include in a funk unit, I came up with three elements that are essential to any funk curriculum: the ingredients of funk (i.e. the four main elements of traditional funk outlined in Part I), the history and culture of funk, and funk creativity.

The first example lesson plan is for the song “Make It Funky” by James Brown (1971). The purpose of this lesson is to teach a traditional funk song entirely by rote, or by ear. The students receive no sheet music and horn players learn and memorize different riffs using the concert D blues scale. The second example lesson plan is for the song “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” by James Brown (1966) in a commercially available arrangement by Mark Taylor (2001). Throughout this unit, students are exposed to two methods of learning: learning by ear and learning by notation. At the end of this example unit, students complete a written assessment asking them to recite knowledge of traditional funk learned in class as well as reflect on different ways race and culture play a role in music, especially within the community. This thesis concludes with a reflection of my own teaching and findings that took place in the spring of 2020 when teaching this sample unit with a suburban high school jazz ensemble near Dayton.

## Part I: Funk Analyses

“The irony is: The more one thinks about it, the harder it is to get the feel of The Funk. It’s just done” (Clinton, p. xiii).

### “Funk is just a feeling!”

No matter how much I try and explain the funk style, there are some things that words simply cannot communicate. When interviewing several funk experts, I asked them how they would define funk. “Funk is just a feeling!” Keith Harrison, musician for the bands Faze-O, Heatwave, and the Dazz Band, proclaimed. “It can be a smell, it can be a move, it can be a step, or it could be a look. Someone might say, ‘Man, she’s funky’” (K.

Harrison, personal communication, June 18, 2019). When I asked local bassist, Keith Wimberly, to describe what groove is, he replied, “You’ve got to feel it. I can talk about it all day and break it down in terms of notes and rhythms. Funk was broken up and syncopated, sure, but anything can be funky. It’s been around long before the 60s and 70s... You just can’t sit still” (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019).

Deron Bell, a Dayton funk musician and pedagogue believes, “The Funk is so much more than just the music. It’s a whole canvas. You’ve got people who play funk, dance to funk, paint to funk, listen to funk. A lot of times people don’t see it from that perspective” (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

The word, “funk,” has been used long before the music came about.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of when or how it was used, funk musicians view funk as its own musical genre and culture. Every funk expert has their own way to describe what funk is and what it means to them. Rickey Vincent believes the best description of “The Funk” came from Barry Walters, a writer for *The Village Voice*. “Trying to put that *thang* called funk into words is like trying to write down your orgasm. Both thrive in that gap in time when words fall away, leaving nothing but sensation” (Barry Walters, as cited in Vincent, p. 3).

## The Funk Style

The history and culture of funk remain important aspects of this genre, but it wouldn't be funk without the musical and stylistic characteristics that make it the groovy, addictive pulse described by its practitioners. As tempting as it may be to say, “funk is just a feeling,” this genre must be defined in a language that can be understood by students for practical and pedagogical implications. In this section, I will analyze songs by three popular funk artists in order to illustrate critical components of the traditional funk style. My method of analysis takes into account the instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals of each song as well as some of the performance practices associated with this musical genre.

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<sup>1</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary defines “funk” as, “A powerful, unpleasant smell, *esp.* a pungent, earthy, or musky odor of sweat or other bodily excretions; a stink.” Its common usage pertaining to the musical genre was first used in 1970. (“funk, n. 2,” 2019).

## 1) Instrumentation

When funk gained popularity in the 1970s and 80s, the foundational instruments for rock, R&B, and funk included drums, bass, guitar, and vocals. These genres used keyboards and horn sections to add new timbres to their sound as well. This instrumentation stems from twentieth-century black popular music styles (i.e. blues, jazz, soul, etc.) where the typical “big band” consisted of trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and a rhythm section. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, new technologies (such as synthesizers, the talk box, etc.) had a major influence on the sound of many funk groups. The electric bass and guitar were powered with amplifiers; the sound from keyboards, horns, and vocals could all go through PA speakers; the drums, if not already miked, were loud enough to be heard in nearly any performance space. This gave funk musicians the advantage to have greater control over their sound with volume, tone, and special effects.

The use of live instruments became another important aspect of funk music. Part of what made this music so enjoyable was the opportunity to actually watch these bands perform live. Traditional funk artists, such as saxophonist Cedell Carter from Slave, argue that “real musicians playing real instruments” was essential to the funk scene (C. Carter, personal communication, June 4, 2019). The visual elements of performance were just as much a part of the music as the instruments. It allowed bands to be creative with their shows by dressing up, adding choreography, and implementing flashy horn moves to keep their audience engaged.

With new technologies such as digital music software and instruments (i.e. drum machines), artists had the ability to create, record, and write music at their fingertips.

Because of this, large bands of 6 or more members became less popular in the recording industry. Studio producers, venues, and other professionals in the music industry could hire one person to do it all instead of having to bring in large groups to perform or record.

The popularity of recording technology effected several funk groups in the 70s and 80s, especially in Dayton, which became part of why so many of these artists have been away from the music industry for so long. However, while many musicians believe live instruments are essential, others believe that, so long as it grooves, it can be funk. For the purposes of this project, traditional funk instrumentation can typically be clarified as drums, electric bass, electric guitar, vocals, keyboards and organs, and horns (trumpets, trombones, and saxophones).

## **2) Form**

Form helps control the structure and flow of the music and serves as an important component of any piece. Studying the form creates a better understanding of funk music so that similar models can be used in pedagogical practices. Many songs, both during the funk era and in modern music use a standard song form, shown below.

### **Verse – Chorus – Verse – Chorus – Bridge – Chorus**

There are many funk tunes that follow a similar structure to this, however, funk often breaks away from this and explores forms that are both simpler and more complex than the standard song form. Regardless of how intricate the form might be, structure is essential to any funk song, according to Keith Harrison. “The core steps of writing we used to have was verse, chorus, a B section, and a bridge” (K. Harrison, personal communication, June 18, 2019).

Funk music often avoided clear endings to songs. When a band went to record, instead of figuring out how to end the piece, they would often stay on one groove until they felt like they had filled enough time. The producer would then edit the recording to have it fade out at the end. This was a popular technique used for mixing music to give the illusion that the groove never ends. Without that sense of closure or cadence, the listener will want more of what they are hearing (Huron, 318).<sup>2</sup>

### **3) Groove**

Jeff Pressing's article, "Black Atlantic Rhythm: Its Computational and Transcultural Foundations," describes groove as "readily danceable music" (Pressing, p. 288). This is the primary characteristic that sets funk apart from other styles of black popular music. As George Clinton mentioned earlier, "It's just done." It may be complicated to put into words, but if we break it apart we can find many consistent characteristics of funk grooves. Fred Wesley, longtime bandleader of James Brown's band, gave a detailed definition on the construction of groove.

If you have a syncopated bass line, a strong, strong, heavy back beat from the drummer, a counter-line from the guitar, or the keyboard, and someone soul-singing on top of that, in a gospel style, then you have funk. So that if you put all of these ingredients together, and vary it in different ways, you can write it down, you can construct The Funk (Fred Wesley, as cited by Vincent, p. 13).

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<sup>2</sup> "... with electronic sound recording fade-outs became routine. With the fade-out, music manages to delay closure indefinitely" (Huron, 318).



A common tool used to help create and support groove can be layering. Lawrence Zbikowski helps define the several factors that are required to construct a groove in his article, “Modelling the Groove: Conceptual Structure and Popular Music.” He writes, “A musical groove is most typically created by a small group of musicians working together, each contributing parts to the whole” (Zbikowski, p. 297). In funk, the drums lay down the rhythm while the bass supports it by establishing the tonality of the song. The guitar typically adds a riff in the mid-high register that might serve as a “call-and-response” effect between the bass and drums. The keyboard has the ability to play in all registers, often adding ornamentation in the upper registers as well as supporting the bass in the lower registers, making it one of the most versatile instruments used in funk music.

Horns (trumpets, trombones, and saxophones) could be used interchangeably, often establishing a layer within the groove by adding different rhythms and harmony to the music. Rather than all parts playing the same thing the entire time, the horns could be resting or playing at different moments in order to augment a pre-existing groove. Being able to support the rhythm, groove, and melody of the piece also made horns a versatile component to the music. The vocals can play a part in the layering of a groove. The lead vocal line often tends to be the melody; however, it can also be a repeated vocal riff that acts as a layer in the groove. Vocalists can also be used as backing singers who sing chords to support the groove, either on a neutral syllable or a simple lyric.

Pressing argues that repetition, another key ingredient of groove, “...limits the burden on memory, achieves intensification of engagement and attention, and promotes automaticity” (Pressing, p. 289). Creating music out of repeated grooves means musicians can easily memorize the music. Without having to read music during a

performance, musicians can better engage with the audience. This element can contribute to the overall feel of the groove by putting more focus on how the music is being played and flows from one idea to the next.

The element of “the one” also helps musicians feel the rhythmic pulse of a groove. James Brown believed in order to create “The Funk,” there needs to be a big downbeat on beat one of every measure. Several musicians also believe that groove requires a human musician (as opposed to a drum machine or electronic instruments), meaning funk requires elements of feeling and emotion that cannot be replicated by a computer. Vincent argues that this sense of human emotion is one of the reasons funk can be so difficult to feel and understand.

Funk music can be very difficult to play for those attempting it from a technical point of view, because it requires freedom of mind, a relaxed and intuitive state in which one devises the appropriate back-beat and counter-line from whatever musical root (jazz, pop, blues, and so on) that the musician feels is fitting for the moment (Vincent, p. 15).

#### **4) Vocal Style and Lyrics**

During the 60s, 70s, and 80s many funk musicians learned how to sing in churches (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019). The vocal technique that many funk singers use is often compared to a gospel style. Dayton funk musician, Deron Bell, believes gospel is where the funk style gets its roots. “Even though I came up in a funk music era, it all started with gospel. Funk just happened to be what was popular at the time” (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019). Funk musicians are also heavily

influenced by R&B and soul music which surrounded the funk era and continued through the late twentieth century. Vocal harmony and soul style singing, which often utilized multiple vocalists, played a major role in the sound of funk music. Due to the large number of players in many of these groups, musicians often doubled as vocalists and sang harmonies or backing vocals both on the recorded tracks and during live performances.

Many funk songs created a party atmosphere which found its way into many funk lyrics. The Master of Ceremonies (also known as an emcee or MC) who exhorts the crowd to dance, shares local information, and notes his or her skill on the microphone (Schloss, p. 2) became a popular vocal element during this era. The MC can convince the audience to join in and participate with the music by using persuasive lyrics that often include references to drugs, alcohol, and sex. Some examples of funk songs that created this party and dance atmosphere are Sly & the Family Stone's, "Dance to the Music" (1968), Kool and the Gang's, "Get Down On It" (1981), James Brown's, "Get Up Offa That Thing" (1970), The Bar-Kays, "Freakshow On the Dance Floor" (1984), and KC and the Sunshine Band's, "Get Down Tonight" (1975). Other than partying, song themes include love and heartbreak, similar to many R&B songs.

Other lyrics are often about funk music itself. Even the word "funk" became a popular lyrical hook for this genre. One of James Brown's hit tracks, "Make It Funky" (1971), repeats those same three words the entire song. The Ohio Players', "Funky Worm" (1972), was a song about a funky dance move. Other popular examples of this include Parliament's, "Give up the Funk" (1976), The Brothers Johnson's, "Get the Funk out Ma Face" (1976) and Wild Cherry's, "Play That Funky Music" (1976). This lyrical

trend helped reinforce the idea that funk lyrics are often about letting loose, partying, dancing, and having a carefree attitude.

One of the most important aspect of traditional funk lyrics, especially in Dayton, is that several of these songs addressed unique aspects of Dayton's urban life. The Ohio Players, one of the first bands to put Dayton funk on the map, used their music to address issues of racism and inequality while staying in touch with their community. In Portia Maulsby's article, "Funk Music: An Expression of Black Life in Dayton, Ohio and the American Metropolis," she addresses the element of African-American vernacular used by several artists, including the Ohio Players.

Dayton's street life became a resource for musical creativity. The culture, behavior, vernacular language, and activities of the black poor and working class provided content and vocabulary for song titles and lyrics... According to bass player Marshall Jones (of the Ohio Players), they employed "less words as possible to make a point because we weren't playing for an educated class" (Maulsby, p. 202).

By using this vernacular, funk music could better relate to their listeners by providing a type of "street music" that served as an outlet from the everyday stresses of the working and social-middle class (Maulsby, p. 207). Songs such as "Get Up Offa That Thing" by James Brown (1970), "Get the Funk out Ma Face" by The Brothers Johnson (1976), "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" by Sly & the Family Stone (1970) serve as a few examples of song titles that demonstrate the use of African-American vernacular, showing off a sense of pride in black culture (Schloss, p. 11-12).

## Analyses

The following analyses are designed to demonstrate how three traditional funk songs used instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals in order to represent three distinct styles of funk. Some of these analyses propose issues for secondary school pedagogy and will be addressed in Part III. The first analysis looks at James Brown, one of the early developers of funk. Next I analyze a song by Lakeside, one of the most popular Dayton funk bands. Finally, the third analysis compares another Dayton band, Zapp & Roger's funk cover of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (1981) with the original recording by Marvin Gaye (1967). Analyzing how each of these songs is constructed and performed will provide a foundation for better understanding the funk style and developing a collaborative curriculum.

### **1) James Brown, "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a) Sex Machine" (1970)**

Ricky Vincent lauds James Brown's iconic recording of "Sex Machine" as "a celebration of the strength and vitality of the black man's sexuality" (Vincent, p. 24). James Brown is referred to as the "godfather" of funk music because he was one of the first artists to implement funk characteristics into his music, pioneering an entirely new musical genre. The following analysis takes a look at two contrasting versions of one of Brown's greatest hits, "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a) Sex Machine."<sup>3</sup> I will first examine the 1970 two-part single and then compare it to a live television performance from 1971.

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<sup>3</sup> This song was more commonly referred to as simply, "Get Up" or "Sex Machine."

Brown always prided himself on his “lightning-quick dance moves,” but it was his charming personality and dedication that helped lead him to such a successful musical career (Vincent, p. 72). Although often identified as an R&B artist (still to this day), Brown believed his music to be a combination of gospel and jazz.<sup>4</sup> Many of his bandmates trained as jazz musicians, including his bandleader during the late 60s and early 70s, Fred Wesley. Learning about James Brown firsthand from his most trusted sideman helps us to better understand the dynamic Brown had with his band, the JB's.

Mr. Brown was a man who lived by two paranoid creeds, the first being (and I quote): “You can’t do nothing for someone else if you ain’t nothing yourself.”

The other James Brown creed was: “I will use a fool as long as he will let me.”

Mr. Brown would use you, but he also showed respect, in his own way, to people who stood their ground. But you had to be careful, because he became like a wild animal, devoid of all reason and humanity if backed into a corner or if he *felt* like he was backed into a corner. He *would* win. Or die trying. Or make excuses forever about why he didn’t (Wesley, p. 102).

Brown was a relentless yet passionate individual who was set in his ways, according to Wesley. His music, however, wasn’t always entirely his creation. Although he may have come across as the only mastermind in the band, he utilized the talents of many of his bandmates to help write and arrange his songs. Bobby Byrd, who is featured as Brown’s duet partner on this track, helped Brown write “Sex Machine” (Vincent, p. 81).

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<sup>4</sup> James Brown has said, “I’ve never been an R&B act, but I’ve been classed as one. My music always came from gospel and jazz, which is called funk and soul. You see funk and soul is really jazz” (quoted in Vincent, p. 73).

On the studio recording from 1970, the JBs use a typical rhythm section of drums, guitar, and bass, but Brown also steps in to play a recurring piano solo. The JBs also employ a horn line of two trumpets, a saxophone, and trombone. This line up of instruments became standard for funk groups in the 1970s and would go on to influence several other bands.<sup>5</sup>

The form of this song is very loose and simple. Due to its flexible structure, Brown often played with the structure of the chart in performances. With the exception of a bridge and a one measure lick where the whole band plays seven repeated notes in a row, there is only one basic groove that lasts nearly the whole song. This seven-note lick occurs three times in the recording and is used as a transition from section to section: once at the very beginning, again coming out of the bridge, and finally at the very end (but only five notes this time). The main groove that happens is only one measure that comes with a heavy downbeat from the bass on beat one every time. Brown was very adamant that his bassist, Bootsy Collins, emphasize “the one” in every measure. Brown recalls:

I think Bootsy learned a lot from me. When I met him he was playing a lot of bass – the ifs, the ands, and the buts. I got him to see the importance of the *one* in funk – the downbeat at the beginning of every bar. I got him to key in on the dynamic parts of the one instead of playing all around it. Then he could do all his other stuff in the right places – *after* the one.... (James Brown, as cited in Vincent, p. 81-82).

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<sup>5</sup> The instrumentation the JBs used during live performance sometimes differed from what was done on the recording and will be discussed later.

The drums keep a funk beat<sup>6</sup> while the bass and guitar(s) play the same groove over and over until the bridge when they switch up the chords, moving from a groove in E-flat to a groove in A-flat. While the guitar keeps the same, consistent riff during the main groove, the bass player (Bootsy) plays slightly different notes and rhythms each time with no clear pattern or form. The only part that is truly consistent is the downbeat. The rest of the piece is a similar variation of the measures transcribed in Music Example 1.

Music Example 1: Groove from James Brown and Bobby Byrd, “Get Up,” released in 1970

The image displays three staves of musical notation for a funk groove in 4/4 time. The top staff is for Electric Guitar, the middle for Bass Guitar, and the bottom for Drum Set. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Electric Guitar part consists of a repeating eighth-note riff. The Bass Guitar part features a more complex, syncopated eighth-note pattern. The Drum Set part shows a classic funk beat with a strong downbeat on the bass drum and a backbeat on the snare.

The only instrumental part that changes in this groove is the occasional addition of the horn line and Brown’s piano solo. The vocals function as part of the groove as well, but come across as having much more freedom and liberty to do what they want compared to an ostinato, or ground bass. The simplified form of this song is:

**Groove – Bridge – Groove.**

<sup>6</sup> Most funk drum beats consisted of eighth-notes or sixteenth-notes on the high-hat, a strong backbeat on beats two and four on the snare drum, and a heavy downbeat from the bass drum either every measure or other measure. These beats also typically included syncopated sixteenth-note rhythms between the snare and bass drums.



Brown, who appears to control the elastic form of the piece, calls out each section of the song before it happens. This track, recorded as a two-part single in 1970, starts with an introduction from Brown, “Fellas, I’m ready to get up and do my *thang*,” which starts a verbal back and forth between Brown and his bandmates. This quick introduction ends with Brown asking, “can I count if off?” over and over until he eventually starts the tune by cuing the seven octave notes. During the groove, Brown and Byrd go back and forth with a call-and-response singing, “get up (get on up),” as a layer on top of the groove. As the lead vocalist, Brown appears to adlib the rest of the lyrics.

On the recording, Brown and the JB’s create a playful, laid-back environment that makes it seem like Brown is in full control of the piece and that the rest of the band has no idea when Brown will decide to change sections, sing new lyrics, or cue a certain phrase. However, in actuality, the audience is only seeing the final product. While it may seem like it is all a surprise, that might not actually be the case with the performers. These are well-trained musicians who have performed this piece many times and can easily predict what is to come in the tune.

When it feels like the band has grooved long enough, he shouts out, “Bobby, should I take ‘em to the bridge?” Then he gets the signal from his partner and the whole band switches to a variation of the original groove, but in a new key (A-flat) with an altered guitar riff. When Brown is ready to move back to the main groove, he gets there by cuing the seven-note lick again and says, “You wanna hit it like you did on the top, fellas? Hit it!” Finally, Brown asks the band, “Can we hit it and quit it?” and the band closes out with one more lick like they did at the top of the chart. This vocal style of talking with the band and singing back and forth with his duet partner creates a lively

party atmosphere that James Brown and the JB's were well known for – a blend of dancing and singing. This was the kind of music that fueled funk in the early stages.

Part of what sets Brown apart from the rest of his R&B peers is his live performances. The energy, intensity, sweat, and passion that he displays has been modelled by generations of musicians. One can hear the “feel” of liveness, or the approximation of it, on the recording with Brown’s spoken cues. Unlike so many other bands that used a guitarist or other instrumental player as a front man or lead singer, Brown used his energetic performance style, dramatic cape, and dance moves. His live shows were legendary, “When you heard James Brown was coming to town, you stopped what you’re doin’ and started saving your money” (Pee Wee Ellis, as cited by Vincent, p. 73).<sup>7</sup> Many people acknowledge that the James Brown experience was always better live and in person than it was through any recording (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019).<sup>8</sup> Every performance could be slightly different. It might have been longer or shorter than the recording, it could have different solos, different lyrics, or outlandish dance moves. Some of the common visuals seen in Brown’s live performance included female backup dancers, coordinated movement in the horn line and rhythm section, and the legendary Danny Ray (a.k.a. the Cape Man) who would run out on stage to cover James Brown in a bright, elegant cape while he was down on his knees covered in sweat.

A live recording of James Brown performing “Sex Machine” with his band in Italy on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1971 (Wasaexpress, 1971).<sup>9</sup> illustrates how his live performances

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<sup>7</sup> Alfred “Pee Wee” Ellis was a saxophonist and arranger for the JB's.

<sup>8</sup> Although, many of these famous recordings tried to capture the feeling of a live performance.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pvIarW3xHg>

often differ from their recorded versions. The first difference between the two is in the introduction. In the recorded version, Brown says each line only once with a casual, more relaxed tone. In the live version, the introduction is much more dramatic. Brown shouts each line twice if not three or four times before moving on. He speaks much faster and addresses his partner, Byrd. Using the introduction as a transition from the opener, Brown shifts from one high-energy song and carries that intensity through the count off to “Sex Machine.” This lengthy introduction also helps give time for the audience to applaud. By repeating each statement in the introduction, he also gives the listeners a chance to understand what he is saying without feeling like he is rushing into the next track.

The next musical difference is rather small, yet interesting. In the recorded version, the band plays the seven-note lick in octaves, but in the live television version, the band played nine notes and lands on the downbeat of the second measure with a different note.<sup>10</sup> Another difference is the length of each section. For example, the first groove lasts approximately two minutes in the recorded version and only one minute in the live version. This could have been due to time constraints on the television broadcast, so Brown may have taken the band to the bridge earlier to save time. A second reason this groove was shorter was because of the most notable difference between the two versions, the tempo. The tempo of the commercial recording stays at a strict 108 beats per minute (bpm) whereas the live performance fluctuates between 114 and 120 bpm. Music tends to have more energy when performed in front of an audience, so it is not uncommon to see the tempo increase ever so slightly and also fluctuate in the moment.

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<sup>10</sup> It’s hard to determine why this is. It is unclear if this was Brown’s decision, the band’s decisions, or why it was even different to begin with.

The horn players are set up along stage left in a diagonal row and are able to coordinate simple dance moves to back up Brown visually. The rhythm section makes up the back row and consists of one bass, one guitar, and two drum sets with two drummers. This is a staple of any James Brown concert. The JB's play so fast, so tight, and with so much movement and energy that the band requires two drummers so that when one gets tired, the other can jump in without even dropping a fraction of a beat (Vincent, p. 216). Behind the rhythm section, up on a pedestal, is one female background dancer who's only job is to move and dance the entire performance. This may have been in order to help amplify the sexual themes in Brown's music. In the center of the stage is Brown and his partner, Byrd. However, it was always essential that Brown was positioned a few feet further down stage, closer to the audience, to ensure that James Brown was recognized as the front man.

## **2) Lakeside, "Fantastic Voyage" (1981)**

Lakeside was one of the most popular funk bands to come out of Dayton. The name, Lakeside, came from an old amusement park (named Lakeside Paladian) located in west Dayton that closed down in 1967 (Maultsby, p. 213). The band played around the Dayton area for many years and became popular in the late 1970s and early 80s with the release of their hit single, "Fantastic Voyage" in 1981. "Fantastic Voyage" is an iconic Dayton funk tune that utilizes characteristic funk instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals. Lakeside's music uses the standard drums, guitar, bass, and vocals, but they also utilize

keyboards rather than traditional horns that help to create an electronic funk sound.<sup>11</sup> The precise electric guitars and synthesizers created a distinct sound that helped establish Lakeside as a progressive funk group. The analysis of “Fantastic Voyage” below highlights three of the four primary characteristics of funk: form, groove, and lyrics (vocals).<sup>12</sup>

Table 1: Form of Lakeside’s, “Fantastic Voyage” (1981)

Measures per section	Form	Groove	Lyric Incipit
4	Intro	A	
10	Verse 1	A	Hey, come on, come along, take a ride...
6	Groove	A	(Come along and ride...)
16	Pre Chorus (MC)	B	I'm the captain on this vessel...
8	Chorus	C	(We just want you to feel...)
8	Groove (MC)	A	Come along, pack your bags...
16	Pre Chorus (MC)	B	We're the directors of this groove ship
16	Chorus	C	(We just want you to feel...)
28	Groove (MC)	A	Come along, pack your bags...
10	Verse 1	A	Hey, come on, come along, take a ride...
4	Groove	A	
10	Verse 2	A	If you're ready to party and you wanna get down...
2	Groove	A	
16	Chorus	C	(We just want you to feel...)
16... Fade Out	Groove/Guitar/MC	A	Hurry up, pack your bags and jam y'all...

There are three basic grooves on this track that get passed back and forth as it switches from verse to chorus. The main groove, during the verses (A), is the home base for this song and simply jams on one riff, repeating the same two measure phrase over and over until the chorus comes in. This two-measure groove demonstrates characteristics of

<sup>11</sup> Keyboards and synthesizers became a popular edition to funk groups since they were able to have such a versatile sound. Bands could easily replace full horn sections with one keyboard player which is a small part of what led to the increase of electronic music. Standard instruments included the Hammond B3 organ, the Fender Rhodes piano, and later the Yamaha DX7 keyboard (Vincent, p. 273).

<sup>12</sup> This chart provides incipits for the lyrics and phrase lengths.

common rhythmic patterns used in funk music. The high-pitched snap of the snare that happens on beats two and four from the drums creates a sound that stands out to the ear in a way that invites those around it to clap along and take part in the groove. To help support this, the recording uses a sampled clap on beats two and four to support the snare.

The bass guitar emphasizes “the one” that Brown mentioned earlier by landing heavily on beat one with the root of the key. However, the bass rhythm is syncopated creating an early downbeat in the second measure that happens on the “and” of beat four in the first measure. On top of this groove, the guitar and keyboard add ornamentation that is light and syncopated, occasionally breaking out in solos that help increase the energy and intensity of the groove. The second and third grooves, heard in the pre chorus (B) and chorus (C), have many similar rhythmic components while utilizing slightly different chords and harmonies in E minor. Emphasis on the downbeat, unexpected backbeats, and syncopated sixteenth-note rhythms help to create this tight feel emblematic of the funk style. The recorded track even includes a fade out at the end so the groove never stops and leaves the audience wanting more.

Music Example 2: Groove from Lakeside’s, “Fantastic Voyage,” released in 1981

The image displays three staves of musical notation for a funk groove in 4/4 time. The top staff is for Bass Guitar, the middle for Drum Set, and the bottom for Clap. The Bass Guitar part starts with a half note on the first beat, followed by a syncopated eighth-note pattern in the second measure. The Drum Set part features a consistent snare pattern on beats two and four, with a hi-hat pattern on the first and third beats. The Clap part consists of claps on beats two and four, mirroring the snare pattern.

Lyrically, “Fantastic Voyage” is a metaphor encouraging people to come and have a good time with Lakeside and their music. Some of the lyrics in the first verse, “just forget about your troubles and your nine to five and just sail on,” help to create this feeling. Then the Master of Ceremonies (Mark Adam Wood Jr.), or in this case the ship’s “captain,” comes in to get the audience on board with the funk music, “We’re the directors of this groove ship, and you are under our command. What you should do is take a listen too, so you can understand.” The lyrics go back and forth between the emcee and the rest of the chorus as both sides are pressuring the audience into hopping aboard the “funk ship.” Lakeside drew inspiration from the Ohio Players, often writing lyrics to create what was known then as “party-funk.” Portia Maulsby describes Lakeside’s impact on the Dayton community, referencing the lyrical themes directed towards the working class.

Party-funk encouraged black people to “hang loose” and “boogie” on the dance floor. Building on the foundation established by the Ohio Players, the second wave of Dayton musicians (Lakeside) produced a party-funk style that Norman Beavers of Lakeside described as “a form of escapism from social problems.” To help black people “forget about the bad times,” Lakeside recreated past eras of adventure (Maulsby, p. 205).

Lakeside’s party lyrics not only represent the ethos of funk, but they use witty puns, sexual innuendos, addictive hooks, and make clever cultural references to James Brown, the Wizard of Oz, and Looney Toons. The lyrics even have a subtle connection to the

band's name by referring to the "ride"<sup>13</sup> that the vocalists are encouraging, possibly supporting the amusement park (now abandoned) that their band is named after. During live shows, these musicians will even dress up as fictional characters (pirates, cowboys, F.B.I. agents, etc.) in order to convey a more interactive performance (Maultsby, p. 205).

The actual vocal technique of this piece demonstrates another important characteristic of funk, both musically and culturally. Musically, Lakeside utilizes multiple vocalists to create harmony as well as a simulation of crowd participation. This chorus of singers has a light timbre that uses soulful voices and falsettos, similar to the gospel style used by James Brown and other funk artists. The vocals are led by the emcee who uses an aggressive and raspy vocal timbre, a popular technique used to narrate the song and engage the crowd to help further fuel the dance and party atmosphere.

### **3) Zapp & Roger, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (1981)**

Zapp & Roger (or Zapp), a notable Dayton funk band originally comprised of Roger Troutman and his three brothers, learned under the tutelage of George Clinton and Parliament-Funkadelic (Vincent, p. 281).<sup>14</sup> Zapp was one of the most talented and influential funk bands of the 80s and 90s and helped put Dayton funk on the map with Troutman's use of the talk box.<sup>15</sup> This analysis looks at Zapp's funk cover of Marvin

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<sup>13</sup> The "ride" may also be a sexual innuendo, another common theme in funk lyrics.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Troutman was murdered by his brother and manager, Larry Troutman, while leaving his recording studio in Dayton in 1999. Larry was found dead in his car, several blocks away, with what police described as a "self-inflicted" gunshot to the head. Larry's incentive to this murder-suicide is still unclear to this day (Sprague, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> The talk box is a special effects pedal hooked up to a tube placed in the mouth used to create an electronic voice controlled by either a keyboard or electric guitar.



Gaye's "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (1981) to learn more about the diverse sound of Zapp as well as see how they took a well-known R&B song and made it their own, funky version. In order for students and teachers to implement this technique pedagogically, we must compare and contrast both versions.

Motown Records released "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" by Marvin Gaye in 1967. The track features the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's string section and the Funk Brothers<sup>16</sup> on the rhythm track. This particular track also uses background singers to harmonize with Gaye and create call-and-response. In traditional funk music, the drums, bass, and guitar serve as a primary component of the groove and overall sound; however, in Gaye's recording, the ear is drawn more to the keyboard and strings as the lead instruments with the vocals at the center of attention.

Zapp & Roger's released their own version of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" in 1981. The instrumentation of this track relies on a standard funk ensemble and includes new and innovative sounds for its time. Similar to the other funk tunes analyzed so far, the groove of this song is established in the drums, bass, guitar, and keyboard. Zapp & Roger also emphasize the use of horns with a prominent saxophone line, specifically the baritone saxophone that supports the bass guitar. The most notable sound Zapp utilizes in this track is the talk box (see Figure 1). Musicians are able to connect the talk box to their instrument (Troutman used a keyboard) in order to create a distinct timbre, amplified through the tube (effects pedal).

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<sup>16</sup> The Funk Brothers were session artists that played the backing tracks to several Motown recordings in the 1960s.

Figure 1: Roger Troutman using a Talk Box.



The device blends the words being mouthed into the tube with the sound of the instrument being played. Although it is called a “talk box,” the performer does not actually talk into the tube, but rather changes the shape (or vowel) of their mouth in order to change the sound being amplified. This creates a distorted vocal sound, similar to what a heavily auto-tuned vocal line might sound like today. This electronic voice quickly became Troutman’s signature sound.

The most obvious difference between these two recordings is the time length. Gaye’s original recording is only 3:16 as opposed to Zapp’s which is 6:48, over twice as long as Gaye’s. Both recordings are at the same tempo, approximately 118 bpm, which means that the difference in time must be due to an extended form. The charts below outline the form of each song. The sections highlighted in gray are nearly identical between the two versions, both lyrically and structurally.

Table 2: Form of Marvin Gaye's, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (1967)

Measures per section	Form	Groove	Lyric Incipit
10	Intro	A	
8	Verse 1	A'	I bet you're wondering how I knew...
4	Pre Chorus 1	B	It took me by surprise I must say...
8	Chorus	C	Don't you know I heard it through the grapevine...
4	Groove	A	(Heard it through the grapevine...)
8	Verse 2	A'	I know a man ain't supposed to cry...
4	Pre Chorus 2	B	You could have told me yourself...
8	Chorus	C	Instead I heard it through the grapevine...
8	Groove	A	(Heard it through the grapevine...)
8	Verse 3	A'	People say believe half of what you see...
4	Pre Chorus 3	B	Do you plan to let me go...
8	Chorus	C	Don't you know I heard it through the grapevine...
12... Fade Out	Groove	A	(Heard it through the grapevine...)

Table 3: Form of Zapp &amp; Roger's, "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" (1981)

Measures per section	Form	Groove	Lyric Incipit
8	Intro	A	
24	Groove	A	Grapevine (heard it through the grapevine...)
1	Break		
8	Verse 1	A'	Bet you're wondering how I knew...
4	Pre Chorus 1	B	It took me by surprise I must say
8	Chorus	C	Oh yeah, I heard it through the grapevine...
12	Groove	A	Grapevine (baby, baby...) don't you never leave...
1	Break		
8	Verse 2	A'	I know a man ain't supposed to cry...
4	Pre Chorus 2	B	You could have told me yourself...
8	Chorus	C	Heard it through the grapevine...
18	Groove	A	Leaving, grapevine, I don't want nobody else...
28	<b>Bridge</b>	D	How much longer, longer would you be mine...
2	Transition		
12	Groove	C	(Heard it through the grapevine...)
12	Groove (drop-out)	C'	Just a little bit of soul now...
8	<b>Bridge</b>	D	How much longer, longer would you be mine...
2	Transition		
24... Fade Out	Groove (sax solo)	C	(Heard it through the grapevine...)

Zapp & Roger mimic the original Marvin Gaye recording for most of the first half of the song, varying slightly on the grooves in between. However, after the second chorus, instead of going to the third verse and chorus like Gaye does, Zapp & Roger ventures off

into new material, arriving at a bridge after staying on the main groove for eighteen measures. Other than a bridge, Zapp & Roger also implement one-measure or two-measure breaks that interrupt the groove and serve as transitions from one section to the next. Contrary to Gaye’s version that relies heavily on melody and vocals, Zapp & Roger’s version relies heavily on groove. With the exception of the verses and choruses borrowed from the original version, the rest of the piece is really their own composition. Because of this, the track is able to focus more on the groove and feel of the piece, making this track more similar to a traditional funk song than an R&B song.

The groove of Zapp’s version is characteristic of a traditional funk groove. As mentioned earlier, it places more focus on groove than vocals. The vocals in this recording tend to blend in with the groove because of the talk box. The drums lay down a consistent, simple rock beat. The only aspect of the drums that stands out in the main groove is the “and of four” that it shares with the bass line in every other measure. See Music Example 3 below.

Music Example 3: Groove from Zapp’s, “I Heard It Through the Grapevine,” released in 1981

Bass Guitar (Bari Sax)

Drum Set

Clap

This track also includes a recorded handclap on beats two and four, similar to Lakeside's "Fantastic Voyage." The layering of this groove includes backing vocals in each chorus, repeating the words "heard it through the grapevine" to create a call-and-response effect characteristic of funk. All of these parts put together create an infectious beat aimed to make the audience dance.

Marvin Gaye's vocal style is soulful, similar to the inflection James Brown would put into his soul singing, often crying out at the top of his head voice and breaking into his falsetto. Roger Troutman's vocal style, however, changes with the use of the talk box. While the talk box allows for a variety of sounds and a nearly unlimited range, it is unable to emulate some of the vocal style characteristic of the natural voice. Gaye is also able to control the inflection of his voice, often scooping up to certain notes and manipulating the vowel shape of certain words. These sounds are limited on the talk box (which is pitch centered). Both vocal styles, however, allow for a great range of creativity and flexibility in their own ways.

The lyrics of both versions are mostly similar, with the exception of Zapp's version which does not include the third verse. Marvin Gaye writes in first person about the heartbreak he felt after finding out, indirectly, "through the grapevine" that his woman was cheating on him and their relationship would soon be over. Although Zapp & Roger slightly change the lyrics by writing some of their own lines over the groove, the message stays the same. Love and heartbreak is another common theme of funk lyrics, in this case stemming from R&B influences. One of the lyrics Troutman adds at the start of the drop-out is "just a little bit of soul now," perhaps referencing back to Marvin Gaye's original vocal style.

## **Conclusion**

These analyses offer three examples of songs that use traditional funk elements from the 1970s and 80s. The specific instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals of these songs are important characteristics that must be understood when learning and teaching funk music. Although students may not play these exact songs in the classroom, these analyses should be used as a guide when learning and understanding traditional funk music. These funk characteristics should be taught to students so that they are learning what to listen for when hearing and performing this music. The next section will further discuss traditional funk culture seen in Dayton, Ohio and how this genre has gone on to influence the music industry across the nation.

## Part II: Funk in Dayton, Ohio

“Marshall Jones of the Ohio Players used to say, ‘God stuck his foot in the Miami Valley and the sweat off his feet rolled into the water.’ That’s why they say ‘there’s something in the water’ because God’s foot was funky and that’s what made Dayton, Ohio so funky” (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

### “There’s something in the water”

Dayton musicians and their fans take great pride in their city’s musical history. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, music flooded the neighborhoods of Dayton. Bands practiced on street corners, there were concerts in the parks most weekends, and local radio was taken over by the funky grooves written and recorded by Dayton funk bands. This musical movement that happened in Dayton also took off across the rest of the nation and was a crucial factor in “the funk bomb”<sup>17</sup> that spread all across America. In the summer of 2019 I was able to interview several Dayton funk musicians who recounted their stories of Dayton during the funk era. The purpose of these interviews was to learn more about the oral history of Dayton funk music and why it was so important to Dayton’s culture and identity. Spending time learning and experiencing this funk culture allow teachers to gain more knowledge on the subject so that it can be taught as part of a funk curriculum.

Ohio Players, Lakeside, Heatwave, Zapp & Roger, Faze-O, Slave, Dayton, and Sun are just some of the notable funk groups to come out of the city of Dayton, Ohio. The first of these groups to reach fame was the Ohio Players, rising to stardom in the mid-

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<sup>17</sup> David Webb referred to the rapid national spread of funk in the 1970s and 80s as “the funk bomb” (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

1970s. Some of their top hits included “Love Rollercoaster (1975),” “Fire (1974),” and “Funky Worm (1972).” This group decided to stay local, often returning to their hometown to mentor younger groups such as Slave (C. Carter, personal communication, June 4, 2019). One of the most influential factors that led to the fame of these Dayton bands was the local radio stations. When talking with Stan “the Man” Brooks, a local radio personality, he told me, “WDAO was the first FM station that played all R&B music in the country. It started in 1964 and we were so proud that our city had a radio station for black music” (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019).<sup>18</sup> According to Brooks, everybody in the city had access to this station and they would listen to it because it played catchy, local music. Keith Wimberly also reiterated how this music became so influential across Dayton and the rest of the nation.

It’s the attitude of the music, the players, and the live instruments. Songwriting in that funk era was incredible and you just couldn’t resist it. It was a masterpiece and you could even hear elements of other genres incorporated in funk (blues, jazz, gospel). Everything came together in funk and created something new.

Something that really got the people going. It’s a groovy *thang*, man. It’s a groovy *thang* (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019).

After a decade or so of Dayton funk music gaining local fame, it eventually grabbed the attention of the rest of the nation. “In the 1970s and early 80s, if you turned your radio on, you would hear a song from Dayton, Ohio every hour” (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019). Across my nine interviews, if there is one thing these

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<sup>18</sup> This station, nicknamed “The *Real Rhythm* of the City,” was both an AM and FM station.



Dayton funk musicians and fans want the community to know, it is that Dayton *is* the Land of Funk.

## **Music in Dayton Public Schools: the 1970s and 1980s**

Dayton is a community with a lot of positive energy and the funk culture is much more than just the music. It's the choreography, the lights, the special effects, the talk box, and all that. But no matter what, I always promote the legacy and the educational aspect of funk music in Dayton (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

Music was alive and well in the city of Dayton from the 1960s through the 80s. Not only were there professionals coming in and out of the city every year, but the talent was also young. According to Bell, some kids reached fame as early as age 12 or 13 while others were able to take advantage of opportunities in their late teenage years. Dayton Public Schools served as a breeding ground for young funk musicians. Their music programs provided opportunities all across the district such as choirs, marching bands, guitar classes, and music theory classes. Several schools even had a requirement that students must be enrolled in music theory before joining a band or choir. This put music fundamentals at the center of the curriculum. Wimberly recalls,

There was a really good music theory teacher from Roosevelt named Charles Spencer. He was a mean old cat, but he knew his stuff really well. He used to test us anywhere and catch us in the hallways, "Hey, you! What's a minor third?" (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019).

Mr. Spencer and other teachers like him cared a lot about their students' education and ensuring they get a well-rounded musical background. Their high standards and mentorship played a large role in inspiring this younger generation that would grow up to reach national fame for their music abilities. Mike Puterbaugh, a former administrator at Dunbar High School, also attested to the support from Dayton Public Schools.

When I was an administrator in Dayton, music was big in the schools. Mr. Charles Spencer (nicknamed "teach") was the music teacher at Dunbar High School. If you were going to be in his band, you needed to know how to read music, so music theory was the first class of the day and everybody had to take it (M. Puterbaugh, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

Dayton Public Schools was not the only factor that led to the success of the funk era. The reason it grew as much as it did was also due to the local community support. Families would support their kids by providing them instruments and opportunities to make music. Stan "the Man" Brooks said that was "the thing" during the funk era.

Why did Dayton have so many bands that became famous funk groups? Because we didn't have much to do here. That was "the thing" back in the day: hoping your parents could afford to buy you an instrument... Parents would buy their kid a saxophone and make sure they learn it by playing it in the school band... Just like kids today aspire to be an athlete like LeBron James, kids back then aspired to be musicians. They could name famous drummers, famous saxophonists, famous guitar players (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019).

Even though some report that there wasn't much to do in Dayton, the music kept the students occupied both in and out of school. "We were so busy, there was no time to get

in trouble” (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019). Not only did many families support their children, but they even had the support of county officials who viewed music as a high priority in their community.

Montgomery County would support us in the summer to keep kids from getting in trouble. They provided what was called the “show-wagon” which was a flatbed truck with a portable stage on it so you could take it around to the Dayton parks and play shows in the summertime (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019).

This “show-wagon” was also referred to as a literal “band-wagon” because funk music was so infectious that everybody wanted to join in. The shows in the parks became known as the “Battle of the Bands” where young groups would hold friendly competitions and compete for local fame. “These were big events in the community happening nearly every weekend and would often draw more people than the prom and other school dances” (M. Puterbaugh, personal communication, May 21, 2019). The schools and the rest of the community were able to successfully work together to support this local music which was very important. Schools had thriving parental support and band booster clubs to help raise money, put on events, and assist with the logistics involved with running a large music program. “I learned very quickly that as an administrator, you do not mess with the band boosters. They carried a lot of weight, but today I don’t see any music happening in these schools, at least not the way it was back in the 60s, 70s, and 80s” (M. Puterbaugh, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

Unfortunately, the music scene in Dayton now is not the same as it was during the funk era. One of the most noticeable changes is in the Dayton Public School District.

“Back then, every school in the city of Dayton had a performing band, orchestra, and drill team (marching band)” (M. Puterbaugh, personal communication, May 21, 2019). Today, there are no marching bands in any of the DPS schools due to reasons such as the lack of funding and community support (M. Puterbaugh, personal communication, May 21, 2019). In the 1970s and 80s, according to Brooks,

Marching bands on the west side of Dayton took over. Families and community members used to go to high school football games every Friday night across the city. Not because there was a good football team, but because the bands were so much fun to watch (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019).

Marching bands were not the only thing to completely disappear from the schools. Extracurricular music programs, music theory classes, school talent shows, and informal mentorships are only some of the experiences that are no longer as easy to access today.<sup>19</sup> The theory classes taught kids how to write music, the talent shows gave the kids something to work on in their free time, and bands like the Ohio Players inspired them to be better (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

School bands and choirs are still around in DPS today, but are quite different. The most successful music programs in DPS are at Stivers School of the Arts, founded in 1908, which is now an arts magnet school (as of 2000) with superior bands, choirs, and orchestras. While this school is evidence that the arts are still surviving in the city, it does not say much for the rest of Dayton Public Schools which have underfunded music

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<sup>19</sup> As Cedell Carter mentioned, bands like the Ohio Players would come back to Dayton in the 80s and jam with the younger funk groups in the band room after school (C. Carter, personal communication, June 4, 2019).

programs. In some schools, including most charter schools, there are not even music programs there to begin with. Gloria Smith-Roberts, a Funk Center<sup>20</sup> volunteer, said that, “this environment creates a stigma that you can only play an instrument if you go to Stivers” (G. Smith-Roberts, personal communication, May 21, 2019). In DPS programs other than Stivers, the numbers are low and many students struggle with fundamentals such as reading music and understanding music theory. As a Dayton mother of children who went through DPS after the funk era, Gloria is only one of the many community members that believe music is an essential part to a student’s education because of the benefits music has on the brain.

When they took the music out of schools, the test scores went down. Today, there is too much focus on getting test scores up, but that can’t happen if students are missing that foundation they learn from music classes (G. Smith-Roberts, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

But where did the music go? Why is funk not as prominent today in Dayton as it was forty years ago? There is one major factor that influenced the decline of funk, not only in Dayton, but among the rest of the nation as well: new advances in music technology.

## **A Post-Funk Music Industry**

Webb believed that after the funk era, with the help of new traditions and music technologies, black popular music evolved into the hip-hop era and funk was seen as a

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<sup>20</sup> The Funk Music Hall of Fame & Exhibition Center, a.k.a. the Funk Center, is a non-profit organization in Dayton, Ohio dedicated to preserving traditional funk culture from the 1970s and 80s. It is led by CEO and Founder, David Webb.

critical link between hip-hop and R&B, making rap the center of attention for black popular music in the late 1980s and 90s (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019). With the help of new digital tools, artists could sample recordings and create new sounds quickly and efficiently without the need of trained instrumentalists. An example of this was the creation of the drum machine: an invention lamented by funk fans and scholars like Vincent.

Studio producers took advantage of the many new recording techniques and used the drum machine – now realistic-sounding enough to simulate a real drummer throughout a song – and created endless music. To real music fans, the new developments were dreadful (Vincent, p. 208-209).

Not only did these changes upset music fans, but it upset the musicians as well. Keith Harrison shared with me his experience dealing with the changing music industry.

Record companies dropped us (live bands) because it was too expensive to spend money on bands that big. They could just hire one person with a computer instead and work with them. So, people started having home studios and garage bands.

Technology has completely shaken up the music industry (K. Harrison, personal communication, June 18 2019).

This change in the professional music industry ended up having an effect on music in the schools. According to Webb and Puterbaugh, the hip-hop era misled children into thinking that they did not need to understand music theory or how to play an instrument in order to be successful in music.

The decade of the rap music is part of what took the music out of schools. People wanted to start sampling music, and when people start sampling you didn't have

to play an instrument. You could just grab something that sounds good, loop it, put a drum beat to it, and that was it. People began to think music classes were boring and unnecessary, but it began to mess up their minds (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

This change in the music industry allowed for many new and creative elements in music, but some musicians argued it began to make traditional bands obsolete. As Keith Harrison mentioned, it was easier for producers to work and collaborate with one artist as opposed to a group of five to ten musicians who might all have contrasting musical ideas. However, he argues that because of this, bands write more authentic songs with original and creative ideas. “With the new generation, music isn’t what it used to be. People are just writing music that they know will sell” (K. Harrison, personal communication, June 18, 2019).

Some Dayton musicians, such as Wimberly, believe funk and hip-hop share a connection. He emphasized their kinship when he said, “When you really think about it, funk was actually a blueprint for the hip-hop era” (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019). Producers began to use the tracks of popular funk songs as a foundation for their beats, as Joseph Schloss describes in his ethnomusicological study of hip-hop, “musical collages composed of brief segments of recorded sound” (Schloss, p. 2). Samplers used funk tracks specifically, not only because of the groove and rhythmic pulse it provided, but also because of the significance of funk culture (Schloss, p. 27). Schloss claims that James Brown’s, “Funky Drummer” received the most attention throughout the hip-hop era.

The Rap Sample FAQ, an online compendium of sample sources, lists almost two hundred songs that sampled from James Brown's "Funky Drummer," virtually all from the middle to late eighties – and the actual number is probably closer to several thousand (Schloss, p. 103).

Other famous samples include the Dazz Band's Grammy Award Winning hit, "Let It Whip" (1982), George Clinton's, "Atomic Dog" (1982), and the Ohio Players', "Funky Worm" (1972). As Webb often says, "Even Justin Bieber sampled the Ohio Players" (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

Many of these groups from the funk era, both in Dayton and the rest of the nation, are still receiving royalties and credits for their music that has become a part of hip-hop culture. However, much of the history and culture of the funk era receives less attention, especially in Dayton. Mike Puterbaugh, a volunteer for the Funk Center, voiced his thoughts on the shift in the music industry and its effect on the younger generation.

These kids need to be exposed to everything. If all you hear is rap, after a while you start to think that's the only music there is. And they don't understand that the success of rap is due to the sampling of funk music (M. Puterbaugh, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

It is important to these funk musicians and their fans that their contribution is remembered and their story is told. Funk was not only the product of the music, but also the process which included playing live instruments. Stan Brooks believes the younger generation is no longer motivated to learn how to play these musical instruments.

Today, I doubt the younger generation can even name ten musicians. And I'm talking *musicians*, not singers: people who played *instruments*. Today, 90% of it



is digital and the other 10% is keyboard. You don't have anyone to look up to or to want to be like. In my generation, we *wanted* to be an instrumentalist (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019).

As the music left the schools, so did some of its culture and history. The purpose of the pedagogy discussed in Part III is to help preserve this important culture and history that contributed so much to the music industry and, more importantly, Dayton's identity.

## **Varying Perspectives on Funk Education**

Everyone I interviewed had their own reasons as to why music education was an important part of their childhood and why we must continue to advocate for it today.

Deron Bell, local musician and pedagogue, shared with me some of his experiences growing up when he said,

Growing up in Dayton playing funk music, I learned more than music. I also learned life skills that I carry with me today in my own business (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

During my interviews, I made sure to ask each musician what they learned about funk, how they learned it, and why they believe funk is important to a young student's education. I've used their ideas and opinions in order to help shape my own philosophy of funk education and pedagogy that will be explored in Part III.

### **1) Deron Bell's Philosophy**

In addition to his busy duties as the co-director of the Dayton-Funk All Stars and the Music Director for the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), Deron Bell teaches funk and writes curricula that advocates for funk and music education to underprivileged children. Bell's ideas were extremely helpful in my research process because they reinforced many aspects of my own philosophy while providing me with new concepts to consider. As he was explaining his story to me, he said,

I see myself as being responsible for maintaining this history while still staying in tune with the current music scene. Educators need to be open to hear the voices of young musicians because the funk in the 80s is a different kind of funk now. It still exists, but if I'm talking to a fourteen-year-old, I wanna hear what kind of grooves they're feeling. To me, there are no two people who hear music the same way (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

As someone who grew up during the funk era, Bell believes history is an important foundation to music learning, along with music theory and fundamentals (reading music notation). However, what sets him apart from many old school funk musicians is that he also recognizes he is teaching a different generation of students that has different interests, talents, and backgrounds. Bell told me he is not trying to recreate his own experiences through teaching, but rather produce an adapted experience that evokes the same feelings and passion for music that he has had his whole life. He also strongly believes there are other benefits to a child's musical education. Learning, performing, and creating music can teach students more about themselves and how to work with others.

By having these musical experiences at a young age, students are learning skills that may apply to other areas in their life.

Growing up in Dayton at the right time, Bell had the chance to work alongside many famous musicians including the Troutman brothers and their band, Zapp. Bell shared with me an example of how working with this group taught him life lessons outside of funk (i.e. discipline).

Working with Zapp in rehearsals taught me that I couldn't miss, I always had to be on time, and I had to know my parts. In order to make it in music, I had to learn discipline and that lesson carried over into other aspects of my life as a music director and a curriculum writer (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

The organizational and time management skills that Bell learned during his time with professional musicians was a vital part of his future success. He believes these skills and concepts go hand in hand with music learning and should be an important factor in music curriculum. However, when discussing what to teach and how to teach it, I noticed that the interviewees advocated for multiple different approaches to learning music and many of the people I interviewed had different opinions on what the foundation of a funk music curriculum should be.

## **2) Aural vs. Written Learning**

One of the first debates I came across while looking into music curriculum was learning by ear, or "rote teaching," versus learning by notation. Many musicians, both then and now, learned how to play music by ear at a young age. Since specialized music training typically does not take place until high school (such as band, choir, orchestra, and music

theory), children may not learn to read music fluently during their early years.<sup>21</sup>

However, if children grow up in an environment where they are constantly surrounded by music in their churches and families, then they might teach themselves how to play music by ear rather than music theory (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019). Keith Wimberly believes that playing by ear is a very successful way of learning an instrument at a young age and that reading music can come later once they have a basic understanding of the instrument. “I learned by ear and didn’t learn how to read music until I was about 16 years-old” (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019). David Webb, who grew up singing in church, also believes that music learning starts by ear. “I always thought that gospel was first. Even if they didn’t read, they play by ear. Then build from there and move to music theory” (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019).

On the other hand, musicians like Keith Harrison and Deron Bell believe music learning starts with the theory and notation of music. Harrison’s philosophy, similar to Bell’s, puts heavy emphasis on creating and writing music. He believes this is done with a proper understanding of fundamentals, culture (or music history), and music technology (software such as Garage Band, Audacity, Ableton Live, etc.). “Teach them music theory, then music culture, then music technology, then you can write a jingle or a song” (K. Harrison, personal communication, June 18, 2019). Harrison’s method, based on music

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<sup>21</sup> Most students begin learning music notation at a young age in elementary music, but might not be able to read fluently until participation in an ensemble in middle school or high school.

theory, has students writing music from very early on in the learning process. Bell, who has a similar philosophy, put extra emphasis on the importance of reading music.

When a kid comes to me and says, “Hey Mr. Bell, I want to jam. I want to learn how to play this on the drums, or the keys, etc.” I always ask them, “Well can you read it? Can you write it? Do you understand its notational value?” I always start my teaching with a little music theory. A lot of kids know how to play by ear, but you’ve got to be good at sight-reading too. Real musicians can always do both.

When I’m teaching something funky to someone else and they don’t know where to place the beat, I’ll write it out in rhythmic notation (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

He argues that in order to become a “real musician” you have to learn how to read music and play by ear. His fear is that students will not put as much emphasis on the importance of notation which is needed, not only for reading music, but for writing and arranging music as well. “Teaching needs to take multiple approaches. We need history, we need fundamentals, and we need hands-on experiences... There needs to be a balance of learning songwriting, arranging, and sight-reading” (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

Although several teachers and musicians have strong beliefs that one method of teaching (rote vs. note) is better than the other, both have their pros and cons. Playing by ear can be a great way to get students playing funk quickly and successfully. However, if too much time is spent on rote teaching, students may struggle to read music when the notation is put in front of them. If students learn a strong foundation of music theory and reading music notation, it opens up a whole world of possibilities that can be explored,

not only with reading and playing music, but also with writing and creating music.

However, learning music theory can be a long, slow process that may be frustrating at times and could turn students away. The ideas shared amongst musicians like Bell, Webb, Harrison, and Wimberly have helped me to form my own opinions on how to teach music, specifically funk, to both beginners and advanced students.

Many teachers and musicians, including myself, believe the best method is a combination of both playing by ear and playing by notation. If properly balanced, students will be able to use these skills in several aspects of music making including performances, solos, and compositions. As Deron Bell mentioned earlier, “Real musicians can always do both.”

## **The Funk Revival: the 1980s to Modern Day**

The funk style went on to influence countless musical genres both during and after the funk era. In the 1970s and 80s, many other black artists began to incorporate funk characteristics into their music, creating new sounds and subgenres of funk. Rickey Vincent lists several subgenres of funk in his book such as jazz-funk, disco-funk (dance funk), naked funk, funky pop, funk-sampling, and funk rock (Vincent, p. x-xi).

One of the earliest subgenres of funk was the jazz-funk fusion that began in the 1960s. Jazz musicians wanted to get back to the influential blues sound that inspired them to begin with. Vincent used a quote from Miles Davis’ 1967 autobiography saying,

I always liked the blues and always loved to play it... You know, the sound of the \$1.50 drums and the harmonicas and the two-chord blues. I had to get back to that

now because what we had been doing was just getting really abstract (Miles Davis, as cited in Vincent, p. 140).

Davis began to implement the funk style in his arrangements and in his playing. Other jazz artists, such as Herbie Hancock, started to use elements of funk in their playing as well, despite traditional jazz artists who considered funk to be out of style.

While dance music (funk) was often considered “selling out” by chauvinistic jazz players, many black jazzmen interested in making money *and* exploring black consciousness through their music were drawn toward The Funk by the late 1960s (Vincent, p. 137).

As disco started to become more popular, some genres of funk started to adapt to the changing music industry, thus creating disco-funk, also known as dance funk. The leader of this new subgenre was K.C. and the Sunshine Band with hits such as “Get Down Tonight,” “That’s the Way I Like It,” and “Shake Your Booty” (Vincent, p. 217). But as Vincent argues, this music had great success in the mid 1970s, but this genre would be “the beginning of the end” for the traditional funk culture that had started with James Brown.

Unlike the essential, soulful James Brown chants (“Get own up”) that were designed to emphasize the soulfulness of the singer, the new dance bands had a universal tone – one that anyone, from any tradition, could connect to. The fantastic, ethnic, rhythmic realm of black funk was getting whitewashed for the masses (Vincent, p. 216).

There was another push to keep the funk alive with a genre called naked funk. During the early 1980s, as funk bands were becoming less popular, new music technologies were

utilized more often, allowing for several solo acts to start implementing funk into their music. Naked funk artists such as Rick James, Prince, and Michael Jackson began to combine their lyrics (often including several sex innuendos) with sounds that drew from funk characteristics, this time with synthesizers and keyboards that took the place of horns and other instruments in the traditional funk band (Vincent, p. 272-273). Dayton groups such as Faze-O, Lakeside, and Zapp & Roger used these new sounds as well, while still keeping the traditional aesthetic of the funk band alive. Zapp & Roger was considered highly influential in the funk era by their ability to combine new sounds with old ones.

If there was one act that consistently delivered potential for stardom, it was Zapp. Their sound was an incredible mix of wild high-tech rhythms and old-style blues sangin' and swangin'. Zapp, with its lead guitarist and vocalist Roger Troutman, took the new electronic instruments (such as the talk box) as far out as they could swing, while still holding down a dance beat (Vincent, p. 280).

Some funk bands eventually lost popularity and were replaced by solo artists that were often influenced by older funk groups from the 1970s and 80s. New subgenres such as funky pop (Chaka Khan), funk-sampling (Ice Cube, MC Hammer), and funk-rock (Red Hot Chili Peppers) became a part of the music scene.

Decades after the rise of funk in the 1970s, funk made its way back into popular music, creating a new funk style that draws from traditional funk. While new funk does not share the same cultural foundation that traditional funk does, there are many similarities in the rhythms, vocals, styles, and grooves that are used. Although modern day funk acts have not received the attention of traditional funk bands, there are still



plenty out there with national fame such as Janelle Monáe, Lettuce, Vulfpeck, Pigeons Playing Ping Pong, All Good Funk Alliance, The Big Ol' Nasty Getdown, Tower of Power, The Floozies, Moon Hooch, GRiZ, Brownout, The Internet, and the list goes on.

New funk is perhaps even more noticeable, not in funk groups, but through funk influence in other genres of popular music. Musicologist, Nate Sloan, from the University of Southern California wrote an article for *The New York Times* titled “The Glorious Return of Funk” that addresses the worldwide influence funk has had on the music of today.

Funk’s musical vocabulary can now be heard across genre and geography: in Hot 100 Billboard hits like this year’s summery anthem “Juice” by the rapper Lizzo, in the dance music of the Montreal producer Kaytranada, the breezy electropop of the Australian outfit Parcels, the Japanese city pop of Suchmos, the midtempo soulful EDM of London’s Jungle and the unclassifiable sonic mashups of Los Angeles-based acts like Anderson Paak and The Internet whose shows sell out hours after they’re announced” (Sloan, 2019).

Funk influence in modern music is also apparent with producers such as Calvin Harris, Dr. Dre, and of course the hit single by Bruno Mars and Mark Ronson, “Uptown Funk” (2014) that “went not ‘platinum’ but ‘diamond’ and remains the poster child for a renewed interest in the sound of funk that’s now half a decade strong (Sloane, 2019).

Funk is still everywhere, and it is important that this genre is still being recognized and connected to the traditional funk era of the 1970s and 80s.

## Dayton's Legacy: Funk Culture in 2019

Although funk might not be exactly the same as it was in the heyday of Dayton funk, it still lives on in new and exciting ways. Traditional Dayton funk has been preserved within the city of Dayton by groups such as the Dayton Funk All-Stars (a.k.a. D-Funk) who specialize in playing Dayton funk songs by artists such as the Ohio Players, Zapp & Roger, Lakeside, Heatwave, and Slave just to name a few (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019). Other small local groups such as Top Secret, Brass Tracks, and Funky G and the Groove Machine regularly perform funk covers because “the people know the songs and it’s the best dance music there is” (K. Wimberly, personal communication, May 24, 2019). Several Dayton funk bands are also remembered through the “Land of Funk” mural painted in 2018 by artist, Morris Howard, on Stone Street in downtown Dayton (see Figure 2). The mural includes album covers, songs, band logos, and other paintings specific to Dayton funk.

Figure 2: Funk Mural in Dayton, Ohio



In September of 2018, the University of Dayton hosted the first ever academic Funk Symposium. This event brought in several Dayton funk artists to participate in panels and share the musical history of Dayton. It also brought in scholars such as Ricky Vincent and Scot Brown who shared their work on funk history as well as Ed Sarath who shared his ideology of a progressive music curriculum centered around black popular music. The event took place over three days and ended with a funk dance party, hosted by the Dayton Funk All-Stars, that was well attended by Dayton locals.

The most notable effort in preserving traditional Dayton Funk has been the Funk Music Hall of Fame and Exhibition Center (a.k.a. the Funk Center). According to David Webb, CEO and Founder of the Funk Center, its vision is, “to establish a home for the legacy of Funk music by acknowledging the artists who brought this art form to life while showcasing the Funk experience” (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019). Unfortunately, the Funk Music Hall of Fame and Exhibition Center was only open for a short time, from December 2017 to March 2019. It closed due to a change in the district’s developer, increasing the cost of rent for the facility. “The new developer wanted to charge us \$1,400 a month for the space. The old developer gave us the space for free. We just couldn’t swing it” (D. Webb, personal communication, May 21, 2019). Stan Brooks shared with me his reaction to the Funk Center closing down.

It hurts my feelings that the funk museum didn’t stay open. We needed that. If a city had ten rock bands come out of the city that went national, a rock museum would stay open for the rest of your life. It’s just pitiful that this city and the state of Ohio couldn’t support the museum like it should’ve (S. Brooks, personal communication, July 2, 2019).

While the Funk Center may have lost its physical space, Webb and the Funk Center still operate as usual while they search for a new home. Other than the museum, the Funk Center has its own web series on YouTube that has been around long before the Hall of Fame opened. This web series features interviews with both national and local musicians to recap the history and stories of funk. Webb and his sixty plus volunteers supporting him also make frequent visits to schools and other community events to help spread the word about Dayton funk.

Things like the Funk Museum and the Funk Symposium are very important to keeping this music alive. We just happen to be in a city where legendary hit records and artists were born right here on the soil. But it's been more than music. There's a lot of community wealth building in it too (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

Bell brings up the important factor of community. One of the characteristics that makes Dayton funk so important is the impact it has on the city's cultural identity. Despite setbacks with the Funk Center and a changing music industry, Dayton has managed to keep the funk alive at a critical time in the city's history.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (Memorial Day), tornados devastated a large swath of the Dayton region, particularly in North Dayton, severely damaging the homes of many community members. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, there was a mass shooting in Dayton's Oregon Historical District leaving ten dead and twenty-seven injured. The summer of 2019 cast a heavy weight on the city, but the community came together to show their strength. On August 25<sup>th</sup>, just a few weeks later, Dave Chappelle (comedian living in Yellow Springs, OH approximately 20 minutes from Dayton) hosted a concert in the

streets of Dayton's Oregon Historical District to honor the victims of the mass shooting. The concert featured several local performers and national R&B/funk artists such as Thundercat and Stevie Wonder (HuffPost, 2019). Less than a month later, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, Dayton hosted another benefit concert, this time to raise money for the victims of the Memorial Day tornados. The city brought back five well-known Dayton Funk acts: The Ohio Players, Zapp, Lakeside, Steve Arrington from Slave, and Faze-O. The concert, hosted by Bootsy Collins<sup>22</sup> and Peppermint Patty (Bootsy's wife), was called "Hometown Legends for Relief" and was held at The Rose Music Center in Huber Heights, approximately 15 minutes from Dayton. Steve Shockley, guitarist of Lakeside who helped organize the concert, spoke about the importance of the event a few days before it happened.

I've seen Dayton go through changes since the '60s. And every time we were resilient enough to pull ourselves out of it. Even though I rode by a bunch of devastation the other day. And it is still devastated. I said, this is going to go on for a while... But I see Dayton is still pulling itself together. Just like all the people who bought tickets for this concert. No matter what the devastation is, we are going out here to see our people, and have a good time and donate some money (Steven Shockley, as cited in WHIO: Dayton News, 2019).

The concert raised a total of \$109,840 which was donated to The Dayton Foundation to support victims of the Memorial Day tornadoes. This concert proved that funk was alive

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<sup>22</sup> William "Bootsy" Collins is a funk bassist from Cincinnati, Ohio most known for playing with funk legends James Brown and George Clinton.

and well in Dayton and that its community members still value and rely on the great musical history of their city.

## **Conclusion**

People all around the nation recognize Dayton as a hotbed of funk. Understanding the stories of these musicians helps both teachers and students draw connections between the music and the culture of funk. However, as I found in my research, there are still many Daytonians, mostly younger, that have no idea there is this deep, musical history within their city. In music education, it is critical that students learn about and understand music within their community, especially in a place like Dayton where the influence is so strong. This can be a challenge depending on the environment and can raise several questions. For example, how does one authentically teach funk (a genre born in black, urban culture) to students outside of that culture? How would this process be similar or different if taught directly within the culture? In the greater Dayton area, the economic and racial demographics differ greatly between urban and suburban settings. Part III will address these issues of culturally responsive teaching within the music classroom. It will also discuss how to address issues of race, gender, and sex within pedagogy as well as share examples of curriculum that can be taught in schools.

## Part III: Funk Pedagogy

“I see myself as being responsible for maintaining this history while still staying in tune with the current music scene. Educators need to be open to hearing the voices of young musicians because the funk in the 80s is a different kind of funk now” (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019).

### “Music is the draw”

In my interview with Deron Bell, he told me, “Music is the draw, but there is also social-emotional learning incorporated” (D. Bell, personal communication, July 16, 2019). Most of the time, students in music classes *want* to be there. Every once in a while, music educators will have students who are in their class to fulfill an arts elective requirement and move on, but chances are students who stick with it continue because they are enjoying that musical experience. Music teachers should use that motivation to their advantage and structure classes in such a way that students are gaining valuable knowledge and experiences through music. Bell also said there is “social-emotional learning” in music classes. Teachers must recognize the impact music can have on students outside of the classroom and in other areas of life. By designing music curriculum that teaches more than just the music, teachers are providing lasting, impactful experiences for students. This section outlines my own philosophy on funk pedagogy developed in conversation with those I interviewed and provides an example of a funk unit that can be taught with a secondary instrumental jazz ensemble.

## **Addressing Issues of Race, Gender, and Sex in the Classroom**

Kate Fitzpatrick-Harnish, Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of Michigan, refers to culturally relevant pedagogy in her book, “Urban Music Education: a Practical Guide for Teachers.” This method of pedagogy takes into consideration the needs of students based on their environment.

A teacher must have a fundamental understanding of each student’s background, family of origin, culture, and particular strengths, weaknesses, and interests if he or she is to be successful... Our greatest opportunity for improving the types of educational experiences that we provide students lies in taking the time to better understand who they are, what they know, and how we can tailor our curriculum and pedagogy to meet their needs (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, p. 38-39).

Fitzpatrick-Harnish argues that it is the teacher’s job to become aware of the students’ environment and understand that these students may differ in terms of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc. (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, p. 39). She also points out that students are constantly changing. Even if a teacher has been in the same school for a number of years, the environment and community around it will always be changing, and so will the students.

An example of this change has been seen nearly everywhere across the greater Dayton region from the 1970s to present day. Part II addressed how the music industry changed throughout the latter half of the twentieth-century, and with that, so did Dayton. Dayton suburbs grew in size and wealth while many Daytonians moved out of the downtown, urban neighborhoods. This shift in population directly affected the student



demographics across the greater Dayton area. Dayton schools and their teachers had to recognize this turnover and adapt their curriculum and pedagogy accordingly.

The beginning of this final section will discuss how teachers should address these demographic issues of race, gender, and sex in the music classroom, specifically when learning and teaching funk. Here I will draw upon readings from educational theorists and pedagogues such as Kate Fitzpatrick-Harnish and Zaretta Hammond. While Dayton funk will be used as the main example for this section, it is important to note that this pedagogy can be applied to several other aspects of music education.

### **1) Race and Culture**

Traditional funk *is* a black music genre. So, how do educators teach this music to diverse student populations in a way that is both relevant and culturally appropriate? Similar to Fitzpatrick-Harnish who touched on culturally relevant pedagogy, Zaretta Hammond believes in culturally responsive teaching which she defines in her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain*, as follows,

An educator's ability to recognize students' cultural displays of learning and meaning making and respond positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content in order to promote effective information processing. All the while, the educator understands the importance of being in relationship and having a social-emotional connection to the student in order to create a safe space for learning (Hammond, p. 15).

Hammond argues further that proper culturally responsive education can strengthen students' connection with the school and its community. Teachers are responsible for providing students with the proper tools to make these connections in a manner that is both effective and appropriate. But how do educators establish the knowledge and credibility to teach funk music to students of all different cultures, especially when they themselves may not come from that culture?

It is important for the teacher to understand that, unless they grew up during the funk era and were an active participant in this music culture, they will always be a secondary resource for teaching funk. This means that the educator must recognize that, no matter how much they listen to funk music, practice funk music, read about funk music, or talk about funk music, they will never be a primary resource or someone who actually grew up with this music as a part of their identity and culture. However, this does not mean that educator is forbidden from ever being able to teach funk. Although many traditional funk purists may argue this form of education can never be authentic enough, there are several ways for teachers to familiarize themselves with funk music.

Educators can immerse themselves in this musical cultural by exposing and familiarizing themselves with traditional funk as much as possible. "Culturally responsive teaching isn't a set of engagement strategies you use on students" writes Hammond,

Instead, think of it as a mindset, a way of looking at the world. Too often, we focus on only doing something to culturally and linguistically diverse students without changing ourselves, especially when our students are dependent learners who are not able to access their full academic potential on their own. Instead,

culturally responsive teaching is about being a different type of teacher who is in relationship with students and the content in a different way (Hammond, p. 52).

Here Hammond discusses how educators can prepare to become a culturally responsive practitioner. She places emphasis on being a “different type of teacher” who, essentially, works above and beyond what is expected of them in order to fully immerse themselves in the culture of the students and the culture that is being taught in the classroom.

Educators can continue doing this by interacting with primary cultural resources.

One of the ways I was able to do this was by interviewing Dayton funk artists to hear their perspective, attending local funk concerts and observing their performance practice, and by reading historical research on Dayton and its musical culture. Although I will never be a primary resource for Dayton funk music and culture, these experiences provide me with a great amount of knowledge and experience when teaching in front of a music classroom, no matter what the culture or background of the students may be. This also helped me establish connections in the Dayton community with primary resources, allowing me to use them in teaching practices by bringing in guest artists or experts to talk about the music and culture with students.

Teachers must be aware of the cultural practices associated with race and the impact it may have on the music and its community. Allowing students to engage with the music and history that is a part of their own community and its identity opens up several opportunities for personal, musical, and cultural growth. Using culturally responsive teaching, educators are able to appropriately and effectively address these

issues of race and culture in music.<sup>23</sup> However, there are more issues to address than only race and culture with funk music. In order to properly teach funk to students, educators must also be aware of the issues that gender and sex play in the music as well as in classroom pedagogy.

## 2) Gender and Sex

In “Living the Funk: Lifestyle, Lyricism, and Lessons in Modern Contemporary Art of Black Women,” Carmen Phelps discusses how many black artists have fallen victim to a sense of conformity, meaning they must dress a certain way, act a certain way, or perform a certain way in order to attract mainstream audiences in funk.

In much the same way that the concept of black art of the sixties and seventies was popularized by a heterosexual, oftentimes misogynistic male ideology, so too is the mainstream music industry today. Although the goal of black artists was not necessarily to capitalize on or appeal to the sensibilities of ‘mainstream’ audiences, their projects ostensibly limited the agency and legitimacy of, for example, gay and lesbian voices that were constructed to be fundamentally threatening to the black nation-building project (Phelps, p. 185).

Phelps argues that during the funk era, there was a target audience, or rather a target theme, that the music was written and performed towards. When looking at the actual performers in funk groups, nearly every band, especially in Dayton, was made up of all

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<sup>23</sup> How to teach black music to different races (white, black, etc.) and how to teach this music as a white teacher are addressed later on in my own reflection of teaching this funk unit.

male artists. As discussed in Part I, common lyrical themes in traditional funk included love, sex, and dancing, all of which were often written from the perspective of heterosexual men addressing heterosexual women. Not only does this notion often exclude LGBTQ+ voices, but it creates this overarching implication of male dominance. Females were used as objects not only in lyrics, but also in performance practices as flashy, sex icons sometimes viewed as objects or possessions that belonged to the popular, male superstar at the front of the stage. However, these themes are a part of funk's identity as a music genre that helped lead to its national success. In Tony Bolden's book, "The Funk Era and Beyond: New Perspectives on Black Popular Culture," Carmen Phelps writes,

The mainstream success of contemporary black artists – or any artist for that matter – may depend more upon their visual marketability and commercial appeal than their actual vocal or lyrical talents, since their physical embodiment of popular ideals is what is most accessible to today's consumers (Phelps, p. 183).

Many of today's consumers, and consumers during the funk era, wanted this type of glamour and sex in the music that they listened to. This is still seen all over the music industry today in country, rap, hip-hop, R&B, pop and several other genres.

An early example of a song that explicitly refers to sex during the funk era is James Brown's, "Sex Machine," performance from Italy in 1971, discussed earlier in Part I (Wasaexpress, 1971).<sup>24</sup> All of the performers are males, with the exception of the one female, dancing up on a pedestal at the back of the stage. It is important to notice that she

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pvIarW3xHg>

is not a musician, meaning she is not playing an instrument with the rest of the band, but rather a supplemental background dancer. Her role in this performance adds nothing to the auditory experience of the music, only the visual experience.

In the early 1970s, female funk artists such as Betty Davis, Chaka Khan, Donna Summer, and Jean Knight proved they could create songs that are explicitly about sex with more than their visual presence but also by using their voice. Similar to how James Brown used his masculine, assertive voice to attract some of his mainstream female audiences,<sup>25</sup> Betty Davis was able to tantalize her male audiences with her musky, romanticizing voice in songs such as, “Anti-Love Song,” recorded in 1973. Acclaimed as one of her most popular hits, this song begins with Davis drawing out the words, “No, I don’t wanna love you,” with a hoarse, strained voice. Her vocal style throughout the song remains low, raspy, and lackadaisical using pitch bending to create a sensual tension between Davis and the listener. Although Davis was also known for her eccentric live performances, her voice on the recording alone is enough to tempt her audience with her sexual, feminine appeal. Songs like this may be difficult to integrate into classroom pedagogy due to the level of appropriateness for young students. Teaching funk has the potential of uncovering deeper conversations about race, gender, income inequality, etc. with our students and therefore could have risks as educators. Teachers should carefully study and reflect on the lyrical content and historical background of a song and the artist before teaching it to their students.

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<sup>25</sup> James Brown was often seen as a sex icon in the male music industry with his lyrical content and physical performance. Vincent refers to him as “the representation of the total and complete *black man*” including “the sexual blank man” (Vincent, p. 8).

Recognizing the diversity of race, culture, gender, and sex within funk music plays a critical role when teaching and learning traditional funk. Teachers must be aware and understand the context of both the subject matter being taught and the environment which it is being taught in (students, school, community, etc.). This understanding helps provide the teacher with knowledge and context as a secondary source in order to appropriately teach funk music. This contextual understanding should serve as the basis of teaching a curriculum on traditional funk.

## **Developing a Funk Pedagogy**

Deron Bell and I realized we share similar philosophies on the importance of music education and his words have helped me to form my own philosophy along with knowledge I have gained through reading authors such as Vincent, Bolden, and Sarath. This pedagogy centers around teaching three main objectives: 1) the ingredients of funk, 2) the history and culture of funk (specifically in Dayton), and 3) creativity. These objectives are also meant to correlate with the Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) that is currently utilized at the collegiate level for young educators during their student teaching or clinical experience. The K-12 Performing Arts edTPA requires teachers to demonstrate how students are engaged in developing knowledge and skills, contextual understandings, and/or artistic expression. These objectives should all directly relate to the central focus of the unit being taught.

## **1) Ingredients of Funk**

Learning the ingredients of funk helps students understand the musical style and should be an essential part of any funk curriculum. These ingredients, explained in Part I, are: instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals. Students must be able to identify the common instruments used in traditional funk music. They must also be able to listen for and diagram the form of traditional funk songs. Groove is one of the most important ingredients to teach in a funk curriculum, especially if this unit is taught to an instrumental ensemble. Students should be able to understand concepts such as syncopated sixteenth-note rhythms, blue scales, funk riffs and licks, and should be able to understand the importance of repetition and how it relates to groove. It is important to note that most grooves should be taught by ear because that is how it was done during the funk era. Lastly, students should learn about the vocal styles and lyrics used in traditional funk music. This includes concepts such as call-and-response, the role of the emcee, falsetto singing, and lyrical content. This objective directly relates to students' development of knowledge and skills in the K-12 Performing Arts edTPA.

## **2) History and Culture of Funk**

The history and culture of funk provides important context for this musical genre and students, especially in the Dayton region, should understand the musical background of their community. Responding to issues of race, gender, and music within the community will help students grow as individuals both in and out of the music classroom. Engaging in this style of learning will not only help the student, but the school and its community



as well by helping to create a more culturally aware society. Issues of race and culture in pedagogy are addressed later on in this section.

Students must also learn about characteristics that are specific to the traditional funk style of the 1970s and 80s such as Dayton Funk (i.e. students will learn about Dayton Funk bands, their music, and what the environment and culture looked like in Dayton during the funk era) and general performance practices. Students will also learn about where funk music came from and how it has influenced other genres and artists in the music industry (i.e. hip-hop). This objective directly relates to students' development of contextual understandings in the K-12 Performing Arts edTPA.

### **3) Creativity**

The last main objective of this funk pedagogy is creativity. This unit is meant to provide students with a number of hands-on opportunities to create their own funk music. While it is important to understand and replicate traditional funk music of the 1970s and 80s, it is also important for students to have their own creative input. Students will have the chance to solo using funk improvisational strategies taught in class as well as adapt the form of funk songs, similar to what James Brown had done in his music. If skill development and time allow, students may even have the chance to write their own funk. Creativity is an essential part of the funk genre because it combines traditional funk with modern ideas that students can bring to the table. This objective directly relates to students' development of artistic expression in the K-12 Performing Arts edTPA.

## Assessment

These three objectives (the ingredients of funk, the history and culture of funk, and creativity) are the foundation of the curriculum outlined in this project. In order to assess whether or not students have successfully achieved these three objectives, I have created a rubric, found in Appendix I, that addresses introductory, intermediate, and advanced understandings of each objective.

During this unit, instructors should assess students using three types of assessment: 1) diagnostic (before), 2) formative (during), and 3) summative (after).<sup>26</sup> The diagnostic assessment is designed for the teacher to find out what the students already know. This can happen either formally using an individual written assignment, or informally through a class discussion. For example, a teacher could ask the class the following questions at the start of a funk unit:

1. What do you think of when I say the word “funk?”
2. How many of you have heard that Dayton is the funk capital of the world?
3. What musical characteristics make funk different than jazz? What characteristics make it similar?
4. Can you think of any famous funk bands from the 1970s and 80s? Who performs funk today?

If students are struggling to answer any of these questions, it might be a good idea to help them out by showing them examples of traditional funk. Listening to nationally recognizable hits of famous funk bands (i.e. Earth Wind & Fire, Sly & the Family Stone,

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<sup>26</sup> These are three types of assessment referred to in the K-12 Performing Arts edTPA.

Kool & the Gang, the Commodores, KC and the Sunshine Band, Wild Cherry, and James Brown) could help students make a connection between what they already know and what they are about to learn in this unit.

Formative and summative assessment tools should be used throughout the unit in order to assess examples of student work. Many of the ingredients of funk (knowledge and skills) can be assessed throughout the unit by paying close attention to how quickly and effectively a student is learning and performing funk. This can be done informally simply by listening for specific students while they play in class, or this can be done formally by scheduling playing tests and hearing each student play individually. For example, a teacher could schedule brief playing tests where each student must individually play a blues scale from memory and be given a score (zero to five). Assessing creativity (artistic expression) through improvisation can be done in a similar fashion. These tasks will most likely be assessed using formative assessment.

Assessing students' understanding of the history and culture of funk (contextual understanding) can be a difficult task to measure. In order to properly assess this, I recommend using a form of summative assessment, such as a written reflection, that demonstrates what students have learned. This reflection can be a worksheet that is completed at the end of the unit that asks questions such as:

1. List four characteristics of traditional funk.
2. Name one Dayton Funk band and list at least one of their songs.
3. How does this song use characteristics of traditional funk?
4. List two examples of performance practice in traditional funk.
5. List one example of how funk music is still preserved in Dayton today.

6. How has this unit increased your understanding of race and its involvement with music?
7. How does music play a role in the development of community?

If completed at the end of the unit, students should have already learned and discussed the topic of each question listed above. A summative assessment tool that includes these questions can be found in Appendix H. This worksheet is designed to assess students' understanding of community music and performance practice.

## **Future Directions**

This curriculum can be expanded in great detail and include several other elements and ideas to support the repertoire. For example, have the ensemble try alternative rehearsal and performance set-ups. Should performers stand or sit? Should everyone be facing the audience or should some performers face each other? If there are vocalists, where will they stand? How and where will the rhythm section be set-up? What are different ways to set-up the ensemble that differ from a standard big band? Having students experiment with alternative rehearsal and performance set-ups will also help keep students engaged throughout the unit as well as encourage them to be creative and think critically.

Another important element to incorporate is memorization. Traditional funk was always performed from memory in order to create a more engaging, impressive performance. It is often easy for students to become buried in the sheet music and not be aware of the other musicians and audiences that surround them. Memorizing sheet music or learning songs by rote (also memorized) will help with funk performance practice.

Memorization is also a great way for students to thoroughly understand form and song structure.

One last topic to consider is how funk pedagogy plays a role in jazz pedagogy. A funk unit, such as the one outlined here, will most likely take place with an instrumental jazz ensemble where the primary repertoire choice is swing music with a mix of Latin, blues, rock, and funk. If you are starting an ensemble with young musicians who are playing in a jazz band for the first time, it may be helpful to start with the funk style instead of the swing style. Since funk music is not swung, it may be easier for students to play this music from the start. Many of the rhythms used in notated funk music are rhythms that young musicians are already familiar with. Teaching funk songs may also be an easy way to get students used to playing in a new ensemble due to the simplicity of the music. There are many easy funk songs that use only one scale, one key signature, and have several repeated passages. Even soloing and improvisation can be easier to teach since there is less of an emphasis on chord changes within funk music. Using music that students can already comprehend is a great way for students to feel successful early on in a jazz ensemble.

The following section will introduce an example of what a funk unit may look like when done with a secondary instrumental jazz ensemble. This example bridges together two works by James Brown: “Make It Funky” and “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag.” Two lesson plans (one for each piece) and an assessment rubric can found in Appendices D and F.

## Lesson Plan 1: “Make It Funky”

I have designed this lesson to get students playing funk music quickly and successfully. With only two simple grooves in the entire song, a main groove and a bridge, this song can be taught completely by rote. Students will learn more about the funk style, James Brown’s performance practices, and strategies for funk improvisation.

This James Brown classic, recorded in 1971, is an excellent example of a traditional funk tune. Although Brown is not from Dayton, his music is still quite similar to the Dayton Funk sound considering most Dayton bands were heavily influenced by the JBs. “Make It Funky” is a great song to do with an instrumental ensemble due to the emphasis on the horn parts. Similar to what Brown does in his song, “Sex Machine,” there is no strict form to this piece. After a brief vocal introduction, the band comes in on the main groove. The horns play a one bar unison riff three times, then rest for three bars. The rhythm section keeps a simple, consistent groove throughout, with the bass and organ<sup>27</sup> improvising while the horns are resting.

### Music Example 4: Main Groove Lick of “Make It Funky” (Concert Pitch)



This six measure pattern (three on, three off) is repeated until the bandleader, James Brown, signals a count off to go into the bridge. The bridge is a slightly more

<sup>27</sup> James Brown recorded using an electric organ, but this can be performed with a piano or electric keyboard instead.

complicated four bar groove that uses three rhythmic patterns spread across the bass and horns. The rest of the rhythm section switches to a groove that varies slightly from the main groove.

Music Example 5: Bridge of “Make It Funky” (Concert Pitch)

Once Brown has decided it is time to go back to the main groove, he will signal a count off, but instead of going straight into the first groove, there is a two measure break (transition) where the whole band chants “Make It Funky” four times before landing on the downbeat of the main groove again.

Music Example 6: Break (Transition) of “Make It Funky”

This lesson plan is one example of something that can be used in a unit of teaching funk music to an instrumental jazz ensemble and can be used as an introduction to traditional funk. A full lesson plan for teaching “Make It Funky” as part of a funk unit can be found

in Appendix D along with a transcription of the chart in Appendix E. It is important to note that this part of the unit will take multiple lessons to teach.

Placing an emphasis on funk culture in the very first lesson of a funk unit allows teachers and students to form a better understanding of this music. Not only does this first step provide context for the students, it also provides the teacher with a diagnostic assessment of what the students already know. As stated earlier, teaching funk can be different depending on the community and environment it is being taught in.

After a brief introduction to funk music, students will learn the concert D blues scale. If students are already familiar with the blue scale (i.e. the concert B-flat blues scale), then learning it in concert D can serve as a smooth transition from what they already know, to what they are about to learn.

#### Music Example 7: Concert D Blues Scale



This scale will be the foundation for learning the horn licks to “Make It Funky” as well as improvisational strategies later on in the unit.

Before diving into the rote teaching of “Make It Funky,” start by listening to the 1971 recording of the song. This will allow students to start using their ear to listen for instrumentation, recurring licks, and other aspects of groove. Students should also use this time to listen for the form of the piece by using these questions to guide their listening:



1. How many sections are there?
2. How many times do you hear the main groove lick?
3. When does the band switch to the bridge?
4. When and how does the band switch back to the main groove?

The class may need to listen to the song more than once to fully understand the form of the piece. This analysis exercise could also be done in small groups.

Now that the students have had an introduction to funk (a basic understanding of history, culture, and analysis), learned the concert D blues scale, and diagrammed the form of the song, they are ready to start learning to play it themselves. If possible, the rhythm section should learn the main groove and the bridge in sectionals so that it does not slow down a full band rehearsal. The drums and guitar should keep a consistent groove. It is important that these two parts remain constant in order to replicate the original recording. In order to play this groove properly, repetition is a must. The bass has more freedom with their part, as long as the bassist lands on “the one” with the root (D) in every measure. The organ (piano or keyboard) has the freedom to improvise in D minor or with the concert D blues scale. During the main groove, it is suggested that the keyboardist comps for the first three measures while the horns are playing and then improvises during the next three while the horns are resting.<sup>28</sup>

When teaching the main groove lick and bridge by rote, everyone can learn each part, including the rhythm section (with the exception of the drummer who should keep a

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<sup>28</sup> “Comping” is a term used by jazz pianists for “accompanying” or “complementing” the ensemble or musician by playing the chords, supporting to the groove both rhythmically and harmonically.

consistent beat while playing the licks in time). Keep in mind that some of the longer, more complex licks (i.e. the main groove lick) will have to be broken down a few notes at a time in order for students to fully grasp the lick. While teaching these licks, it is important to address the funk style (articulations, tone, groove, etc.) and to informally assess these concepts throughout the learning process.

Once students have successfully learned and memorized each lick, they can start putting the piece together. A transcription, found in Appendix E, provides assignments for which instrument should play each lick. After teaching the “make it funky” break (transition) and deciding how the bandleader will cue the ensemble to move to the next section, the ensemble can begin to play the whole song and start to feel comfortable transitioning altogether. The bandleader could be the teacher, or a student if they feel comfortable (this should be decided early on). Now students can start learning and implementing funk improvisational strategies: using notes of the blues scale, syncopated rhythms, repeated licks, offbeat accents, call-and-response, etc.

Before this piece is ready to be performed, students should listen and watch another performance of James Brown in London from 2003 (Dutchsoulman, 2010).<sup>29</sup> This time, students should identify aspects of performance practice using these questions to guide them:

1. What are the similarities and differences between this 2003 live performance and the 1971 recording?

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0F1QlhgNiY>

2. How is the form different? Is this performance longer or shorter than the recording?
3. Is this version in the same key?
4. How does the tempo compare to the recorded version?
5. What visual elements does the band add to the performance? How can we add these elements to our performance?

The purpose of this video is to get students thinking deeper about performance practice and how they can make their performance more similar to traditional funk. From here, the ensemble will need to decide how they want their performance to be structured. What will the form be? Who will solo? When will they solo? Who will lead? Are there any visual elements to add? How will the song end? The recording ends with a fade out, however, the live video ends by transitioning into the next song. The ensemble will need to figure out how to end their performance of this piece.

Once these details are decided, the ensemble should be ready for their performance. A detailed lesson plan that explains each step further can be found in Appendix D. The following lesson plan (2) is designed to follow this lesson (1). Ensembles may work on both pieces simultaneously, however, the unit should begin with “Make It Funky” and both funk pieces should be performed around the same time so that students can reflect on the differences of learning by ear vs. notation.

## Lesson Plan 2: “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”

The purpose of this lesson plan is to teach students more about traditional funk culture and show students a different way of learning funk by notation instead of by ear.

Recorded in 1966, “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” was one of the first funk songs.

Brown abandoned the traditional verse and chorus song structure and replaced it with sections that repeated one chord, resulting in a dangerously addictive groove. This was also one of the first songs to put the emphasis on “the one” rather than the backbeat.

These new musical ideas go hand in hand with Brown’s lyrics. The words “papa’s got a brand new bag” simply mean that “papa” (probably James Brown himself) has a new interest or “thing” he is into. The rest of the lyrics in the song rattle off new, funky dance moves like “the Jerk,” “the Fly,” “the Monkey,” and “the Mashed Potatoes.” The national success of this song led to Brown being even more experimental with his band, shifting away from traditional R&B and creating what is now known as traditional funk, popular in the 1970s.

This piece, arranged by Mark Taylor and published by Hal Leonard in 2001, is meant to be taught after “Make It Funky” has been introduced in Lesson Plan 1. A full lesson plan for teaching “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” as part of a funk unit can be found in Appendix F. It is important to note that this lesson plan will also span over the course of multiple days or lessons depending on ensemble skill level.

Bringing in a guest artist (i.e. someone like Deron Bell) could be a great way to start this unit. Before even getting to the music, the ensemble can engage in a discussion about Dayton Funk, the funk style, and performance practice with a musician who has

experienced traditional funk firsthand. Since the ensemble should already know “Make It Funky,” the students and guest artist can use the piece as an example to demonstrate improvisational strategies, reinforce characteristics of the funk style, and put it in context with the rest of funk culture. The ideal guest would be someone like Deron Bell who has grown up in Dayton, lives an active life as a funk musician, and specializes in teaching funk. The overall purpose of bringing in a guest like this is to reinforce what students have been learning in class and hopefully inspire them to learn more about funk music and culture.

To transition from “Make It Funky” to “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag,” students should begin learning the concert F blues scale. Since they already know the concert D blues scale, transposing it into the key of F should be a fairly easy transition.

#### Music Example 8: Concert F Blues Scale



This is also a good time to informally assess if students have a clear understanding of the blues scale. Allowing students to figure out what notes are in the concert F blues scale on their own will show whether or not they understand the relationship between each blues scale. The concert F blues scale will serve as the foundation for many of the passages seen in “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” as well as the solo section that will be taught by rote.

Next, the ensemble should listen to the 1966 recording of “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag.” Students should listen for the ingredients of funk they learned about in “Make It Funky” (instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals). This is also a good time to go over the elements of funk that James Brown used and how this piece served as a transition from R&B to traditional funk. Looking at the music for “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag,” the students should begin to identify similarities and differences with how it compares to “Make It Funky” and other jazz or funk charts they may be working on.

Now it is time to start playing the chart. Have the ensemble read through the piece, but leave out the solo section (measures 38-73). Measures 1-37 and 74-86 should be rehearsed similar to how the ensemble would learn a typical jazz chart. Work on individual and ensemble skills such as notes, rhythms, style, balance, intonation, etc. Once the ensemble has a basic understanding of the written notation of the chart, it is time to start learning the solo section.

For the purposes of this lesson plan, the written solo section will not be used. Have the students listen to the James Brown recording once more, while trying to follow along in their music. They will notice that their arrangement is not identical to Brown’s form, instrumentation, etc. Have the students think critically about the differences by asking the following questions:

1. Which parts of the song are similar in form?
2. Where in the music does the arranger write a new section?
3. How does the arranger change the instrumentation? Which instruments have the melody and who are they supposed to be replicating from the original recording?
4. Are the two versions in the same key?

5. Are there any grooves or sections in the original recording that are missing from the arrangement?

Students should identify the following:

1. Measures 1-26 are similar to the original recording.
2. The arranger writes a new section for measures 26-38 and 74-84.
3. Since there is no vocalist, the arranger gives the melody line to the tenor saxes and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trombones.<sup>30</sup>
4. The two versions are not in the same key (original is in E, arrangement is in F).
5. The second main groove in the original recording is missing from the arrangement.

In order to make this arrangement similar to the original recording, this lesson plan has the ensemble ignore the written solo section and replace it with the second main groove from Brown's version. Since this groove is not written into the arrangement anywhere, students should learn this by rote. Luckily, this groove is only one measure long and can be repeated for as long as necessary. This is a great substitute for the written solo section because it stays on one chord the entire time, making it easy for students to solo using the concert F blues scale taught at the beginning of the lesson. Once this groove has been taught by rote, the form of the piece will look as follows:

**m. 1-37 – solo section groove – m. 74-86 (including D.S. al Coda)**

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<sup>30</sup> To go deeper with students' critical thinking, ask them why the arranger chose these instruments to play the vocal line. It is most likely because the tenor sax and trombone have the closest range and timbre to Brown's voice.

The horn part to the solo section groove has been transcribed below in concert pitch:

Music Example 9: Solo Section Groove of “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”



Now that the entire piece has been put together and rehearsed, students should watch the live performance of “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” from 1965 (’00 Grits & Soul, 2016).<sup>31</sup> Students should think about the following questions as they watch:

1. How is this piece similar or different from the original recording?
2. What aspects of performance practice can be found?
3. How does the tempo of the live performance compare to that of the recording?
4. Are there any characteristics of Dayton funk found in this performance?

After taking time to reflect on this performance, it is time for the ensemble to start figuring out details for their own performance (tempo, soloists, visuals, form, etc.), similar to how they did at the end of the “Make It Funky” lesson.

At the conclusion of this unit, students will engage in a class discussion of race and community impact on funk music. During this conversation, the teacher and students should ask questions and reflect on what they have learned and how it connects to funk. After this conversation, students will fill out a summative assessment worksheet, outlining the contextual understandings they learned along the way. Question number five on this worksheet can be used to help guide the class discussion at the end of the

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMoEXGbdyc0>



unit. For the summative assessment, they will be asked to identify Dayton funk bands, their music, and their impact on the Dayton community. They will also identify performance practices of traditional funk music to show their understanding of this specific music genre. This assessment worksheet as well as a unit rubric can be found in the Appendices H and I.

## **Furthering Funk Pedagogy**

The following section outlines several activities that can be done as part of a funk curriculum in addition to rehearsing and performing funk repertoire. While many activities focus on topics of Dayton funk specifically, some of them bridge traditional funk with contemporary music. The purpose of these supplemental lessons is to further engage students in their music learning by breaking out of the standard routine of rehearsing and these activities should be applicable to communities outside of Dayton as well.

### **1) Guest Artists**

Bringing in funk experts as guest artists can help reinforce the content taught in class as well as help inform the teacher. Since teachers are often secondary sources for teaching different music styles and cultures, bringing in someone who is a primary source (i.e. someone who grew up in Dayton during the funk era, or a working funk musician in one's own community) can further enhance students' understanding of funk music and culture. When planning lessons, it is recommended that a guest is brought in after the

funk unit has been introduced and students have a basic understanding of the music. This way, students will have had time to reflect on what they have learned and can come up with specific questions for the guest to enhance students' critical thinking skills.

If the guest is an established funk musician, they can also perform with the class to help inspire students' creativity and musicality. With the example funk curriculum outlined earlier in this section, a good time to bring in a guest would be after the ensemble has learned "Make It Funky" by rote. Then, when the guest comes in, the artist will be able to solo for the band while they are all playing along. Students can learn new improvisational strategies and gain professional feedback on the spot. Finally, this experience can emphasize the importance of music within a community by connecting the concepts learned in class with a practical application of their community's musical style and culture.

## **2) Group Projects**

Having students work together to learn more about funk can further students' learning outside of the classroom. Students can work in small groups (approximately three-five people) and research one aspect of traditional funk. This could include a further exploration of the funk style by looking more into a specific characteristic of funk (instrumentation, form, groove, or vocals) or students could research a specific local funk band. Students can also choose to analyze recordings or videos, attend local concerts, or even compose their own music. The purpose of this project is for the students to learn more about a topic that interests them as well as share their knowledge with the rest of the class so other students can benefit from their research as well. Allowing students to

select their own topic (with approval from the teacher) encourages creativity and will hopefully increase their interest in learning more about funk.

### **3) Dayton Funk Bands and National Funk History**

In addition to students possibly researching and presenting on Dayton funk groups, the teacher can also give brief, daily history lessons on various Dayton bands. This can help establish routine and provide a theme for each lesson. These brief lessons should be no longer than five to ten minutes, depending on how much time the teacher wants to leave for the warm-up, rehearsal, etc. Teachers should give a brief background, introduce some of the musicians in the group, and listen to one or two songs with the class. This is also an opportunity to talk about the traditional funk style by addressing how these songs demonstrate funk characteristics (i.e. Roger Troutman from Zapp was well-known across the nation for the use of the talk box). Providing cultural and community context will help reinforce other concepts taught throughout the unit as well.

These lessons can also branch out from only Dayton bands to include other famous funk bands from around the country such as James Brown (the JB's), Sly & the Family Stone, Earth, Wind & Fire, Chaka Khan, and Parliament-Funkadelic. Students may be more likely to recognize funk songs by national funk artists than Dayton funk bands. A healthy balance may be helpful in keeping students interested in the topics presented. This can be especially helpful if the students are currently working on any repertoire by these artists. For example, it may be helpful to teach a brief lesson on James Brown's influence in music before learning "Make It Funky" or "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag."

#### **4) “New Funk” and Funk Influence**

Understanding what kinds of music students listen to allows teachers to relate lessons to what the students already know. Asking students what they think funk is at the start of the unit may be a great chance to learn more about what kind of music they believe funk is. They may recognize funk influence in popular songs (i.e. “Uptown Funk”), but not actually in traditional funk. Using these songs that students are already familiar with could be a good way to start teaching funk. As the unit progresses, students can begin to think critically about the similarities and differences between traditional funk and “new funk” (or funk influence).

#### **5) Composing Funk (Songwriting)**

In order to enhance creativity and artistic expression during this unit, some form of composition or songwriting should be implemented in the curriculum. Because this is original student work, this process could have an infinite number of outcomes. Therefore, this activity should be dictated by the students with guidance from the teacher. First, try to establish a groove, either starting with a bassline, riff, drum beat, etc. Then, ask students what kind of message or feeling they would like to evoke through this piece. This can help guide the structure of the piece as well as provide ideas for lyrics if necessary. Encourage students to use what they have learned about form, layering, and other funk characteristics to develop the song. In order to avoid frustration and create a more collaborative rehearsal, this activity should be done after students have already learned about the culture of funk as well as applied their skills through funk repertoire. The purpose of composing is to not only engage students’ creativity, but also connect

with the community and cultural context by writing songs in a manner similar to how it was done during the funk era.

## **Reflection**

Towards the conclusion of my work on this project, I had several opportunities to actually teach the funk units described in this project as well as educate youth about their region's musical history in different environments around Dayton, both urban and suburban. In December of 2019 I was invited to speak to the students at Stivers School of the Arts. As stated earlier, Stivers is an arts magnet school and a part of Dayton Public Schools. It is located in an urban setting with a majority African-American student population. During my presentations, I gave students a brief introduction to the musical history of our city as well as walked them through my method of analyzing traditional funk songs. We listened to several songs by Dayton funk artists and discussed the musical characteristics of each song as well as reflected on the lyrics and meaning that each artist may have been trying to convey.

I was surprised at first by how quickly some of these students responded to my questions and how much they already knew about Dayton's musical legacy. At the start of each class I asked the students, "What do you think of when I say Dayton funk?" Many of the students were able to name Dayton funk bands, their songs, and some of them even had relatives that used to play in these groups. Even though I was there to share with them some of the knowledge that I had learned, I was impressed at how much knowledge I gained from hearing the students' stories. This proved to me that Dayton

funk is not only a part of Dayton's history, but that it also lives on (though not as strong) in the younger generations.

One of the challenges I faced before presenting at Stivers was how to address the issue of race. As a young, white college student, I had to figure out how to talk about an African-American genre of popular music to a population of students that was primarily African-American. I was afraid I would have difficulty winning over the trust and respect of some of the students who perhaps already knew something about Dayton funk. For the most part, I had no trouble gaining respect and credibility from the students at Stivers. I tried my best to address the content with honesty and sincerity. I made it clear that I was a young, white college student who did not grow up during the funk era and did not live in this culture every day. However, I also informed the students of the ethnographic research methods I used during this project. I explained to them that I am a secondary resource who spoke with nearly a dozen musicians that were a part of this musical culture and was able to learn firsthand from a primary resource, asking questions in order to absorb as much credible knowledge as possible. Pairing this approach with my overall preparedness and confidence created an effective method of teaching this music while earning their respect and attentiveness.

I also had the chance to teach the funk unit, outlined in Part III, to the Springboro High School Jazz Band during my student teaching experience in early 2020. Springboro is a suburb of Dayton, approximately 15 miles south of the city. The demographic of this school, approximately 98% white, is vastly different to what is found in Dayton Public Schools. The first lesson I taught with the jazz band was similar to the presentation I gave at Stivers. I started out the same way by asking them what they knew about Dayton funk.

Not a single student claimed to know anything about their region's funk music culture. While I expected a lack of responses compared to Stivers, I was slightly surprised that no one was able to come up with anything.

At first, I was afraid that the students might not want to learn about this music as much since they did not know anything about it to begin with. However, once they saw how excited I was to teach this music, they began to feed off of that energy and became very invested in what I was teaching. One of the differences between teaching in Springboro versus Stivers is that at Springboro, since the students did not know anything about the music I was teaching, they listened to and accepted nearly everything I said. This made it much easier for me to earn the trust of student because I was the only person in the classroom with any knowledge of Dayton funk. However, the danger with this is also that the students believed nearly everything I said. I could have been telling them false information and they would have listened. This is just an example of why teachers need to learn as much as they can about the music they are teaching, especially if it is not a genre or culture they are already familiar with. It is also important in this situation that students understand the teacher is a secondary resource and it is their job to provide students with outside materials and access to primary resources.

I also had an opportunity to further teach traditional funk to students at Springboro through funk performance. During my brief time with the ensemble, I taught them the two James Brown pieces discussed in Part III, "Make It Funky" and "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag." I started by teaching them "Make It Funky" using the concert D blues scale I provided them at the start of the unit. In only an hour of rehearsal, the students learned the entire song by rote and were able to get through the piece from beginning to

end. I had the students decide which instruments played which part during the bridge and even had three students volunteer to lead each section (cueing the start, transition to bridge, and transition back to the main groove), similar to how James Brown would have done during a live performance or on a recording. During a second lesson on “Make It Funky,” I worked with the students to clean up and clarify different parts of the chart. We addressed characteristics such as style, form, soloing and improvisation, cueing, visuals, and other aspects of performance practice.

The second piece I taught them was Mark Taylor’s arrangement of “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag.” As outlined in Part III, we rehearsed the majority of the piece as we would any other jazz chart. We focused on reading notes and rhythms, matching style, locking in tempo, etc. I then taught them a new version of the solo section by teaching them the second groove used in Brown’s original recording by rote. The students also listened to and analyzed the original recordings of this piece and compared them with live performances we watched of the JB’s. Overall, this unit was a great success and the students learned about traditional funk in a variety of methods; analyzing, rote learning, reading funk notation, discussion, etc. They were excited and eager to learn the entire time and were able to create a performance that reflected the knowledge they learned.

Through both of these teaching experiences and the work I completed with this project, I learned that community music is an essential part to any music curriculum. Even though the material may have been presented differently and the student responses may have varied amongst the two schools, both groups of students were able to make deeper, important connections between music, race, culture, and their community. For the students in Stivers who may have already known about Dayton funk, they were able to



further their learning about a topic that is close and important to them. For the students in Springboro who knew nothing about Dayton funk, they were able to learn something completely new that may change the ways they think about music and expand their notions of community and hopefully inspire further research with this subject through listening, analyzing, and reflecting. These deeper concepts about music, race, culture, and community should be integrated into all music curriculums and teaching traditional funk to Dayton area school districts is only one example of how these concepts can be integrated. This can lead to ideas for future pedagogical research in community music, the differences between urban and suburban teaching environments, as well as fostering civic pride in urban schools and within other curricula. My hope is that teachers across the nation can rethink some of the ways in which we teach music by reflecting on what we are teaching and, more importantly, why we are teaching it.

## **Appendix**

- A)** List of Interviewees
- B)** List of Music Examples
- C)** List of Tables and Figures
- D)** Lesson Plan 1: “Make It Funky”
- E)** Transcribed Score: “Make It Funky”
- F)** Lesson Plan 2: “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”
- G)** Solo Section Groove: “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”
- H)** Funk Unit Reflection and Playing Test Instructions
- I)** Answer Key and Assessment Rubric

## A) List of Interviewees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
Bell, Deron	July 16, 2019	Music Director of the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) and co-director of the Dayton Funk All Stars	Deron Bell maintains an active musical career in Dayton as a performer, music director, educator, and curriculum writer. One of his passions is to educate underprivileged students about Dayton Funk.
Brooks, Stan	July 2, 2019	Dayton Radio DJ	Stan “the Man” Brooks is a local radio personality in Dayton, Ohio, for popular stations including WROU 92.1 FM, WDAO 1210 AM, and the Soul of Dayton 98.7 FM.
Carter, Charles Cedell	June 4, 2019	Musician	Cedell Carter is a saxophonist who played in the groups Slave and Steve Arrington’s Hall of Fame.
Gratto, Sharon	Sep. 24, 2019	Graul Chair in Arts and Languages at the University of Dayton	As the Graul Chair in Arts and Languages, Dr. Sharon Gratto was responsible for organizing the first ever academic Funk Symposium held on UD’s campus in the fall of 2018.
Harrison, Keith	June 18, 2019	Musician	Keith Harrison is a vocalist and keyboardist who played in the groups Faze-O, Heatwave, and the Dazz Band. He has won a Grammy for the Dazz Band’s hit song, “Let it Whip.”
Puterbaugh, Mike	May 21, 2019	Funk Center Volunteer and former Dayton Public Schools Administrator	Mike Puterbaugh is a former Assistant Principal of Dunbar High School where he had many students from groups such as Slave.
Smith-Roberts, Gloria	May 21, 2019	Funk Center Executive Assistant	Gloria Smith-Roberts helped start the Funk Center with David Webb.
Webb, David	May 21, 2019	President, CEO, and Founder of the Funk Music Hall of Fame and Exhibition Center (a.k.a. the Funk Center)	David Webb started the Funk Center. His vision is “to establish a home for the legacy of Funk music by acknowledging the artists who brought this art form to life while showcasing the Funk experience.”
Wimberly, Keith	May 24, 2019	Musician	Keith Wimberly is a local bassist performing for groups such as Funky G and the Groove Machine and artists such as Steve Arrington.

## B) List of Music Examples

Music Example 1	Groove from James Brown and Bobby Byrd, “Get Up,” released in 1970	p. 19
Music Example 2	Groove from Lakeside, “Fantastic Voyage,” released in 1981	p. 25
Music Example 3	Groove from Zapp, “I Heard It Through the Grapevine,” released in 1981	p. 31
Music Example 4	Main Groove Lick of “Make It Funky” (Concert Pitch)	p. 73
Music Example 5	Bridge of “Make It Funky” (Concert Pitch)	p. 74
Music Example 6	Break (Transition) of “Make It Funky”	p. 74
Music Example 7	Concert D Blues Scale	p. 75
Music Example 8	Concert F Blues Scale	p. 80
Music Example 9	Solo Section Groove of “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”	p. 83

## C) List of Tables and Figures

Table 1	Form of Lakeside, “Fantastic Voyage,” released in 1981	p. 24
Table 2	Form of Marvin Gaye, “I Heard It Through the Grapevine,” released in 1967	p. 30
Table 3	Form of Zapp & Roger, “I Heard It Through the Grapevine,” released in 1981	p. 30

Figure 1	Roger Troutman using a Talk Box	p. 29
Figure 2	Funk Mural in Dayton, Ohio	p. 53

<b>D) Lesson Plan 1: “Make if Funky”</b>	
<b>Unit</b>	James Brown, Funk Unit
<b>Title of Piece</b>	“Make It Funky”
<b>Composer/Arranger</b>	James Brown, transcribed and arranged by Caleb Vanden Eynden
<b>Grade</b>	High School (9-12)
<b>Ensemble</b>	Jazz Band
<b>Central Focus</b>	The central focus of this unit is to learn the ingredients of funk (instrumentation, form, groove, vocals) and apply them to two James Brown songs, “Make It Funky” and “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag.” This unit will also touch on the history of the funk genre as well as help students form connections with Dayton funk history. After learning about the musical style and the history and culture of funk, students will be able to develop their own, creative structure of these in funk songs in the style of the 1970s and 80s Dayton funk.
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	In this lesson, students will start by learning the concert D blues scale to serve as a foundation for the song, “Make It Funky.” This piece will be taught completely by ear (rote teaching), without using any notation (the instructor will be able to refer to a transcription of the song). The rhythm section will learn basic funk grooves used on James Brown’s recording as well as strategies for improvising on the groove. Horn players will learn four funk “licks” that use the concert D blues scale and make up the two main grooves in the piece.
<b>Contextual Understanding</b>	Students will learn about funk history from the 1970s and 80s. This includes famous funk artists (i.e. James Brown), performance practices, and connecting funk to the history of Dayton, Ohio. For this particular song, students will be learning funk music the same way a musician would learn during the funk era, by ear (rote teaching).
<b>Artistic Expression</b>	Once students have learned everything they need for “Make It Funky” (rhythm section groove, horn licks, vocals, etc.), students will have the chance to create their own song structure, similar to how funk musicians would have done it at live performances in the Dayton area. The students will determine when to switch grooves, who plays what horn lick, and who is going to take each solo. This free-form style is another popular performance practice of funk music that the students will have the chance to experience for themselves.
<b>Assessment</b>	Students will be assessed on musical skills such as pitch, rhythm, style, the blues scale, improvisation, and performance practice. See rubric for more details.

<b>Learning Sequence</b>		
<b>Step</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Materials</b>
1.1	Introduction to Dayton funk and James Brown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief overview of unit’s central focus</li> <li>• Brief history of Dayton’s funk era</li> <li>• Introduction to the funk style, what is funk?</li> <li>• Show videos of Dayton funk bands</li> <li>• <b>Diagnostic assessment:</b> what do they already know?</li> </ul>	Laptop, presentation
1.2	Learn concert D blues scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start w/ notation, quarter notes</li> <li>• Slur, then tongue, focus on funk style</li> <li>• Come up with different rhythms and patterns to play (student led)</li> </ul>	Instruments, notes written on white board
1.3	Listen to 1971 recording of James Brown, “Make It Funky, Parts 1-4” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students listen for and identify their instrument’s part</li> <li>• Listen for form and diagram as a class</li> </ul>	Laptop, speakers
1.4	Teach groove to rhythm section (could be done in sectionals) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with basic funk drum beat, slowly add elements to replicate recording</li> <li>• Add bass, emphasis on the one</li> <li>• Add guitar, consistent rhythm throughout</li> <li>• Add keyboard, freedom to improvise</li> </ul>	Instruments
1.5	Teach main groove lick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach slowly by rote, rhythm section can learn too</li> <li>• Increase tempo, rhythm section plays groove</li> <li>• Teach form: 3 measures on, 3 measures off (vocals) and jam on the groove</li> </ul>	Instruments
1.6	Teach bridge, everyone learns every part <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part 1: beat 1 bass line</li> <li>• Part 2: beat 3 horn lick w/ harmonies</li> <li>• Part 3: offbeat sax lick</li> <li>• Part 4: rhythm section (could be done in sectionals)</li> <li>• Piece together, assigning different sections different parts</li> </ul>	

1.7	<p>Work on transitioning between each groove</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach the break “make it funky” 4x</li> <li>• Jam on each groove and signal when to switch</li> </ul>	
1.8	<p>Introduce funk improvisation strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies: rhythms, space, call and response</li> <li>• Show and demonstrate examples of strategies</li> <li>• Give each student a chance to improvise, first altogether, then as solos</li> </ul>	Laptop, videos
1.9	<p>Watch live performance of “Make It Funky” from London, 2003</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify aspects of performance practice</li> <li>• Discuss similarities and differences between live vs. recording (i.e. form, length, key, tempo, lyrics, performance practice, etc.)</li> <li>• Think about what we can add to our performance</li> </ul>	Laptop, speakers
1.10	<p>Work out performance practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a form for the piece</li> <li>• Who will solo?</li> <li>• Who will lead?</li> <li>• How will we end?</li> <li>• Add horn moves and visuals</li> <li>• Prepare for performance</li> </ul>	

## E) Transcribed Score: "Make It Funky"

SCORE

### "MAKE IT FUNKY"

MUSIC BY JAMES BROWN

TRANSCRIBED AND ARRANGED BY CALEB VANDEN EYNDEN

CONCERT D BLUES SCALE

MAIN GROOVE ♩ = 96

ALTO SAX

TENOR SAX

BARITONE SAX

TRUMPET IN B $\flat$  1

TRUMPET IN B $\flat$  2

TROMBONE

BASS TROMBONE

ELECTRIC GUITAR

BASS GUITAR

DRUM SET

PIANO

Dm7

Dm7

Dm7

The score is for a 4/4 funk piece in D major. It features a main groove with a tempo of 96 beats per minute. The instrumentation includes Alto, Tenor, and Baritone Saxophones, Trumpets in B-flat 1 and 2, Trombone, Bass Trombone, Electric Guitar, Bass Guitar, Drum Set, and Piano. The saxophones and trumpets play a melodic line based on the Concert D Blues Scale. The electric guitar and bass guitar provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The drum set plays a funk groove with a prominent bass drum and snare pattern. The piano provides harmonic support with a Dm7 chord.



2

"MAKE IT FUNKY"

A. SX.  
T. SX.  
B. SX.  
B $\flat$  TPT. 1  
B $\flat$  TPT. 2  
TBN.  
B. TBN.  
E. GTR.  
BASS  
D. S.  
PNO.

MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY  
MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY MAKE IT FUN-KY

The musical score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The saxophone section (A. SX., T. SX., B. SX.) and trumpet section (B $\flat$  TPT. 1, B $\flat$  TPT. 2) play a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and accents. The trombone section (TBN., B. TBN.) provides a harmonic accompaniment. The guitar (E. GTR.), bass (BASS), drums (D. S.), and piano (PNO.) parts are marked with a slash (/), indicating they are to be played as a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics "MAKE IT FUN-KY" are repeated in a call-and-response pattern across the saxophone and trumpet parts.

## "MAKE IT FUNKY"

3

BRIDGE

A. SX. T. SX. B. SX. B $\flat$  TPT. 1. B $\flat$  TPT. 2. TBN. B. TBN. E.GTR. BASS. D. S. PNO.

DM7

DM7

DM7

The musical score for the bridge of "Make It Funky" is arranged for a 12-piece band. It consists of 12 staves: A. SX., T. SX., B. SX., B $\flat$  TPT. 1, B $\flat$  TPT. 2, TBN., B. TBN., E.GTR., BASS, D. S., and PNO. The bridge is marked with a double bar line and repeat signs at the beginning and end. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The saxophone parts (A. SX., T. SX., B. SX.) and trumpet parts (B $\flat$  TPT. 1, B $\flat$  TPT. 2) play a melodic line starting on the second measure. The trombone parts (TBN., B. TBN.) play a similar line. The electric guitar (E.GTR.) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, starting on the second measure. The bass (BASS) plays a simple bass line. The drums (D. S.) play a pattern of eighth notes. The piano (PNO.) plays a simple accompaniment. The bridge is marked with a double bar line and repeat signs at the beginning and end.

4

"MAKE IT FUNKY"

**BREAK**

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- A. SX.** (Alto Saxophone): Treble clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- T. SX.** (Tenor Saxophone): Treble clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- B. SX.** (Baritone Saxophone): Treble clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- B $\flat$  TPT. 1** (B-flat Trumpet 1): Treble clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- B $\flat$  TPT. 2** (B-flat Trumpet 2): Treble clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- TBN.** (Trombone): Bass clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- B. TBN.** (Baritone Trombone): Bass clef, melody with lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY MAKE IT FUN - KY".
- E.GTR.** (Electric Guitar): Treble clef, accompaniment with a **DM7** chord marking.
- BASS** (Bass): Bass clef, accompaniment.
- D. S.** (Drums): Drum set notation.
- PNO.** (Piano): Grand staff (treble and bass clefs), accompaniment.

The score consists of two measures. The first measure contains the main melody for all instruments, and the second measure continues the melody. The lyrics "MAKE IT FUN - KY" are repeated four times across the two measures.

<b>F) Lesson Plan 2: “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”</b>	
<b>Unit</b>	James Brown, Funk Unit
<b>Title of Piece</b>	“Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag”
<b>Composer/Arranger</b>	James Brown, arr. Mark Taylor Publisher: Hal Leonard, 2001
<b>Grade</b>	High School (9-12)
<b>Ensemble</b>	Jazz Band
<b>Central Focus</b>	The central focus of this unit is to learn the ingredients of funk (instrumentation, form, groove, vocals) and apply them to two James Brown songs, “Make It Funky” and “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag.” This unit will also touch on the history of the funk genre as well as helps students form connections with Dayton funk history. After learning about the musical style and the history and culture of funk, students will be able to develop their own, creative structure of these in funk songs in the style of the 1970s and 80s Dayton funk.
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	In this lesson, students will need to know how to read and understand funk music notation. This includes syncopated sixteenth-note rhythms, articulations, form, etc. Students will explore concepts of groove, improvisation, balance, style, and other similar concepts in the jazz ensemble. Another important skill the students will learn in this lesson is playing by ear. Students will learn, by rote, a groove from the original James Brown recording to play during the solo section that is different from what is notated in the arrangement.
<b>Contextual Understanding</b>	Students will learn about funk history from the 1970s and 80s. This includes famous funk artists (i.e. James Brown), performance practices, and connecting funk to the history of Dayton, Ohio. For this particular song, students will be learning funk music through reading notation (arrangement by Mark Taylor) similar to how students would with typical jazz charts. The class will also determine how the arrangement is different than the original James Brown recording (key, form, vocals, tempo, etc.).
<b>Artistic Expression</b>	Students will have the chance to improvise solos once they have learned a new groove for the solo section. As a class, students will discuss how tempo plays a role in the performance of funk and will decide what tempo they want to use when they perform the piece.
<b>Assessment</b>	Students will be assessed on musical skills such as pitch, rhythm, style, the blues scale, improvisation, and performance practice. See rubric for more details.

<b>Learning Sequence</b>		
<b>Step</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Materials</b>
2.1	Bring in guest artist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Dayton funk musician</li> <li>• Share about the musical history of Dayton</li> <li>• Reinforce concepts of race and music</li> <li>• Play along w/ band on “Make It Funky”</li> <li>• Share tips and strategies for style and improvisation</li> <li>• Open the floor for questions</li> </ul>	Guest artist
2.2	Learn concert F blues scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify correlation with concert D blues scale</li> <li>• Start w/ notation, quarter notes</li> <li>• Slur, then tongue, focus on funk style</li> <li>• Come up with different rhythms and patterns to play (student led)</li> </ul>	Instruments, notes written on white board
2.3	Listen to 1966 recording of James Brown, “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen for instrumentation, form, groove, and vocals</li> <li>• Compare and contrast with other jazz charts and funk songs (i.e. “Make It Funky”)</li> </ul>	Laptop, speakers
2.4	Play through arrangement (leaving out the solo section), <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the differences in form and instrumentation</li> <li>• Which grooves are from the James Brown recording and which are written for the arrangement?</li> <li>• Identify specific measures, notes, and rhythms that may be difficult to play</li> </ul>	Instruments, sheet music
2.5	Rehearse piece <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn m. 1-37 and 74-86 (cut solo section)</li> <li>• Address concepts of the funk style, sound, balance, etc.</li> </ul>	
2.6	Teach new groove in F (solo section) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn by rote, using the actual groove from the James Brown recording</li> <li>• Beat 2 lick w/ harmonies</li> <li>• Jam on solo section groove, have students solo with concert F blues scale (review of solo strategies)</li> </ul>	Instruments

2.7	Watch live performance of “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” from 1965 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare and contrast live vs. recording, taking note of performance practice</li><li>• Describe and discuss how this performance practice compares to Dayton funk</li><li>• Take more time to look into Dayton funk if needed</li></ul>	Laptop, speakers
2.8	Work out performance practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a form for the piece using the new solo section</li><li>• What tempo do we want to take?</li><li>• Who will solo?</li><li>• Add horn moves and visuals</li><li>• Prepare for performance</li></ul>	
2.9	After performance (work sheet/presentation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class discussion of race and community impact on funk music</li><li>• <b>Summative Assessment:</b> what have they learned</li></ul>	Worksheet (see handout)

## G) Solo Section Groove: "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag"

**"PAPA'S GOT A BRAND NEW BAG"**

SCORE MUSIC BY JAMES BROWN

**SOLO SECTION**

The score is for a 4/4 groove and features the following parts:

- ALTO SAX:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- TENOR SAX:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- BARITONE SAX:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- TRUMPET IN B♭:** Harmonic accompaniment with chords.
- TROMBONE:** Harmonic accompaniment with chords.
- ELECTRIC GUITAR:** Chords, including an F13 chord in the first measure.
- BASS GUITAR:** Rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes.
- DRUM SET:** Rhythmic accompaniment with snare and cymbal patterns.
- PIANO:** Chords, including an F13 chord in the first measure.

The score consists of four measures, numbered 1 through 4 at the bottom. Each measure contains a repeat sign (double bar line with dots) at the end, indicating a continuous groove.

## H) Funk Unit Reflection and Playing Test Instructions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

### Funk Unit Reflection

1. List the four characteristics of traditional funk. (4 points)
  
2. a) Name one Dayton funk band and list at least one of their songs. (2 point)  
  
b) Describe how this song uses characteristics of traditional funk. (2 point)
  
3. List two examples of performance practice in traditional funk. (2 point)
  
4. List one example of how funk music is still preserved in Dayton today. (1 point)
  
5. Describe how you think music plays a role in a community's identity. (3 points)
  
6. What is one aspect of funk you would like to learn more about? (1 point)



## Funk Unit – Playing Test Instructions

**Total Points: 25**

Students will be asked to play the following:

1. Blues Scales (5 points)
  - a. concert F blues scale
  - b. concert D blues scale
  - c. memorized, w/o music
  - d. half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes
  
2. “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” (5 points)
  - a. measures 14-35
  - b. w/ music
  - c. correct notes, rhythm, and style
  
3. “Make It Funky” main groove (5 points)
  - a. 3 on, 3 off, play along to recording
  - b. memorized, w/o music
  - c. correct notes, rhythm, and style
  
4. **Horns only:** “Make It Funky” bridge (5 points)
  - a. play your part and one other horn part (selected by the teacher)
  - b. play along to recording
  - c. memorized, w/o music
  - d. correct notes, rhythm, and style
  
5. **Rhythm section only:** “Make It Funky” bridge (5 points)
  - a. play your part, improvising appropriately
  - b. memorized, w/o music
  - c. correct notes, rhythm, and style
  
6. **Improvisation** (5 points)
  - a. use notes from either the concert F or D blues scale
  - b. use style and rhythms characteristics of traditional funk
  - c. memorized, w/o music

## I) Answer Key and Assessment Rubric

### Funk Unit Reflection Answer Key

1. List the four characteristics of traditional funk. (4 points)  
**Instrumentation, Form, Groove, Vocals (Style and/or Lyrics) – 1 point for each correct**
2. a) Name one Dayton funk band and list at least one of their songs. (2 point)  
**Multiple answers accepted – 1 point for Dayton funk band, 1 point for Dayton funk song**  
  
b) Describe how this song uses characteristics of traditional funk. (2 point)  
**2 points: answer DESCRIBES the song's instrumentation, form, groove, and/or vocals**  
  
**1 point: answer identifies the song's instrumentation, form, groove, and/or vocals, but fails to describe how it is used (using what we learned in lesson one)**
3. List two examples of performance practice in traditional funk. (2 point)  
**Multiple answers accepted – 1 point for each (i.e. fade-outs, two drummers, changing tempos for live performances, song transitions, dance moves, examples of the four characteristics, etc.)**
4. List one example of how funk music is still preserved in Dayton today. (1 point)  
**Multiple answers accepted – funk hall of fame (funk museum), modern day funk concerts, funk mural, funk symposium/festival, etc.**
5. Describe how you think music plays a role in a community's identity. (3 points)  
**3 points: student provides a thoughtful answer that connects music to community, culture, history, etc. and demonstrates deeper musical reflection**  
  
**2 points: student provides a thoughtful answer, but fails to connect to community, culture, history, etc.**  
  
**1 points: student provides a generic answer, but fails to connect to community, culture, history, etc.**
6. What is one aspect of funk you would like to learn more about? (1 point)  
**Multiple answers accepted**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

### Funk Unit Grading Rubric

<b>Playing Test:</b>	<b>Intro (1)</b>	<b>Intermediate (3)</b>	<b>Advanced (5)</b>	<b>Score</b>
Blues Scales (concert F and D)	Unable to play either blues scale from memory	Able to play both blues scales from memory	Able to play both blues scales from memory with good tone, rhythm, style, and articulation	
“Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” (select measures)	Incorrect notes and rhythms, lacks style and appropriate tempo	Correct notes and rhythms, but lacks style and/or appropriate tempo	Correct notes and rhythms, uses a clear funk style, and plays at an appropriate and consistent tempo	
“Make It Funky” Main Groove	Unable to play the main groove	Remembers correct notes and rhythms when using the blues scale/music	Performs main groove from memory with the same style and tempo as the recording	
“Make It Funky” Bridge (horns only)	Unable to play any part of the bridge	Able to remember his/her part to the bridge	Performs his/her part to the bridge as well as at least one other part in the ensemble with same style and tempo as the recording	
“Make It Funky” Bridge (rhythm section only)	Unable to play his/her part of the bridge groove	Able to play his/her part of the bridge groove	Able to play his/her part and demonstrates ability to appropriately improvise on it either rhythmically or harmonically	
Improvisation (concert F or D blues scale)	Unable to improvise without using music	Able to improvise without music using notes from the blues scale	Able to improvise using notes from the blues scale and uses style and rhythms characteristic of traditional funk	

**Teacher’s Comments:**

Playing Test Total: \_\_\_\_/25 Quiz Total: \_\_\_\_/15

**Funk Unit Total: \_\_\_\_/40**

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