

The idea of a music theme day developed over time as our classical collection was not that large and, to be honest, I am not that much of a fan. So as we added more kinds of music to our collection, we were able to assign a genre of music to each day of the school week. Monday=blues, Tuesday=open, but generally instrumental and classic, Wednesday=vocal, Thursday=world and Friday=jazz. Our collection now is quite large and so playing variety within each genre is not a real problem. We buy a lot of CDs, so the collection is constantly growing.

Years ago, the drama department offered a musical theatre course. For that we bought most of the more popular Broadway musicals. Sadly, that course did not last, but the buying had begun in earnest and we had an actual tie-in with the curriculum. While the music program at the school did not make much use of our collection, we knew that someday, a new teacher would appear and be thrilled with our collection. That happened a few years ago and now the music is circulating like crazy! Students are required to explore different musical styles, they are sent to listen to a particular jazz or blues great, and they know if they are looking for background music for a classroom presentation, we probably have something that would work. The English department uses our spoken word collection. We have several CDs of poetry such as the Beat poets and some famous speeches by notables such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Now the students are bringing in their own music for us to play. I find that I am being exposed to some very interesting and good contemporary music. When a student asks if we can play Tito Puente or Dizzy Gillespie on Friday, or some Latino Jazz on Thursday or William Shatner on Wednesday (yes, I know, but the album is actually not bad), all is right with the world.

As our student population is ethnically diverse, the World Music Thursdays are quite the hit. One student recognized a song from a Moroccan music CD as one she heard at a

wedding. Another student, listening to Amalia, came to say that her parents play that at home. On Open Tuesday, one student liked one of the songs she heard so much that she decided to use it as her skating performance piece.

Starting a music collection may seem an overwhelming task; however, joining a number of music clubs such as Columbia can help. For classical, jazz and world, the Musical Heritage Society has an excellent catalogue. For world music, we also subscribe to Global Rhythm magazine, which provides an eclectic mix CD with each issue. Haunting delete bins in record stores always pays off—even our local supermarket has a good selection of low cost CDs.

A student came to visit and I had not seen him for some time. To put his time at the school into perspective, I asked if we were playing music when he was a student. He said, “Are you kidding? That was where I first heard Miles Davis. Up to that point, I thought I knew music. Then I realized I didn’t know anything.”

Just this semester one of our students made it to the second round of *Canadian Idol*, but was rejected for not having the “right look.” In an attempt to show her the silver lining of this, the music teacher sent her to the library to get CDs by Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington. He is pleased to announce that she has become so taken by this music that she is moving away from the Idol schlock that she once thought good and is embracing the classics. If this new direction only lasts for a while, that would be enough, but if this passion ignites this student to take on a career in music, then I would know that playing CDs in the library was really worthwhile. ■