



**Lesson:** “Bourbon Street Parade”

**Grade:** 9-12

**Subject:** Traditional Jazz

**Topics:** Traditional Brass Band (Marching Band)

## DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will learn the history of Carnival season in New Orleans and the lyrics, song form, and instrument techniques for the song, “Bourbon Street Parade.” Students will illustrate their understanding of the song with a performance.

## OBJECTIVES

- Research and gather historical facts about the song, “Bourbon Street Parade.”
- Analyze song form.
- Read music.
- Apply instrument techniques and strategies for learning a song.
- Play traditional marching band music on an instrument.

## STANDARDS

### National Core Arts Standards

[Music - Harmonizing Instruments](#) - Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

[Music - Composition and Theory](#) - Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

[Music - Composition and Theory](#) - Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

## INSTRUCTOR NOTES

Students should have familiarity with reading music. Teachers should review the lesson resources, media, and websites prior to launching the lesson. For more information on carnival season in New Orleans, visit [Mardi Gras New Orleans: Carnival](#).

## MATERIALS

- Music lead sheet, instruments (clarinet, drums, piano, sousaphone, trombone, trumpet), manuscript paper
- PRESENTATION: [Bourbon Street Parade](#)
- VIDEOS: [Paul Barbarin “Bourbon Street Parade”](#) | [Preservation Hall Band](#) | [George Lewis & His New Orleans All Stars](#) | [De De and Billie Pierce](#) | [Bourbon Street Parade](#) | [Rhythm Section: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)
- LYRICS: [“Bourbon Street Parade”](#)





- STUDENT GUIDES: [Complete Instrument Guides with Sheet Music](#)
- INSTRUMENT TECHNIQUES: [Techniques by Instrument](#)

## INTRODUCTION

1. Display slide 3 of the presentation, [Bourbon Street Parade](#), to show students pictures of Carnival season in New Orleans. Ask students: *What do you notice about the photo? What questions do you have? What can you infer about the event or people in the photograph?* Tell students that Carnival season in New Orleans is filled with events and celebrations leading up to Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). It is the very last day before Lent season which goes until Good Friday. The photograph is an example of a parade you might see during Carnival season. The band members dressed in all black are paying tribute and respect to traditional Jazz funerals. A traditional song you might hear during a carnival season parade is “Bourbon Street Parade.”

2. Display slide 4 of the presentation, [Bourbon Street Parade](#). Introduce and play the song, [Paul Barbarin “Bourbon Street Parade.”](#) Tell the students the song was written by Jazz drummer Paul Barbarin in 1955 and is an example of early marching band music’s influence on New Orleans Jazz. It highlights characteristic elements of marching band music—press rolls, four beats to the measure bass drum pattern, and a bugle call—to remain true to the idea of a traditional march. What sets “Bourbon Street Parade” (and other New Orleans marches) apart from traditional marches are the elements of New Orleans Jazz that are incorporated into the song. These elements include syncopation in the drums (accenting the fourth beat in every other measure), horns freely interpreting the melody, and improvising throughout.

3. Display slide 5 of the presentation, [Bourbon Street Parade](#), to engage students in a listening session with the song, “Bourbon Street Parade.” Play the audio recordings by the [Preservation Hall Band](#), [George Lewis & His New Orleans All Stars](#), and [De De and Billie Pierce](#). Ask students to discuss the recordings with their peers. Ask: *Which instrument is playing the lead/melody? Which instrument(s) are playing the chordal harmonies (banjo/guitar/piano/etc)? Which instruments are playing melodic harmonies? What is the time signature? Are there any notable differences when contrasting one recording from another? What emotions do you feel as a listener? What is driving the emotional change?*

4. Tell students that, like many Brass Band songs, “Bourbon Street Parade” begins with a drum cadence to set the tempo and feel. Notice here how the trumpet plays a two-note call, from Eb concert to Ab concert; this is one way that brass bands establish the song’s key. The rigid triplet line played by the trumpet before the horns begin is a classic element of this song that is still played today to signify the end of the drum cadence and the beginning of the song. Have students listen to Paul Barbarin & His New Orleans Jazz Men from their 1955 record in the





song, [“Bourbon Street Parade.”](#) on slide 6 of the presentation, [Bourbon Street Parade](#). Accompanying Barbarin (drums) on the record are musicians John Brunious (trumpet), Willie Humphrey (clarinet), Bob Thomas (trombone), Lester Santiago (piano), Danny Barker (banjo), and Milt Hinton (bass).

5. Discuss the song with students. Ask: *What roles are each of the musicians playing?* Tell students that throughout the song, Thomas’ trombone work features small, half-step slides that are characteristic of the “tailgate” trombone style—highlighting the unique ability of the trombone to use a slide. Humphrey, the clarinetist, plays two roles: harmonizing with the trumpet and playing ornate embellishments during pauses in the melody. The drums (Barbarin) and bass (Hinton) alternate between a 2/4 march feel and a 4/4 swing feel throughout the song to lend variety and interest to the groove.

## APPLICATION

1. Tell students they are going to learn the melody of the song, “Bourbon Street Parade.” Distribute the instrument-specific song guides below. Have students memorize the melody of the song.

[Clarinet Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Drums Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Flute Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Piano Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Sousaphone/Bass Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Trombone Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Trumpet Guide: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

2. Distribute the [Lyrics: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#) to students. Rehearse the verses and allow time for students to practice on their own.

*Let’s fly down, or drive down, to New Or-leans.*

*That cit-y has pret-ty*

*His-tor-ic scenes.*

*I’ll take you and par-ade you*

*Down on Bour-bon Street.*

*There’s a lot of hot spots,  
you’ll see lots of big shots,*

*Down on Bour-bon Street.*

3. Have students reference the instrument-specific song guides to learn and memorize the chord progressions.





4. Tell students that the song form for “Bourbon Street Parade” is considered A form/roadmap.

5. Introduce students to the instrument-specific techniques for “Bourbon Street Parade.” Review the techniques with students and allow time to practice.

[Clarinet Techniques: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Drum Techniques: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Piano Techniques: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Sousaphone or Upright Bass Techniques: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Trombone Techniques: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

[Trumpet Techniques: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#)

6. Encourage students to independently transcribe solos related to their instrument. They can study the following Traditional Early New Orleans musicians to grow and refine their craft as a soloist. Tell students they can incorporate early New Orleans musician’s ideas with their own to discover their own unique identity.

- **Clarinet:** Paul Barbarin & His N.O. Jazzmen Atlantic Records 1955, George Lewis, Louis Cottrell, Charlie Gabriel, Barney Bigard, Willie Humphrey
- **Drums:** Paul Barbarin & His N.O. Jazzmen Atlantic Records 1955, Kid Ory, Teddy Riley and the Excelsior Brass Band, George Lewis, Tuxedo Brass Band, and The Preservation Hall Band
- **Piano:** Paul Barbarin & His N.O. Jazzmen Atlantic Records 1955, Sweet Emma Barret and Her Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Billie and De De and their Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Louis Cottrell and his New Orleans Jazz Band, Lester Santiago
- **Sousaphone:** Paul Barbarin & His N.O. Jazzmen Atlantic Records 1955, Kid Ory’s Creole Jazz Band, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Teddy Riley and the Excelsior Brass Band,
- **Trombone:** Paul Barbarin & His N.O. Jazzmen Atlantic Records 1955, Kid Ory’s Creole Jazz Band, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and Sweet Emma Barret and Her Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Frog Joseph, Freddy Lonzo, Bob Thomas, Trombone Shorty
- **Trumpet:** Paul Barbarin & His N.O. Jazzmen Atlantic Records 1955, Jack Willis, John Brunious, Teddy Riley and the Excelsior Brass Band, Tuxedo Brass Band, Bunk Johnson and His New Orleans Band, and The Preservation Hall Band

7. Review the [Background and Performance Tips for “Bourbon Street Parade”](#) resource with students. Once students know the melody and techniques, have students play along with the [Rhythm Section: “Bourbon Street Parade”](#) on slide 7 of the presentation, [Bourbon Street](#)





[Parade](#). To extend, play the melody and exercise embellishment, adding flavor or creating your own interpretation of the melody.

## EVALUATION

1. Assess students' knowledge of the song, "Bourbon Street Parade." Have students perform the song and demonstrate the New Orleans functions and techniques for their instrument. Conclude the lesson with a written reflection. Ask: *What factors influenced the historical and cultural tradition of the song, "Bourbon Street Parade?" What instrument techniques are applied to the song, "Bourbon Street Parade?"*

## ATTRIBUTIONS

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Louis Ford, Curriculum Developer and Music Artist Liaison  
JoDee Scissors, Editor and Content Curator  
Meghan Swartz, Music Artist Consultant  
Mark Braud, Music Artist Consultant

