

# The Clarion-Ledger

Real Mississippi  
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## Thelonious Monk Institute jazzes up school day

■ Group shares music curriculum during tour of state

By Sherry Lucas  
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Murrah High students clapped and swayed to a history lesson Wednesday morning. Top-notch musicians from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz delivered the lesson in seductive beats of blues and jazz.

The institute is on a two-week tour of Mississippi public schools, bringing its new curriculum, "The Blues and Jazz — Two American Classics," to thousands of students.

The performance electrified sophomore Emmerly Jefferson, 15, who had listened to such music on CDs but never live. "That was amazing. The saxophone player, wow," said Jefferson, who plays the flute and attends Power APAC (Aca-



Monk

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Gallery: More photos from Murrah High

demic and Performing Arts Complex).

"Actually seeing the expressions on the faces

of the musicians performing, in the back of my mind, it paints a picture and takes me to a place you just can't go listening to a CD," she said.

"I never really listened to the blues before," said Xavier Stokes, 16, a sophomore. "It was good for my first time hearing it."

"You could get into it," said Cortney Hubbard, 16, a junior and French horn player in the band.

The institute also had a jazz band clinic, vocal master class and assembly programs at Jim Hill High School Wednesday and at Callaway High today.

The institute is a nonprofit education organization that on Monday announced its move from Los Angeles to Loyola University in New Orleans.

"This is our region now,"  
See MUSIC, 2E



Joe Ellis/The Clarion-Ledger

Lisa Henry belts out a blues tune as Bobby Watson accompanies on saxophone during a blues and jazz program for students at Murrah High School in Jackson on Wednesday.

## Music: Goal is to visit all 50 states, Monk explains



Joe Ellis/The Clarion-Ledger

Murrah High School junior Antoinette Wilder applauds at the conclusion of a program on blues and jazz by musicians from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz at the school on Wednesday.

### From 1E

said Thelonious Monk Jr., board chairman and self-described spiritual leader of the institute. Its goal is to go through all 50 states and Mississippi is No. 24 on the list.

"We've been becoming involved with the blues and of course, Mississippi is the home of the blues, so we felt like it was a good thing to do," said Monk, son of the legendary jazz pianist and composer.

"We have children everywhere and we don't discriminate. We want to get to as many people as possible and share the importance of jazz, the importance of blues, the importance of music in general.

"Music has no borders and education has no preference as

far as I'm concerned," Monk said, hoping to engage all kids in America's musical history and show the connections and the continuum.

"Jazz came out of the blues. The blues came out of gospel. And gospel came out of the blues. In America, Eubie Blake is connected to Beyonce and Usher, to Elvis Presley, to Fats Domino and Louis Armstrong ... in one long continuum. Pigeonholing the music deprives kids ... of the big picture," Monk said.

From *Stormy Monday* to the theme from *Spiderman*, students got a quick introduction to blues and jazz and their connection.

"I think they did an awesome job," said LaToya Jackson, 16, a Murrah sophomore.