



## Ray Simien

### *“Jammin’ Through the Decades”*

**Grades: 3-5**

**Assembly Performance**

**Performance Length: 45 minutes**

**Audience Limit: 100**

### About the Artist

Mr. Simien is a graduate of Lamar University, where he studied music theory, composition, and song-writing. Putting his skills to work, Mr. Simien has written a number of original scores, many of which he performs. He also is a firefighter for the City of Beaumont and the father of two.

### Before the performance:

- Ask students how they think music from different eras might sound.
- Ask students if they know of any famous musicians who are from Texas.

### After the performance:

- Ask students which era of music was their favorite.

### About the Program

In *Jammin’ Through the Decades in Southeast Texas*, Ray Simien shows students how music composition is influenced by political, cultural, and social factors. He brings alive music from the 1940s to the present by focusing on musicians from southeast Texas such as Harry James, The Big Bopper, Janis Joplin, Tracy Byrd, and others. Students enjoy the interactive learning that Mr. Simien provides.

### Performance Set-up Requirements:

A performance area of at least 10’ x 10’, and a simple PA system with microphone. Students may be seated on the floor or in rows of chairs.

## Classroom Management

Please note that Young Audiences' policy mandates that the classroom teacher is to be present during the entire program or residency. Should the teacher leave, the artist is instructed to leave also. The teacher is responsible for managing classroom behavior during the program or residency.

### TEKS:

Social Studies: 3.4A-D; 4.7B; 5.6A-C, 5.14A-C, 3.14A-B; 4.20C; 5.22A-B

Language Arts: 3.14A-C; 4.15A-C; 5.15A-E, 3.14D; 4.15F; 5.15D

Music: 3.5A-C; 4.5A-D; 5.5A, E

## Word List

**Jammin':** when two or more artists improvise music together

**Harry James:** one of the most outstanding instrumentalists of the Swing era and one of the most popular band leaders of the 1940s

**The Big Bopper:** an early rock 'n roll star who was known for the song "Chantilly Lace"

**Janis Joplin:** a female musician who pioneered the position of female lead musician in the male dominated music world of the 1960s

**Tracy Byrd:** a well-known country singer who has remained true to his regional roots

Thank you for allowing Young Audiences of Northeast Texas to share these artists and performances with your students. The students' written thank you notes may be sent to:

**Young Audiences of Northeast Texas**  
200 East Amherst  
Tyler, Texas 75701

## Classroom Connections

### Social Studies:

- Invite your students to look at a Texas map. Ask them to find southeast Texas and towns such as Beaumont (Harry James' hometown and The Big Bopper's childhood home), Sabine Pass (The Big Bopper's birthplace), and Port Arthur (Janis Joplin's hometown).
- Invite them to discuss the landforms, climate, and vegetation of the region. How have people adapted to this region's geography? What are some of the primary industries? What would it be like growing up in this region? Did these musicians' roots affect their music?
- Invite your students to listen to the music of each of these artists and to discuss how it was affected by the culture of his/her era:  
Harry James: 1930s-1940s  
The Big Bopper: 1950s  
Janis Joplin: 1960s  
Tracy Byrd: 2000s

### Language Arts:

- Invite your students to select either Harry James, The Big Bopper, Janis Joplin, or Tracy Byrd. Then, ask them to write a description of their music and how it was influenced by what was happening in their culture at that time.
- Ask your students to write a letter to any of the above musicians. In this letter, the students can tell the musician how he/she thinks the musician's artistry has helped the student understand the culture of the musician's time.

### Music:

Play selections by Harry James, The Big Bopper, Janis Joplin, and Tracy Byrd for your students. Ask your students to identify each selection by time period and tell what makes the music sound like the time period.