

HOW DO I LOOK?

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The album cover for Jessie Montgomery's "Strum" gives a strong illustration of who she is. How would you design an album cover for your own music which would show your identity?



ACTIVITY

Jessie Montgomery is an exciting young composer of music for strings. You can watch performances of two of her compositions by following these links:

[Catalyst Quartet - Jessie Montgomery - Strum](#)

[Jessie Montgomery: Starburst](#)

Jessie included these pieces of music on her album “Strum: Music for Strings” and you can find the whole album on iTunes if you'd like to listen to it.

Look closely at the album cover, which has been reproduced above by kind permission of Jessie and her management. What do you notice immediately about Jessie from the cover? What do you notice about her style and color of clothing, her hair, her background?

Are you able to learn things about Jessie just by looking at the picture?

Now look at the wikipedia article for Jessie -

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jessie_Montgomery

Are there some things in the Wikipedia article that you already worked out just by looking at Jessie's album cover?

The success of the album cover is that it portrays Jessie Montgomery as a young, Black woman from an urban setting. She shows her connection to her neighborhood and her culture in the artwork. Often we think of Classical music as being played by people wearing tuxedos in a fancy concert hall. How does this album cover challenge that stereotype? Are there other stereotypes that Jessie challenges in this album cover?

Create an album cover for yourself that would show people your identity and culture before they read your wikipedia article? What would your background be, what would your choices be in terms of clothing, hair, colors, etc.?

You could draw or paint your own album cover, and you could choose to use a cartoon style of drawing or maybe a very realistic style, or somewhere in between (a little like Jessie's cover). You could also print out a photograph of yourself and cut it out, and then glue it on top of a background which you might cut out of a magazine, maybe. If you have mad photoshop skills on the computer, perhaps you could superimpose an image of

yourself on a different background. Make sure you add your name and the name of your album on your album cover.

While you're working on creating your album cover, perhaps you might like to watch and/or listen to this great conversation between Jessie Montgomery and Aaron Dworkin, in which Jessie talks about what it means to become a composer.

<https://youtu.be/01QTGU1hasE>



RESOURCES

Jessie Montgomery's web site - <https://www.jessiemontgomery.com/>

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

- Creating 1
- Creating 2
- Responding 7
- Responding 8
- Connecting 10

SUBJECT CONNECTIONS

Music, Art