

Dear 92nd Street Y School Partners:

The show must go on! After much relief when the city-wide bus strike was resolved, we were especially excited to continue the 2012-13 Musical Introduction Series season with the Grammy-nominated Cedric Watson & Bijou Creole!

On April 15 and 16, more than 3,000 public school students and teachers filled 92Y's Kaufmann Concert Hall and took in the sights and sounds of Southern Louisiana Mardi Gras music and dance, with Cedric Watson and his lively, fun-loving band leading the way. Cedric, a young musician of Creole heritage, has scholarly knowledge of Creole music, soulful virtuosity on both accordion and fiddle, and singing and storytelling talent that captures the imagination of audiences of all ages.

Prior to the concerts, 92Y teaching artists visited every class at each participating school to steep the students and teachers in the music and culture of Southern Louisiana. Students learned to identify the instruments played in Creole music, such as the rubboard and the accordion, dance the two-step, shuffle and waltz, and play rhythmic patterns on real rubboards. Through Mardi Gras mask-making, students further studied how Louisiana celebrates its traditions and individuality, and they even got the chance to show off their masks to Cedric Watson by wearing them to the concert!

By the time they arrived at the concert, the students were ready to perform with the band, and several students did just that when they came up onstage and played the rubboard with Desiree, the band's amazing rubboard player. These students became part of the band for an entire song, keeping the beat while making up their own rhythms on this unique instrument. At the end of the concert, the entire audience was on their feet moving to the irresistible sounds of Mardi Gras!

At the concerts, students were also 'secretly' gathering their thoughts and feelings about what they saw and heard, in order to become 'cultural journalists' and report on their experience of the live concert. By sharing their findings about the music, instruments, Cedric and his band, everyone was able to not only reflect on their own experience but also gain new perspectives by hearing the thoughts and observations of their peers.

We are very proud of the excellent work your students accomplished in this unit, as well as their enthusiasm and joyful participation, which filled the concert hall. Their natural fascination with the live music, real instruments and exceptionally talented performers of this American musical genre was deepened by their preparation and the partnerships created in the Musical Introduction Series.

With warm regards,

Larisa Gelman, Director
Debra Kreisberg, Managing Director