



# music studio

## LESSON PLAN

# BEHIND THE MUSIC

## Behind the Music: Music in America 1970

VH1 Music Studio  
Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for High School Keyboard Music Classes

### Hard Rock

Lesson 1 of 3

[Note to Teachers: This series of lessons covers music that rose to popularity during conflict in the United States over participation in the Vietnam War. Some of the musicians featured experimented with drugs, including two who died from drug-related causes, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. If your curriculum is subject to restrictions on the topic, you should review the videotape before using it in the classroom.]

**OVERVIEW:** The three lesson plans, written to correspond with *Behind the Music: Music in America 1970*, can be used as a unit of study or as individual lessons. Coordinating this unit with the student's social studies/history curriculum will enhance the student's understanding and comprehensive learning of both musical and historical concepts.

### Objective

Students will recognize popular music as a reflection of the culture  
Students will consider the effectiveness of music to communicate ideas  
Students will perform any part of a four-part keyboard ensemble with musical sensibility in a "hard rock" style  
Students will improvise a melody over student accompaniment

National Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9— Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments; Reading Music; Listening to, analyzing, and describing music; Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

## Materials

VHS VCR Player

Television

VH1 Cable in the Classroom program Behind the Music: Music in America 1970

Web-based lesson materials

Classroom keyboards

“Rast’s Roost,” in Jam Session (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1993). For more information on this resource, please visit <http://www.halleonard.com/>

Drum machine or drum set (optional)

Recordings of 1970s hard rock or heavy metal (optional)

## Prior Knowledge and Experiences

Students can read single line parts in either the treble or bass clef on the keyboard.

Students have studied syncopation and have improvised melodies using the C blues scale.

## Procedures

1. Show students first 10 minutes of the video Behind the Music: Music in America 1970. You may show the entire video, but questions in this lesson are related to music in the video’s first segment.
2. Briefly review some major current events of 1970 covered in this section of the video (Vietnam War continuing, Chicago 7 trial)
3. The video narration says that in 1970 “pop music darkened,” and that from it developed hard rock and heavy metal as performed by the groups Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath. Review with students how they might define hard rock and heavy metal. ( Hard rock is similar to acid rock’s buzzing tone of the lead guitar equipped with a sustaining pedal, but has a higher dynamic level and thicker texture. Heavy metal has greater concentration on the rhythm guitar with the lead guitar buried under thick texture. )
4. If you have recorded examples, play a short selection for your students. Ask students how the sounds might express the feelings of the audience or conflict in society. Would those who listen to hard rock in 1970 have been affected by the Vietnam War? Would they know people fighting in Vietnam? Would they be watching televised war reports on the evening news? Would they likely be drafted themselves? What else might they be concerned about? [You might discuss how music throughout the ages has reflected society and current events as well as expressing emotions of a society involved in wars with defeat, triumph, horror, tragedy etc... If there is time, you could listen to “Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima” by Krzysztof Penderecki, or “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” for example.] Have students identify songs with which they are familiar and listen to today, which address cur-

rent cultural and societal issues. How does the style and elements of music chosen for each piece help to relay the composers intentions.

5. Tell students they will now analyze and play a piece in hard rock style.

6. Have students analyze Part 4 of “Rast’s Roost” and help them discover the use of pattern, repetition, and sequence (the repetition of a pattern beginning on a different pitch). Have them clap the rhythm observing the accents. Have them analyze suggested fingering.

7. Ask students to “play” Part 4 on a closed keyboard cover, observing correct rhythm, accents, fingering, and approximate pitches. Then ask them to play the music on the keyboard. You, or students with previous keyboard experience, may add Parts 2 and 3. Determine an appropriate “hard rock” tempo.

8. Have students analyze Parts 2 and 3 in the same way that they analyzed Part 4. Encourage them to create several different comping rhythms (patterns of regularly and irregularly spaced chords that punctuate and complement the melody) that enhance Part 4. Encourage individual students to try their rhythm while a peer plays Part 4. Have students take turns playing Parts 2, 3, and 4. Encourage an effective balance between the three parts.

9. Have students analyze Part 1 to discover the use of pattern, repetition, rhythmic variation, and syncopation. Ask students to clap the rhythm observing accents. Have all students play Part 1 through measure 25. Ask students to discuss appropriate balance (should Part 1 be strongest?) and then ask assigned students to add Parts 2, 3, and 4 through measure 25.

10. Review the C blues scale focusing on the blue notes (lowered 3rd, 5th, and 7th). Students lacking technical facility may use the first five notes of the scale.

11. Have individuals take turns improvising a melody while a specified; group of students play Parts 2, 3, and 4 (one student on each part). Have students perform the complete ensemble, switching parts as desired. Add an appropriate drum machine (or drum set) accompaniment.

**VH1, in partnership with Cable in the Classroom, collaborated with MENC: The National Association for Music Education to develop this series of lessons.**

**The lesson is adapted from Strategies for Teaching Middle-Level and High School Keyboard, compiled and edited by Martha F. Hilley and Tommie Pardue: 1996 ( MENC: Reston, Va.).**



# **National Standards for Music Education**

- 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.**
- 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.**
- 3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.**
- 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.**
- 5. Reading and notating music.**
- 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.**
- 7. Evaluating music and music performances.**
- 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.**
- 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.**