



BEHIND THE MUSIC

VH1 Presents the 1980s VH1 Music Studio Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for High School Music Classes

Lesson 4

[Note to Teachers: Some of the scenes and topics in the videotaped program that these lessons accompany address social change, the sexual revolution, AIDS (auto immune deficiency syndrome), and drug culture. If your curriculum is subject to restrictions on any of these topics, you should review the videotape before using it in the classroom.]

The popular music of the 1980s both reflected and influenced everyday lives, says Shannon Daugherty, the host of “VH1 Presents the 1980s.” The popular music in the 1960s responded to the Vietnam War with anthems of peace and protest, and the music of the 1970s mirrored the cultural transition to a time when the once vibrant youth movement was feeling bitter and betrayed. During the 1970’s some popular musicians were laying aside political messages, some turning inward for themes, others rejecting any message at all. The music of the 1980s also reflected the culture of its decade. The popular music of the 80’s reflected both a culture focused on conspicuous consumption and wealth as well as a generation addressing social change with the emergence of concerts and albums to raise money for famines in Africa and the economic plight of America’s farmers.

Objective

Students will discuss development of music videos

Students will identify elements that make a successful music video

National Standard 8, 9— 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 VH1 Presents the 1980s

Web-based lesson materials

Teacher-provided music video (Michael Jackson's 1983 Thriller was one of the most influential)

Prior Experience

Students have viewed the program VH1 Presents the 1980s

Procedures

1. As students enter the classroom, have a music video playing on the television.
2. When students have settled into their seats, tell students what you like and don't like about the video that is playing.
3. Invite students to tell what they like and don't like about the music video. Rephrase to them what they've talked about--are they noticing the visual or the sound elements of the video?
4. Have students describe the video in musical terms (melody, harmony, rhythm, and form, style, etc...). What is the quality of the musical performance?
5. Have students describe the theatrical and visual elements of the video. Is there choreography? How many performers are involved? What is the lighting like? What about the staging and blocking? How do the costumes or clothes contribute to the overall effect? What do you notice about camera shots including angles, close-ups, editing, etc...
Does the staging tell a story? Is the staging created to tell a story?
7. Now have students discuss if their impression of the music would be the same with out the video. Have students imagine what they might notice with just the sound remaining.
8. If possible, turn the television away from the students. Tell students to observe what they notice about the music as you replay the music video--this time without the students being able to see the visuals.
9. Lead students in a discussion of any observations they have about listening to the music video without seeing it.

10. Have students form groups of three or four. Each group is assigned to do a research project on the development of music videos. Have them conduct research in the school music library and on the Internet to find out when music videos became popular in the United States, to look at the role of television and cable television's MTV in the development of music videos, and to list some landmark music videos and the artists in them. Each group is to be prepared to discuss their findings with the other students at a class period assigned to this.

Extension

Have students perform a piece of music with and without visual images. Students can explore performing a piece of music with no costumes, movement, or expression and then create a video or stage performance to correspond.

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.

Lesson One is derived from *Strategies for Teaching: Middle-Level and High School Keyboard* (MENC: 1996).



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