



music studio

LESSON PLAN



Road to Fame: Harry Connick, Jr.

Lessons for Middle-Level and High School General Music Classes,
Grades 7-12

A VH1 Save the Music Special

Lesson 4 of 5

Objective

- Students will develop criteria for evaluating music and musical performances
- Students will use criteria to select compositions and performances for use in a mock radio station

National Standards for Music Education: 7--Evaluating music and music performances

Materials

VHS VCR Player

Television

VH1 Cable in the Classroom program *Behind the Music: Music in America 1968*

Web-based lesson materials

Recordings of a variety of classical and jazz excerpts (about a dozen each), including good-quality recordings, old scratchy recordings, and recordings of rehearsals. You might include classical piano and vocal recordings as well as the instrumental and vocal music of Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, James Booker, Wynton Marsalis, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Torme, Diana Krall, and Harry Connick Jr. among others.

Audio-playback equipment, including two audiocassette recorder

Two blank audiocassettes

Prior Knowledge & Experience

- Students have seen the videotape Road to Fame: Harry Connick, Jr.
- Students have studied various musical styles and origins.
- Students have discussed their music preferences.
- Students have studied the elements of music.
- Students have written personal evaluations of music, using appropriate music vocabulary.

Procedures

1. Discuss with students the differences among radio stations that play music (for example, rock 'n' roll, classical, country, jazz). Ask them to give examples of the music played on a classical radio station versus that played on a jazz radio station (for example, music by Mozart, blues).
2. Discuss why some music is played on the air while other music is not (demographics of the audience, advertising revenues, ratings, and so on). Students might think about the stations they normally listen to and transfer that knowledge to classical and jazz stations.
3. Ask students to create a list of criteria for what makes an effective musical performance and what makes a good piece of music. Discuss with them the importance of all performers playing together with good balance, blend, and so on, and the significance of music having repetition and contrast for unity and variety, and so on.
4. Divide the class in half and assign one of the groups to be employees of a classical radio station and the other group to be employees of a jazz radio station. Then assign half of each group to be salespeople and the other half to be program directors of disc jockeys. Explain the roles of people in these positions at radio stations. (Salespeople sell advertising time to businesses and organizations--the major source of income for the station. Program directors determine the type of music that is aired as well as the mix of news, weather, sports, talk, and other topics. Disc jockeys are on-air personalities who often select, organize, and announce the music aired. Sales employees need programming that appeals to advertisers or their customers and programming employees need sales revenues to stay on the air.)
5. Have students in each group--classical and jazz--listen to the respective recordings of excerpts and then select music that meets their requirements. Have each group of sales people compile a list of six songs to present to their program director group for air play with a list of reasons for including those pieces.
6. Have the program directors listen to the recordings, read the reasons, and select for their station three songs (a set) and the order in which they should be played. Then have the disc jockeys make a cassette

recording of their set, including an appropriate introduction for each song, giving the performer, the type of composition, and some background, if appropriate.

7. Play the two sets for the entire class and have students decide whether the sets played for each of the stations meet the criteria they originally devised.

Follow-up

Have students decide what music they will perform in a concert based on criteria they have established for the performance. Then have them write the program and program notes for the concert.

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

Lesson Four is derived from *Strategies for Teaching: Middle-Level General Music (MENC:1996)*



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.