



100 Greatest Women of Rock and Roll



VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 3

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the eras portrayed, to substance abuse, violent acts, and topics of a sexual and/or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom

Objective

- Students will analyze the genres of rhythm & blues, jazz, soul, and hip-hop/rap.
- Students will discuss female artists who fall within these genres.
- Students will compose and/or improvise their own lyrics and melody within one of these genres.

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
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.

Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- Audio playback equipment
- VH1's *100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll*, Episodes 2 and 5
- Web-based lesson materials
- Copies of Informational Chart (included with lesson) for students
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Piano or other keyboard instrument
- Teacher selected recordings of songs by Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Queen Latifah, and Ella Fitzgerald (optional)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have experience “composing,” lyrically and melodically, an original piece of music. (Note: it is not necessary to notate the actual melody in music notation for this project.)

Procedures

1. Begin class by defining the genres that will be included in the lesson's discussion. Students should take notes for later reference. Use the following as needed:
 - Rhythm and Blues**
 - a: a song, often of lamentation, usually characterized by 12-bar phrases, 3-line stanzas in which the words of the second line usually repeat those of the first, and continual occurrence of blue notes in melody and harmony
 - b: jazz or popular music using harmonic and phrase structures of blues
 - c: popular music typically including elements of blues and black folk music and marked by a strong beat and simple chord structure
 - Jazz**
 - a: American music developed especially from ragtime and blues and characterized by propulsive syncopated rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, varying degrees of improvisation, and often deliberate distortions of pitch and timbre
 - b: popular dance music influenced by jazz and played in a loud rhythmic manner
 - Soul**
 - a: music that originated in black American gospel singing, is closely related to rhythm and blues, and is characterized by intensity of feeling and earthiness
 - Hip Hop/Rap**
 - a: to talk freely and frankly
 - b: to perform rap music

2. Explain to students that these definitions describe how many popular musicians of today choose to express themselves and use their talents. Because there are many female artists within these genres from which to choose, this lesson focuses on one per genre (Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Queen Latifah, and Ella Fitzgerald). Teachers should feel free to center on additional, or different, musicians from the 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll program. Distribute copies of the Informational Chart to students, and ask them to complete the biographical information sections as the artists are discussed, and the video notes sections while viewing the program segments.
3. Prior to showing the Aretha Franklin segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed (*lesson plans based specifically upon Aretha Franklin's successes and struggles can be found at www.vh1musicstudio.com/specials.html*):

Aretha Franklin - Rhythm and Blues/Soul

"American singer, b. 25 March, 1942, Memphis, Tennessee. She began singing in the choir of her father's church. Known as the "Queen of Soul," she recorded such hits as "Respect," "Chain of Fools," "Who's Zoomin' Who," "(You Make Me Feel Like a) Natural Woman," and "Highway of Love." In a career spanning more than forty years, the woman Time magazine named "one of the most influential people of the last century," The Wall Street Journal called "the most powerful singer alive" and VH1, "the greatest woman in rock 'n' roll," continues to find new ways to inspire and amaze. Starting in the sixties, when she defined the Golden Age of Soul, her highly personal gospel-inspired sound brought her status as one of the Greats of American Music. She has won virtually every award there is to win, scoring dozens of smash hits, a truckload of Grammy's and Lifetime Achievement Awards. She is the youngest recipient in the history of the Kennedy Center Honors as well as the first woman elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. "To sing a song," she says, "I must find meaning in the lyric. And of course I must feel the groove."

4. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 5 with Susan Sarandon, #1 - Aretha Franklin segment.
5. Lead students in a brief discussion of Aretha Franklin's style. What are the characteristics of her music that classify her as an R&B/Soul artist?
6. Prior to showing the Etta James segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

Etta James - Rhythm and Blues/Soul

"b. Jamesetta Hawkins, 25 January 1938, Los Angeles, California, USA. James' introduction to performing followed an impromptu audition for Johnny Otis backstage at San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium. "At Last" (1961), "Trust In Me" (1961), "Don't Cry Baby" (1961). "Tell Mama" was a triumph, and pitted James' abrasive voice with the exemplary Muscle Shoals house band. Its highlights included the proclamatory title track, a pounding version of Otis Redding's "Security" (both of which reached the R&B Top 20). The 1973 album *Etta James* earned her a US Grammy nomination, despite her continued drug problems, which she did not overcome until the mid-80s. A 1977 album, *Etta Is Betta Than Evah*, completed her Chess contract, and she moved to Warner Brothers Records. A renewed public profile followed her appearance at the opening ceremony of the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984. She was inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1993, prior to her signing a new recording contract with Private Records. Her extraordinary voice has been showcased to great effect on her recent Private releases, including *Love's Been Rough On Me*, *Matriarch Of The Blues* and *Blue Gardenia*. The latter, a smooth album demonstrating James' love of jazz ballads, rewarded the singer by rising to the top of the Billboard jazz chart."

7. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 5 with Susan Sarandon, #19 – Etta James segment.

8. Lead students in a brief discussion of the music of Etta James. Why is she classified as an R&B/Soul singer? How is her style similar to or different from that of Aretha Franklin?
9. Prior to showing the Queen Latifah segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

Queen Latifah - Hip Hop/Rap

"b. Dana Owens, 18 March 1970, East Orange, New Jersey, USA. Rap's first lady, Queen Latifah, broke through in the late '80s with a style that picked selectively from jazz and soul traditions. The former Burger King employee maintained her early commitment to answer the misogynist armory of her male counterparts, and at the same time impart musical good times to all genders. After working as the human beatbox alongside female rapping crew Ladies Fresh, she was just 18 years old when she released her debut single, "Wrath Of My Madness", in 1988. By the time of her third album, she had moved from Tommy Boy Records to a new home, Motown Records, and revealed a shift from the soul and reggae tones of *Nature Of A Sista* to sophisticated, sassy hip-hop. Queen Latifah subsequently embarked on a career as an actor, notably in the streetwise black hit comedy, *Living Single*, where she played magazine boss Khadijah James. Her movie credits already include *Juice*, *Jungle Fever* and *House Party 2*. As if that were not enough, she additionally set up her own Flavor Unit record label and management company in 1993, as an outlet for new rap acts as well as her own recordings. The first release on it, "Roll Wit Tha Flava", featured an all-star cast including Naughty By Nature's Treach. Queen Latifah represents an intelligent cross-section of hip-hop influences. Though she is a forthright advocate of her race's struggle, she is also the daughter of and brother to policemen. *Black Reign*, in fact, is dedicated to the death of that same brother: "I see both sides. I've seen the abuse and I've been the victim of police who abuse their authority. On the other side you've got cops getting shot all the time, you got people who don't respect them at all". While a little too strident to live up to the Arabic meaning of her name (Latifah equates to delicate and sensitive), Queen Latifah remains one of the most positive role models for young black women (and men) in hip-hop culture: "Aspire to be a doctor or a lawyer, but not a gangster". As one of the singles lifted from *Black Reign* advocated: "UNITY (Who You Calling A Bitch?)". Following a lengthy hiatus owing to acting commitments, Latifah returned to recording with 1998's *Order In The Court*. She most recently can be seen in the big screen production of "Chicago" in the role of "Mama." Roger Ebert is quoted, "And what a good idea to cast Queen Latifah in the role of Mama, the prison matron; she belts out "When You're Good to Mama" with the superb assurance of a performer who knows what good is and what Mama likes."

10. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 2 with Geri Halliwell, #72 – Queen Latifah segment.
11. Guide students in a discussion of Queen Latifah's music. What aspects characterize her as a hip-hop artist? Why is she different from many other hip-hop/rap artists? How does the genre of hip-hop compare to that of R&B and soul? Share the following summary as needed:

Hip-Hop/Rap brought together the ideas of folk music, "music of the people," and the stylistic attributes of R&B, Soul, and Jazz. The subject matter most often witnessed in hip-hop or rap deals with life, love, and politics. It sings what the people want to hear. Queen Latifah is a true pioneer in hip-hop and rap. Her song "UNITY" inspired women to fight against male discrimination. Her voice gave women the confidence they needed in a genre where many artists are male and many subjects glorify the physical or verbal abuse of women. The original intent of rap was to express thought freely and rhythmically, and Queen Latifah returned that concept to the public.

12. Prior to showing the Ella Fitzgerald segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

Ella Fitzgerald - Jazz

"Ella Fitzgerald was born in Newport News, Virginia, on 25 April 1917. She was orphaned at the age of 15 and was placed in

the Colored Orphan Asylum in Riverdale. From there, she was transferred to the New York State Training School for Girls, a reformatory later revealed to be involved in wide-spread physical abuse. Ella was literally living in the streets of Harlem when she was finally discovered as a musical talent. Ella had intended to dance when she made her singing debut in 1934 at the Harlem Apollo Theatre, New York, on amateur night. When she lost her nerve, she instead launched into two songs - "Object of My Affection" and "Judy". She won first prize. Bandleader Chick Webb took notice of this talented songstress and personally coached the shy teenager, introducing her one night at the Savoy Theatre as his orchestra's singer. And so began Ella Fitzgerald's remarkable singing career. Ira Gershwin once said of her, "I didn't realize our songs were so good until Ella sang them." Ella's legendary music career spanned an incredible six decades, with recordings in the thousands. She never received formal vocal training, yet Ella's technique and range rivaled that of the trained singer. Throughout her three-octave vocal range, Ella's voice remained in perfect clarity, her diction was unfailingly crisp and her intonation was absolutely flawless. Coupled with this textbook-perfect technique, Ella had improvisation talent to rival the best jazz instrumentalists. Her spontaneous scat vocalizations were a trademark of her style. Ella married twice, first at the age of 24 to Benjamin Kornegay, and then again to bass player Ray Brown at the age of 30. Both marriages ended in divorce. A diabetic for many years, Ella's vision and health were seriously affected by the disease, and she had a propensity to heaviness. She did, however, remain an active performer until 1992. She died on June 15, 1996 at the age of 79, and the world lost one of its finest musical legends. Through her indelible music, the legend lives on."

13. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 5 with Susan Sarandon, #13 – Ella Fitzgerald segment.
14. Have students discuss the music of Ella Fitzgerald. What characterizes her music as jazz? Share with students the following summary as needed:

The genre of jazz is clearly shown in the genius of Ella Fitzgerald. Her voice is quick and responsive, reacting to the musicians and intelligently responding through swift embellishment and fun melodies. Jazz connects the same concepts of R&B and Soul, magnifying the importance of singing what is true to life. Ella Fitzgerald's voice is velvety and lush, comforting while she prays for "Someone to Watch Over Me" and uplifting when she croons toward "Blue Skies." She is an icon with her astounding natural talent and ability to express the intelligence of Jazz with the sweet sound of R&B and Soul.

15. To improvise in the true art form of jazz, one follows a certain formula. The melody must flow and, in this instance, follow the format of the 12 bar blues. Introduce students to the 12 bar blues and the concept of improvisation. Remind them of the definition of "blues" provided earlier in the lesson, and show them the following chart, demonstrating the chord progressions:

12 Bar Blues

PHRASE	1	2	3
FORM	A A A A	A A D D	E7 D E7 E7

16. Discuss with students the subject matter usually associated with R&B, Jazz, Soul, or Hip-Hop/Rap. The lyrics generally express deep emotion, for example, rhythm and blues is just that: the blues, a sad, heartbreaking feeling. If desired, play teacher selected recordings of songs by the artists discussed in this lesson to further demonstrate the genres. (NOTE: For a non-performance based lesson, skip to step 19.)

17. Tell students that they are to compose their own lyrics following the 12 Bar Blues formula, keeping in mind the characteristics of the genres they have been discussing. Students should work during class, either individually or in groups. They may compose lyrics only, or incorporate “scat” syllables as desired.
18. Have students perform their projects for the class, accompanying them on piano by playing 12 bar blues chord progressions. Ask students to objectively critique their classmates’ performances, checking for validity and truth to the form.
19. Assign students a genre discussed in this lesson (R&B, Soul, Jazz, Hip-Hop/Rap). Working in groups or individually, ask them to choose a female musician representative of the style, and have them create a presentation that focuses on the life of the musician and at least one musical selection for which the artist is known. The presentations may be in the form of an oral report, a written report, a visual representation (e.g. artistic interpretation, painting, drawing, etc.), or any combination, and should include discussion of the musical characteristics that classify them within a particular genre(s). If necessary, students could work on their presentations outside of class. Have students present their projects for the class. (NOTE: This activity may be omitted when steps 15-18 are included.)

Additional ideas for working with jazz, R&B, soul, and hip-hop/rap can be found in the “Say it Loud!” and “The Millennium Jazz Concert” lesson series on www.vh1musicstudio.com, the Ken Burns Jazz lesson series link at www.pbs.org/jazz/classroom/, and MENC’s Jazz Appreciation Month site at www.menc.org/guides/jazz/jazzappreciation.html.)

Informational Chart

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Biographical Notes</i>	<i>Notes on Video Segment</i>
Aretha Franklin	Rhythm and Blues/Soul		
Etta James	Rhythm and Blues/Soul		
Queen Latifah	Hip Hop/Rap		
Ella Fitzgerald	Jazz		

Supplemental Resources:

Definitions, biographical information, and historical information for the *100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll* lesson series has been excerpted primarily from the following sources:

- www.webster.com
- www.vh1.com
- Women in Early Music: <http://150.252.8.92/www/iawm/pages/>
- Women in Music: informational Web site with contacts and mentoring, www.womeninmusic.com/
- www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/othsubj.htm

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.



These standards-based materials are provided through a partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education. This lesson plan was created by MENC member Amy Rosenthal, Vocal Music, Cayuga Elementary, Lake Grove, NY.