



100 Greatest Women of Rock and Roll



VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 5

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 rock and roll and alternative rock music.
- Students will discuss the female artists who fall under these genres.
- Students will interpret musical selections through visual connection.

National Standards for Music Education

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, 3, and 5
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Copies of Informational Chart (included with lesson) for students
- Unlined (blank) paper/crayons, markers or colored pencils for students
- Teacher selected recordings of songs by Sarah McLachlan, Tina Turner, Tori Amos, Janis Joplin, Kate Bush (optional), and Bessie Smith (optional)

Procedures

1. As a field both old and evolving, rock and roll has helped shape the society of music as we now know it today. Both the “classic” definitions of rock and roll and alternative rock were once known as a male dominated field. However, throughout the years and with the hard work of the powerful women featured in this lesson and many others, these stereotypes are being broken down every minute. Ask students to name several female rock and roll artists with whom they are familiar.
2. There are many different styles of music that can be considered “rock music.” Ask students to name as many variations within the rock music genre as they can (heavy metal, hard rock, acid rock, classic rock, hillbilly rock, folk rock, punk rock, alternative rock, etc.). The list could continue with what was recently quoted as, “a delightfully futile quest that’s something like mapping an amoeba.” (Jon Pareles, New York Times)
3. Mention to students that certain colors are able to suggest specific emotions. Ask them if they have ever associated a color with an emotion, an activity, or even a sound, such as music. Have students list words that describe the overall effect or feeling of particular colors. For example:
 - Red – power, anger, love
 - Blue – calm, coolness, peace, sadness
 - Yellow – bright, warm, fear
 - Green – youth, energy, growth, envy
4. Play teacher selected recordings of songs by the artists represented in this lesson. Ask students to label each song with a color, or colors, as well as adjectives to describe why they feel their choices are appropriate. For example:

- “Possession” by Sarah McLachlan:
purple = uneasiness, yellow = fear, red = power
- “Proud Mary” by Tina Turner:
orange = excitement, green = energy
- “Silent All These Years” by Tori Amos:
blue = sadness, red = anger, pink = insecurity
- “Piece of My Heart” by Janis Joplin:
red = power, anger, purple = raw emotion

Briefly discuss student choices at this time. Advise students to keep their notes available so they can refer to them as the artists and sub-genres within rock music are studied later in the lesson.

5. 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.
6. Sarah McLachlan is seen as a “feminist visionary” who founded the all-female concert tour, “Lilith Fair.” Prior to showing the Sarah McLachlan segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

“Sarah McLachlan has emerged as one of Canada’s leading recording artists and a major force in the North American music industry. McLachlan has released five albums with Arista Records, beginning in 1988 with *Touch*, followed by *Solace* (1991), *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy* (1994), *The Freedom Sessions* (1994) and *Surfacing* (1997). *Surfacing* has sold six million copies (six times platinum status) in the U.S. and achieved “Diamond” status in Canada for selling more than one million copies. *Surfacing* also won McLachlan two Grammy Awards, four Juno Awards and many other distinctions.

McLachlan also conceived and launched the much-heralded “Lilith Fair” tour, a multi-artist bill showcasing the talents of women performers from around the world. “Lilith Fair” was the number one most successful multi-artist tour in North America and concluded its second year in operation by playing in 52 cities in the U.S., Canada and the U.K., grossing over \$28 million U.S. In the process, “Lilith” donated over \$2 million dollars to local and national charities.

Over her 10-year career, McLachlan has received numerous entertainment and achievement distinctions, including the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Visionary Award for advancing the careers of women in music. The award, presented by New York Governor George E. Pataki, recognizes her work with “Lilith Fair,” which gives both established and aspiring women artists a chance to showcase their talents to a broad audience.

7. Show VH1’s 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 2 with Geri Halliwell, #69 – Sarah McLachlan segment.
8. Sarah McLachlan can also be seen as a singer/songwriter. The instrumentation in her songs has the piano in a strong role, which helps create the intimate atmosphere her songs require. Ask students to suggest what color Sarah McLachlan would be. Why did she feel it was so important to create “Lilith Fair?” Do the students agree/disagree with the statement that female groups were being discriminated against?
9. Tina Turner has a background in R&B and pop, but her soul is all rock and roll. Ask students to think about how much emotion is expressed in the sound of her voice. What could be an adjective to describe her sound? Prior to showing the Tina Turner segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

b. Annie Mae Bullock, 26 November 1939, Brownsville, Tennessee, USA. A singer while in her early teens, this enduring artist was a regular performer in St. Louis' nightclubs when she was discovered in 1956 by guitarist Ike Turner. She joined his group as a backing singer, but quickly became the co-star and featured vocalist, a relationship sealed two years later with their marriage. Ike and Tina Turner was a highly successful act on the R&B circuit, before expanding their audience through a controversial liaison with producer Phil Spector. They emerged as a leading pop/soul act during the late 60s/early 70s with tours in support of the Rolling Stones and hits with "Proud Mary" (1971) and "Nutbush City Limits" (1973). However, the relationship between husband and wife grew increasingly strained as Ike's behavior became irrational. Tina walked out of their professional and personal relationship during a 1975 tour, incurring the wrath of concert promoters who remained unsympathetic when the singer attempted a solo act. During this time the singer appeared in Ken Russell's film of the Who's rock-opera *Tommy*, offering an outrageous portrayal of the Acid Queen; however, this acclaimed cameo failed to successfully launch Turner's solo career.

Her career was rejuvenated in 1983 when British act Heaven 17 invited her to participate in an offshoot project dubbed BEF. She contributed a suitably raucous cover version of the Temptations "Ball Of Confusion" which, in turn, engendered a recording contract with Capitol Records. Turner's reading of Al Green's "Let's Stay Together" reached the UK Top 10, while an attendant album, *Private Dancer*, hurriedly completed in its wake, spawned another major hit in "What's Love Got To Do With It". This melodramatic ballad topped the US chart, reached number 3 in England, and won two Grammys as Record Of The Year and Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female. The title track, written by Mark Knopfler, was also a transatlantic hit.

In the mid-80s Turner accepted a role in the movie *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, the theme from which, "We Don't Need Another Hero", was another international hit. The following year she duetted with Mick Jagger at the Live Aid concert and contributed to the US charity single "We Are The World". Her 1985 autobiography was filmed in 1993 as *What's Love Got To Do With It*, which also gave its title to a bestselling album and an extensive worldwide tour. She released the title track from the James Bond movie *Goldeneye* in October 1995. The Bono/Edge composition had Turner sounding uncannily like Shirley Bassey (the vocalist on "Goldfinger"). The Trevor Horn-produced *Wildest Dreams* was a further solid rock album, laying her strong R&B roots to rest. Turner returned to the UK Top 10 in October 1999, days short of her sixtieth birthday, with "When The Heartache Is Over". This preceded the disappointing *Twenty Four Seven*, following which Turner announced she was retiring from live performance.

Although commentators have criticized Turner's one-dimensional approach, she enjoys massive popularity. She is truly happy with her present life and talks articulately about her difficult past. The voluptuous image is kept for the stage, while a quieter Turner enjoys the fruits of her considerable success offstage. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1991.

10. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 5 with Susan Sarandon, #2 – Tina Turner segment.
11. Tina Turner has been the lead singer in front of the stereotypical "rock and roll band." The electric guitars and penetrating rhythm sections set the tone for her raw, concentrated vocals. Ask students to choose a color to represent Tina Turner. What about her professionalism and intense drive has helped her career?
12. Tori Amos was a child prodigy who has become an artist, a genius on the piano, and a strong role model. Her song, "Silent All These Years," described physical domestic abuse, and proceeds went to the charity, RAINN (The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), of which she is a founding member and serves as chair on the advisory board. Prior to showing the Tori Amos segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

b. Myra Ellen Amos, 22 August 1963, North Carolina, USA. Amos was compared early in her career to everyone from Kate Bush to Joni Mitchell. She began playing the piano aged two-and-a-half, and was enrolled in Baltimore's Peabody Institute as a five-year-old prodigy. Legend has it that she was formally ejected for "playing by ear" the songs of John Lennon and the Doors, following six years of study. In 1980, aged 17, she released (under her real name, Ellen Amos) her first single "Baltimore"/"Walking With You" on the MEA label (named after her own initials). She favored cover versions such as Joni Mitchell's "A Case Of You", Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" and Bill Withers' "Ain't No Sunshine", later staples of her 90s live set. Amos then adopted the first name Tori, after a friend's boyfriend's remark that she "didn't look much like an Ellen, more like a Tori".

Still the dozens of demo tapes she had recorded since her early teens (mostly sent out by her doting father) failed to give her a break, and she switched tack to front pop-rock band Y Kant Tori Read (a play on words that referred to her previous expulsion from the conservatory).

...Amos lowered her profile for a while after this undignified release. As she remembers, "After the trauma I crumbled. I was very confused about why I was doing music." Nevertheless, she persevered in writing her own songs, and eventually a tape of these reached Atlantic Records' co-chairman, Doug Morris. Though he saw the germ of her talent, he decided that her current sound was not to the taste of the average American-FM listener, and sent Amos instead to the UK (and EastWest Records) so that she might enjoy a better reception. Amos moved to London in February 1991 and started playing small-scale gigs around the capital. Her "debut" EP, *Me And A Gun*, was released in October 1991, and tackled the emotive and disturbing topic of her rape by an armed "fan" as she drove him home after a gig. An acclaimed debut album, *Little Earthquakes*, followed in January 1992, although the comparisons to Kate Bush continued.

Much of the following year was spent writing and recording a second album with co-producer and partner Eric Rosse. The result, *Under The Pink*, included a guest appearance from Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails). The first single lifted from it, "Cornflake Girl", reached number 4 in the UK charts in January 1994. The follow-up, "Pretty Good Year", reached number 7 in March, and with the album topping the UK chart Amos confirmed she was now a commercial force. She was heralded in the press, alongside Polly Harvey (PJ Harvey) and Björk, as part of a new wave of intelligent, literate female songwriters. This was cemented with the release of the sexually charged *Boys For Pele*. The lyrics were a powerful combination of artistic and erotic liberation. Armand Van Helden's remix of "Professional Widow" gained a huge club following and secured Amos a UK number 1 hit.

Several of the songs on *From The Choirgirl Hotel* were informed by Amos' recent miscarriage. The album proved to be her most mature and musically adventurous to date, Amos recording with a full band for the first time. A prolific songwriting burst led to the release of the double "To Venus And Back" the following year. The eclectic "Strange Little Girls" was a bold project on which Amos attempted some interesting cover versions, including the Beatles' "Happiness Is A Warm Gun," the Stranglers "Strange Little Girl" and Eminem's "97 Bonnie & Clyde". In July 2002, Amos signed a new recording contract with Epic Records. She made her debut for the label a few months later with the highly accessible *Scarlet's Walk*.

13. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 2 with Geri Halliwell, #71 – Tori Amos segment, and Episode 3 with Julianna Margulies, #46 – Kate Bush segment.
14. Similar to Sarah McLachlan, Tori Amos incorporates the piano as her steadfast tool in performance. Her unconventional technique, after being trained in a conventional, classical format, validates her proficiency and allows her to create intense moments, on the piano and in her voice as well. Lead students in a discussion of similarities/differences between Tori Amos and Kate Bush. Do you agree that they have a similar sound? Do you think that the music of Tori Amos is similar to Joni Mitchell? Why/why not? What color would Tori Amos be?
15. Janis Joplin was one of the very first women who single-handedly changed the concept of the "proper" female musician. She was rough, her voice was raspy, and she was powerful. She was the female answer to every rock star who ever existed. Prior to showing the Janis Joplin segment, share brief biographical information with the students, using the following as needed:

Janis Joplin was born in the oil refinery town of Port Arthur, Texas on January 19, 1943 as the eldest child in a working class family. Janis was interested in art and poetry from a young age and many people considered her eccentric. By the age of fourteen Janis had become a social outcast, so she withdrew into her own world. She was consumed with a passion for music and at the age of eighteen, she began performing at country and western bars in Houston and Dallas.

Janis briefly attended Lamar State College of Technology and University of Texas at Austin after high school, but her love for music drew her to California. On the West Coast in 1963, Janis witnessed the hippie movement and found herself drawn in. Janis sang at blues clubs and coffeehouses in San Francisco and Venice Beach and openly indulged in drugs and alcohol. On more than one occasion, Janis performed on stage holding a bottle of Southern Comfort in her hand.

Joplin lived in California for two years, performing often. She briefly moved back to Port Arthur in 1965. Although she tried to readapt to the small town atmosphere, she quickly realized that there was no hope and returned to San Francisco within the year. Chet Holms, a publicist and a friend of Janis, suggested that she join an existing rock band called Big Brother and the Holding Company. She took his advice and joined on as the lead singer and they were a hit. The soulful bluesy voice that listeners heard had never come from a small white girl before, and she was instantly compared to such legendary blues singers as Bessie Smith and Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter.

Big Brother and the Holding Company performed at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, where Janis awed audiences with her hearty performance of "Ball and Chain," originally recorded by Big Mama Thornton. The band's performance earned them an offered contract with an independent label, Mainstream Records. Big Brother released its' self-titled debut album in 1968.

Later that year, Big Brother and the Holding Company released their sophomore album, "Cheap Thrills," under Columbia Records. The album was immediately successful with such hits as "Piece of My Heart," "Ball and Chain," and "Turtle Blues," and stayed at No. 1 on the Billboard charts for eight weeks. "Cheap Thrills" went on to sell a million copies in only the next month.

In late 1968, Janis left Big Brother to pursue a solo career. It was during this period that she gave another heart wrenching performance at the Woodstock Music and Art Festival in Bethel, New York. In 1969 Janis formed another back up group, the Kosmic Blues Band, and released "I Got Dem Ol' Kosmic Blues Again Mama!" with the hit single "Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)". After the release of her third album she formed the Full Tilt Boogie Band. Sadly, Janis died before her album with her new band was released, in the Landmark Motor Hotel in Hollywood, California in 1970 of an accidental heroin overdose. Her body was cremated and her ashes were scattered over the California coast.

Janis and the Full Tilt Boogie Band were working on "Pearl" at the time of her death and the album was released posthumously in 1971. Pearl is noted for it's lack of intensity that was usually encompassed in Janis' music, as was obvious in songs like "Mercedes Benz" and "Me and Bobby McGee."

Janis Joplin was inducted into the Music Hall of Fame in 1995. Her songs became the passion and emotion of the hippie generation and her voice could never be duplicated. She is still considered the greatest white female blues singer of all time.

16. Show VH1's 100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll: Episode 5 with Susan Sarandon, #3 – Janis Joplin segment, and Episode 4 with Courtney Cox, #26 – Bessie Smith. View these two segments without interruption or discussion.
17. Janis Joplin was the lead singer of "Big Brother and the Holding Company," a rock band with a heavy blues influence. Luckily for Big Brother, Janis Joplin was born with a voice strong enough and a stage presence wild enough to front an ensemble already so crushing, with weeping electric guitars and formidable drums. Would you classify Janis Joplin as a blues singer, or as rock and roll? Why? Ask students to objectively critique the similarities/differences between Bessie Smith's and Janis Joplin's voices and technique. What color would Janis Joplin be?

18. As students understand the concept of connecting color to sound, increase the complexity through a secondary activity. Teacher should select two songs, either video segments or recordings of the women discussed earlier in the lesson or other “rock” genre artists (e.g. Hole #68, Cyndi Lauper #58, PJ Harvey #55, Alanis Morrissette #53, Melissa Etheridge #49, Sheryl Crow #44, Heart #40, Pat Benetar #39, Bjork #36, Sinead O’Connor #35, Joan Jett #32, Marianne Faithfull #25, Grace Slick #20, Patti Smith #15, Stevie Nicks #14, Debbie Harry #12, Annie Lennox #9, Chrissie Hynde #7). Ask students to listen to the recording, and using the tone color and emotion of the music, create an abstract picture that conveys its meaning.

19. Present student pictures to the class with explanations of how the student interpreted the music, and why they chose the specific colors. Lead students in an exploration of how the term “rock music” can have so many different expressions, which should be evident in the various colors shown in the student pictures. Is each artist capable of extending their music to reach every color and every shade?

Student Copy

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Biographical Notes</i>	<i>Notes on Video Segment</i>
Sarah McLachlan	Alternative Rock		
Tina Turner	Rock		
Tori Amos	Alternative Rock		
Janis Joplin	Rock		

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.