



VH1

And You Don't Stop - 30 Years of Hip-Hop
Episode 2
VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 9-12

Lesson 3

NOTE TO THE 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.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please review the lyrics before using the song in the classroom, as some may be considered inappropriate for classroom use.

Objectives

- Students will discuss how Run-D.M.C. brought Hip Hop into mainstream popularity.
- Students will discuss why melding two styles of music is popular and what the results have been through history.
- Students will take two songs and combine elements to make a new song.

National Standards:

4. Composing and arranging music within specific 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
- VH1's *And You Don't Stop – 30 Years of Hip-Hop2* (Cable in the Classroom edited version)
- Web-based lesson materials
- CD Player/Audio equipment
- Overhead projector (optional)
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Audio recordings of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way" from the album *Toys in the Attic* (1975) and Aerosmith and Run-D.M.C.'s duo "Walk This Way" from the album *Raising Hell* (1986)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students are familiar with various musical genres and can identify the musical elements using accurate terminology.

Procedures

1. Lead students in a discussion of the hip hop/rap group Run – D.M.C. Review their biographical information, including their rise to fame, popular hits, and personal background of each of the artists. Encourage students to take notes during the discussion. The biography at the end of the lesson and Web sites listed in the "Supplemental Resources" section will be helpful in guiding the discussion.
2. Show VH1's *And You Don't Stop – 30 Years of Hip Hop, Episode 2*, the section that focuses on Run – D.M.C. Ask students to pay specific attention to how the group broke the barrier and attracted a larger audience of white listeners.
3. Play the recording of Aerosmith and Run-D.M.C.'s duo version of "Walk This Way," Run-D.M.C.'s cross over hit. Have students make a list of the musical elements in the song that are characteristically hip hop or rock. Do the two styles share some musical elements? If desired, play the recording of Aerosmith's original version of "Walk This Way" for comparison. The following chart provides suggested answers and may be helpful in organizing the students' ideas:

	Vocal style	Guitars	Beat	Bass	Other
Verse	rap	rock	rap	etc.	
Chorus	rock				

4. Have students discuss why this song was so popular. Why did the marriage of these two unique styles create such a positive response for both musical groups? Use the following as needed:

Aerosmith had a hit with the original “Walk this Way” in 1975, so they already had a large fan base, and Run DMC was increasing in popularity. Bringing the two together added fans for each group and increased each band’s popularity.

The style of the song is imitative of the blues/rock-a-billy style that was the origin of rock and roll. Originally, rock music was a mix of country and blues (to simplify), which was a marriage of styles from the Black and White communities. Run DMC’s “Walk this Way” remarried styles from Black and White communities, which had been steadily separating since the 1960s. Rap was deemed “not real music” by many people, but “Walk this Way” brought the style of rap new respect by filling in elements that were missing to them, such as sung lyrics and a verse/chorus format.

Melding two styles of music often has a positive effect on both styles. Other examples include: blues + country = rock and roll, classical + folk music = popular Romantic era pieces, Spanish folk music + African percussion = Afro-Latin music, Salsa, Bossa Nova, etc.

5. Divide students into groups with three to five members. Explain to them that each group will be assigned two songs to combine, such as “London Bridge” with a jazz ballad, or a rap song with a Mozart string quartet. Have the groups begin by brainstorming, using a blank chart similar to the one used in Step 3 to assist them in deciding which elements of each style they would like to keep in their combination arrangement (headings may need to be adapted to suit the different genres).

NOTE: Choose the song combinations ahead of time and assign one to each group, have them draw from a hat, etc. Make sure the songs are simple enough, such as a familiar melody and a simple rhythmic pattern, so that students of any ability can perform them. Students can sing “London Bridge” with a swing beat or rap over a recording of a string quartet. Other possibilities include combining an African drum pattern with a Neil Diamond song (students can play along with a recording), or applying an Eastern European folk dance beat (2+2+3) to “Old MacDonald.” Ideally, students should be able to perform their combination songs for the class.

6. If possible, have each group perform their arrangement for the class. Classmates who are watching should complete a comparison chart or make notes indicating which musical elements belong to which genre, and discuss their ideas briefly after each performance.

Supplemental Resources:

- Additional biographical information for Run-D.M.C.:
www.vh1.com/artists/az/run_dmc/artist.jhtml
<http://pages.sbcglobal.net/tmoren/rundmc/>
www.rollingstone.com/artist/bio/_/id/5606/rundmc?pageid=rs.Artistcage&pageregion=artistHeader
- Biography of Aerosmith: www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:m9b8b5c4tsq4~T1

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.

Biography: Run DMC
by Stephen Thomas Erlewine

More than any other hip-hop group, Run-D.M.C. are responsible for the sound and style of the music. As the first hardcore rap outfit, the trio set the sound and style for the next decade of rap. With their spare beats and excursions into heavy metal samples, the trio were tougher and more menacing than their predecessors Grandmaster Flash and Whodini. In the process, they opened the door for both the politicized rap of Public Enemy and Boogie Down Productions, as well as the hedonistic gangsta fantasies of N.W.A. At the same time, Run-D.M.C. helped move rap from a singles-oriented genre to an album-oriented one — they were the first hip-hop artist to construct full-fledged albums, not just collections with two singles and a bunch of filler. By the end of the '80s, Run-D.M.C. had been overtaken by the groups they had spawned, but they continued to perform to a dedicated following well into the '90s.

All three members of Run-D.M.C. were natives of the middle-class New York borough Hollis, Queens. Run (born Joseph Simmons, November 14, 1964) was the brother of Russell Simmons, who formed the hip-hop management company Rush Productions in the early '80s; by the mid-'80s, Russell had formed the pioneering record label Def Jam with Rick Rubin. Russell encouraged his brother Joey and his friend Darryl McDaniels (born May 31, 1964) to form a rap duo. The pair of friends did just that, adopting the names Run and D.M.C., respectively. After they graduated from high school in 1982, the pair enlisted their friend Jason Mizell (born January 21, 1965) to scratch turntables; Mizell adopted the stage name Jam Master Jay.

In 1983, Run-D.M.C. released their first single, "It's Like That"/"Sucker M.C.'s," on Profile Records. The single sounded like no other rap at the time — it was spare, blunt, and skillful, with hard beats and powerful, literate, daring vocals, where Run and D.M.C.'s vocals overlapped, as they finished each other's lines. It was the first "new school" hip-hop recording. "It's Like That" became a Top 20 R&B hit, as did the group's second single, "Hard Times"/"Jam Master Jay." Two other hit R&B singles followed in early 1984 — "Rock Box" and "30 Days" — before the group's eponymous debut appeared.

By the time of their second album, 1985's *King of Rock*, Run-D.M.C. had become the most popular and influential rappers in America, already spawning a number of imitators. As the *King of Rock* title suggests, the group were breaking down the barriers between rock & roll and rap, rapping over heavy metal records and thick, dense drum loops. Besides releasing the *King of Rock* album and scoring the R&B hits "King of Rock," "You Talk Too Much," and "Can You Rock It Like This" in 1985, the group also appeared in the rap movie *Krush Groove*, which also featured Kurtis Blow, the Beastie Boys, and the Fat Boys.

Run-D.M.C.'s fusion of rock and rap broke into the mainstream with their third album, 1986's *Raising Hell*. The album was preceded by the Top Ten R&B single "My Adidas," which set the stage for the group's biggest hit single, a cover of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way." Recorded with Aerosmith's Steven Tyler and Joe Perry, "Walk This Way" was the first hip-hop record to appeal to both rockers and rappers, as evidenced by its peak position of number four on the pop charts. In the wake of the success of "Walk This Way," *Raising Hell* became the first rap album to reach number one on the R&B charts, to chart in the pop Top Ten, and to go platinum, and Run-D.M.C. were the first rap act to receive airplay on MTV — they were the first rappers to cross over into the pop mainstream. *Raising Hell* also spawned the hit singles "You Be Illin'" and "It's Tricky."

Run-D.M.C. spent most of 1987 recording *Tougher Than Leather*, their follow-up to *Raising Hell*. *Tougher Than Leather* was accompanied by a movie of the same name. Starring Run-D.M.C., the film was an affectionate parody of '70s blaxploitation films. Although Run-D.M.C. had been at the height of their popularity when

they were recording and filming *Tougher Than Leather*, by the time the project was released, the rap world had changed. Most of the hip-hop audience wanted to hear hardcore political rappers like Public Enemy, not crossover artists like Run-D.M.C. Consequently, the film bombed and the album only went platinum, failing to spawn any significant hit singles.

Two years after *Tougher Than Leather*, Run-D.M.C. returned with *Back From Hell*, which became their first album not to go platinum. Following its release, both Run and D.M.C. suffered personal problems as McDaniels suffered a bout of alcoholism and Simmons was accused of rape. After McDaniels sobered up and the charges against Simmons were dismissed, both of the rappers became born-again Christians, touting their religious conversion on the 1993 album *Down With the King*. Featuring guest appearances and production assistance from artists as diverse as Public Enemy, EPMD, Naughty by Nature, A Tribe Called Quest, Neneh Cherry, Pete Rock, and KRS-One, *Down With the King* became the comeback Run-D.M.C. needed. The title track became a Top Ten R&B hit and the album went gold, peaking at number 21. Although they were no longer hip-hop innovators, the success of *Down With the King* proved that Run-D.M.C. were still respected pioneers.

After a long studio hiatus, the trio returned in early 2000 with *Crown Royal*. The album did little to add to their ailing record sales, but the following promotional efforts saw them join Aerosmith and Kid Rock for a blockbuster performance on MTV. By 2002, the release of two greatest-hits albums prompted a tour with Aerosmith that saw them travel the U.S., always performing “Walk This Way” to transition between their sets. Sadly, only weeks after the end of the tour, Jam Master Jay was senselessly murdered in a studio session in Queens. Only 37 years old, the news of his passing spread quick and hip-hop luminaries like Big Daddy Kane and Funkmaster Flex took the time to pay tribute to him on New York radio stations. Possibly the most visible DJ in the history of hip-hop, his death was truly the end of an era and unfortunately perpetuated the cycle of violence that has haunted the genre since the late ‘80s.

Courtesy of: www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:crfm960odepf~T1



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 Rachel Weissman, Music Enrichment Teacher, Evergreen Montessori School, Wheaton, MD