



VH1's "Movies That Rock": Moulin Rouge

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 1

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 be introduced to and discuss the genre of the musical film.
- Students will discover the Bohemian lifestyle and its characteristics.
- Students will create their own composition using various popular songs that unify one idea or theme.

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.

Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- Audio Audio playback equipment (CD player)
- VH1's *"Movies That Rock": Moulin Rouge*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils and paper (students)
- Copies of Vocabulary Worksheet for students (included with lesson)
- Movie soundtrack to "Moulin Rouge," Interscope Records, 2001 (optional)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have a basic familiarity with music notation.
- Students can identify melodic and rhythmic passages in various styles of music.

Procedures

1. As students enter the classroom, have "Elephant Love Medley" playing in the background. When they are seated, ask them to comment on their thoughts as they listen to the music. Do they recognize any individual songs in the medley? Do they recognize it as music from "Moulin Rouge?" Does it create an image for them?

For younger students: As students enter the classroom, distribute boas, trinkets of jewelry, long flowing scarves, walking canes, etc., and allow them to experiment with these costume elements, attempting to discover a character through them. Proceed to step 2 after some time with this activity.

2. When students are seated, explain that they are going to see the opening scenes of the movie "Moulin Rouge," a modern day movie musical. Lead students in a brief discussion of the genre of movie musicals. Have them name other musical movies (*The Sound of Music, The Music Man, Mary Poppins, Chicago*, animated movies, etc.). What aspects of the movie musical that aren't present in "non-musical" movies might provide unique challenges to producers and directors? (The *Behind the Movie: Chicago* lesson series provides additional topics related to movie musicals and their development.)
3. Show VH1's *Movies That Rock: Moulin Rouge*, through the introduction of the dramatic idea presented by the actors Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman in her boudoir.
4. Have students discuss the open-mindedness of the Bohemian lifestyle as it is depicted in the movie. In what ways do the Bohemians accept people of all physical and mental abilities, and of different cultural and financial backgrounds? Ask the students to express their feelings about the freedom of the Bohemian lifestyle. Do they experience that type of freedom in their own lives?
5. Play "Elephant Love Medley" for students again, and help them list the various songs that make up the medley. (The melodies include: "All you Need is Love," "I was made for Lovin' You," "One More Night," "Pride

(In The Name of Love),” “Don’t Leave Me This Way,” “Silly Love Songs,” “Up Where We Belong,” “Heroes,” “I Will Always Love You,” and “Your Song.”)

6. Lead students in a discussion of how the combination of various melodies in a single musical selection can present a unified idea. Guide them in expressing their feelings about the ideas that are being presented in “Elephant Love Medley.” Does the music channel the creative influences of the Bohemian type of lifestyle?
7. Distribute copies of the Vocabulary Worksheet to students. Have them work in teams of two or three to complete the worksheets.
8. Tell students that they are going to create a medley of songs that expresses a theme, preferably one that is representative of the Bohemian lifestyle. Students should work in small groups (the same groups that worked together on the Vocabulary Worksheet would be appropriate), and select one word from each category on their worksheet that they would like to incorporate into their theme. The medley should include approximately six songs, one for each word, if possible, and students may choose from any genre, as long as the music is appropriate for the classroom.
9. As a class, guide students in assessing each group’s creation of a medley, and how well it expresses a unified theme. If appropriate, have students perform their compositions, or present them using recordings. (This could be done as part of a subsequent lesson.) If a performance is not feasible, have groups explain their musical selections. How well do the songs represent the words that were selected from the vocabulary worksheet?
10. Ask students to comment on how the use of dynamics and tempos helps to create the mood of a song. Did the groups use a combination of songs for their medleys that use a variety of tempos and dynamics, or were they all similar? Have students experiment with, or discuss, making changes to the tempos and dynamics of their selected songs to alter the interpretation of the composition.

Extensions:

1. Social Studies: Ask students to research the Bohemian lifestyle in Paris during the time period of the movie, “Moulin Rouge,” as well as the lifestyle of gypsies in Europe, and people who live in Greenwich Village, New York, past and present.
2. Physical Education: Have students discuss the physical stresses and requirements endured by professional performers and dancers, such as the need to be a certain weight and/or height, and the necessity of maintaining a physical level that allows them to obtain perfection and/or success. Topics might include diet, eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia), exercise, endurance, physical stress, etc.
3. Science: Have students discuss the influence of the freethinking Bohemian lifestyle on scientific inventions in Europe and around the world during the same time period as that represented in the movie.

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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 Alice Backus, Alexander Graham Bell Academy, Cleveland Municipal School District, Cleveland, Ohio.

VOCABULARY WORKSHEET

List words in the following categories that you feel describe the category heading. Descriptive words may be adjectives, adverbs, nouns, etc.

FREEDOM

LOVE

TRUTH

FRIENDSHIP

BEAUTY

SUCCESS