



200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons



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 discuss style and characteristics of musical time periods.
- Students will discuss the definition of “pop culture.”
- Students will compare and contrast modern-day popular icons to music icons throughout history.

NOTE to teachers: In Lesson 1 of this series, musical time periods are discussed in broad terms, giving the main points of each era and an “icon” of proportions comparable to modern day icons with which students are familiar. Lessons 2-4 delve deeper into the chosen time periods, while taking a closer look at present day “icons” that bring shared musical ideals to each generation. Lesson 4 provides activities that summarize the previous lessons

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 *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Copies of Musical Styles and Composer/Artist worksheets (included with lesson) for students
- Teacher selected recordings of Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, W.A. Mozart, J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Aaron Copland, and other classical artists as highlighted in the Musical Styles worksheet.

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have experience discussing various musical styles.

Procedures

1. Begin class discussion by asking students to provide a common definition of the term “popular.” Possible answers might include “who/what everyone likes,” “what everybody is doing/wearing/listening to,” etc. Write the student answers on the board (teacher may wish to save this list for use in Lesson 4), and close the discussion by telling students that the word “popular” can be defined as “commonly liked or approved of” (Merriam-Webster’s dictionary). Ask students to think about or write down the name of a “popular” musician, and have them describe what makes him/her popular based on their discussion. Possible answers might include “good-looking,” “talented,” or as simple and vague as “I just like him/her.”
2. Have students define the term “icon.” Answers might include “a figure/person to look up to,” “a role model,” etc. Tell students that Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines “icon” as “an object of uncritical devotion.” Ask students to comment on whether they would still consider the musicians discussed in step 1 as “icons”, based on their discussion of the term.
3. Explain to students that popularity is measured subjectively: the opinions and feelings of society on a certain subject are deciding factors. Many societies function by this “majority rule,” with people uniting through a common affection for someone or something. Throughout musical history, there have been composers and artists who have achieved a status so legendary that they are celebrated throughout the world for their successes, and have attained the role of “icon”.
4. Distribute student copies of the Musical Styles worksheet, and ask students to fill in the worksheet during the discussion. Lead students in a broad discussion of the aspects of musical time periods (Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th Century). Play teacher selected recordings representative of each era and briefly discuss. Students should note on their worksheets the musical characteristics of the

selections.

NOTE: Information for each major musical time period (located at <http://archiv.radio.cz/hudba/indexeng.html>) is provided on the teacher version of the Musical Style worksheet. The information provides flexibility of content as to which eras may be chosen for this activity, however, it may be helpful to include those eras that will be focused on during the discussion of composers later in the lesson.

5. Distribute student copies of the Composer/Artist worksheet, asking them to complete them during the following discussion. Suggest to students that common threads tie the artists and composers considered to be icons of today to the icons of the past that they have just discussed. They may be similar in musical style, or there may be parallels in their lives.
6. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Whitney Houston, #116, Hour 3. Encourage students to make notes on their worksheet about Whitney Houston.
7. Play the teacher selected recording of a popular Whitney Houston song, and ask students to note characteristics of her music on their worksheet in the "Icon of the Present" section. Follow this by playing the teacher selected recording of a J.S. Bach piece, and ask students to note the musical characteristics. (NOTE: If students previously focused on Bach while completing the Musical Styles worksheet, they may refer back to their notes, and the playing of another Bach selection can be omitted at this point.)
8. After students listen to the examples, ask them if they see any similarities between Whitney Houston and Bach. Students will likely be skeptical at first, and may need some encouraging. Guide students in the discussion by using the ideas provided in the teacher version of the Composer/Artist worksheet, then ask them if they are able to add any other similarities to the ones already given. Repeat this exercise, focusing on the differences. Students should make notes on their worksheets.
9. Repeat procedures 6 - 8, using the following VH1 segments: Michael Jackson, #10, Hour 5; Stevie Wonder, #125, Hour 2; Dolly Parton, #189, Hour 1. (See the teacher version of the Composer/Artist worksheet for the classical counterparts.)
10. Lead students in a discussion connecting the importance of musical history and the icons of the past with the icons of today. Ask them to reflect upon their own choices as a group. Do the modern day icons they suggested at the beginning of the lesson still represent a "popular" opinion?

Extensions:

1. Group or individual activity:
Stylistic nuances of musical time periods - Play a listening game with the students. Separate them into groups and play excerpts of different musical styles. In order to receive credit, ask students to explain why the example is a part of that particular musical time period (i.e.: play "Spring" by Vivaldi and ask students to give specific examples of Baroque style).
2. Group or individual activity:
Comparing/contrasting the icons of past and present - Divide students into groups and assign each group a musical time period. As previously discussed, ask students to consider other present-day musicians who could be compared to a musician of their specific time period. Students may bring in musical examples and present their "icon" to the class.

Musical Styles Worksheet (Teacher Copy)

Time Period	Style of Music	Composers
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Medieval</u></p> <p>Suggested listening examples: Gregorian Chant, “Greensleeves”</p>	<p>Gregorian chant is monophonic, that is, music composed with only one melodic line without accompaniment. The authors of the melodies of the Gregorian chants remain unknown. As with the melodies of folk music, the chants probably changed as they were passed down orally from generation to generation.</p> <p>Polyphony is music where two or more melodic lines are heard at the same time in a harmony.</p>	<p>Most are unknown, however some influential composers are Hildegard von Bingen, Perotin, Guillaume de Machau, John Dunstable, and Guillaume Dufay.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Renaissance</u></p> <p>Suggested listening examples: “O Magnum Mysterium” by Palestrina</p>	<p>The technology of printing permitted a much wider distribution of their works and enabled a larger public into the study of music. Renaissance harmony was more unrestrained and more expressive - the period between Josquin Desprez and Palestrina is known as “the golden age of polyphony.” Imitation - where one musical line shares or imitates the same musical theme of the preceding line - became an important polyphonic technique.</p>	<p>Johannes Ockeghem, Josquin Desprez, Palestrina, William Bird, Giovanni Gabrielli, Carlo Gesualdo, John Dowland, and Orlando Gibbons</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Baroque</u></p> <p>Suggested listening examples: “l’incoronazione di Poppea” by Claudio Monteverdi, “Messiah” by Georg Friedrich Handel.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the Baroque age, around the year 1600, a new musical form was developed - opera. This form combined poetry, theater, the visual arts, and music. The style of homophony became more widespread in instrumental music as well. Many baroque pieces contain a continuo part, in which the keyboard (a harpsichord or organ) and the bass instruments produce a harmonic point, which accompanies the melodic line or lines.</p> <p>New polyphonic forms were devised. Canons and fugues, two very strict forms of imitational polyphony, were extremely popular. The orchestra was another creation to arrive at the beginning of the Baroque era, evolving from the accompaniment to opera and vocal arrangements. The most popular baroque musical genre was the concerto, in which solo musicians (or small groups of soloists) played “in concert” with an orchestra, which brought about interesting contrasts in dynamic and melody.</p>	<p>Claudio Monteverdi, Heinrich Schütz, Arcangelo Corelli, Henry Purcell, Francois Couperin, Antonio Vivaldi, Georg Philipp Telemann, Jean- Philippe Rameau, Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Friedrich Händel, Domenico Scarlatti.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Classical</u></p> <p>Suggested listening examples: Symphony No.100 “<i>Military</i>,” movement 1, by Franz Joseph Haydn, “Queen of the Night’s aria” from The Magic Flute, by Mozart.</p>	<p>As implied by the term ‘classical’, the music of this period looked to the art and philosophy of Ancient Greece and Rome - to the ideals of balance, proportion and disciplined expression. The late Baroque style was polyphonically complex and ornamental and rich in its melodies. Composers of the Classical era deviated from the evolution of their predecessors - their music had a considerably simpler texture. Homophony - music where the melody and accompaniment are clearly distinct - was the main style during the classical era; new genres were discovered that completed the transformation from the Baroque era to the Classical. The sonata was the most important of these, as well as the most developed. Although Baroque composers also wrote sonatas, the Classical style of sonata is completely distinct. The increasing popularity of public concerts led to a growth in the popularity of the orchestra as well, to the enlargement in the number of musicians and the number of orchestras overall.</p>	<p>Carl Philipp Emanuel (C.P.E.) Bach, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Johann Christian (J.C.) Bach, Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig von Beethoven.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Romantic</u></p> <p>Suggested listening examples: Hungarian Rhapsody No.10 by Liszt, 1812 Overture by Tchaikovsky, “The Dream of Gerontius” by Elgar.</p>	<p>The Classical period was oriented towards structural clarity and emotional restraint. It was expressive, but not so passionate that it became unbalanced. Composers of the Romantic period looked for their own balance between emotional intensity and classical form. “Musical story-telling” was no longer accepted. Pieces had to express some factual content, not only in opera but in instrumental compositions. The genre of the symphonic poem was brought about. In its performance, a composition had to set a scene, and then tell a story from that scene. Another new element brought to music by the Romantic period was the appropriation of folk music. Nationalism became a driving force in the later Romantic period, with composers trying to express their cultural identity through their music. These trends were mostly apparent in Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe, where elements of folk songs even became parts of symphonies, symphonic poems and other forms.</p>	<p>Ludwig von Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Hector Berlioz, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Fryderyk Chopin, Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt, Giuseppe Verdi, Richard Wagner, Anton Bruckner, Johannes Brahms, Modest Mussorgsky, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Antonin Dvorak, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff, Gabriel Fauré, Edward Elgar, Giacomo Puccini, Gustav Mahler.</p>

20th Century

Suggested listening examples:
“Prelude to The Afternoon of a Fawn” by Debussy, “Fanfare for the Common Man” by Copland.

The music of the 20th century is a series of ‘isms’ and ‘neo-isms’. The rough energy of Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring” was labeled neoprimitivism; the extreme emotional tones of early Schönberg were given the label expressionism; the return to cleanly structured forms and textures was called neoclassicism. All of these labels came (and are coming) as an attempt at orientation in the heterogeneous world of music in the 20th century.

During the first half of the 20th century, nationalism continued to have a large influence, the study of folk songs enriched the music of many composers, such as that of Ralph Vaughan Williams (England), Bela Bartok (Hungary), Heitor Villa Lobos (Brazil) and Aaron Copland (USA). Jazz and popular music also had a strong influence on many “serious” composers, whether in America or Europe.

The advance of technology has also had an enormous impact on the evolution of music in this century, with some composers using, for instance, the cassette player as a compositional tool (i.e. Violin Phase by Steve Reich), or electronically generated sounds alongside classical instruments, the use of computers to compose music.

Leos Janáček, Claude Debussy, Richard Strauss, Carl August Nielsen, Jean Sibelius, Arnold Schönberg, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Maurice Ravel, Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, Anton von Webern, Alban Berg, Sergei Prokofiev, Paul Hindemith, George Gershwin, Kurt Weill, **Aaron Copland**, Dmitri Shostakovich, Olivier Messiaen, John Cage, Benjamin Britten, Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, Philip Glass, Charles Ives.

Musical Styles Worksheet

Time Period	Style of Music	Composers
<u>Medieval</u>		
<u>Renaissance</u>		
<u>Baroque</u>		
<u>Classical</u>		
<u>Romantic</u>		
<u>20th Century</u>		

Composer/Artist Worksheet (Teacher Copy)

Icon of the Past	Icon of the Present	Similarities	Differences
<p>J.S. Bach</p> <p>Suggested listening example: “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”</p>	<p>Whitney Houston</p> <p>Suggested listening example: “Run to You”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both artists began their careers in sacred music. 2. Both artists are renowned for their music being technically challenging. 3. Both artists became role models that many others later tried to imitate. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specific musical style is different – Bach is considered a part of the Baroque period, while Houston is considered R&B or “pop.” 2. Bach’s instruments were primarily “keyboard” (i.e. organ, harpsichord), while Houston is a vocalist.
<p>W.A. Mozart</p> <p>Suggested listening examples: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik KV 525, Une petite musique de nuit Piccola musica notturna, In G Major: I Allegro</p>	<p>Michael Jackson</p> <p>Suggested listening example: “Thriller”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both artists began their careers as young child prodigies. 2. Both artists reached “superstar” status during their lifetimes. 3. Both artists are known for incorporating and evolving through different styles in their music. 4. Both artists became role models that many others later tried to imitate. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specific musical style is different – Mozart is considered a part of the Classical period, while Jackson is considered “pop.” 2. Mozart’s main achievement was as a composer, while Jackson’s primary success is seen as a performer.
<p>Ludwig von Beethoven</p> <p>Suggested listening example: Symphony No. 9 finale “Ode to Joy”</p>	<p>Stevie Wonder</p> <p>Suggested listening example: “Superstitious”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both artists are known for evolving through different styles in their music. 2. Both artists had physical handicaps. 3. Both artists were renowned during their careers. 4. Both artists became role models that many others later tried to imitate. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specific musical style is different – Beethoven is considered to be a “bridge” composer that connects both the Classical and Romantic periods, while Wonder is considered to connect R&B, funk, and “pop.” 2. Stevie Wonder became blind as an infant, however Beethoven began to go deaf at 28 and was completely deaf by the time he was 50.
<p>Aaron Copland</p> <p>Suggested listening example: “Appalachian Spring”</p>	<p>Dolly Parton</p> <p>Suggested listening example: “In the Sweet By and By”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both artists are known for showing patriotism through their music (i.e. Copland: folk music quotes, Parton: Appalachian songs). 2. Both artists composed music that incorporated different styles (i.e. Copland – jazz into Classical, Parton – “pop” into Country). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specific musical style is different – Copland is considered to be a part of the 20th century period, while Parton is known for her “Country” genre.

Composer/Artist Worksheet

Icon of the Past	Icon of the Present	Similarities	Differences
J.S. Bach	Whitney Houston		
W.A. Mozart	Michael Jackson		
Ludwig von Beethoven	Stevie Wonder		
Aaron Copland	Dolly Parton		

Supplemental Resources:

Definitions, biographical, and historical information for the *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons* lesson series has been excerpted primarily from the following sources:

- www.webster.com
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68029/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68030/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68031/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68032/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68033/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68034/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68035/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68036/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68037/episode.jhtml
- http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/the_greatest/68038/episode.jhtml
- Baroque Music: <http://baroque-music.com/frames/frames.shtml>
- A Brief History of Opera: <http://parallel.park.uga.edu/~awilliam/fs-opera/opera-history.html>
- Official website of Philip Glass: www.philipglass.com/
- Concise History of Western Music: www.wwnorton.com/concise/welcome.htm
- A Brief History of Music: <http://archiv.radio.cz/hudba/indexeng.html>

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.