

200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 2



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 the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque eras.
- Students will compare and contrast modern day popular icons to musical 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

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
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 *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Students' completed Musical Styles and Composer/Artist worksheets from Lesson 1
- Teacher selected recordings of Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, Mariah Carey, J.S. Bach ("The Well-Tempered Clavier"), Palestrina, and madrigal and/or Saltarello pieces

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have experience discussing various musical styles.
- Students have completed Lesson 1 of this portion of the series.

Procedures

1. Ask students to refer to the Musical Styles worksheet from the previous lesson. They may wish to make further notes during the next few steps of this lesson. Remind them of the following details:

During the medieval time period, there were few people who had the ability to read and write. Books were painstakingly copied by hand word for word for royalty and/or religious leaders. This was also the way of music – the form of music notation was unreliable and inconvenient to the common man. The way of news was carried by word of mouth, usually sung by wandering minstrels, or troubadours, who would travel from town to town, delivering information. The music, therefore, was simple, able to be learned by ear and repeated often.

Play teacher selected recording of a "Saltarello," an Italian court dance of the Middle Ages, and/or a madrigal. Have students discuss why the piece they have just heard would have been an important part of society at the time. What role would the wandering minstrels have played in society?
2. Have students direct their attention to the Renaissance portion of their worksheets, and guide them with the following:

Time progressed, and so did technology. During the Renaissance, one of the most important inventions was the printing press. Invented in 1445 by Gutenberg, it helped composers become more well known during their own lifetimes. It also created the need for a more standardized music notation that would become a universal language spoken by all musicians. The Renaissance was literally a "rebirth" in the fine arts – literature, art, and music. Musicians felt the freedom of composing with new styles such as polyphony and harmony.

Play teacher selected recording of Palestrina, such as "Sicut Cervus." Ask students to consider the musical differences between the selection they listened to previously and the Palestrina piece, and briefly comment on their observations. How could Palestrina be considered an "icon" of his time with regard to these musical

differences?

3. Discuss the Baroque era with students, using their worksheets for reference. Suggest the following regarding the intricacy of the era:

Each of the disciplines became more complex (architecture, painting and sculpture) during the Baroque era. Music reflected this intricacy as well. J.S. Bach was famous for “counterpoint,” which is defined by Merriam-Webster as:

- a: one or more independent melodies added above or below a given melody,
- b: the combination of two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character.

Ornamentation was also a main factor in the Baroque era, with qualities such as trills and mordents added to the music in order to make it more interesting.

Play teacher selected recording of a selection from “The Well-Tempered Clavier” by J.S. Bach. As a major composer of the Baroque era, does his skill with counterpoint and ornamentation place him in the role of “icon” to other composers?

4. Suggest to students that, as was revealed in the previous lesson, there are aspects of these time periods and composer “icons” that lend themselves to modern musicians as well.
5. Show VH1’s *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Bob Dylan, #68, Hour 4; Jim Morrison, #170, Hour 1. Ask students to reflect on the musical styles they just discussed as they watch.
6. Play teacher selected recording of a Bob Dylan song, such as “Blowin’ in the Wind” (optional). Lead students in a brief discussion of Bob Dylan and his music. He was considered a troubadour of the 1960s, speaking of political activism through his music. His orchestrations were quite simple, which allowed the information of his music to be showcased. Ask students to comment on Dylan’s characteristics, and how they have made him a “pop icon” of today. If he had lived centuries ago, to which musical era would he most likely have belonged (Medieval)? Why (his music speaks of the politics and news of the time, much as the wandering minstrels did in their time)?
7. Play teacher selected recording of a Jim Morrison/The Doors song, such as “People are Strange.” Tell students that Jim Morrison was often considered a poet before he was considered a “rock star.” As front man for the psychedelic band The Doors, he was a pioneer who broached topics not usually lyrically expressed in rock and roll. How can this make him an icon of his era?
8. Show VH1’s *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Jimi Hendrix, #109, Hour 3; Mariah Carey, #177, Hour 1.
9. Play teacher selected recordings of Jimi Hendrix, such as his version of “The Star-Spangled Banner”, and Mariah Carey, such as “Honey.” Explain to students that these artists are examples of rock and roll and R&B influenced by the Baroque era. Much like Bach used ornamentation to stimulate the listener, these two artists use a technique commonly referred to in contemporary pop music as “riffing.” Similar to the previous discussion about Dylan and Morrison, guide students in drawing comparisons. Why are Carey and Hendrix considered icons? Why was Bach considered an icon? Can Bach’s influence on music be seen in the styles of these two contemporary artists? How does this solidify Bach’s role as an icon?
10. Lead students in a dialogue concerning the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque time periods. In their opinion, did the modern musicians discussed today evolve from the style of those before them? How do the influences of “musical forefathers” continue to be evident in contemporary music? Ask students to discuss

whether the modern day icons they have watched as part of this lesson have the potential to have the same level of influence on artists of the future, and if they think that affects their status as an icon.

Extensions:

1. Group or individual activity:

The medieval time period (upper elementary/middle school) - Divide students into groups. Ask them to collaborate and decide on a current event (can be school related, news related, music related, etc.). Students should also select a popular song with which they are familiar (school appropriate!). Once these aspects are decided, request that students rewrite the lyrics of the pop song, incorporating the current event. Students may use instruments and perform in the way of a modern day “minstrel.”

2. Group or individual activity:

The Baroque time period (middle school/high school) - Divide students into groups and ask that they decide on a popular song with which they are familiar (school appropriate!). Request that students add ornamentation to the previously existing song (in the form of “riffing”, or more traditional trills and mordents). Once finished, students may perform for the class. During the performance, students may critique each other on the basis of originality, pitch, and rhythmic integrity.

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.