



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 how music is an important part of animation.
- Students will discuss the life and career of jazz composer, Vince Guaraldi.
- Students will compare and contrast two versions of “Linus and Lucy”.
- Students will discuss Charlie Brown as a Pop Icon.

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 (students)
- Chalkboard or overhead projector and transparencies
- Copies of Listening Chart for "Linus and Lucy" (included with lesson) for students
- Video of "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" animated special
- Two recordings of "Linus and Lucy"
 1. Original jazz trio version from either "A Boy Named Charlie Brown" or "A Charlie Brown Christmas"
 2. Wynton Marsalis' version from the album "Joe Cool's Blues"

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have experience discussing various musical styles.
- Students are familiar with and can use the terms melody, tempo, rhythm, timbre/ instrumentation, and dynamics.

Procedures

1. As students enter the classroom, have a teacher selected recording of "Linus and Lucy" playing in the background. When students are settled, ask them if they can identify the cartoon character(s) associated with this composition. It is likely that they will be able to identify one or more of the *Peanuts* characters.
2. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Charlie Brown, #104, Episode 3.
3. Lead students in a discussion about why Charlie Brown might be considered a pop icon. (If necessary, a brief review of lesson 1 in the first Pop Icons series will provide the definition of "pop icon.") List all acceptable responses on the board or overhead.
4. Ask students to comment on why people automatically think of Charlie Brown when they hear the "Linus and Lucy" song. Why is the music used for the *Peanuts* specials as popular as the characters themselves?
5. Tell students that Vince Guaraldi composed the music used for the *Peanuts* animated specials. Share the following biographical facts about Guaraldi:
 - Vince Guaraldi (1928-1976)*
 - 1953—first recorded work on the album "Vibratharpe" by the Carl Tjader Trio
 - 1955—formed first trio with longtime friend Eddie Duran (guitar) and Dean Reilly (bass)

- 1956-57—released first two albums, “The Vince Guaraldi Trio” and “A Flower is a Lonesome Thing”
 - 1963—Guaraldi’s original composition, “Cast Your Fate to the Wind,” became a Gold Record and won the Grammy award for Best Instrumental Jazz Composition
 - 1965—Guaraldi performed at Grace Cathedral
 - 1965—debut of “A Charlie Brown Christmas”
 - 1976—last *Peanuts* special to include Guaraldi’s original music, “It’s Arbor Day, Charlie Brown,” debuted on television
6. Distribute student copies of “Comparing ‘Linus and Lucy’” Listening Chart. Explain to students that they will be listening to two versions of a classic Guaraldi composition, the original arrangement by the Vince Guaraldi Trio and an arrangement by jazz trumpeter, Wynton Marsalis. Ask students to complete the listening chart, noting the differences and similarities as they listen.
 7. Play a recording of the Vince Guaraldi Trio performing “Linus and Lucy” (suggested albums: “A Boy Named Charlie Brown” or “A Charlie Brown Christmas”). Students should complete the appropriate sections of their charts while listening.
 8. Play Wynton Marsalis’ arrangement of “Linus and Lucy” (album: “Joe Cool’s Blues”). Remind students to fill in the appropriate sections of their charts while listening.
 9. Lead students in discussing their observations of the two different recordings. Point out the treatment of the instruments in the Marsalis version, noting that traditional jazz improvisation is used more in this arrangement than that by the Guaraldi Trio. Ask students specifically if they noticed the unusual treatment of the trombone. Marsalis’ arrangement uses the trombone to represent adult voices, as it is used in many of the *Peanuts* animated specials. NOTE: If possible, it may be helpful to show the students a short clip from a *Peanuts* special at this time so they can draw a visual comparison.
 10. Show the video clip from “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” in which Snoopy and Woodstock are setting the table for dinner. Show the clip initially with the sound muted, and then show the clip again with the sound on so that students can hear the song “Little Birdie” along with the animation. Ask students to consider the unique relationship between Guaraldi’s music and the *Peanuts* animated specials while they watch.
 11. Lead students in a discussion about how the song “Little Birdie” fits with the animation during that scene. Ask them to explain how the animation is different without the song. Is the scene enhanced by the music? How does the music convey the mood of Woodstock and Snoopy? Have students comment on how music replaces the need for dialogue in this scene.
 12. Ask students to look back at the list created during step 3, and again reflect on the idea of Charlie Brown as a Pop Icon. Was music on the original list? Has the familiarity of the music used in *Peanuts* specials contributed to his being ranked among the Pop Icons?

Extensions:

1. Compare some of Guaraldi’s other jazz compositions, such as “Cast Your Fate to the Wind,” with the music he composed for the *Peanuts* specials.

Comparing “Linus and Lucy” (Teacher Copy)

Musical Elements	Vince Guaraldi Trio	Wynton Marsalis
Tempo	Allegro	Allegro
Dynamics	Varies between mezzo-forte and forte	Varies between mezzo-forte and forte
Timbre (Instrumentation)	Piano, drums (with brushes), and string bass	Piano, drums, string bass, trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, trombone
Rhythm	Heavily syncopated, especially in the bass line	Heavily syncopated, especially in the bass line
Melody	Melody is simple and moves in step-wise motion, with very few large jumps	Original melody is simple, however, the melody becomes complex during the improvisatory sections
Other Characteristics	The brushes used on the drum set add an interesting sound to the piece	Some rich harmonies are created by the wind instruments There are a lot of improvisatory sections The trombone has an unusual sound quality to it (almost like a growl)

Comparing “Linus and Lucy”

Musical Elements	Vince Guaraldi Trio	Wynton Marsalis
Tempo		
Dynamics		
Timbre (Instrumentation)		
Rhythm		
Melody		
Other Characteristics		

Supplemental Resources:

- www.vinceguaraldi.com
- www.peanutcollectorclub.com/guaraldi.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 Michelle Barnes, General Music and World Drumming, Fall Creek Valley Middle School, Indianapolis, IN.