



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 define the term “exoticism.”
- Students will identify musical elements used by 19th and 20th century composers and modern pop icons to convey exoticism.

National Standards for Music Education

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
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
- Teacher selected recordings of world music (recommendation: Putumayo's "World Playground")
- Compact Disc "Brand New Day" by Sting

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have prior experience discussing various musical styles and genres.
- Students are familiar with the term "pop icon."

Procedures

1. As students enter the classroom, have a teacher selected recording of world music playing. Once students are settled, lead them in a discussion about the origin of the music they have been hearing. What country or countries does it represent? Ask students to comment on whether they have ever heard music from other countries incorporated into the music of modern pop artists, and give examples of songs with which they are familiar.
2. Explain to students that many composers from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as modern day musicians, incorporated music from other countries into their compositions. Discuss the musical idea of "exoticism," and provide students with the following definition by Ralph Locke in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*: "Exoticism: the evocation of a place, people, or social milieu that is (or perceived to be) profoundly different than accepted local norms in its attitudes, customs, and morals."
3. Lead students in discussing the reasons modern pop artists might use exotic music in their songs. Is there a specific purpose for using exotic music? Could the artists be reflecting on their own cultural heritage, or a personal interest in the particular culture? Could these artists gain audiences in other cultures by using that culture's music?
4. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Sting, #107, Episode 3.
5. Guide students in discussing Sting's use of world music influences in his pop songs. Is he trying to support or draw attention to a certain culture? Remind students of Ricky Martin's comment about Sting's work to preserve the world's rain forests. Is Sting trying to focus attention on a certain part of the world with his use of exotic music? Have students share their thoughts on whether a pop artist can really make a difference in the world with their music.

6. Play “Desert Rose” from Sting’s “Brand New Day” CD for students. As they listen to the selection, have them write down the musical elements in the song that make them think of exotic places (instrumentation, alternate tunings, language, vocal style, etc.).
7. Lead students in a discussion of the exotic musical elements that Sting incorporates into “Desert Rose.” Ask them to identify the particular cultural influence they hear in this song (Arabian).
8. Have students comment on Ricky Martin’s reflection on Sting’s longevity as a musician. How does his longevity contribute to his status as a pop icon?
9. Ask students to briefly discuss the narrator’s reference to Sting’s targeting of specific audiences through media such as Jaguar commercials. What type of listener is he trying to reach? Would they be interested in music that uses exotic influences? Why? Have students comment on how Sting’s use of exotic music has affected his popularity over the years.

Extensions:

1. Have students examine music of the Arab culture, similar to that used by Sting in “Desert Rose.”
2. Have students listen to other “exotic” compositions by Sting and compare them to “Desert Rose.” (Recommended examples: “Send Your Love,” “Message in a Bottle,” “The Book of My Life”)

Supplemental Resources:

- Articles on Sting and music of the Arab people in the November 2000 issue of *Music Alive!* (Vol. 20, No.2)
- *Music of Many Cultures* activity book by Carol Fisher Mathieson

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.