



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 identify the musical characteristics that create a memorable theme song.
- Students will discuss the affect a popular theme song can have on a performer or show's status as a pop icon.
- Students will compare and contrast an original television theme song with classical music.

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)
- Teacher selected recordings of famous classical themes (recommendations: Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*, or Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*)
- Teacher selected recording a of Mozart piano concerto
- "Mozart TV" Compact Disc (contains famous television theme songs written in the styles of various composers)
- Audio recording of the "Brady Bunch" theme song (optional)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students are familiar with the term "pop icon."
- Students have prior experience discussing various musical styles and genres.
- Students are familiar with basic musical terms such as tempo, instrumentation, dynamics, etc., and can use them in a discussion.

Procedures

1. As students enter the classroom, have a teacher selected recording of a famous classical music piece that most of the students will recognize playing in the background (see recommendations in "Materials" section). Once students are settled, ask them if they recognize the selection and if anyone can identify the piece and/or composer.
2. Ask students to suggest reasons why a particular theme or song is easily remembered. What are the musical elements that make a song recognizable (catchy melody or rhythm, unique instrumentation, lyrics, etc.)? Have individual students share the reason the piece they heard earlier is familiar to them.
3. Lead students in brainstorming a list of popular television show theme songs (past or present, animated or live, etc.). Have them explain the reasons that these theme songs stick out in their minds. Are the reasons similar to those they discussed in Step 2? How much of their recognition of the song is related to the show itself? Does the theme song exemplify a particular character or characters?
4. Hum a portion of the Mr. Rogers theme song "Won't You Be My Neighbor" for students. Ask them to identify the song and show, and add the lyrics to the melody.
5. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Mr. Rogers, #148, Episode 2.

6. Guide students in discussing why Mr. Rogers is considered a pop icon. Why was his children's program on the air for such a long period of time? Is Mr. Rogers' theme song "Won't You Be My Neighbor" one of the reasons he is considered a pop icon? What about the song makes it memorable? How can a theme song contribute to an artist or show's popularity?
7. Play a teacher selected recording of a Mozart piano concerto. Ask students to write down the musical elements that are characteristic of this genre of music (instrumentation, melody, rhythms, ornamentation, etc.) as they are listening, and have them name the composer.
8. Ask students if they are familiar with the theme song from the "Brady Bunch" television show (if students are not sufficiently familiar with the song, consider playing a recording of the original version). Play the "Brady Bunch" theme song from the "Mozart TV" CD for students, which is written as a piano concerto. As they are listening, have them write down the musical elements that are evident in the arrangement. How is it similar to, or different from, the Mozart concerto they listened to previously?
9. Using their notes about the piano concertos, have students discuss the similarities and differences they noted between the original "Brady Bunch" theme and the piano concerto version. How was the instrumentation changed? Were the rhythms and tempo altered? What changes or additions were made to the melody to make it sound like a Mozart composition? Ask students to comment on whether they feel the adaptation was successful and why.

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.