



VH1 Ultimate Albums

Bob Marley – Legend Episode #3

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 perform using rhythm instruments with accurate tempo a given syncopated ostinato pattern to accompany a played audio recording of reggae music.
Students will discuss the use of music to express religious and political beliefs.

National Standards: 2 - Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; 3 - Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments; 5 – Reading and notating music; 6 - Listening to, analyzing, and describing music; 9 - Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Materials

VHS VCR Player

Television

VH1 Ultimate Albums, Bob Marley, Legend Episode #3, segment two

Web-based lesson materials

Rhythm Instruments (optional, for younger students)

Teacher selected recording(s) of Reggae music and audio equipment

Syncopated ostinato pattern on board, overhead transparency, etc., suited to selected recording

Pencils and copies of guided listening questions for students

Procedures

1. Have selected Reggae music playing as students enter the classroom. Provide ostinato pattern on board, transparency, etc., and clap the pattern softly. As students take their seats, invite them to read the ostinato pattern and join in by clapping softly.
2. Play a second selection of Reggae music, providing a different ostinato. For younger students, hand out rhythm instruments and lead the ostinato softly to get them started. Have older students create their own ostinatos, with or without rhythm instruments. (The study of rhythms in Reggae music is continued in Lesson 3.)
3. Ask students to listen carefully to the selection again, paying close attention to the instrumentation and musical style. What types of instruments are used? List student answers on the board.
4. Have students comment on the structure of the music. Does the chord structure of the music itself change often (no)? Why not (the lyrics are the focus of Reggae music, rather than the music)?
5. Hand out guided listening sheet for students to complete while watching the program (see below).
6. Show VH1 Ultimate Albums, Bob Marley, beginning with segment two, and stopping after Chuck D's commentary. Remind students to listen for some of the elements of Reggae (simple chord progressions, focus on lyrics, rhythms, etc.).
7. Briefly discuss the quote: "You gotta stand up for your rights; you gotta stand up for something or you're gonna fall for anything. That's the motto I live on." Why could this quote define the Jamaican population at the time, and why was music such an important vehicle for this message? Use the following as needed:

As the tension continued to increase between the political parties, middle and lower class Jamaican's were losing all hope. Their neighborhoods were being devastated by poverty and destroyed by guerilla warfare. Children were starving, many were homeless, and there were few jobs to be had. The people of Jamaica had noth-

ing to hope for, to live for, to stand up and fight for, until the prophetic Bob Marley decided he wasn't going to sit back and watch his country destroy itself. He would fight "the power" the only way a Rastafari would – through music and poetry.

8. The narrator referred to Bob Marley as a civil leader and Rasta prophet. Lead students in a discussion of a Rastafari. Use the following as needed:

Rastafari is a combination of Judaism and Christianity in the African-American culture, and is a religion that, according to followers, is uncorrupt and in its purest form. A Prophet is a person to relay a religious message from a higher being – in this case, Marley was a prophet to Jah, an abbreviation of Jehovah. Marley was extremely religious, and preached peace, love, and unity through Jah. One of the defining characteristics of Rastafari is the wearing of dreadlocks.

It became common because anything not deemed pure, natural or clean, was forbidden. This included the combing or cutting of hair, citing the holy directive in Leviticus 21:5: "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh." Nappy tresses were allowed to mat and twine themselves into ropy dreadlocks, so called to mock non-believers' aversion to their appearance.

9. Ask students to comment on the ways in which Bob Marley communicated his Rastafarian beliefs through his music. Remind students of the importance of sacred music over the centuries, and have them list several composers who are known for their sacred works (Bach, Mozart, Haydn, etc.). How does the motivation of those composers (e.g. composers of Haydn's time were typically commissioned, or were employed by royalty or by churches to write sacred music) to write sacred music compare to that of an artist such as Marley?

10. Explain to students that Bob Marley created music as his "act of God". Have them list other worldly acts performed "in the name of God". Would they be more effective if the people performing the acts expressed themselves through music instead? Why or why not? Does music provide a safe but effective venue for expression?

To close the lesson, have students put away their completed guided listening sheets, and ask them questions directly from the sheet. Use a reward system of your choice for the students who answer the questions correctly.

Guided Listening:

1. What instruments do you hear in the reggae excerpts?
2. Of what religion was Bob Marley a part? (Rastafari)
3. The narrator refers to Marley as a "Rasta" who _____? (MLK, Jr.)
4. Marley referred to the I 3's, his back up vocalists, as his three _____ or three _____. (birds or angels)
5. Soon after the release of "I Shot the Sheriff", Bob Marley and his music became a threat to the _____ class. (working)
6. Why would any political party want to assassinate Bob Marley?

Lesson One is derived from Strategies for Teaching: Middle-Level and High School Keyboard (MENC: 1996).



These standards-based materials are provided through a partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education. This lesson plan written by MENC member Renee Gabel, General/Choral Music, Ridley Middle School, Ridley Park, PA.