



True Spin

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 3 – Marketing of Pop Music



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 gain an understanding of concepts of marketing and promotion in popular music.
- Students will recognize the affect of marketing and promotion on popular opinion of artists and their 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 *True Spin*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Original music video for some of the following songs (optional):
 - *Born in the USA* – Bruce Springsteen
 - *Losing My Religion* – REM
 - *Back in Black* – AC/DC
 - *Ray of Light* – Madonna
 - *Rio* – Duran Duran
 - *Under the Bridge* – Red Hot Chili Peppers
 - *Every Breathe You Take* – Police
 - *Safety Dance* – Men without Hats
 - *In The Air Tonight* – Phil Collins
 - *Walk Like an Egyptian* – Bangles

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have completed Lesson One, “Getting the Meaning in Pop Music,” and if possible, “The ‘True Spin’ On Myths and Music.”
- Students have minimal experience discussing music as it relates to society, politics, culture, etc.
- Students have some knowledge of popular musical styles (disco, heavy metal, punk rock, etc.).

Procedures

1. Begin class by reminding students of the previous discussions regarding the way images in a music video associated with a pop song don't always seem to have the same meaning as the song itself. Have students mention a few comparisons that were made during the previous lesson(s) to refresh their memories, and ask them to comment on why a video might be purposely designed to convey alternate meanings.
2. Explain to students (as needed) that marketing and promotion have a significant impact on how we understand and perceive the meaning of a song. Record companies have long created films or other opportunities to promote a particular song, album, or artist (movie shorts featuring Glen Miller and others, TV appearances by various artists such as the Beatles, etc.). These were all done to increase record sales. Why were the modern day MTV and VH1 created (similar reasons)?
3. Lead students in discussing marketing and its values in the music industry. What does marketing and promotion do? What are the typical promotional venues? What are its goals (bringing new artists to public awareness, letting the public know about new music from established artists, etc.)? Have students identify

and discuss the specific goals of presenting a song through video.

4. Have students write down five things they know about their neighbor or best friend, and five things they know about their favorite popular music artist. As a class, discuss how they know the information they wrote on their lists by categorizing the items based on knowledge gained first-hand, or based on what they have heard or been told (second-hand). Which items are predominantly on the “first-hand” list, those about artists, or those about friends? Point out that what we think we know about any artist is typically based upon what we’ve been told, not experienced first-hand, as would be the case with a friend. Why do we know these things about our friends (based on experience, things we’ve been through)?
5. Ask students to explain where they learned the information on their lists about the pop artists. (Most answers will likely reflect magazine articles, television programs, advertising, etc.) Guide them in understanding that many of these venues are part of marketing and promotion efforts surrounding the artists. Marketing works to cause belief in a product so that we will want it based upon what we know about it (whether the product be soap or music). Part of the marketing surrounding an artist and their music is accomplished through the use of music videos.
6. Show VH1’s True Spin, selected segments. (Using segments other than those studied previously would be appropriate.)
7. Ask students to discuss which myths described in the program likely developed from ideas conveyed through promotion. Do the clips shown from the music video seem to enhance a marketing image? Do they fit the song, or depict a different meaning? Would a particular myth help to drive up record sales? If possible, show the original music video of the featured song.
8. Have students compare and contrast marketing image with artistic intent of the performer. What is the artistic intent of a performer such as Britney Spears versus that of Alicia Keys, for example? Have students suggest additional artists for discussion.

Extensions:

1. Have students select a pop artist (suitable for classroom discussion), and compare and contrast that artist’s image as it has been created through marketing and promotion with what is known about the artist through sources other than marketing (television interviews, biographies, news and print media, etc.). Ask students to present their findings in class.
 - Truth: Walking on a ferry
 - The songwriter states that sometimes it’s really a simple thought and a simple tune.

Supplemental Resources:

- Song lyrics: www.lyrics.com

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 David J. Greenagel, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Music, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA.