



music studio

LESSON PLAN

storytellers

VH1 Storytellers: Wyclef Jean

A VH1 Save the Music Special

VH1 Music Studio

Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for High School School Music Classes

Lesson 3 of 4

(Note to teachers: Please view this videotape for appropriateness for your classes. Some of the lyrics have sexual innuendo and others mention a violent end to the life of a drug dealer.)

Objective

Students will identify lawful uses of copyrighted materials and explain the interrelated roles of composer, lyricist, publisher, performer, agent, and record company.

National Standards: Content Standard 9--Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Materials

Videotape of VH1 Storytellers Wyclef Jean.

- Television and VCR
- Worksheet printed out from the end of this lesson
- Copyright information resources, such as Copyright: The Complete Guide for Music Educators, 2d ed., by Jay Althouse (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1997), available from MENC; "Copyright Law and Sound Recordings," by Robert H. Woody III, Music Educators Journal 80, no. 6 (May 1994); "In Retrospect--Copyright and Campfires" by Charles Gary, Teaching Music 4, no. 3 (December 1996)
- Recording of the selected music (optional)
- Chalkboard

Prior Knowledge and Experiences

Students have been introduced to the function of copyright and the format of a copyright notice.

Students have studied how, why, and by whom a copyright is filed and have been introduced to a sample US copyright form [Note: Form PA, with instructions, is available from the Forms Hotline (telephone 202-707-9100).]

Students have each selected a piece they would like to learn to sing or play on their instrument (see step 2).

Procedures

1. Have students view the second segment of the video Wyclef Jean: Storytellers. Wyclef performs the song "Guantanamara," a song derived from an old poem written for a woman in Guantanamo, Cuba many years ago. Wyclef says "So the song actually comes from a poem. So that means nobody owns it. So you cannot sue me. I can do this song as many times as I want." Ask students if they know what Wyclef is talking about. Listen for answers that suggest Wyclef was referring to music copyright laws, laws that musicians, both amateur and professional, need to know.
2. Briefly review the function of copyright, citing examples of lawful (and unlawful) use of copyrighted materials (see Materials).
3. Ask some of the students to tell the class about the pieces they have selected (see Prior Knowledge and Experiences), having them identify the year of publication, whether the piece is an arrangement, and so on. Tell the students that in this lesson they are going to discuss the legal status of their pieces, considering the following categories:
 - public domain;
 - protected by a current copyright;
 - once protected by a copyright, which has expired; or
 - creation that is not yet protected.
4. Lead students in a discussion of the factors that will help them identify which category is appropriate for their selected pieces. Then, having students work in small groups, ask them to discuss with their group members what they think the status of their pieces is and why.
5. Have class reassemble. Discuss with them what use they could make of a piece of music that is protected, considering the following possibilities:
 - play or sing it for themselves;
 - play or sing it in a school concert for parents;
 - play or sing it in a local restaurant;
 - play or sing it for scouts at a Boy Scouts of America camp; or
 - make a recording for distribution.
6. Have students consider when music that was copyrighted before 1922 went into the public domain.
7. Briefly summarize the importance of the various aspects of copyright the class has discussed.

Indicators of Success

Students interpret the meaning of a copyright notice on the music they play or sing.

Students describe aspects of the interrelated roles of composer, lyricist, publisher, performer, agent, and record companies.

This lesson is adapted from *Strategies for Teaching Middle-Level and High School Guitar*, Compiled and Edited by William E. Purse, James L. Jordan, and Nancy Marsters (MENC, 1998).

VH1, in partnership with Cable in the Classroom, collaborated with MENC: The National Association for Music Education to develop this series of lessons.



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.