

College Guild
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Sampler

~ Music ~

Unit 5 of 6

Music. It can be the focus of our attention or merely background noise. It's played during elevator rides, between intermissions at hockey games, and of course, during concerts. Many enjoy listening to music in the company of others, while some might find happiness in being alone with music. There are festivals and shows built around the beautiful work of musicians, all coming from an array of backgrounds. Of course, if you've ever tried playing an instrument or singing, you know that it requires a balance of raw talent and hard work. In this Unit we'll talk about a handful of artists who have changed the music industry, different genres of music, music theory, and the impact of music on people across the world.

Famous Musicians

Johann Sebastian **Bach** was born on March 31, 1685 into an incredibly musical family who lived in Eisenach, Germany. His father directed the town musicians, and his uncles were professional musicians, surrounding Bach with the beauty of music as well as the instruments that many children are never exposed to at such a young age. Though he was the eighth child in a busy household, he found the time and motivation to pursue music. At age fourteen, he went with his friend Georg Erdmann to St. Michael's School in Lüneburg because of the choral scholarships they were awarded. Through his elite schooling and musical family, he became one of the most famous and influential German composers and musicians of all time. "Brandenburg Concertos", "Goldberg Variations", and "Mass in B minor" are some of his most famous works, while he also wrote over three hundred cantatas (200 of which survive). His music inspired many musicians through its technicality, artistic grace, and intellectual intensity. Unfortunately, in 1749 his health and vision began to deteriorate and on July 28, 1750 he died from the combination of a stroke and pneumonia. Sadly, Bach did not even get to see the eventual widely-held respect for his work, since he was not recognized as a great composer until the first half of the 19th century.

1. After reading about Bach's highly musical family, how much do you think family professions play a role in the path a child takes? Do you think Bach would have eventually discovered a love for music if his family had not been so involved with it? Why or why not?

2. Do you think Bach was disappointed that he wasn't recognized as a great composer in his lifetime? Is success or passion for a subject more of a motivator in someone's work? Explain.

Wolfgang Amadeus **Mozart** was born on January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria. He was the youngest of seven children, but sadly, five of them died in infancy. Mozart, like Bach, grew up in a musically inclined family. His father was an experienced teacher, and also a minor composer. It is rumored that Mozart began composing at the age of five! Through family connections, he performed for royalty, but grew restless at the age of seventeen and went to Vienna. There, he achieved fame, but little wealth. He managed to compose over 600 works and was one of the most respected classical composers of the time, even inspiring many of Beethoven's early works. Mozart died in 1791, a fairly early death, the cause of which has been a mystery to the world. Mozart created many astoundingly beautiful works, but imagine what else he could have composed had his time on earth not been cut short.

3. Would you rather earn fame or money for your talents? Explain.

Ludwig van **Beethoven** was born on December 17, 1770 in Bonn, Germany. Similar to the last two composers you read about, Beethoven was also born into a family that valued music, with his father teaching him to play various instruments at a very young age. Some of Beethoven's most well known compositions include nine symphonies, five concertos for the piano, one violin concerto, thirty-two piano sonatas, and sixteen string quartets. He is respected for being an important person in stimulating the transition between the classical and romantic era in western music. His hearing began to decline in 1800, an incredibly sad ailment for a musician, yet he continued to compose despite his setbacks.

4. Which instrument(s) would you want to play and why?

5. Not being able to hear well clearly creates a huge disadvantage for a musician. Think of another profession and a setback that would greatly affect it. How would you advise someone to overcome this setback? (For example: A writer gets arthritis in her hands and can no longer write by herself. A solution would be she dictates her words out loud to someone who then writes/types them.)

Now that you've gotten a taste of some classical composers, let's jump ahead to the 1900s and explore the musicians of more modern times.

Elvis Aaron Presley was born on January 8, 1935 in Tupelo, Mississippi and moved to Memphis, Tennessee when he was thirteen years old. His music career took off in 1954, and he quickly became known as the "King of Rock and Roll" despite his success in many other genres of music, such as pop, blues, and gospel. People loved the energy in his songs and his sometimes controversial lyrics. Elvis was also famous for his provocative performances and signature smirk. But Elvis battled drug addiction, and eventually died from drug related health problems in 1977.

6. You may have heard about some famous actors, musicians, and athletes who have become involved in drug scandals. Why do you think there is a tendency for famous people to turn to drugs?

7. Elvis was known for having lyrics that were slightly controversial - such as bringing up skin color in his songs. Think of (at least) three other subjects that a controversial song could be written about and come up with the titles for these songs.

One of the most well-known rock groups is **The Beatles**, a group formed in Liverpool in the 1960. The members consisted of **John Lennon**, **Paul McCartney**, **George Harrison**, and **Ringo Starr**, and they quickly rose to become the most influential band in the rock era after their first hit "Love Me Do" in 1962. Their popularity was often referred to as "Beatlemania". The group broke up in 1970, after achieving estimated sales of over 600 million records.

8. Would you rather be part of a band or a solo-artist? Explain the reasons behind your choice.

Madonna Louise Ciccone was born on August 16, 1958 in Bay City, Michigan to a Catholic family with five siblings. She is known for being an American singer, songwriter, actress, and businesswoman, and has influenced popular music with her edgy content and the vivid imagery in her music videos. Some of her lyrics have come from hardships in her own life; her mother died of breast cancer when she was young, after which her father married the housekeeper. Madonna resented him for this for years, and became slightly rebellious in her behavior and lyrics. Often referred to as the "Queen of Pop", Madonna attended the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance and then moved to New York City to further her career in dance. She has sold more than 300 million records and the Recording Industry Association of America called her "the best-selling female rock artist of the 20th century".

9. Think of another song you've heard that was inspired by hardships/struggles in a musician's life. What would you write about if you were a songwriter? (Keep in mind: just because you write about it, doesn't mean you have to have gone through it.)

10. Which musician that you've learned about would you want to be friends with and why?

11. Write a story about a fictional musician who found fame at an early age.

Music Genres

There are endless music genres, but in this Unit we'll focus on just four of them: Country, Rock, Classical, and Rap. Some of the other genres include Broadway, folk, tribal, hymns, jazz, punk, R&B, and traditional music from almost every country.

Country music is a popular genre, especially in the southern United States, since it originated in Atlanta, Georgia in 1920. Country music has its roots in southeastern American folk music, blues, and Western music, and it often includes ballads and dance tunes accompanied by banjos, electric or acoustic guitars, and fiddles. Famous country musicians include Luke Bryan, Toby Keith, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, and Carrie Underwood. Some may refer to country music as "hillbilly" music, while others think it holds a great deal of beauty and emotion.

Rock music introduced itself in the 1950s, and was influenced by blues, rhythm, and country music. A traditional rock song consisted of a 4/4 time signature with a verse-chorus form, but the genre has developed over time to include a variety of forms. Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Nirvana, and Aerosmith are just a few of the rock musicians and bands that have inspired people throughout the era. Rock songs often touch on the subject of love, but also include many social or political references.

Classical music has been heard from about the 11th century to today. It covers such a vast amount of time that it has been divided into several periods: the Early Music Period -- including the Medieval (500-1400) and the Renaissance (1400-1600) eras; the Common Practice Period -- including Modern (1890-1930), High Modern (mid 20th), and Contemporary or Post Modern (1975-2000). Famous musicians from this genre include Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Schubert, and Brahms.

Rap music is referred to as, "spoken or chanted rhyming lyrics." The performance or "delivery" of rap is an important part of the genre, and people often judge this music based on content, flow, rhythm, and execution. Interestingly, the word "rap" in the English language can mean a variety of things, such as "to strike, especially with a quick, smart, or light blow" and "to utter sharply or vigorously" or "to rap out a command". Some popular rappers are Eminem, Snoop Dogg, 50 Cent, and Dr. Dre.

12. What would be *your* definition of rap?

13. Of the four genres listed above, which concert would you want to attend and why?

14. Which genre seems the hardest to compose and why?

15. Write one verse of rap AND one verse of country music dealing with one of the following subjects: peace, technology, poverty, or dolphins.

Instruments

Learning to play an instrument is an intense but rewarding process -- and there are so many to choose from! We'll talk about four popular instruments below: Piano, Guitar, Drums, and Saxophone. Keep in mind there are hundreds of different

instruments: clarinet, conga drum, cymbals, flute, harmonica, mandolin, recorder, tambourine, violin, trumpet, fiddle, and organ, and many more.

Piano



In 1709 in Padua, Italy there was a man named Bartolomeo di Francesco Cristofori who worked in a harpsichord shop and played a crucial role in the creation of the piano. Taking inspiration from the harpsichord (which could only produce one volume), Cristofori created an instrument that could be louder or played in a different tone simply by the fingers pressing on different keys. His name for it was "gravicembalo col piano e forte" which translates roughly to "soft and loud keyboard instrument". Today, there are many different kinds of pianos, from traditional to electronic, and they can be played solo or be accompanied by almost any other instrument, including the voice, of course.

16. Name two other instruments you think would accompany a piano nicely and explain why you chose them.

Guitar



The origins of the guitar are still disputed today, but we know they can be traced back to over 4,000 years ago. The ancient Sumerian, Babylonian, and Egyptian civilizations used "bowl harps" which sometimes consisted of tortoise shells with a stick across the hollow part and some silk strings. Archaeologists have found pictures of guitar-like instruments in the ruins of ancient Persian and Mesopotamian cultures. The name "guitar" comes from the word "tar" which means "string" in an ancient Sanskrit language. The guitar continued to develop throughout the centuries, with more strings gradually being added, and now there's even an electric version. The beauty of the guitar is that this handheld instrument can be brought just about anywhere, and the only tool you need to play it is your hands.

17. You read about how the Egyptians used empty tortoise shells and sticks to make guitars. Pretend you are one of the first settlers in America. What would you use to construct your guitar and how would you build it?

Drums



The oldest known instrument is the drum; it dates back to 4,000 BC in Egypt and China. The basic structure of a drum is a "drum skin" (such as alligator skin in the case of ancient Chinese cultures) stretched over a hollow shell. They can be played with drumsticks or just your hands. This structure has remained the same for centuries. The sound that drums produce can be manipulated through the tension of the drum skin stretched over the shell, the shape of the shell, and the type of drum shell, among other things. Drums are often used in religious ceremonies or rituals. There are also used in music therapy (discussed below) and were used as a means of communication in Africa to "imitate the tone patterns of spoken language". Drums even have their place in the military, having been used to encourage troops and communicate commands in Chinese warfare.

18. Think of something else not mentioned that drums could be used for.

Saxophone



Adolphe Sax created the saxophone in 1864 in Brussels. He wanted an instrument that had "the power of a brass instrument but the speed of a woodwind instrument". He used elements of the French horn and the clarinet to make the saxophone. Once his fifteen-year patent expired in 1866, others began making modifications to improve the instrument. The saxophone was popular in military bands, especially British bands. There are many different types of saxophones, such as the baritone, tenor, and alto. A range of these often appear in a symphonic band.

19. Out of these four, which instrument would you want to learn how to play and why? What about any instrument in the world?

20. Make up your own instrument and sketch it. Describe how it is played, the sound, and when people should use it.

Music in Our Lives

Music therapy is used to help people improve their emotional and physical health. In addition to counseling, psychiatry, medication, etc., music can stimulate recovery in the patient.



21. Why would music have such a powerful healing effect on some patients?

African dance and music are so closely intertwined in African culture that their word for "dance" also means "music"! This is an important part of their culture, not simply a way to have a good time. They use it in naming ceremonies, agriculture activities, war time, religious ceremonies, and rituals for the dead. When North American slave owners restricted Africans from dancing in their traditional ways, the slaves fought back by adapting moves (such as shuffling their feet instead of lifting them) to get around the rules of the owners. Drums are an important part of African music, as well as instruments made from natural elements, such as rattlesnake shakers and wood sticks.



22. Name a few activities music is connected to besides dance and explain the connection.

Religious music can also be a huge part of people's lives, and many find singing to be a great link to spirituality. Some religions place music at the center of their worship and use it as a means to communicate among followers and with their higher powers. Songs are also used to celebrate life and death, as well as for other religious rituals.

23. When do you use music? Is it a means of worship, a reason to relax, something that makes you happy? Explain the role music has played in your life.

24. Pretend you are the manager of a major music festival. Who would you want to play? What genres of music? What other stands would you have at the festival - food, merchandise, etc.?

25. What was your favorite part of this Unit and why?

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

Appendix Sampler ~ Music: Unit 5 of 6

Citations

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