



FEATURE

Songs on Screen: The History of Music Videos Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 1, 2, and 7

OBJECTIVES

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work (*Cr1*)
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work (*Cr2*)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (November 2016)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access
- Piano
- Classroom instruments (percussion instruments, recorders, etc.)

START

Have students read “Songs on Screen: The History of Music Videos” on pages 6-9 to learn about the history of music videos. Then, review and discuss the following terms. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

PRECURSOR — something that comes before
PROMINENT — easily seen, important, and/or well-known
EXTRANEIOUS — unrelated to a given item or concept
APT — appropriate
INNOVATIVE — new and advanced

DEVELOP

- **1. Play** “Stranger in Paradise” by Tony Bennett (Hear the Music playlist **track 2** at musicalive.com).

ASK

- **To what genre of music does this song belong?** (Standard; classic pop.)
- **If you had to guess, from which genre do you think this song was adapted?** (Opera; musical. The melody is originally from *The Polovtsian Dances* from the opera *Prince Igor* by Alexander Borodin, which premiered in 1890. The melody was later used in the 1953 musical *Kismet*, in which all of the songs were based on the music of Borodin.)
- **Can you think of any other classical music pieces that were later adapted to become popular songs or standards?** (Examples include “I’m Always Chasing Rainbows,” adapted from Frédéric Chopin’s *Fantasie-Improptu*, and Allan Sherman’s “Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh” from Amilcare Ponchielli’s *Dance of the Hours*.)

- **2. Play** “Video Killed the Radio Star” by the Buggles (Hear the Music playlist **track 3** at musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What is the instrumentation?** (Vocals, guitars, keyboard, drums, pitched percussion [glockenspiel, marimbas], bass, synthesized sounds.)
- **How would you describe the sound of the main vocal?** (It sounds as though it’s coming through an old telephone line.)
- **Why do you think this vocal effect was chosen?** (Subjective.)

• How does the vocal effect relate to the lyrics?

(Subjective. The lyrics sound like one side of a phone conversation.)

- **How does the vocal effect compare to the effect of the overall instrumentation?** (Subjective. The old technology evoked by the vocal effect combines with the modern synth sounds to create a clash of eras.)

- **3. Play** “Here It Goes Again” by OK Go (Hear the Music playlist **track 4** at musicalive.com).

ASK

- **What is this song’s time signature?** (4/4.)
- **Is the key signature major or minor?** (Major.)
- **What is the instrumentation?** (Vocals, guitars, keyboard, drums, bass.)
- **What is going on in the guitar solo (begins at about 1:32)?** (Simple chordal playing.)
- **What are some reasons why a band would choose to go with an extremely simple guitar solo?** (Subjective. It fits in with the lyrics or subject matter, it maintains a steady “feel” to the song, etc.)
- **What are the lyrics just after the guitar solo?** (“I guess there’s got to be a break in the monotony.”)
- **Do you think that the lyrics relate to the simple guitar solo?** (Subjective. Perhaps the band purposely planned a simple, “monotonous” guitar solo with an accompanying lyric that refers to “the monotony.”)

CLOSE

- 1. Ask the students** to choose a short classical melody, then rewrite its lyrics to describe a current or upcoming event at the school.
- 2. Ask the students** what elements and instrumentation can make a song sound futuristic or old-fashioned. Can they think of any songs with both of these elements?
- 3. Ask the class** how they would construct instrumental solos that relate to the following words: Crazy, calm, silly, serious, quiet, sad, joyous. What instruments would they use? What would the music sound like?

ASSESS

- **Did the students read the article?**
- **Did the students understand how a melody from classical music can be used as the basis for a popular song?**
- **Were the students able to create their own lyrics to a classical melody?**
- **Were the students able to understand how futuristic and old-fashioned elements can affect a song?**
- **Were the students able to come up with their own instrumental solos based on word choices?**