



FEATURE

ART OF THE MIX

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 7-9, 10

OBJECTIVES

Perceive and analyze artistic work. (*Re7*)
Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (*Re8*)
Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (*Re9*)
Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (*Cn10*)

MATERIALS

Music Alive! magazine (Vol.40 No.7)
Computer or mobile device with internet access

START

Ask your students to read "Art of the Mix" on pages XX-XX. Then, go over the following highlighted words to reinforce comprehension and vocabulary.

Channel - known as a channel strip, configured from top to bottom.

Input - how the sound comes into the mixer

Gain - controls the amount of sound that can come into the audio mixer channel.

Fader - the sliding volume controller for each channel's output after adjustments. The master fader is what controls the overall volume level of all sources connected to the mixer.

Equalizer - adjusts the balance between different frequencies, changing the timbre of a sound signal. Most mixers have three equalization bands, High, Mid, and Low.

Pan - where the sound is heard for the listener (left, center, right).

Mute - all audio on a channel is disabled.

Auxiliary Send - connects monitors on stage so that performers can hear themselves.

Overdub - rerecording over an existing track

Mixdown - the process of combining all tracks into a single stereo track

Mixer - production device used to receive all sounds of a song

DEVELOP

As a class, watch the "What is a Mixer" video.

- Discuss the meaning of each channel knob and how it contributes to the sound.
- Does mixing seem easy or difficult to you? Why or why not?
- Pick any band and discuss how many tracks are needed at minimum.

Listen to each song in Hear the Music. They were selected because of their use of mixing. For each song, discuss the following:

- Do you hear the sound move from one side to the other? (panning)
- How many tracks can we hear in each song? Is it possible there are more?
- Which control allows for certain tracks to grow louder or softer? Do you hear it happening? (Fader)
- Special question: In "Wandering," did you feel like you were in a forest? How do you think the mixing engineer accomplished it using a mixer?

Then watch the Queen documentary on "Bohemian Rhapsody."

- Do you see and hear how the different tracks are recorded to create their iconic layers of sound?
- Why is the tape recorder reel of the song so fragile?
- How did you move a section of music on a recorded tape to a different section?

Extra Credit

Learning the basics of DJ equipment is fun for all ages!

Watch the beginner's tutorial and then watch rising start DJ Nandy. Observe and discuss how she uses the mixer to change between songs.

CLOSE

Discuss the importance of mixing in the process of recording music. Have students pick out their own school-appropriate song and write a paragraph explaining what mixing effects they hear.

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they review the vocabulary words?

Did they answer the supplemental questions?