

TAMERLANO/THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

WHAT MAKES MUSIC POPULAR?

TAMERLANO, BARBER, POP, & ALL THAT JAZZ...

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Duration: 1 lesson/ 50 minutes

Grade Levels: 8

Subjects: Music, Literature

California State Board of Education **Visual and Performing Arts Standards** *Music*

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments about Works of Music

Students critically assess and derive meaning from works of music and the performance of musicians according to the elements of music, aesthetic qualities, and human responses.

Literature

Analyze and Critically Assess

4.1 Use detailed criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions and apply the criteria to personal listening and performing.

4.2 Apply detailed criteria appropriate for the genre and style of the music to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations, by oneself and others.

Derive Meaning

4.3 Explain how and why people use and respond to specific music from different musical cultures found in the United States.

4.4 Compare the means used to create images or evoke feelings and emotions in musical works from a minimum of two different musical cultures found in the United States.

1.0 Writing Strategies Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

1.1 Organization and Focus 1.1 Create compositions that establish a controlling impression, have a coherent thesis, and end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.

1.2 Establish coherence within and among paragraphs through effective transitions, parallel structures, and similar writing techniques.

1.3 Support theses or conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from authorities, comparisons, and similar devices.

Goals & Objectives:

1. To introduce students to opera and make a connection to the music popular today.
2. To allow students to actively listen to four musical selections from different periods and styles and to compare and contrast musical characteristics used in each selection.
3. Introduce students and make them aware of how music can express emotion in different eras, including: Baroque, Bel Canto, 20th century, and a popular song of today.
4. To allow students to see similar patterns in music from different eras.
5. To give students the vocabulary and ability to listen to music critically, to describe the music, as well as to help students formulate an opinion and be able to write about those ideas in an essay.

Prep:

1. Musical selections, Copies of two worksheets, audio equipment to play the musical selections. Suggested selections, the teacher can opt to choose different pieces:
 - a. Tamerlano: *Empio, per farti guerra*
 - b. Barber of Seville: *Una voce poco fa*
 - c. Porgy & Bess: *Summertime* [Leontyne Price] or a Jazz version by Ella Fitzgerald.
 - d. Popular Example: Each student will choose their own.

Procedure:

1. The teacher will ask the class to brainstorm: “What makes music popular?” Is emotion important to a piece of music and why? The students will write in their journals, and then share with class.
2. The teacher will write down student’s responses on the board.
3. Teacher will explain that the debate of “importance of emotion in music” has been around for at least four centuries.
4. Teacher will hand out Worksheet A to the class and read the instructions.
5. Teacher will hand out Worksheet B. Students will actively listen to four musical selections and compare and contrast musical characteristics used in each selection.
6. Teacher will let students to listen to an excerpt from Tamerlano and write observations.
7. Teacher will go over the findings with class.
8. Teacher will let students to listen to an excerpt from Barber of Seville and write observations. Suggested- *Una voce poco fa*.
9. Teacher will let students to listen to a 20th century excerpt and write observations. Suggested: *Summertime* by Leontyne Price. Note: teacher may choose a jazz song for this selection, for example *Summertime* sung by Ella Fitzgerald or Billy Holiday.
10. Teacher will go over the findings with class.
11. Teacher will allow students to listen to a popular song of their choice and complete the Worksheet B.
12. Teacher will go over the findings with class.

13. Students will write an argumentative essay, and in their essay state what makes popular music and what is the best way to express emotion in music. Students will use the four excerpts and their notes from class as examples in their essays.

Assessment:

1. Students will be able to actively listen to four musical selections from different periods and styles and to compare and contrast musical characteristics used in each selection.
2. Students will be able to participate in class discussion.
3. Students will be able to write a journal entry, as well as finish Worksheet B.
4. Students will be able to analyze musical ideas and emotions in different musical selections, and discuss their findings and thought with the class.
5. Students will be able to use their findings and thoughts in an essay.

Worksheet A

POPULAR MUSIC

POPULAR MUSIC has a long history, but what makes popular music “popular?” This has been the debate for at least four centuries if not more!

Starting from the Medieval Era (sometime before 1200-1300) to Renaissance (approx. 1300-1470), music began as one melody sung in Latin and gradually evolved. The music became more and more complex, until even the regular songs of the day became difficult to sing and understand.

The artists in the Baroque Era (music during 1600-1750) got together and decided to come up with a new style, a style that would be accessible. In order to do that, they decided to bring back the conventions of Greek tragedy. Essentially, musicians in the Baroque wanted the music to express “pathos,” or emotions in the melody. In an age without television, opera became one of those new styles in which composers sought to combine the melody and theater to create drama. Opera became a very popular musical style that even though transformed, stayed **popular** art form for many centuries.

STRUCTURE Some of the new techniques used gave opera certain formal structures. Greek tragedy alternated between:

- *episodes* (spoken monologue or dialogue) and
- *stamias* (songs sung by the chorus).

Baroque opera is similarly made up of:

- *recitative* (sung-spoken dialogue with minimal accompaniment) and
- *da capo* arias (songs with a specific three-part structure). Even though many elements of opera evolved with time, some of the basic ideas such as the *da capo* arias, recitatives, as well as the importance of getting an idea across was an essential factor.
- The THREE part structure.

The THREE-PART structure breaks down like this:

- The first section of a *da capo* aria could, in theory, be sung on its own and not sound like anything was missing. - The second section compliments the first but varies in tempo, musical texture, and mood (similar to a “bridge” in contemporary musical form).
- The third section is the *da capo*, which is Italian for “back to the beginning.” The first section is sung a second time, but the melody is improvised on (or “ornamented”) by the singer in order to show off their vocal acrobatics.

But don’t think that this is too “old school!” This technique can be heard in jazz, even today.

- The first part of the song is played straight through or as written and is followed by the bridge.
- The song returns to the “head” or beginning, but the original melody is improvised on by the lead instrument or vocalist. A singer improvises by “scatting” around the melody.

So let’s review!

- In baroque opera, the alternation of *recitative* and *da capo* arias is used deliberately.
- *Recitative* is dialogue or monologue that advances the action of the plot.
- During an aria, no action takes place. This is the moment where the character steps out of the action and sings about his or her emotions.
- The reason the aria's first section is repeated in the *da capo* is not only to give the singer a chance to display their vocal skill, but also to delve deep into the emotion exploring each nuance and bringing it forward through expression to the audience.

Even though opera was alive and thriving, it did not mean that we as people decided that we couldn't make it better! After the Baroque Era, there was Classical Era, and then Bel Canto, and 19th Century, and 20th Century, etc!

But don't go too far!!!

What makes popular music "popular?" Is it the dynamics?

- Dynamics- how loud or quiet the music is! Here is a chart that goes over the basic dynamics:

<i>Shortcut</i>	Italian Word	Meaning
• <i>pp</i>	pianissimo	very quiet
• <i>p</i>	piano	quiet
• <i>mp</i>	mezzo piano	medium quiet
• <i>mf</i>	mezzo forte	medium loud
• <i>f</i>	forte	loud
• <i>ff</i>	fortissimo	very loud
• <i>crescendo</i>	crescendo	getting louder
• <i>diminuendo</i>	diminuendo	getting quieter

Well, some might argue that TEMPO has something to do with it!

Tempo- the speed of music, where the bpm stands for beats per minute. Usually, the terms are in Italian. Here are some very common terms and their meaning:

- *Adagio* — slow and stately (literally, "at ease") (66–76 bpm)
- *Allegretto grazioso* — moderately fast and gracefully
- *Allegretto* — moderately fast (but less so than *allegro*)
- *Allegro* — fast and bright or "march tempo" (120–168 bpm)
- *Allegro moderato* — moderately quick (112–124 bpm)
- *Andante* — at a walking pace (76–108 bpm)
- *Andante Moderato* — a bit faster than *andante*
- *Andantino* – slightly faster than *andante*
- *Andantino* — alternatively faster or slower than *andante*
- *Grave* — slow and solemn
- *Largamente* — very, very, very slow 10bpm
- *Largo* — very slow (40–60 bpm), like *lento*
- *Lento* — very slow (40–60 bpm)

- *Moderato* — moderately (108–120 bpm)
- *Vivace* — lively and fast (≈140 bpm)
- *Vivo* — lively and fast

Or, maybe it is the METER?

Meter- partially derived from meter in poetry, music has different meters. Here are some common ones:

4/4	March like, where one can count four beats with strongest beat on one and another one on three.	
3/4	Waltz like, where one can count 1-3, with strong beat on one.	
2/4	Walk like rhythm, where you can count to 2, with a strong beat on one.	

Assignment: Listen to a baroque segment and write down your observations. Then, listen to an opera excerpt from bel canto (in Italian meaning beautiful singing, and refers to beginning 19th century opera) and write down your observation. Listen to a jazz example and write down your observation. Choose a popular song that you think is a good example of popular music in today’s society and write down your observations. Write an essay, and in your essay state what makes popular music and what is the best way to express emotion. Use the four excerpts and your notes as examples in your essay.

Worksheet B—Teacher copy

Musical Excerpt	<i>Empio, per farti guerra</i>	<i>Una voce poco fa</i>	<i>Summertime</i>	Popular Song Example
Is this a part of a greater whole? If so, title:	<i>Tamerlano</i> by Handel	<i>Barber of Seville</i> by Rossini	Answers will vary depending on excerpt	Answers will vary depending on excerpt
Year of Composition	1724	1825		
Character	Bajazet, <i>Sultan of the Turks</i>	Rosina		
Voice Type	Tenor	Mezzo-Soprano (this aria has been sung by Sopranos, but was written for Mezzo-Soprano)		
Prominent Instruments	Strings,	Orchestra		
Language	Italian	Italian		
Meter	3/4	Starts in 3/4 and changes to 4/4		
Tempo	Allegro	Andante		
Dynamics	<i>f</i>	<i>mp-f-mp-varies</i>		
Musical Description/ Observation – how does it make you feel? Is there anything unusual or unexpected?	<p>Answers will vary</p> <p>Fast moving melodic line</p> <p>Forceful</p> <p>Stepwise melody</p> <p>-Decorative passages where singer sings many notes on one vowel.</p>	<p>Answers will vary</p> <p>-Virtuosic</p> <p>-Vocal line jumps from high to low and back again suddenly</p> <p>-Very ornamented melody</p> <p>- Melody often in leaps</p> <p>-little textural (orchestra changes)</p> <p>-Several moods</p>		

Worksheet B

Name: _____

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

Musical Excerpt				
Is this a part of a greater whole? If so, title/composer				
Year of Composition				
Character				
Voice Type				
Prominent Instruments				
Language				
Meter				
Tempo				
Dynamics				
Musical Description/ Observation – how does it make you feel? Is there anything unusual or unexpected?				