



The United States Army Field Band

In My Dream

A Celebration of African-American Music

IN MY DREAM: MIDDLE SCHOOL GENERAL MUSIC, LESSON PLAN #1 **KNOW THE BUSINESS! POP MUSIC AND MARKETING**

OBJECTIVES: Students will identify musical elements within a pop song.
Students will discuss the impacts of the music business upon performers.
Students will work in small groups.

MATERIALS: • *In My Dream*: tracks 6 (“Ain’t No Mountain High Enough”), 16 (“Dancing in the Street”), and 18 (“Respect”), and liner notes
• Current recordings by pop artists such as Backstreet Boys, Destiny’s Child, J.Lo, Jay-Z, or Ruben Studdard, who are reputed to have strongly influential management

PROCEDURES:

1. Play *In My Dream* tracks 6, 16, and 18; ask students to describe any elements they may share (all female vocals; solo + backup singers; backup singers sing “together” or homophonically; instrument types used; etc.)
2. Play an example from a current pop group (Backstreet Boys, Destiny’s Child). What do they have in common with the previous recordings?
3. Brief teacher-driven discussion: Who chooses which artists become popular or highly marketed? How can a record company mold the career of an artist (clothing, image, vocal style, etc.)? What are some examples the students can provide of artists whose careers have been carefully managed? Do all such performers reap the same financial benefits?
4. Describe the Motown record label under Berry Gordy, including his meticulous management of top artists. Martha and the Vandellas (16), Aretha Franklin (18), and The Supremes (6) are great examples of artists whose careers he shaped, and the ways in which he did so. Use the liner notes, and the references within, for more information.
5. Student small-group discussion: Each group should think of a performer whose career has been strongly guided by management, and 3 ways in which this is obvious. Groups should share results with the class.
6. Closure: Replay 6, 16, and 18—these songs have all become classics. Can the newer pop artists molded in this same way find the same longevity? Discuss, using specific examples, and playing some of their music, if available.

EXPLORATION:

1. Compare The U.S. Army Field Band recordings of tracks 6, 16, and 18 with the original recordings; what is different?
2. Have students ask their parents or another close relative about popular singers of their adolescence. How were they similar or different?
3. Watch *A Hard Day’s Night* or *Spice World* (may need editing) with your class. How does this lesson relate to the experiences of the performers as depicted in either film?

ASSESSMENT: Did the students correctly identify musical elements within a pop song?
Did the students discuss the impacts of the music business on performers?
Did the students successfully work in small groups?

NATIONAL STANDARDS*:

- 6a. Students describe specific music events in a given aural example, using appropriate terminology.
- 8b. Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music (in this case, math.)
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

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