

The Women of Motown (High School)

Rationale

This 50-minute lesson will guide students through a series of social reflecting exercises that examines the issues and roles of the Women of Motown. This lesson is intended to provoke critical thought about the world around them as well by highlighting the many issues of women in music.

Inspiration

“Until Motown, there were three big careers for a black girl: babies, factories, or day work. Period.”

Mary Wells, first female signed to Motown

Mastery Objectives

- Students will have a greater awareness of issues surrounding women in music and society.
- Students will construct their own critiques of these issues based on their own experiences.
- Students will objectively compare the Woman of Motown and modern women of various music genres (types of music).

Standards Addressed

National Standards for Music Education

- NA-M.9-12.9 UNDERSTANDING MUSIC IN RELATION TO HISTORY AND CULTURE
 - Students identify sources of American music genres (e.g., swing, Broadway musical, blues) trace the evolution of those genres, and cite well-known musicians associated with them.
 - Students identify various roles (e.g., entertainer, teacher, transmitter of cultural tradition) that musicians perform, cite representative individuals who have functioned in each role, and describe their activities and achievements.

National Standards for History

- Era 9 Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)
 - Standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties
- Era 10 Contemporary United States (1968 to the present)
 - Economic, social and cultural developments in contemporary United States

Materials

- White board or place for group writing
- CD Player and/or Computer with Internet Connection
- Writing materials for students (pen & paper)
- Attached lyrics of “My Guy” as performed by Mary Wells
 - Audio and/or video of “My Guy” as performed by Mary Wells
- Attached lyrics of “Baby Love” as performed by The Supremes
 - Audio and/or video of “Baby Love” as performed by The Supremes
- Attached list of Motown Female Artists
- Attached Journal Reflection Activity

FACILITATOR’S CHOICE OF ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Attached lyrics of “Just A Girl” as performed by No Doubt
 - Audio and/or video of “Just A Girl” as performed by No Doubt
- Attached lyrics of “Consider me Gone” as performed by Reba McEntire
 - Audio and/or video of “Consider me Gone” as performed by Reba McEntire
- Attached lyrics of “Poker Face” as performed by Lady Gaga
 - Audio and/or video of “Poker Face” as performed by Lady Gaga

Procedures

1. Introduction

Ask students:

- What are some words that come to mind when you think about female musicians today?
- What comes to mind when you think about artists such as Rhianna, Madonna, or Shania Twain?

Make a list of student responses for everyone to see.

Ask students

- What are some words that come to mind when they think about *male* artists today?
- What are words that come to mind when one thinks about artists such as Eminem, Justin Bieber, U2, 50 Cent or Keith Urban?

Make a list of student responses for everyone to see.

2. Constructing Meaning

Discuss any differences between the two lists. Encourage students to ask themselves “why” are the lists different and “why” have they chosen these words to describe each gender? Ask students to elaborate on any words that might contain hidden meanings. i.e. powerful = confident with one’s own body, etc...

3: Historical Discovery

Ask students what they know about Motown and the women of Motown. If student response is little, then encourage students to try and answer the following questions:

- What era comes to mind when one mentions “Motown”? 1940s? 1960s? 1980s?
- Does anyone know any artists from Motown?
- What do they picture the artists look like?
 - Race, gender and overall demeanor?
- Where was Motown initially located?

Hand out lyrics to “My Guy” as performed by Mary Wells and watch/listen to the song performed.

Return to the questions about Motown Records for further student participation.

- What era comes to mind when one mentions “Motown”? 1940s? 1960s? 1980s?
- Does anyone know any artists from Motown?
- What do they picture the artists look like?
 - Race, gender and overall demeanor?
- Where Motown was founded?

Discuss that Motown Records was a significant impact on today’s music by breaking new ground in not only music and race but also in empowering women by providing numerous artistic role models.

Distribute the attached list of Motown Female Artists.

Ask students if they’ve heard any of the songs and to inquire if these are songs that they think everyone knows. (The goal here is to highlight the importance of female contribution to the collective popular culture of today)

4. Social Relevance

Write the quote visible for students:

“Until Motown, there were three big careers for a black girl: babies, factories, or daywork. Period”

Mary Wells, first female signed to Motown

Ask the students:

- Do you believe the options for women today are the same or have they changed?
- Does race still play a part in these options or is it purely gender?

Hand out lyrics to one or more of the teacher selected works and watch/listen to the song performed.

- “Just A Girl” as performed by No Doubt
- “Consider me Gone” as performed by Reba McEntire
- “Poker Face” as performed by Lady Gaga

Without discussion of the above, hand out lyrics to “Baby Love” as performed by The Supremes and watch/listen to the song performed.

Have students complete the Journal Reflection Activity

Motown Female Artists

Artist	Hit Songs
Brenda Holloway	"Every Little Bit Hurts" "You've Made Me So Very Happy"
Diana Ross	"Ain't No Mountain High Enough" "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" "Diana"
Erykah Badu	"On & On" Bag Lady" " Love of My Life (An Ode to Hip-Hop)"
Gladys Knight & the Pips	"Midnight Train to Georgia" "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" "If I Were Your Woman" "Neither One of Us"
Martha Reeves and the Vandellas	"(Love Is Like a) Heat Wave" "Nowhere to Run" "Jimmy Mack" "Dancing in the Street"
Mary Wells	"Two Lovers" "You Beat Me to the Punch" "My Guy"
Tammi Terrell	"Ain't No Mountain High Enough" "Your Precious Love" "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing"
The Crystals	"He's a Rebel" "Da Doo Ron Ron" "Then He Kissed Me"
The Supremes	""Where Did Our Love Go" "Stop! In the Name of Love" "Back in My Arms Again" "Baby Love" "I Hear a Symphony" "You Can't Hurry Love" "You Keep Me Hangin' On"
The Velvelettes	"He Was Really Sayin' Somethin' "These Things Will Keep Me Loving You"

My Guy – Mary Wells

<p>Nothing you could say Can tear me away from my guy Nothing you could do 'Cause I'm stuck like glue to my guy</p> <p>I'm stickin' to my guy Like a stamp to a letter Like the birds of a feather We stick together I'm tellin' you from the start I can't be torn apart from my guy</p> <p>Nothing you can do Could make me untrue to my guy Nothing you could buy Could make me tell a lie to my guy</p> <p>I gave my guy my word of honor To be faithful and I'm gonna You best be believing I won't be deceiving my guy</p> <p>As a matter of opinion I think he's tops My opinion is he's the cream of the crop As a matter of taste to be exact He's my ideal as a matter of fact</p> <p>Nothing you could say Can tear me away from my guy Nothing you could do 'Cause I'm stuck like glue to my guy</p> <p>I'm stickin' to my guy Like a stamp to a letter Like the birds of a feather We stick together I'm tellin' you from the start I can't be torn apart from my guy</p> <p>Nothing you can do Could make me untrue to my guy Nothing you could buy</p>	<p>I gave my guy my word of honor To be faithful and I'm gonna You best be believing I won't be deceiving my guy</p> <p>As a matter of opinion I think he's tops My opinion is he's the cream of the crop As a matter of taste to be exact He's my ideal as a matter of fact</p> <p>No muscle bound man Could take my hand from my guy No handsome face Could ever take the place of my guy He may not be a movie star But when it comes to being happy we are There's not a man today Who could take me away from my guy</p> <p>No muscle bound man Could take my hand from my guy No handsome face Could ever take the place of my guy He may not be a movie star But when it comes to being happy we are There's not a man today Who could take me away from my guy</p> <p>There's not a man today Who could take me away from my guy (Tell me more) There's not a man today Who could take me away from my guy</p> <p>YouTube! Video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1M5eEJeT38</p>
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Could make me tell a lie to my guy	
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Baby Love – The Supremes

<p>Baby love My baby love I need you Oh, how I need you But all you do is treat me bad Break my heart and leave me sad Tell me what did I do wrong To make you stay away so long</p> <p>'Cause baby love My baby love Been missing you Miss kissing you Instead of breaking up Let's have some kissin' and makin' up Don't throw our love away In my arms you're gonna stay. Need you, need you Oooh, baby love.</p>	<p>Baby love My baby love Why must we separate, my love, All of my whole life through Never loved no one but you. Why'd you do me like you do. I got this need</p> <p>Need to hold you once again, my love, Feel your warm embrace, my love Don't throw our love away Please don't do me this way Not happy like I used to be Loneliness has got the best of me.</p> <p>My love, My baby love I need you Oh, how I need you Why'd you do me like you do After I been true to you So deep in love with you Baby, baby, baby...</p> <p>YouTube! Video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23Uklkwy5ZM</p>
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Just a Girl - No Doubt

<p>Take this pink ribbon off my eyes I'm exposed And it's no big surprise Don't you think I know Exactly where I stand This world is forcing me To hold your hand 'Cause I'm just a girl, little 'ol me Don't let me out of your sight I'm just a girl, all pretty and petite So don't let me have any rights</p> <p>Oh...I've had it up to here! The moment that I step outside So many reasons For me to run and hide I can't do the little things I hold so dear 'Cause it's all those little things That I fear</p> <p>'Cause I'm just a girl I'd rather not be 'Cause they won't let me drive Late at night I'm just a girl, Guess I'm some kind of freak 'Cause they all sit and stare With their eyes</p>	<p>I'm just a girl, Take a good look at me Just your typical prototype</p> <p>Oh...I've had it up to here! Oh...am I making myself clear? I'm just a girl I'm just a girl in the world... That's all that you'll let me be! I'm just a girl, living in captivity Your rule of thumb Makes me worry some</p> <p>I'm just a girl, what's my destiny? What I've succumbed to Is making me numb I'm just a girl, my apologies What I've become is so burdensome I'm just a girl, lucky me Twiddle-dum there's no comparison</p> <p>Oh...I've had it up to! Oh...I've had it up to!! Oh...I've had it up to here!</p> <p>YouTube! Video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHzOOQfhPFg</p>
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Consider Me Gone – Reba McEntire

<p>Every time I turn the conversation to something deeper than the weather I can feel you all but shuttin' down.</p> <p>And when i need an explanation for the silence you just tell me you don't wanna talk about it now.</p> <p>What you're not saying is coming in loud and clear we're at a crossroads here...</p> <p>If I'm not the one thing you can't stand to lose If I'm not that arrow to the heart of you If you don't get drunk on my kiss If you think you can do better than this then i guess we're done Let's not drag this on Consider me gone</p> <p>With you I've always been wide open like a window or an ocean. There is nothing I've ever tried to hide. So when you leave me not knowin' where you're goin' I start thinkin' that we're lookin' we're lookin' at goodbye.</p>	<p>How about a strong shot of honesty don't you owe that to me...</p> <p>If I'm not the one thing you can't stand to lose If I'm not that arrow to the heart of you If you don't get drunk on my kiss If you think you can do better than this then i guess we're done Let's not drag this on Consider me gone.</p> <p>Consider me a memory. Consider me the past. Consider me a smile in an old photograph someone who used to make you laugh.</p> <p>If I'm not the one thing you can't stand to lose If I'm not that arrow to the heart of you Then i guess we're done let's not drag this on. Consider me gone. Consider me gone. Consider me gone. Just consider me gone.</p> <p>YouTube! Video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cw_L8HdoYgo</p>
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Poker Face – Lady Gaga

<p>I wanna hold em' like they do in Texas please Fold em' let em' hit me raise it baby stay with me (I love it)</p> <p>Luck and intuition play the cards with Spades to start And after he's been hooked I'll play the one that's on his heart</p> <p>Oh, oh, oh, oh, ohhhh, oh-oh-e-oh-oh-oh I'll get him hot, show him what I've got Oh, oh, oh, oh, ohhhh, oh-oh-e-oh-oh-oh, I'll get him hot, show him what I've got</p> <p>Can't read my, Can't read my No he can't read my poker face (she's got to love nobody)</p> <p>I wanna roll with him, a hard pair we will be A little gamblin' is fun when you're with me (I love it) Russian Roulette is not the same without a gun And baby when it's love, if it's not rough it isn't fun (fun)</p>	<p>Can't read my Can't read my No he can't read my poker face (she's got to love nobody)</p> <p>P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (Mum mum mum mah) P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (Mum mum mum mah)</p> <p>I won't tell you that I love you Kiss or hug you Cause I'm bluffin' with my muffin I'm not lying I'm just stunnin' with my love- glue-gunning</p> <p>Just like a chick in the casino Take your bank before I pay you out I promise this, promise this Check this hand cause I'm marvelous</p> <p>P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (Mum mum mum mah) P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (Mum mum mum mah)</p> <p>YouTube! Video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bESGLojNYSo</p>
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Journal Reflection Activity

1. What are the differences between the women artists of 1960s Motown and today? How have things changed in the messages of the songs and overall attitude of and toward female artists?

2. When Mary Wells said that the only work for girls in the 1950s and 1960s were “babies, factories or day work”, did this surprise you? Why do you think she might have said this and have things changed?

3. Think about the women role models in your own life. Why is it important to have a variety of role models and how do you think the women of Motown might have impacted your own role models?