


THE ART OF



# ROCK + ROLL

*Volume 1: Beginnings through 1980*

A 19-WEEK MUSIC LAB FOR EXPLORING ROCK MUSIC HISTORY THROUGH READING, LISTENING, & ACTIVITIES



## Lesson 1

# BLUES, JAZZ, + SWING:

## CALL-AND-RESPONSE



### BLUES & JAZZ

Blues and jazz both got their start in the rural South within African-American communities. Blues usually featured the storytelling of the singer's woes, but they could also be funny, a way for the singer to relate with their audience in a rhythmic story form. Blues also included a music element that has made its way solidly into music culture worldwide, call-and-response. Call-and-response is a common democratic pattern in Sub-Saharan African cultures, a method for community members to participate in public gatherings and discussions. In music, this can be heard when a singer vocalizes lyrics, and an instrument responds in return. This format is called leader/chorus call-and-response. Another form of call-and-response is called question/answer, where the singer(s) in one section poses a sung question, and another vocalist responds with an answer via song.

Read over or listen to these songs to better understand the leader/chorus call-and-response:

Muddy Waters Mannish Boy (Blues)

CALL: "Now when I was a young boy"

RESPONSE: (Harmonica/rhythm section riff)

CALL: "At the age of 5"

RESPONSE: (Harmonica/rhythm section riff)

Chuck Berry School Day (Rock n' Roll)

CALL: "Drop the coin right into the slot"

RESPONSE: (Guitar riff)

CALL: "You gotta get something that's really hot"

RESPONSE: (Guitar riff)

Carly Rae Jepsen Call Me Maybe (Contemporary)

CALL: "Hey, I just met you"

RESPONSE: (Violins)

CALL: "And this is crazy"

RESPONSE: (Violins)



While the Blues included call-and-response, jazz added a new twist on the blues with improvisation or unplanned response. Jazz music is notable for improvised "conversations" between instruments or a singer and the band. This was seen as a way of adding freedom of expression into the music, allowing the audience to "feel" what the musician was feeling at that moment.

### ⚡ TRY THIS!

To get a general idea of how a vocal and instrumental call-and-response combination might work with improvisation, sing the following questions/statements aloud. Tell your learner they can only answer with humming or instrument sounds they can make using their mouth or with an instrument you have on hand. Their responses should also be more than a single note and successfully express their response by conveying feeling with their sounds:

Call: "Are you ready for some fun?"

Response:

Call: "How do you feel when you dance in the sun?"

Response:

Call: And how would you feel if I said the fun is done before it's begun?

Response:

## SWING!

From jazz sprang swing! Small jazz numbers started to swell in size to become big bands, and jazz began to evolve, adding large multi-part arrangements that had rhythms written to suit the newest dance crazes, such as the Jive, that were spreading across the nation. Big bands became big business with their mass appeal and danceable tunes. Louis Armstrong was a big player in the swing movement and was quoted saying, “if you don’t feel it, you’ll never know it.” The New Harvard Dictionary of Music states that swing is “An intangible rhythmic momentum in jazz...Swing defies analysis...”



**LISTEN & LEARN (SONG FACTS):** Listen to three pieces of music, one firmly in each genre of blues, jazz, & swing. Discuss the similarities you hear from one genre to the next. Can you hear how genres influence each other? Innovation sometimes means taking something great and adding to it or manipulating it into something new and exciting. This is how music has evolved and changed through time. Listening options: Bessie Smith (Blues) *Down Hearted Blues*, Jelly Roll Morton (Jazz) *The Crave*, Duke Ellington (Swing) *It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)*.

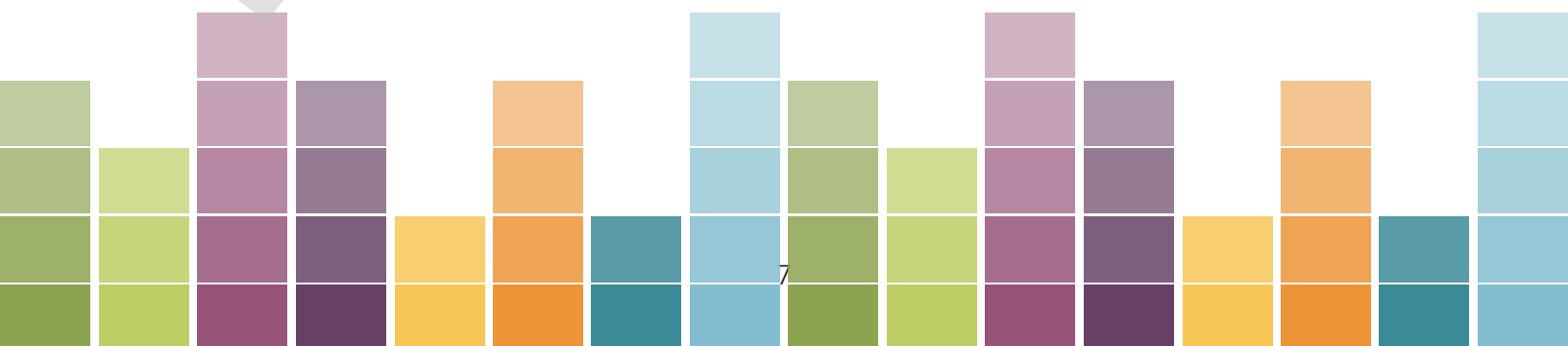
**LISTEN FOR:** Call-response patterns (jazz & blues), improvisation (jazz), simple narrative ballads (blues), trance-like rhythm (blues), singing closer to rhythmic talking instead of a sung melody (blues), the addition of a ‘rhythmic pulse’ for danceability (swing).

### ⚡ TRY THIS!

Look up different videos of dances that were created around the swing music genre. The term “Jitterbug” was later used to encompass any dance that was typically associated with swing music or to notate a swing dancer, they might be called a jitterbug. Here is a list to get you started: Lindy Hop, Jive, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing, Balboa, Charleston, Hand Dancing, Collegiate Shag.

## Additional Playlist

- 🎵 *Back Water Blues* by Bessie Smith (blues)
- 🎵 *Dream A Little Dream of Me* by Louis Armstrong & Ella Fitzgerald (vocal jazz)
- 🎵 *Comes Love* by Sylvia Syms (jazz)
- 🎵 *Aint Nobody Here But Us Chickens* by Louis Jordan (jump blues)
- 🎵 *I'll Be Seeing You* by Ella Fitzgerald (jazz)
- 🎵 *Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby* by Louis Jordan (jazz)
- 🎵 *Fly Me to the Moon* by Frank Sinatra (swing)
- 🎵 *Jumpin Jive* by Cab Calloway and the Nicholas Brothers (swing)
- 🎵 *Best Jazz Singers* on Spotify (collection)





▶ Watch (Please vet all films for age-appropriate content before watching with learners)

- *Bessie: The Music of Bessie Smith* (HBO Films)
- *Ella Fitzgerald- Just One of Those Things* (documentary)
- *Alive and Kicking* (Swing dance documentary)
- *Jazz* (2001 PBS Documentary series, episodes range from 13+ to 19+)
- Netflix Explained: Music (does mention sex very briefly at the beginning)



Read more about:

- *Legends, Icons, & Rebels*, pp. 28 —31, “Louis Armstrong,” pp. 84 —87, “Louis Jordan,” pp. 92 —95, “Ella Fitzgerald”
- *Music is My Life*, p. 22, “Ella Fitzgerald,” p. 101, “Miles Davis”
- *The History of Rock for Big Fans and Little Punks*, pp. 212 —13, “Mississippi Blues”
- *Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat: Ella Fitzgerald Biography* by Roxane Orgill
- *Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph* by Roxane Orgill
- *Who Was Louis Armstrong?* by Yona Zeldis McDonough
- For younger learners tagging along:
  - *Ella Fitzgerald* (Little People, Big Dreams) by Maria Isabel Sanchez
  - *Ella Fitzgerald* (Genius Series) by Isabel Munoz
  - *Making Their Voices Heard: The Inspiring Friendship of Ella Fitzgerald and Marilyn Monroe* by Vivian Kirkfield
  - *Just a Lucky So and So* by Lesa Cline-Ransome
  - *Bessie Smith and the Night Riders* by Sue Stauffacher



## Lesson 9

# THE ALBUM COVER:

## MAKING A STATEMENT



Album covers are another artistic dimension of the music industry. Many bands have had a lot of fun naming their albums and representing the album's musical influences as creative concepts on their covers. The art of the cover is an integral part of the album's success. The album cover can go a long way to capturing people's attention; getting them talking about the art, creating "buzz," which helps promote the music; and tells people what they might expect to find within the album.

Many bands choose to create a setting and a simple story around their albums to project an underlying theme that brings cohesion to each project. In much the same way as a novel can tell a story, so can a music collection. However, some covers are unplanned but still successfully draw people to purchase.

For this project, you will have three options:

1. You can come up with a theme and venture to create a cover from scratch (including the album's name)
2. You can choose to recreate a personalized version of a fun and famous cover by The Beatles.
3. You can recreate a favorite album cover in a new medium.

Let's explore a few common or interesting album concepts and methods to inspire you before you undertake to make your own.

### PLAYING WITH LANGUAGE AS ART: ENTENDRE

Rush's *Moving Pictures* album art by Hugh Syme included three elements, designed as a triple entendre, a figure of speech, or particular wording intended to have more than one meaning. The imagery was made to represent three different ideas using the album title, "Moving Pictures." the cover depicts movers who are carrying pictures, a literal representation of the album's name. On the side, people are shown crying because the pictures passing by are emotionally "moving," a play on the same title but with a different meaning. Finally, the back cover has a film crew making a motion picture of the whole scene. The words "moving" and "motion" are synonyms, so a different representation of the album's title.



### SYMBOLISM

Taylor Swift's album *1989* was her official departure from country music, where she started her music career. She said she wanted to focus on a style influenced by 1980's synth-pop, and her birthday, being in the year 1989, made her theme for the album come together and reflect in her cover art. Taylor used her birth year as the album's title and the polaroid picture, which was popular in the 1980s, to symbolize her musical rebirth.

Using her birth year and a nostalgic representation of her youth, she shows her fans that this album is both new for her and a connection to something old from her past. She is using symbolism to tell listeners what to expect of the music.



## SYMBOLISM USING INTERESTING ART STYLES: ASSEMBLAGE ART

If you were a Torchlight Level 3 user, you might remember your introduction to assemblage art, and maybe you even kept your project from *My Innovations*. If you enjoyed creating your past art piece or are new to the art form, the use of lesser-known art forms might be just the ticket for your album cover. In 1968 The Rascals released an album called *Once Upon a Dream*, and Dino Danelli noted the cover was “An assemblage of objects and sculptures that represent our dreams individually and collectively as a group. For its construction, I have, instead of carving from stone, used an opposite method of building and adding to create many objects, which altogether form an environment. The objects exist not as separate identities, but as symbolic carriers.” In other words, they collected small objects they felt represented their thoughts, ideas, and dreams and put them all together in an open-faced box to create an exciting scene filled with symbolism. It is typical of the art style to use monochromatic color, then selectively add bits of color back in for further symbolism or interest. If you would like to try your hand at this style, find small symbolic objects of your theme around the house or maybe at a thrift shop. You will need a box made from a material of your choice, glue (hot glue works excellent), and paint (one color for all the objects and maybe accent color(s), if you choose).



## CREATING CURIOSITY

What about this cover choice catches your attention? Do you feel it holds symbolism of what is contained within the album? If so, what do you think it symbolizes?

The Who's album, *Who's Next*, is based on an experimental project they called *Lifefhouse*. Their cover image was inspired by *2001 A Space Odyssey*, a popular science-fiction/adventure movie from 1968, and shows the band members having urinated on a concrete monolith in a desolate wasteland. This album cover was purely a spur-of-the-moment choice, though. Read more about it here: <https://www.tlcr.bz/ARR-12>

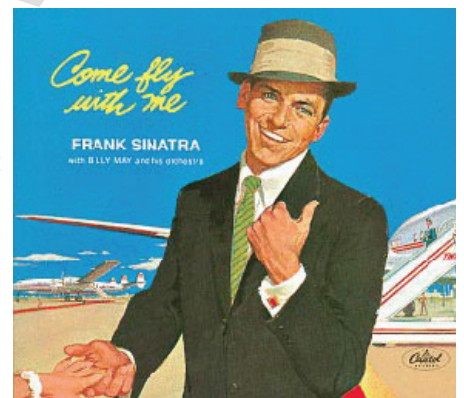


You might find it funny or even odd, but most people would at least find it intriguing. If your reaction was to ask yourself: why they had urinated on a huge concrete structure, and where in the world were they? Then, the cover accomplished something! It made you curious. Art does not always need a story. Sometimes, art is meant to capture your imagination and make you want to find out more. This method can be used as a marketing tool to compel people to buy an album because they feel their curiosity may be met with answers if they listen to the album. This curiosity can also lead people to make up their own stories, in essence, creating opportunities for imagination, which is an accomplishment of art in itself!

When I first saw this cover, I felt it was reminiscent of a near dystopian future (look up “dystopian”, it’s a great word), maybe where rock music was used to free people from government oppression and the band members were leaders of the revolt! Discuss what your initial thoughts were. Did you make up a story in your head about what the cover meant or why they chose this image?

## ALLURE OF AN IDEA

Frank Sinatra's album *Fly With Me* was dubbed “A Musical Trip Around the World.” The album cover was designed by Jon Jonson and was representing the allure of the jet-set era of the 1950s when air travel was a luxury only enjoyed by wealthy

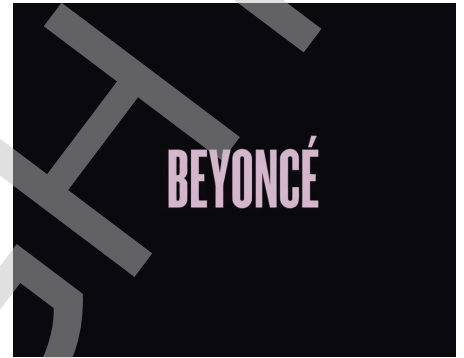




people. Because most people could not afford such luxuries, the idea behind the album's theme was to create a feeling of world travel and luxury, but at the low cost of a musical album. They hoped to entice people with the idea of something grand but out of their reach.

## MINIMALISM MAKES A STATEMENT

Sometimes when you want to make a statement, less is more. Beyoncé's namesake album design was simple, her bold pink typed name on a black background. You would not think there was much to say about this, but there are many points of possible symbolism to be explored. Let's start with the bold pink text, which could symbolize Beyoncé's ownership of her femininity because pink was thought to be a feminine color within many societies. While this concept is flawed, it was used to an interesting effect here. Then we have her singular bold name as the only cover decoration showing that she alone is enough, no other decoration or flare needed. Minimalist symbolism can be thought-provoking and compelling when used well. Another minimalism cover to study is Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*.



## USING PLACE

The Beatles wanted their last album they recorded together to be in the place they created their music, right outside their studio actually. Millions of people have visited Abbey Road's zebra-style crossing to recreate the iconic album cover over the years. In fact, there is a live-feed camera directed at the location so you can watch people as they make their own version of the famous cover, which had no band name or title on the cover. You can read more about it here:

<https://www.tlcr.bz/ARR-13>



**✨ TRY THIS!** The Beatles created an album called *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in which the band is in color, having just performed for an audience of influential figures. To choose these figures, the band had to have a thoughtful conversation about what cultural figures of the world were influential to them. Many familiar figures were vetoed for various reasons by one or more of the bandmates. Your job is to go through the same process, creating a collection of people, famous or otherwise, that you feel positively influenced either yourself or society in general.



Assignment:

1. Create a list of influential figures
2. Do some light research and discuss with a trusted person on each figure and whittle your list down to the most influential among them, making sure the chosen figures can all fit within your 10x10 album cover.
3. Grab greyscale photographs or print-outs of yourself, bandmates (family), and your final inspirational figures.
4. Cut out all your inspirational figures, yourself, and your bandmates. Using brilliant-colored markers or paint, color in the photos of yourself and your bandmates.
5. Assemble your cultural collage album cover on a 10"x10" piece of paper in the style of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club using glue.
6. Add your chosen album title with artistic lettering.

This is a great artistic representation of your sphere of influence. In a snapshot, you have created a picture of those who inspire or influence you in your present life.

**⚡ TRY THIS!** Create an original album cover. What concept do you want to use within your cover? Do you want to choose a theme for the album, give it a name, and cultivate a cover that speaks to it using symbolism? How about a fun play on words using entendre? You could also use an art style that you have meant to try or create something that will bring up many questions and create an air of curiosity. Revisit the album concepts above and choose a direction.

**⚡ TRY THIS!** Recreate a favorite album cover of yours using an alternate art form or different materials such as recreating a picture into a painting or making a cover replica, but in Lego, like this fun replica of Moving Pictures.



## EXTENSIONS

**📶** Have learners choose an intriguing cover they feel uses symbolism and/or heavy messaging from pre-approved album covers, then listen to the album to see if the music correlates to the covers statement.



Read more about:

- *Legends, Icons, & Rebels*, pp. 68—71, “Frank Sinatra”
- *Music Legends: 40 Inspiring Icons*, “The Who,” “Pink Floyd,” “Beyoncé”
- *Black Music Greats: 40 Inspiring Icons*, “Beyoncé”
- *Music is My Life*, p. 53, “Beyoncé”
- *The History of Rock: For Big Fans and Little Punks*, p. 31, “The Who,” p. 32, “Pink Floyd”
- Look up the etymology of the word entendre and see if your learner can figure out the literal meaning of terms like double or triple entendre.
- Have older learners dive a bit deeper into album covers with political or controversial messages, such as:
  - Pink Floyd’s *Animals* album (Socio-economic messaging loosely based on George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*). If older learners are interested in diving into Pink Floyd’s album cover inspiration, they might try reading *Animal Farm* or the new graphic novel version adapted and illustrated by Odyr.
  - Metallica’s *Master of Puppets* (anti-war sentiments and commentary on true evils of the world).
  - The Roots *Things Fall Apart* (Civil Rights era image used to reflect the group’s musical goal of addressing inequality).
  - Hole’s *Live Through This* (Social commentary on the self-doubt that fuels the beauty industry).