



In this unit the children study pieces of rock and pop music and explore how the 12 bar blues has been influential on both genres. The unit begins with reminding the children of the *African-American Spirituals* they studied in Y5 (summer A). Spirituals were a genre of American Christian music associated with the suffering of slaves during the slave trade. They were influential on other genres of music including the blues (which the children studied in the unit *Blues and the Groove* in Spring A), which was in turn influential on rock and roll and pop music.

At the beginning of the unit the children study the classic rock and roll song, *Hound Dog* sung by Elvis Presley (previously studied in year 3, Autumn A in the unit *Off-Beat*) and *Crossroads* by the rock group 'Cream' which are both based on a 12 bar blues. They learn how electric guitar solos, such as the one played by the influential guitarist Eric Clapton from 'Cream' are typical of rock music. They go on to study *Can't Buy Me Love* by the Beatles (building on their Y2 investigation of the Beatles in the unit *Beat Music*) which is also based on a 12 bar blues. They then listen to *Wonderwall* by Oasis and learn how the 90s band were influenced by the Beatles. They finish the unit by comparing the sound of the acoustic and electric guitar of the intros to *Crossroads* and *Wonderwall*.

During the course of the unit the children learn to sing *Hound Dog* and *Can't Buy Me Love*, both over backing tracks, creating rhythms on the off-beat on untuned percussion instruments and actions to accompany the songs.

Lesson Sequencing

In lesson 1 the children listen to a version of *Hound Dog* sung by Elvis Presley and explore how this is based on a 12 bar blues. *Hound Dog* is a classic rock and roll song. At first, the children revise that the 12 bar blues uses three chords built on the I, IV and V notes of the scale, played over a pattern of 12 bars in 4/4 time. They then learn to sing the song over a backing track. In lesson 2 they will start to develop their own accompaniment for the song.

In lesson 2 the children listen to another song based on a 12 bar blues, *Crossroads*, performed by the rock group, Cream who formed in 1966. The group consisted of an electric guitar, electric bass guitar and drums. The most famous of these was Eric Clapton who played the electric guitar. In this song you can also hear Eric Clapton singing. The band were admired for their great talent at playing their instruments but only stayed together for 3 years. They were known for playing different kinds of rock music,



including 'blues rock' (a kind of rock music that relies on the chords and improvised solos of the blues). Eric Clapton is regarded as one of the most influential electric guitarists in rock music. Rock music often uses electric guitar solos and in this song you can hear solos played by Eric Clapton. The solos are improvised, which means when music is made up on the spot. In this song we can also hear a distinctive guitar 'riff' played at the beginning of the song. A riff is a short, repeated phrase. This can be heard in the introduction before Eric Clapton starts singing. At the end of the lesson the children create an accompaniment played on untuned percussion instruments for their version of Hound Dog which they started to learn in lesson 1.

In lesson 3 the children learn about one of the most famous bands of all time—the Beatles. The Beatles were an English rock/pop band who started in Liverpool in England in 1960. The band had four members and had the nickname the 'fab four'. The members of the band were John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr. Lots of people think that they are the most successful and influential band in the history of pop (popular) music. The Beatles became very famous in Britain and people called the excitement over the band 'Beatlemania'. In year 2 the children investigated how the Beatles made 'beat music' (where there is a strong emphasis on the first beat of every group of 4) and listened to *Yellow Submarine* and *Help!* In this lesson they listen to *Can't buy me love* which uses a 12 bar blues structure in each verse. *Can't buy me love* was written by Paul McCartney and released in 1964. By early 1964, the Beatles were international stars and had achieved unprecedented levels of critical and commercial success. They became a leading force in Britain's cultural resurgence at the time, ushering in a British invasion of the United States pop market. At the end of the lesson the children learn to sing *Can't buy me love* with a backing track.

In lesson 4 the children listen to *Wonderwall* by Oasis and learn how the 90s band were influenced by the Beatles. Oasis were an English rock band who formed in Manchester in 1991. They are known as a 'Britpop' band, which was a movement in music in the 1990s focused on British bands. Britpop generally showed influence of British bands from the 1960s and 70s. Oasis were heavily influenced by The Beatles and used the tradition of melodic, guitar-based pop music established by the earlier group. In *Wonderwall* the sound of the guitar, which we hear at the beginning dominates the song. At the end of the lesson the children continue to practise singing *Can't buy me love* and play percussion instruments and add actions to accompany their singing.

In lesson 5 the children listen to and compare the intros of *Crossroads* by Cream and *Wonderwall* by Oasis to distinguish the different sounds made by an electric and acoustic guitar. They continue to rehearse the songs *Hound Dog* and *Can't buy me love* so that they are ready for performance in lesson 6.

In **lesson 6**, the children perform and record the songs which they have learnt over the course of the unit. They then evaluate their performance. In doing so, they learn that we can evaluate a performance to make it better next time. By practising the songs so they are ready for performance they develop their skills in singing together as an ensemble.

Musical Focus

Harmony and Form

- Chord progression for the 12 bar blues (chord I, IV and V) over 12 bars of 4/4 time.
- Improvised solos over a 12 bar blues
- Verse/Chorus/Intro/Outro

Instrumentation

- Rock and roll use of electric guitar solos
- Beatles/Oasis use of the guitar
- Different between electric and acoustic guitars

Links to Prior/Following Units

Year 5

Spring B—*Beethoven's Eroica* (Pitch, Melody, Harmony —Main theme based on a triad, using triads built on I, IV and V to create a melody)

Summer A—*African-American Spirituals* (Structure and Form—verse/chorus)

Year 6

Autumn A—*Voice and Body Percussion* (Tempo—Time signatures in 4/4)

Spring A—*Blues and the Groove* (Harmony, Rhythm and Form—chord progression for the 12 bar blues over 12 bars of 4/4 time, AAB lyrical form of the 12 bar blues, use of flattened notes in the blues, using the minor pentatonic scale in the blues)

Spring B—*Minimalism* (Instrumentation and timbre—combining acoustic and electronically produced sounds)

Summer B—*Protest Songs* (Style, structure and form—verses/chorus; songs as an expression of a need for social change;

development of song style and genre; African- American spirituals, gospel songs, protest songs, jazz, folk)

Outcomes

Learn, practise and perform *Hound Dog* and *Can't Buy Me Love* over a backing track, adding percussion/movement on the off-beat.

Key Learning Points

- Rock and roll music sometimes used a 12 bar blues.
- The 12 bar blues uses three chords built on the I, IV and V notes of the scale and the chords are played in a pattern over 12 bars of 4/4 time.
- Rock and roll music often uses electric guitar solos.
- Creams' version of *Crossroads* is based on a 12 bar blues. It includes an improvised guitar solo by Eric Clapton.
- The Beatles were an English rock/pop band from Liverpool.
- The verses of *Can't buy me love* use a 12 bar blues.
- The band Oasis were influenced by the Beatles. They were a 'Britpop' band.
- Oasis created melodic, guitar-based pop music established by the Beatles.
- The electric and acoustic guitar have a different sound.

Progression: Technical, Constructive, Expressive

Singing

Children learn and sing call and response and action songs, to warm up at the beginning of each lesson. They also learn to sing the songs *Hound Dog* and *Can't Buy Me Love*, which are both based on a 12 bar blues. This develops their technical singing skills which include posture, breath control, singing with a pulse, imitating rhythms, varying speed, holding a particular pitch and singing together in an ensemble. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression. In particular, the children sing African-American spirituals, previously studied in year 5, which were influential on the blues.

They use these songs to develop their skills in identifying pulse and metre which assist with understanding the metre of 4/4 (4 crotchet beats in a bar) used in the 12 bar blues.

Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, developing their technical skills of feeling, clapping and tapping, to the beat allowing them to identify metre, expressing how the music makes them feel and identifying instrumentation and form. By listening to various rock/pop songs they begin to have conscious understanding of how music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of pulse, metre, harmony and structure/form. By studying these songs, they begin to develop an increasing understanding of the expressive qualities of music from a particular culture/genre.

Practising

Practising singing songs accompanied by untuned percussion instruments develops technical motor skills and an internal sense of pitch, pulse and rhythm. Singing these songs develops knowledge of handling pulse, rhythm, metre, harmony and structure/form as component dimensions of making music. Practising the skills required for singing the songs gradually over the course of the unit, ensures increasing confidence and sophistication in the expressive quality of musical outcomes.

Performing

Working towards performance of songs with an accompaniment over the course of six lessons ensures increased technical accuracy, confidence, fluency, expression and the ability to play securely in an ensemble.