

Special Focus

POP MUSIC AND MUSIC EDUCATION



Photograph courtesy of the author

POPULAR MUSIC IN YOUR PROGRAM

Growing with the Times

by John Kuzmich, Jr.

Traditional school music programs do not interest some accomplished student musicians. John Kuzmich, Jr., discusses the power of popular and rock music to draw these students into music education.

Many music educators may hesitate to offer instrumental pop instruction. The schedule of traditional band instruction in junior and senior high schools forces music teachers to squeeze preparation time between added responsibilities. Should we, as music educators, spend all of our energy and time with our "bread and butter" students, using our current enrollment to develop the best symphonic bands possible, or should we broaden our base of operation by including students who are outside of our regular instrumental classes?

Walking the halls of our schools are a number of young musicians who do not belong to the school band, orchestra, or chorus. These students, who are not geared toward conventional music instruction, may already be proficient in basic rock, folk, or jazz techniques. Instead of learning through formal music lessons, they glean informal pointers from other musicians. Generally, they play by ear, often mimicking recordings of their favorite artists. Many eventually play in bands and some may even become professional performers—all without the aid of a school music educator! Obviously, we need these self-motivated, fresh musicians in our programs more than they need us.

Pop music does have a way of influencing the literature we play in marching band, jazz band, and symphonic band. Contemporary music appeals to our band students; take the time to examine the music playing on their personal stereos or identify the radio stations that they regularly listen to, and you'll discover quickly the general popularity of pop music, even among our best classical or jazz musicians.

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A case study

The band program at Evergreen High School in the Denver, Colorado, suburbs was noted for its jazz program. For eighteen years, no marching band existed, and a symphonic band enrollment of less than thirty students left the group with incomplete instrumentation. But two active jazz bands thrived in the curriculum.



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Most of the students preferred rock and pop music over jazz or symphonic music. Establishing a pep band that performed pop-oriented music during the football season helped broaden the program. The pep band quickly became accepted as part of the band program and later developed into a marching band.

One music elective, a survey class of rock history, involved students outside of the band program. While the intent of the class was good, it invariably attracted heavy metal and death rockers with little sensitivity for other rock styles. Because this class offered limited benefits for the band program, it was soon replaced with a beginning band class called Concert Band.

Though the course's written description was traditional in nature, it included beginning instruction on electric guitar, drums (including the drum set), and electric bass. This approach drew students into the instrumental program from outside the traditional feeder system. These individuals began their own rock bands and attracted enough students to maintain the class for the following year.

Music educators may realize their college music methods classes did not train them to teach this kind of class. For example, the teachers of these courses should be able to play without music since rock students do not use written parts.

Proficiency in teaching jazz improvisation can help teachers adapt to this pop-oriented class where playing by ear is the norm. Rock/pop teaching materials differ, however, from those used to teach jazz students. If you try initially to teach rock-oriented students to read music through an organized system of instruction, they often balk, cease to practice, and soon quit. Often they will say, "Just show me how to do it and I'll play it!" Instructional videos and rock-oriented audio teaching materials may help keep students on-task. The resource list that accompanies this article contains a sampling of helpful rock-oriented instructional materials. The variety of materials is also important; a number of instructional videos should be used along with instrumental technique books.

Scheduling solutions

A six- and seven-period schedule in high school can restrict the number of scheduling options available to students. This problem is exacerbated when only single sections of some essential nonmusic courses are offered—leaving fewer students with the opportunity to enroll in fine arts classes.

Because declining enrollment made elective class scheduling dif-

ficult at Evergreen High School, the administration chose to eliminate the traditional seven periods of study hall. Instead, they elected to offer one large study hall for over three hundred students. During the study hall, music faculty members had a free period to structure an elective course of their choice. Teachers were also able to make recruiting presentations describing the class. I offered a rock performance class. After the presentation for this course, almost twenty students responded favorably to enrolling.

In the presentation, the students learned more about the rock performance class through previews of the instructional videos and instrumental technique books to be used. Herbie Hancock's *RockSchool* videotapes effectively present a rock class course of study (see Resource List). The instructional materials impressed the students during the orientation, helped recruit students, and showed the students what would be expected from them in the class.

Comprehensive musicians

Beginning instrumental pop/rock students differ from "traditional" band students in that they are more naturally attracted to comprehensive musicianship approaches because they are not used to reading music. They compose their own music soon after beginning instruction. Often, they display interest in recording techniques, musical styles, and transcribing their favorite music for use as they begin their own bands.

Once beginning pop/rock students become proficient on their instruments, encourage them to organize their own bands during class time. While you can introduce them to fake books, the students usually would rather listen to records of their favorite rock bands. With amazing proficiency, they can learn the chords and lyrics of tunes they want to play. Imitation of their

favorite artists is a great learning facilitator. It is exciting to see students transcribing solos and parts directly from the original recordings. Students love to learn tunes from the "Pocket Songs" from Music Minus One. Not only do they learn the tunes, they even add harmony parts and arrange the tunes to fit their own musical tastes.

When student groups reach this level of self-instruction, introduce them to more comprehensive musicianship concepts. Have students examine how harmony, melody, tone color, rhythm, and form are used in their favorite rock groups and styles. Eventually, the students will learn to further investigate musical structure to the point where they start writing their own material for their groups.

A series of lunchtime concerts in Evergreen's student commons gave student-run bands a comfortable forum to perform in front of their peers. The concert series also served as a feeder system for the school's annual battle-of-the-bands contest.

Performance competition

Each year, Evergreen High School attracts high school rock bands from all over the state of Colorado for an aggressive contest. All members of the competing bands must be enrolled in junior or senior high schools. Prizes, donated by local musical merchants, are offered to the top five bands. A nearby ABC affiliate radio station has cosponsored the event over the airwaves. Four professional musicians judge the event based on musicianship rather than crowd applause. The event is staged on the high school football field with a rented professional sound system and a custom-built stage, and the contest is professionally videotaped. To add prestige to the event, bands can audition for semifinalist qualification by submitting a cassette tape of original compositions

instead of "cover" tunes.

Evergreen's school marketing club (DECA) and the student council participate in the event, making it an all-school project rather than just a band activity. The first year the contest was held, six of the fourteen bands accepted by the professional judges at the semifinal level were from Evergreen High School; the contest's first and fourth place winners were from Evergreen. This kind of event can be particularly fulfilling, with the high level of musicianship, improvisation, and composition achieved by a newly discovered group of students.

Effects on the program

The band program at Evergreen benefitted from the infusion of rock/pop music. There has been crossover enrollment from the rock class to the music theory classes. The symphonic band is now stronger with committed support throughout the sections, capable of performing grade IV and V literature. (Two years earlier, the symphonic band had difficulty performing grade III literature.) A community/school symphonic band has been formed with more than fifteen parents of symphonic band students participating.

The jazz program has likewise benefitted with an expansion of both jazz and pop combos. The combos play as pep bands for home basketball games and at jazz concerts and serve as a primary source of developing multiple soloists and rhythm sections in our jazz program. Some of the combos play professionally. Evergreen's pep band has grown to a full marching band with the addition of flag and pom-pom squads.

Evergreen expanded its instrumental music program in nontraditional ways. By so doing, it reached a larger percentage of the student body and strengthened the traditional offerings. In short, it is successful music education. ■

Resource List

At the high school level, appropriate instrumental instructional materials make pop/rock instruction easy and attractive to students. While beginning/intermediate level pop/rock students may not be formally trained in music, they know what is "hip" and what is "square." Videotapes and books with audiocassettes or soundsheets really impress students. These students are motivated by real-world applications for performing the music that they listen to on a daily basis. Music practice precedes music theory.

This is a list of selected instructional materials that are particularly appropriate in developing a pop/rock instrumental music program at the high school level.

Videotapes

MIDI

Muro, Don. *An Overview of Electronic Musical Instruments*. J.D. Wall Publishing Co., available from MENC Publications Sales, 1990. (45 min) An imaginative introductory video for MIDI applications with synthesizer, sampler, drum machine, digital effects processor, and vocoder. All levels.

Untangling MIDI, Part One. Hal Leonard, 1988. (60 min) Offers step-by-step instruction along with practical troubleshooting tips and real-world examples. All levels.

Keyboard

Chick Corea Electric Workshop. DCI Music Video, 1988. (60 min) How to create sounds on synthesizers and how to layer synthesizer sounds to create new textures. All levels.

Chick Corea Keyboard Workshop. DCI Music Video, 1987. (60 min) Practicing, composing, and improvising. 64-page booklet included. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: David Bryan of Bon Jovi. Hot Licks Productions, 1988; *Richard Tee—Contemporary Piano*. DCI Music Video, 1987.

Electric Bass

Carol Kaye Electric Bass. Carol Kaye, 1986. (120 min) Fundamentals video that teaches jazz bass styles and techniques such as bass line construction, soloing, reading, basic theory, and II-V progressions. Beginning/intermediate levels.

Jaco Pastorius. DCI Music Video, 1985. (60 min) Demonstrates "hip" electric bass techniques that turn students on to some serious practicing. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: Billy Sheehan On Bass. DCI Music Video, 1989; *John Patitucci Electric Bass*. DCI Music Video, 1989; *Mark Egan Bass Workshop*. DCI Music Video, 1989; *Slap, Pop, and Tap for the Bass with Stuart Hamm*. Hot Licks Production, 1988; *Superchops 4 Bass, Level One with Beaver Felton*. Hot Licks Productions, 1989.

Guitar

Schmid, Will. *Beginning Guitar*. Hal Leonard, 1986. (60 min) A thorough video for properly teaching the fundamental techniques: playing chords, reading music, playing solos and duets, improvising rock, and accompanying in a variety of styles. Beginning level.

Paul Gilbert Intense Rock Sequences and Techniques. Hal Leonard, 1988. (60 min) Step-by-step approach to learning challenging licks through alternate picking, three note-per-string scales, sweep picking, and string skipping. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: Bon Jovi Hit Songs. Hal Leonard, 1988; *Chicago Blues Guitar with Arlen Roth*. Hot Licks Production, 1989; *Frank Gambale*. DCI Music Video, 1989; *Guitar Tricks*. Hal Leonard, 1986; *Guns 'N' Roses Style*. Hal Leonard, 1986; *Rik Emmett*. Hal Leonard, 1986; *Star Licks Videos*. Hal Leonard, 1986; *Tommy Tedesco*. Hot Licks Production, 1989.

Drums

Dave Weckl. DCI Music Video, 1988. (72 min) Insights into the fundamentals of drumming including hand and foot technique and practice routines. All levels.

Rod Morgenstein. DCI Music Video, 1988. (60 min) Creatively shows how to develop versatility, create a drum part, and play in odd time signatures. Demonstrates a unique approach to ghost strokes and double bass drumming. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: Aronoff, Kenny. Basics of Rock Drumming. DCI Music Video, 1989; *Feldstein, Sandy, and Dave Black. Alfred's Drum Method, Books One and Two*. Alfred, 1987; *Joe Franco Double Bass Drumming*. DCI Music Video, 1988; *Kenny Aronoff Laying It Down*. DCI Music Video, 1987; *Sulsbruck, Birger. Latin-American Percussion*. DCI Music Video, 1988; *Payne, Jim. How to Play Drums, From Day One*. DCI Music Video, 1989; *Snare Drum Rudiments*. DCI Music Video, 1987.

Rock Ensemble Techniques

Hancock, Herbie. *RockSchool, Volumes One-Six*. Warner Home Videos, 1987. Collection of instructional videos with two 191-page texts that correlate to the videos. Discusses what it takes to be a rock musician and to put together a rock band. All levels.

Books

Recording Techniques

Muench, Teri, and Susan Pomerantz. *Attn: A & R*. Alfred, 1988. Step-by-step guide to the recording industry. Provides candid comments about the music recording business. All levels.

Multi-Track Recording. Hal Leonard, 1988. Resource for setting up a home or school studio. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: Multi-Track Recording for Musicians. Alfred, 1988.

MIDI

Mind Over MIDI. Hal Leonard, 1987. Good first book about MIDI.

Using MIDI. Alfred, 1987. The theory and practical applications of MIDI with an attractive balance of text and graphics. All levels, particularly for introduction to MIDI.

Sanchez, Rey. *MIDI Guitar*. CPP/Belwin, 1988. Complete applications directory for the MIDI guitarist. Overview of the technology. All levels.

Also try: Advanced MIDI Applications. Alfred, 1988; *Leonard, Tomlyn, and Steve Leonard. Electronic Music Dictionary*. Hal Leonard, 1988.

Synthesizer

Beginning Synthesizer. Alfred, 1986. Covers a broad spectrum including programming. Good reference manual.

Eiche, Jon F. *What's a Synthesizer?* Hal Leonard, 1987. Simple answers to common questions about synthesizer technology. Beginning level.

Also try: Quinzi, Steve. Synthesizer Orchestration. CPP/Belwin, 1987; *Schlesinger, Andrew. Insider's Guide to Casio CZ Synthesizers*. Alfred, 1987; *Sequencer Trax: Contemporary Hits*. Hal Leonard, 1989; *Trax: Heavy Hits*. Hal Leonard, 1989; *Yamaha Easy DX7*. Hal Leonard, 1986; *Yamaha Easy DX100 and DX27*. Hal Leonard, 1986.

Voice

Davidson, John, and Cort Casady. *The Singing Entertainer*. Alfred, 1982. Insight about the entertainment business and being an artist. All levels.

Resource List (continued)

Fakebooks/Songbooks

Galliford, Gill, and Tom Roed, ed. *Gig Paks: '50s and '60s Rock 'N' Roll*. CPP/Belwin, 1988. A loose-leaf fakebook of one hundred classic hits from the fifties and sixties. A repository of early rock literature easily playable by beginning or intermediate musicians.

Whitburn, Joel, ed. *The Ultimate Pop Rock Fake Book*. Hal Leonard, 1986. More than four hundred hits from 1955 to 1986. Designed for piano, voice, and guitar. All levels.

Also try: *The Ultimate Series: Contemporary—Sixty Solid Gold Hits*. Hal Leonard, 1990; *Rock Guitar Fake Book*. Hal Leonard, 1988; *The Beatles Fake Books*. Hal Leonard, 1987.

Guitar Methods

Sanchez, Rey. *Basic Guitar Chords*. CPP/Belwin, 1984. More than two hundred basic chords, including power and bar chords. Beginning level.

Stetina, Troy. *Heavy Metal Lead Guitar, Volume One*. Hal Leonard, 1986. Heavy metal techniques. Includes sections on the minor pentatonic scale, blues scale, dorian minor scale, natural harmonics, and crossing strings. Play-along cassette tape included. Beginning/intermediate levels.

Also try: Casabona, Helen, ed. *Rock Guitar*. Hal Leonard, 1989; Stetina, Troy. *Heavy Metal Lead Guitar, Volume Two*. Hal Leonard, 1987; Tarshis, Steve. *The Complete Rock Guitar Player*. Music Sales, 1988.

Chords

Vinson, Harvey. *Rock Chord Guide*. Music Sales, 1970. Chord-voicing presentation that describes chord roots based on specific strings. Beginning/intermediate levels.

Schmid, Will. *Rock Chords for Guitar*. Hal Leonard, 1986. Covers most chords needed to play today's rock: open-string chords, heavy metal power chords, and bar chords. Intermediate level.

Michaels, Mark. *Rock Picture Chords and How to Use Them*. Music Sales, 1978. Presents the most-often-used chords, progressions, and right-hand patterns in clear diagrams and photos. Beginning level.

Improvisation/Riffs/Lead Guitar

Friedman, Jay. *Rock Guitar Licks*. Alfred, 1987. Guitar licks organized in major, minor, dominant seventh, diminished, augmented, and major/minor progressions. Graphics and musical notation. Beginning/intermediate level.

Sokolow, Fred. *The Complete Rock Guitar*. CPP/Belwin, 1981. Useful in learning a variety of styles. Divided into sections on heavy metal, country rock/folk rock, funk, disco and soul, and pop styles. Soundsheet included. Intermediate level.

Also try: Agresta, Ralph. *The Classic Riff Collection Rock Guitar*. Music Sales, 1988; Celentano, Dave. *Flying Fingers*. Hal Leonard, 1987; Celetano, Dave. *The Magic Touch—Two Hand Touch Technique*. Hal Leonard, 1986; McGee, Jerry. *Dynamite Guitar Licks*. Alfred, 1987.

Rock Theory

Tarshis, Steve. *Teach Yourself Rock Theory*. Music Sales, 1978. Primarily for the guitarist. Covers a broad spectrum of material in both standard notation and tablature.

Guitar Method Songbooks

Celentano, Dave. *Speed Metal*. Hal Leonard, 1989. Various classical composers' music written and played in heavy metal style. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: Schmid, Will. *Guitar Rock Hits for One, Two, or Three Guitars*. Hal Leonard, 1985.

Equipment

Anderton, Craig. *Electronic Projects for Musicians*. Music Sales, 1980. Shows how to build a preamplifier, compressor/limiter, ring modulator, phase shifter, and twenty-three other inexpensive electronic accessories. All levels.

Guitar Gear. Guitar Player, 1985. A detailed text on all kinds of guitars, accessories, and electronic equipment. All levels.

Artist Songbooks

Pink Floyd—The Wall. Music Sales, 1990. Collection of Pink Floyd songs with guitar voicings. Intermediate level.

Also try: *AC/DC Anthology*. Music Sales, 1985; *The Best of Anthrax*. Music Sales, 1989; Gress, Jesse. *Original B. B. King*. Music Sales, 1989; *Richie Blackmore Anthology*. Music Sales, 1988; Tarshis, Steve. *Original David Gilmour*. Music Sales, 1986; Traum, Artie, and Arti Funaro. *The Legends of Rock Guitar*. Music Sales, 1986; Wolk, Tom. *Original Eric Clapton*. Music Sales, 1986.

Electric Bass

Dean, Dan. *Hal Leonard Electric Bass Method*. Hal Leonard, 1982. First three volumes of a six-volume series. Easy-to-follow approach in tablature and standard notation with a play-along record. All levels.

Dean, Dan. *Hal Leonard Studio Series for Guitar: The Studio Bassist*. Hal Leonard, 1983. Tablature and standard notation with a play-along recording. Advanced level.

Also try: Dean, Dan, and Will Schmid. *Bass Trax—One*. Hal Leonard, 1986; Gross, David C. *Heavy Metal Riffs for Bass*. Music Sales, 1987; Gross, David C. *Improvising Rock Bass*. Music Sales, 1985; Hubbard, Joe. *Pop Bass Lines*. Music Sales, 1986; *Standing in the Shadows of Motown—The Life and Music of Legendary Bassist James Jamerson*. Hal Leonard, 1989.

Piano

Boyd, Bill. *An Introduction to Jazz Chord Voicing for Keyboard*. Hal Leonard, 1988. For teaching pianists improvisation and voicings. Written out in all keys. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Ambrosio, Joe. *Rock Rhythms for Piano*. Hal Leonard, 1980. Rhythm pattern material; covers disco and funk; soft, medium, and hard rock. Optional rhythm guitar and bass guitar parts. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Also try: Baker, Kenneth. *The Complete Rock and Pop Keyboard Player*, Books One, Two, Three, and Four. Music Sales, 1987; Collins, Anne. *How to Use a Fake Book*. Hal Leonard, 1985; *Rock and Pop Creative Keyboard*. Music Sales, 1988.

Drums

Magadini, Peter. *How To Play The Drum-Set, Book One*. Hal Leonard, 1980. Drum-set method with a play-along cassette. Beginning level.

Magadini, Peter. *How To Play the Drum-Set, Book Two*. Hal Leonard, 1980. Wide variety of techniques and concepts for the drum-set player. Play-along cassette is included. Advanced/intermediate levels.

Also try: Bardet, Rene-Pierre. *Two Hundred Drum Machine Patterns*. Hal Leonard, 1985; Feldstein, Sandy. *Roland Drum Machine*. Alfred, 1987; *Peter Erskine Drum Concepts and Techniques*. Hal Leonard, 1987.

Transcriptions

Transcribed Scores. Hal Leonard, 1989. Series of transcribed scores of artists David Sanborn; Chick Corea; the Beatles (three volumes); Blood, Sweat & Tears; Spyro Gyra; Sting; and the Yellowjackets. Individual books for each artist.

Improvisation

Yellin, Peter. *Improvising Rock Sax.* Music Sales, 1978. Explores rock nuances and techniques. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Schmid, Will. *Jazz/Rock Trax One.* Hal Leonard, 1985. Improvisation method for rock-oriented players who are not ready for theoretical demands of jazz improvisational method. Works well at the high school level. Based on pentatonic and blues techniques. Beginning level.

Harmonica

Glover, Tony. *Rock Harp.* Music Sales, 1981. Covers basic techniques, theory, and styles of rock harmonic playing. Beginning level.

Also try: Manus, Steve. *How to Play the Harmonica.* Alfred, 1980; Schackner, Alan Blackie. *Rock Harmonica.* Warner Brothers, 1981.

Rock History

Beethoven, Jane, and Carman Moore. *Rock-It.* Alfred, 1980. Concise text for pop history instruction at the beginning level.

Brown, Charles T. *The Art of Rock and Roll.* Prentice-Hall, 1987. Outstanding text for rock history class. All levels.

Also try: Brown, Charles T. *Music U.S.A.* Prentice-Hall, 1986; Ward, Ed, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ken Tucker. *Rock of Ages: The History of Rock and Roll.* Prentice-Hall, 1986; Kocandrle, Mirek. *The History of Rock and Roll: A Selective Discography.* G.K. Hall, 1988.

Software

Swan, Paul. *Electric Bass Fingerings.* SWAN Software. Teaches electric bass fingerings at three levels of difficulty. Works well in a classroom situation. For Apple, IBM, Commodore, and compatible computers.

Swan, Paul. *Electric Guitar Fingerings.* SWAN Software. Similar to the SWAN software described above. For Apple, IBM, Commodore, and compatible computers.

Audiocassettes

Pocket Songs. Music Minus One. Over four hundred sing-along cassettes of pop/rock top-forty hits with full band accompaniment, with and without lead singer. Good resource for incorporating vocalists into pop/rock instruction. All levels.

Drum Instruction

Dave Weckl Contemporary Drummer + One DCI Music Video, 1987. Side one contains a hot band and nine studio charts while side two is minus the drummer. There is a click track for easier use. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Guitar Instruction

Blues Rock. Hal Leonard, 1984. Blues/rock techniques in the styles of Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Stray Cats, Rolling Stones, and others. Instruction book included. Intermediate/advanced levels.

Eric Clapton Style. Hal Leonard, 1986. A musical treat for guitarists. Instructional booklet included. Intermediate level.

McIntyre, Joe. *Rock Licks.* Hal Leonard, 1979. Contains sixty-two hot licks. Intermediate level.

Publisher Directory

Alfred Publishing
16380 Roscoe Boulevard
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Carol Kaye
P.O. Box 3791
Littleton, CO 80161-3791

CPP/Belwin
15800 NW 48th Street
Miami, FL 33014

DCI Music Video, Inc.
541 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011

G. K. Hall & Co.
70 Lincoln Street
Boston, MA 02111-2685

Guitar Player
20085 Stevens Creek Boulevard
Cupertino, CA 95014

Hal Leonard Publishing
7777 West Bluemound Road
Milwaukee, WI 53213

Hot Licks Production
PO Box 337
Pound Ridge, NY 10576

Music Minus One
50 South Buckhout Street
Irvington, NY 10533

Music Sales Corporation
5 Bellvale Road
Chester, NY 10918

Neil A. Kjos Music Company
4382 Jutland Drive
San Diego, CA 92117

Prentice-Hall Inc.
Rt. 9W
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

SWAN Software
PO Box 1755
Provo, UT 84603

Warner Brothers
265 Secaucus Road
Secaucus, NJ 07096-2037

Warner Home Videos
PO Box 68618
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