



Choir Virtual Learning

Women's Choir/Women's A Cappella Groups

May 6, 2020



Lesson: May 6, 2020

Objective/Learning Target: Students will be introduced to the elements of a cappella music and listen specifically for those elements in women's ensembles.

Bell Work:

Answer the following:

1. Define the term a cappella. Use this link if needed.
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dictionary>
2. What are sounds other than singing that we can make with our voices?
3. Have you had any interest in a cappella singing?



Rise of popularity! Brief history of a cappella groups!

The earliest forms of a cappella music go all the way back to the Renaissance era when instruments were few and singing plentiful. Listen to this clip to hear the earliest a cappella sounds. By rule, only men and boys were allowed to make music during this time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cilvhB-zTfc>

A cappella singing continued to flourish as music history progressed, however, with the rise of instrumental music and using instruments to accompany singers, there was a decline in new a cappella music production.



History continued..

By the late 1800's, Barbershop groups began to emerge singing popular music of the day a cappella. They are known for their tight harmonies and distinct vocal lines. In this day they were all men, but later women's groups formed as well. The most popular women's group is known as the Sweet Adelines. There are now national organizations and competitions for barbershop groups from around the world.

Listen to this clip- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiJa0KZ3xas>



Explosion into pop culture!

The most recent form of a cappella music has permeated pop culture. Shows like “The Voice” created a surge of young people forming groups at the high school and collegiate levels and infused beat boxing and other forms of vocal percussion into the music. The group Pentatonix helped lead the charge and was followed by a series of Pitch Perfect movies centered around young people forming a cappella groups.



Competition is fierce!

The types of competitions that are portrayed in the Pitch Perfect movies are not fictitious. They take place annually and are held nationally and internationally for high school, college and community a cappella groups. They usually consist of performing 3-4 songs, choreography and transitions.



Elements of A Cappella Music

1. Covers- Covers are songs that have been previously written but are re-written or remastered for a new group, in this case an a cappella group. Example: “American Woman” was originally done by The Guess Who, but Lenny Kravitz did a cover.
2. Vocal Parts- Beat boxer/Vocal Percussion, Bass (singing syllables such as “dm”), SSAA, SATB, or TTBB choral parts, and soloists.
3. Dancing
4. Songs are usually arranged by someone in the group.



A cappella sounds!

In the following clips, listen for the elements we just discussed.

Can you hear the following:

1. Vocal Percussion
2. A bass line using nonsense syllables such as “dm”
3. A song you’ve maybe heard before but has been remastered to fit this scenario.
4. 4-part harmony

Clip 1- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6Mtpk4jeVA>

Clip 2- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAVPYq8fc3k>

More Practice!

Find 2 more clips of women's a cappella groups and practice listening for the elements we have discussed.



Lesson Recap

Answer the following questions from this lesson.

1. What is the earliest form of a cappella music we discussed?
2. What famous men's organization began the a cappella movement?
3. How was that music taken to the next level?
4. Where have we seen this music in pop culture?
5. What are the elements of a cappella music?

Thank You!

