

SOUNDS LIKE TORONTO

Music Awards

Grade 10 — Music

Guiding question: What genres of music are recognized/celebrated?

Description

This lesson can act as a short unit in which students are asked to identify and critically reflect on musical genres and music awards culture.

The timing, content, and delivery of the following content should be shaped according to your timetable, class length, and age of participants. Please make adjustments, edits, and/or additions as you and your students see fit.

This lesson is flexible. A teacher may wish to focus more on students' creative writing, reflective writing after listening, or summarizing among other curriculum and administrative expectations. Further inquiries and other artists you may include are suggested below.

Materials: smart board/projector to show music videos, paper for student compositions, writing utensils

Introduction/Minds On

Open discussion questions for students to start thinking about musical genres, either on their own in writing or in small group discussions:

- How many musical genres do you listen to?
- How can you tell what kind of genre a song belongs to? Can a song belong to more than one genre at a time?
- How does a new musical genre get created? Who decides when that happens?

Today we will look at two Canadian music awards, the JUNO Awards and the Polaris Prize, which approach the question of musical genres in very different ways.

In small groups, visit the website for the [JUNO Awards](#) and read through some of the musical genres on their categories list.

Next, visit the website for the [Polaris Prize](#) and read through their Mission Statement and Frequently Asked Questions.

The JUNO Awards give awards for Song and Album of the Year, as well as awards for particular genres. In each genre, music is nominated or qualifies for an award based on a combination of Album sales/downloads/streaming and voting. The Polaris Prize deliberately resists categorizing music by genre or sales numbers.

Group discussion questions:

- How are sales numbers or downloads related to genre? Do streaming numbers help us to decide whether a song is “good” or not?
- If a song doesn't fit into a recognizable genre, can it ever win an award?
- Can you think of songs or music you listen to that wouldn't fit into any of the Juno Award categories?
- Look at the list of past winners of the Polaris Prize. Do you see any patterns in terms of musical genre or style between the winners?
- Why might certain types of music not get considered for awards? Whose perspective dominates in categories like “International Album” or “World Music”?

Body/Action

Activity/ Assignment: Make your own Music Award

You are all jurors for a new Music Award. Spend some time deciding what your award will focus on: will there be categories for different genres? Will albums sales or downloads play a factor? Will there be a long and short list, or just a single winner?

Look over the artists featured in the Sound Like Toronto exhibit. What genres of music are represented? Are there any genres that are left out? Which artists would get your vote for your new award?

Choose an artist from the Sounds Like Toronto exhibit, or make a shortlist of artists. In small groups, decide on which artist to nominate for the award. Make a case to the rest of the class for why your artist should win.

Groups can take turns playing the songs out loud to the class, after they make their arguments.

Make a second shortlist of artists you don't see on the Sounds Like Toronto exhibit. Why aren't they included? Why should they be included? Make a case to the rest of the class for why your artist deserves to be in Sounds Like Toronto.

Consolidation

Students should have some written responses/notes/group discussion conversations around the “Minds On” questions, and will also have chosen a shortlist/a single artist from the Sounds Like Toronto exhibit that they believe deserves to win. They should also have chosen an artist not included in the Sounds Like Toronto that they believe has artistic merit and deserves to be included.

These responses could be compiled into an essay on awards culture or musical genres. Or students could choose to investigate the history of a particular musical genre, or choose to play/perform a song from that genre, or write their own music that conforms to a genre. Or they could try to find a song that is difficult to categorize into genre categories, or try to write a song that defies genre expectations. Students could also critically analyze awards culture – look at the impacts of money and the entertainment industry on awards, look at the way that histories of racism and cultural appropriation are visible in awards shows (which artists are included/excluded and why?

Which musical genres are present in categories like “song of the year” and which aren't?). Students could expand the voting for their new award into other classrooms at school to see what other classes or ages of students think about particular songs.

Further inquiry section:

What are some other ways that artists achieve recognition? What are some awards available in other countries, and what are their selection criteria? Do international awards impact recognition in Canada? Are there awards that specifically recognize experimental/eclectic/unusual sounds?

Assessment

The work produced in this lesson does not need to be formally assessed (assessment of, evaluated), however, here are some suggestions for doing so.

If you wish to evaluate this work (assessment “of”) it is suggested that you co-create success criteria along with students.

1. Brainstorm
2. Sort and Categorize
3. Make and post a T-chart
4. Add, revise, refine

From Gregory, K, Cameron, C., & Davis, A. (2011). *Knowing What Counts: Setting and Using Criteria*

A sample of Success Criteria (with rubrics) are given below for reference

See below for curriculum expectations covered a sample of student created success criteria.

Sample Rubric

| Criteria for Remix poems | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Application of the creative process (evidence of generating ideas, reflection, revision, imagining, experimenting) | | | | |
| Transfer of previous skills and knowledge (use of figurative and descriptive language) | | | | |
| Effective word choice and use of syntax | | | | |
| Creative (unique end product) | | | | |
| Analysis (evidence of editing and effort in creating a unique piece of writing) | | | | |

CURRICULUM

We have listed grade 10 and 11 Music Arts curriculum objectives below, however this work could easily be adapted for other grades and/or subjects.

AMU2O/AMU3M/O

B1: The Critical Analysis Process

B1.1 listen to selections that represent a variety of musical styles and genres, and describe and reflect on their responses to them

B1.2 identify and explain the use of elements and other components of music in a variety of selections, including their performance repertoire

B1.4 conduct research to gather information relating to music, musicians, and the musical opinions or analysis of others

B2: Music and Society

B2.1 explain the origins of traditional, commercial, or art music with reference to the culture or community in which it was created

B2.2 describe significant contributions of individuals within a community or culture to genres of traditional, commercial, and/or art music

B3: Skills and Personal Growth

B3.1 explain how the study of music has contributed to their personal growth (including the development of their values), their ability to express themselves, their awareness of social and environmental issues, and their understanding of others

B3.3 describe and demonstrate interpersonal skills and work habits that contribute to the success of individual and collaborative musical work

B4: Connections Beyond the Classroom

B4.3 identify opportunities for and explain the benefits of ongoing involvement in musical activities and the arts community

C: Foundations

C2: Characteristics and Development of Music

C2.1 demonstrate an understanding of the development of various musical forms

C2.2 identify and describe shared and unique characteristics of traditional and contemporary music, including Aboriginal music, from Canada and around the world

C3: Conventions and Responsible Practices

C3.3 demonstrate an understanding of ethical and legal practices relating to music, with reference to both consumers and producers of music