

Introduction to Global Music

The [Center for European Studies](#) and other Area Studies Centers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are collaborating with the student-run radio station [WXYC](#) in the production of the [Global Music Show](#).

This monthly hour-long program features music from a particular area of the world combined with commentary by guest scholars, who discuss the music played in the context of the culture and history of the region that produced it.

To support cultural learning, CES has created student listening guides, pre- and post-listening discussion questions, and resource links for each of their Global Music programs. The programs run about one hour, and so listening and discussion would work well for block schedule classes. If your class runs the traditional hour length, you can have the class listen over two periods, and then discuss. Alternatively, you can assign the listening for homework, and hold the discussion during class time.

Music can teach us much about a culture that never appears in a textbook. Use these programs and teaching resources to connect your students with European cultures in a dynamic, new way. Encourage students to continue their exploration of Europe through music.

Nachahmer Rock: Investigating the Sounds of German “Copycat” Pop

With Dick Langston

Pre-Listening Questions

Ask students to think about these questions before you listen to the program. Write their answers on the board.

1. What kinds of music do you usually associate with Germany? What instruments do you usually expect to hear? What are the German songs we’re familiar with usually about?
2. In this program, you’re going to hear pop music by German artists. Make a prediction. What instruments do you think you’ll hear? Do you think the songs will be very similar to our pop songs, or will they be very different?
3. You’ll be hearing music with lyrics in English and in German, sometimes in the same song. Why do you think a German singer would sing a song in English, or a mix of German and English?

Name _____

Read these questions before you start listening to “Nachahmer Rock: Investigating ‘Copycat’ Pop.” As you listen, write down your answers.

1. Early on, we hear about the decision to do something a little different from “Nachahmer” (which means “copycat”) Rock. Why did Dick Langston decide to make the change?
2. You’ll hear five different tracks of German popular music in the first section of the show. As you listen, briefly describe the kind of music you’re hearing (pop, hiphop, techno, rock, etc.), write down the instruments you hear, and note whether the singer (if there is one) is singing in English, German, or both.
3. What is Krautrock? What German city is it most associated with?
4. You’ll hear five new tracks of German music now. Again, as you listen, briefly describe the kind of music you’re hearing (pop, hiphop, techno, rock, etc.), write down the instruments you hear, and note whether the singer (if there is one) is singing in English, German, or both.

5. The last track of the show is from the German band Mouse on Mars. Describe the sounds you hear.

Post-Listening Discussion

After the class has listened to “Nachahmer Rock: Investigating ‘Copycat’ Pop,” use these questions as springboards for discussion.

1. Look back on your predictions of what you would hear in the program. Was your prediction correct? Did anything surprise you about the music you heard?
2. Germany is the world’s largest music market, after the United States and Japan. After World War II, the U.S. stationed large numbers of American servicemen in both these countries. (In fact, Elvis Presley served in the US Army in Germany from 1958-60.) How do you think the presence of the Americans might have affected the popularity of certain kinds of music in German and Japan?
3. Why do you think some of the German singers sing in English, or in a combination of German and English?
4. Think back to the decision to switch from a discussion of “Nachahmer” or “copycat” rock to a discussion of German pop music in general. How do you distinguish “copycat” from “influence”? Is it possible for musicians to be entirely original, without any influences?
5. From the music you’ve heard, do you think German and American popular music forms are more alike than different? How do German and American musicians influence one another? Are there still musical qualities that are uniquely German, or uniquely American?

Activities:

1. Create your own original poster to advertise “Nachahmer Rock: Investigating ‘Copycat’ Pop.”
2. Find the German lyrics for “Muss Ich Denn,” the English translation, and the lyrics to “Wooden Heart.” (You heard an English/German version sung during the show.) Compare and contrast the folk song and the more recent popular English version, exploring the similarities and differences between the two songs.

3. The first song (“Muss Ich Denn”) and the third song (“Heimweh”) were also recorded by American popular singers. Research these songs, listen to the German and American performances online, and write a review comparing and contrasting their qualities.
4. Continue learning about Nachahmer Rock and German popular music by exploring these sites:

Sounds of Germany: A History of German Pop in 10 Songs

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/jun/25/sounds-europe-german-pop>

The Guardian’s take on popular contemporary German music. Includes video of artists.

German Music Now: From Berghain to Mannheim

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/jun/26/german-music-now-sounds-europe>

Continuation of The Guardian’s feature on the German music scene

Music Weekly Extra: Gilles Peterson's guide to German music

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/audio/2012/jun/29/gilles-peterson-german-music?intcmp=239>

DJ’s guide to German music

Elvis in Germany, YouTube “Wooden Heart” / “Muss I Denn”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds61smSIXOc>

At end of his time in the army in Germany, Sgt. Presley sings in German and English in a musical/children’s presentation.