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“We Don’t Need No Instrumentation”: The Educational Benefits of Pop A Cappella

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We Don't Need No
Instrumentation: *The Educational
Benefits of Pop A Cappella*

By: Jeremy Witt

History

- St. Olaf Choir
- The Wiffenpoofs,
1909
- From Glee Clubs
to Barbershop
to Doo-Wop



History cont.

- Collegiate A Cappella
- The College A Cappella boom
- High School Choral Groups



Popular Music

- What's the problem?



“Music is music. In order to help students grow, we have to break the mentality that musicians are divided into ‘camps’ and do not, will not, cross over. We also have to smash the stereotype that says that different genres of music have different values. Greatness and mediocrity exist in all types of music.”

Alex Phan
“A Cappella Pop”

Pop Music in the Classroom?

- “How can we *not* take popular music seriously? What do we teach our students when we turn our backs on the vast majority of musical experience they find meaningful?” –Carlos Rodriguez



Benefits of using Pop Music

- Familiarity
- Huge part of Today's Culture
- Teenagers relate to it



Pop Music and Music Theory

- Chord Types- Common Tone Diminished Seventh
“Bohemian Rhapsody”
- Linear Bass Patterns- Descending Stepwise Bass
“Wonderful Tonight”
- Other Chord Progressions- Plagal Cadence “Let it Be”
- Modes- Locrian “XYZ” (intro)

Contemporary Pop A Cappella

- Pop Music in Choral Music Curriculum
- Performance Techniques
- Ear training
- Pitch, Blend, Balance



Questions?