

A Beginner's Guide to Rock Music

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For the teachers: The purpose of this document is to teach students some basics about well-known rock musicians and commonly used instruments in rock bands. The first slide serves to teach the students about the musical alphabet (a,b,c,d,e,f,g). This slide is not essential for the student's understanding of the document as a whole, but I have included it in case there is interest.

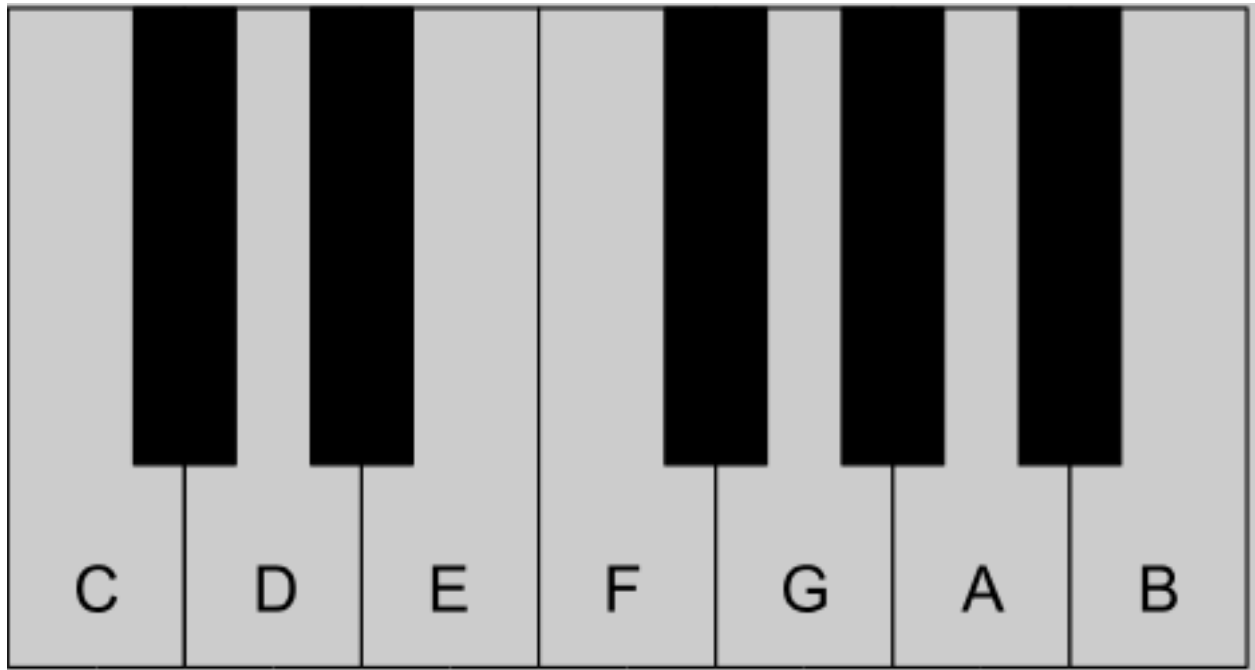
The next few slides each give a brief background about an individual musician or band. Before explaining the information on each slide, the instructor should play an excerpt of a song by the artist on that slide. Recordings of pieces by these artists can be easily found on www.youtube.com. Here are my suggestions for songs to play:

- 1). Michael Jackson: *Beat It*
- 2). Bob Dylan: *Blowin in the Wind*
- 3). The Beatles: *Let It Be*
- 4). Led Zeppelin: *Stairway to Heaven*

The last few slides show a picture of and give a brief background on different instruments that are commonly used in rock bands. Again, the instructor should show the students what each instrument sounds like before explaining the details provided on the slides. Again, I have provided some suggestions for recording to play, all of which can be found on YouTube. In each case, only an excerpt needs to be played, as some of the recordings are quite long.

- 1). Guitar: *The Star Spangled Banner* (Jimi Hendrix version)
- 2). Bass: *Money* (by Pink Floyd)-the beginning of the song
- 3). Percussion: *YYZ* (by Rush).
- 4).Voice: *Stairway to Heaven* (by Led Zeppelin)-this song showcases many different styles of singing that are common in rock music. From crooning to wailing, etc.

PIANO KEYBOARD WITH NOTE NAMES



FAMOUS ROCK/POP ARTISTS

MICHAEL JACKSON (King of Pop)



- 1958-2009. Born in Indiana, died in California
- Started out playing with his family in 1964 (The Jackson 5)
- Known for: Beat It, Billie Jean, Thriller, Man in the Mirror.
- Solo career started in 1971, became very famous in the 80s.
 - Popularized many dance techniques such as “robot” and “moonwalk”, to which he gave the name.
 - Thriller is the best selling album of all time.
- One of the few artists to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice!

BOB DYLAN



- Robert Allen Zimmerman (birth name)
- Born in 1941. Most popular in the 1960s, but still popular today.
- Usually plays a guitar and sings. This is unlike other people that we are learning about that play in bands.
- Later in his career, he was backed by a band.
- Very well known for his lyrics.

THE BEATLES



- English rock band formed in Liverpool, England in 1960.
- John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr.
- They are the best selling band in history.
- Known for: Let it Be, Yellow Submarine, Yesterday, A Hard Day's Night.
- Changed the sound of rock music

LED ZEPPELIN



- Another British rock band: formed in 1968.
- Jimmy Page (guitar), John Bonham (drums), John Paul Jones (bass), Robert Plant (voice)
- Known for a particularly LOUD style of rock called Heavy Metal.
- Led refers to Lead, Zeppelin is an airship.
- Influenced by other types of music, such as the Blues.
- Known for: Stairway to Heaven, Kashmir, etc.

INSTRUMENTS USED IN ROCK BANDS

1) GUITAR



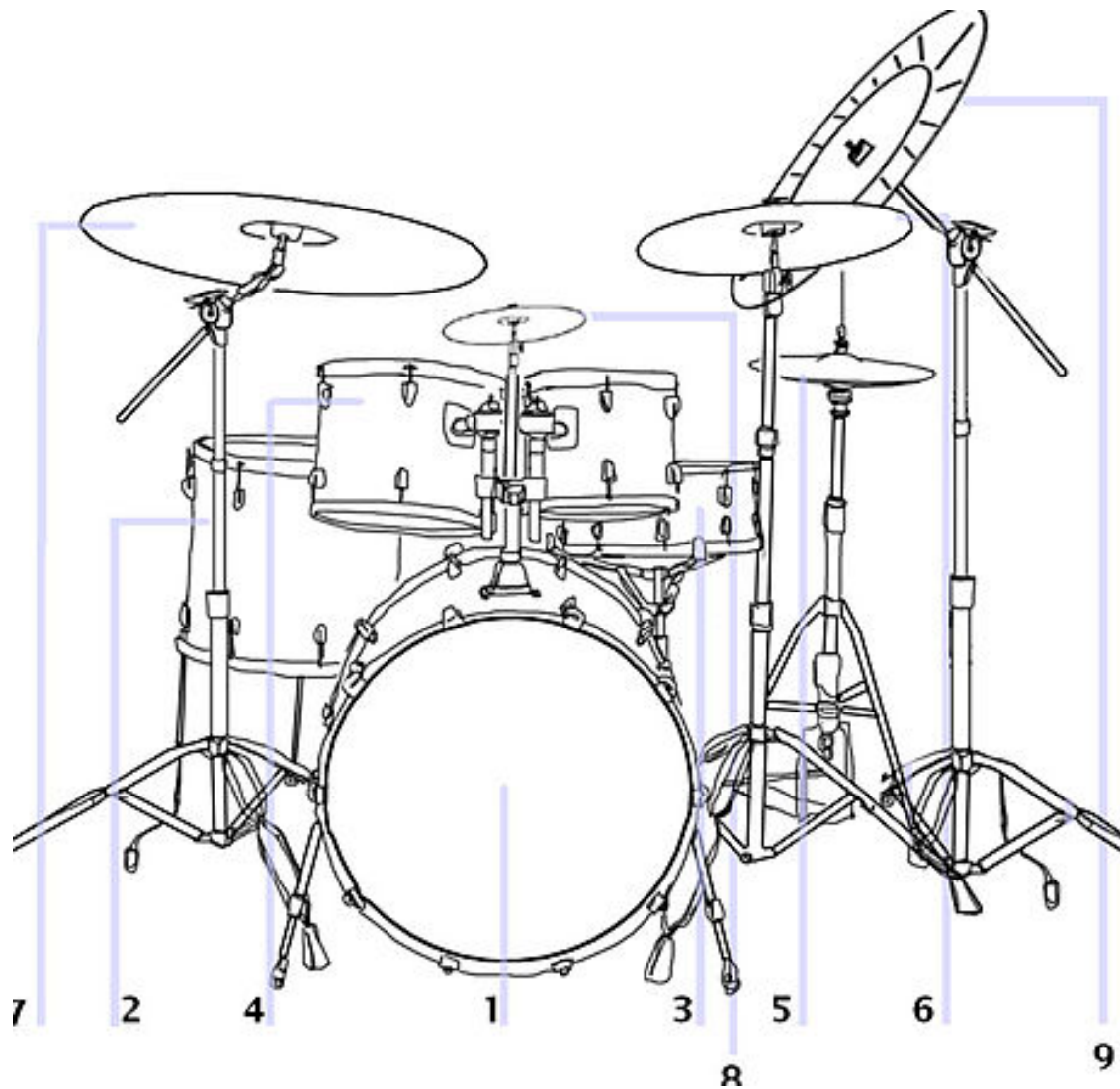
- Rock bands usually use **ELECTRIC** guitars, because it's louder and you can do some really cool stuff with it!
- Electric guitars can make a dirty sound known as "Distortion."
- Rock bands usually use a guitar for **BOTH** rhythm (keeping the beat) and melody (the tune of the song).

2) ELECTRIC BASS



- Also called Bass Guitar, or Bass.
- Invented in the 1930s by Paul Tutmarc from Seattle.
- 4 strings. Very low sound.
- Used mainly for rhythm in rock bands.
- Used by Jazz musicians before it was used by rock musicians

3) DRUMKIT



-Typical drum kit consists of Bass Drum, Snare, Toms, Hi-hat, Crash Cymbal.

-Used to keep the beat. Other musicians have to follow the drummer, or else the song sounds chaotic and bad.

-Many drummers extend their kits, adding more drums, more cymbals, electronic percussion, etc.

4) VOICE



- The vocalist sings the melody (tune of the song)
- The vocalist does not keep the beat. They follow the drummer and bass player, and the rhythm guitar.