

Every issue of *In Tune* features a short history lesson: the Icon page. Here are some additional suggestions for making use of it in your classroom. **BY KATE KOENIG**

ICON GREAT MUSICIANS IN HISTORY

WHO Rock quartet from London, England

WHAT One of the essential acts of the original 1960s British Invasion; loud, lyrical, and ambitious

WHEN Formed in 1964, still active in 2017, even after losing two key members

and matured into one of the towering songwriters of the time. With their 1969 "rock opera" *Tommy*, the Who showed they could make a conceptually unified album that blended elements of classic and modern rock and told a story—a tale about a deaf, and blind boy who miraculously regains his hearing.

The music only improved from the 1971 masterpiece *Who's Next*, which told stories of both the joys and the hardships of everyday English life in the '60s, in writing detail with near-symphonic arrangements. Townshend was an early adopter of the synthesizer and put it to imaginative use during this time.

Quadrophenia was the pinnacle of his solo recording career. What follows is a series of uneven releases, long hiatuses—including a 24-year gap between studio albums—and tragedies. In 1978, Moon died from a drug overdose. In 2002, Entwistle did the same. Townshend and Daltrey, however, brought in other musicians and carried on, even as they maintained their own successful solo careers. They continue to perform and, on a good night, still sound superb. But both they and their audience understand that they can never top what they achieved in the 1960s and '70s. At their peak, the Who were tuneful, thoughtful, transcendent; in short, everything rock musicians should be. **T**

Who's Listening

The Who Hits 50! is a comprehensive collection of the band's many great singles. *Tommy*, *Who's Next*, *Quadrophenia*, and *1967's The Who Sell Out* are all excellent entry points as well. *And Live at Leeds (1970)* is on the short list of rock's best live albums.

After a brief stint as the Detours, guitarist Pete Townshend (pronounced with a silent h), bassist John Entwistle, drummer Keith Moon, and lead vocalist Roger Daltrey became the Who in 1964. From the beginning, the band was musically and visually arresting. Spoken-word lyrics and a subculture of young, well-dressed hippies known as mods, they played covers of Motown and blues songs in a style of thuggish lunatics, smashing instruments at the ends of shows (Entwistle called it "auto-destructive art") and occasionally fighting each other.

As the loudest band of their era—concert volume kept them in the top 10 of the *Billboard* charts for years (they royed their hearing)—the Who way for hard rock, art rock, punk, and metal, influencing everyone from Pearl Jam to the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Entwistle was not

we were holding up a mirror to our audience and reflecting them." —Pete Townshend

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Bob Marley

Tina Turner

Gene Krupa

Carlos Santana

Chopin

prevailing fashion and was unpopular with his record label. He proved everyone wrong, leaving behind interpretations of Bach's *The Goldberg Variations* that changed popular opinion and arguably made him more of a cultural force than he would have been if he'd stuck with Chopin or Rachmaninoff.

voice rang so clearly and recognizably through his recordings that it was akin to Miles Davis (our October 2016 icon) performing a jazz standard.

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE (DECEMBER 2016)

The story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe proves that a "hidden figure" can still wield a lot of influence.

Maybe you were familiar with Tharpe before you read about her in *In Tune*. But it's reasonable to assume that most of your students weren't—her name isn't frequently mentioned when talking about the founders of rock 'n' roll. In recent years, especially following the 2011 biographical documentary *The Godmother of Rock & Roll*, she's gotten more attention, but she remains relatively obscure.

Popularity can often be misconstrued as a testament of worth. Artists with the most far-reaching influence are certainly of cultural value, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're more valuable than someone whose name isn't as well-known. Tharpe was one of the first people to wail out a foreshadowing of rock, and inspired a host of other proto-rockers to do the same. She'll probably never

a meaningful observation on culture, the music business, or the challenges of an artist's life. To help you in creating a lesson for your students using Icon, we've taken three examples from this season and offered some additional perspectives that you can expand on in class. For each lesson, be sure to discuss and explain these concepts, and include related YouTube videos and performances.

GLENN GOULD (NOVEMBER 2016)

Glenn Gould and the realm of classical music may not be subjects with which your students are all that familiar. But the lesson in Gould's life story is one that can be found in all genres of music.

Gould was a quiet iconoclast, forgoing the trends of the times in favor of the direction he chose for himself. His decision to resurrect the music of Bach went against

The unusual personality of Gould also came out in behavioral quirks: his habit of humming so loudly while playing that it was picked up on recordings; his decision to quit performing in public early in his career; his general habit of being so absorbed in his music that he didn't seem to notice the world around him. Gould was distinctly himself—and yet, he is famous for his performances of music written by others.

All classical performers are interpreters; they learn the music of composers often long deceased and broadcast it back out into the world. The aspirations of many popular and jazz musicians to establish their own compositional voice can overshadow the value of connecting with someone else's work. In fact, Gould's example shows that artists don't need to write their own material to express their inner selves. His artistic



(GOULD) KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES; (THARPE) MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; (THE WHO) THE VISUALEYES ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

have the visibility of someone like Elvis Presley, but she was arguably just as important a link in the chain.

Tharpe also went against societal norms just by being who she was. It couldn't have been easy to be an African-American female

singer and instrumentalist in the age of Jim Crow, less than two decades after women gained the right to vote. Yet in photos and videos, Tharpe exudes joy almost exclusively. If she could be unapologetically herself at a time when that likely disturbed a lot of

people, so too can your students learn to embrace their own artistic voices.

THE WHO (JANUARY 2017)

Aside from being one of the biggest names in classic rock, the Who are probably most

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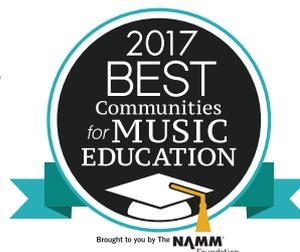
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remembered for two things: smashing their instruments onstage and producing rock operas.

Today, the idea of a hard rock band destroying its instruments at the end of a show has become something of a cliché. What tends to be forgotten is its roots in post-World War II England's art scene. Guitarist and composer Pete Townshend, who attended Ealing Art College in London in the early '60s, was heavily influenced by the work of Gustav Metzger, pioneer of the auto-destructive art movement. (Metzger coined the term "auto-destructive" from the root *auto-*, meaning "self"—though his work did occasionally feature automobiles.) He used the breaking down of common objects to explore the relationship between art and destruction, and to symbolize mankind's relationship with violence as Europe continued to recover from the horrors of war. Townshend, deeply inspired by Metzger's work, took this concept and applied it to the Who's performances.

The Who paired hot-blooded, aggressive rock 'n' roll with art-school intellectualism, though they're certainly better known for the former. In 1969, this combination resulted in Townshend's magnum opus, *Tommy*, often considered the first great rock opera. By applying the long-form, vocal-driven narrative style of opera to rock, Townshend opened the doors for a new subgenre of music. He also, in a sense, subverted both genres—by forcing one (opera) into an informal context and the other (rock) into a more formal one.

The Who's thoughtfulness defied appearances. It gave rock new depth, and pushed for the music's recognition as something more than an unrefined expression of the common man. It also paved the way for many masterpieces that came after *Tommy*—including the Who's own *Quadrophenia* (1973), Genesis' *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (1974), and Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (1979).

GREATER MEANING

The societal and cultural meaning that can be found in our Icons' life stories is fairly obvious, but they also have something else in common: authenticity. All the artists

ALL THE ARTISTS WE'VE CHOSEN TO FEATURE MADE THEMSELVES WORTH REMEMBERING BY BEING GENUINE IN THEIR ART AND CAREER DECISIONS.

we've chosen to feature on this page over 14 seasons of *In Tune* made themselves worth remembering by being genuine in their art and career decisions. The examples are as diverse as artistic personalities can be, but the more examples you

become aware of, the truer that general observation becomes.

In their actions, our Icons have said something that's much louder even than their music. That's why we've given them a special place in our telling of history. **T**

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