

# DESIGNING ALBUM COVERS WITH COLOR THEORY

Est. Time: 90 minutes

Subjects: Art, General Music

Age Range: All Ages

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



What are the principles of color theory, and how is it used in fashion and album cover design?

In this lesson you will:

- Discover the principles of color theory
  - Explore the color wheel and how it functions as a design tool
  - Examine the principles of color theory at work through an analysis of popular music fashion and album covers
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“I get the same charge from juxtaposition of colors as I do from juxtaposition of chords.”

- Joni Mitchell

\*Jux·ta·po·si·tion: (noun) The idea of two things being seen or placed close together with a contrasting effect.





Examine **these examples** of outfits worn by famous musicians. Choose one of the outfits that stands out to you. Then consider or discuss with a friend:

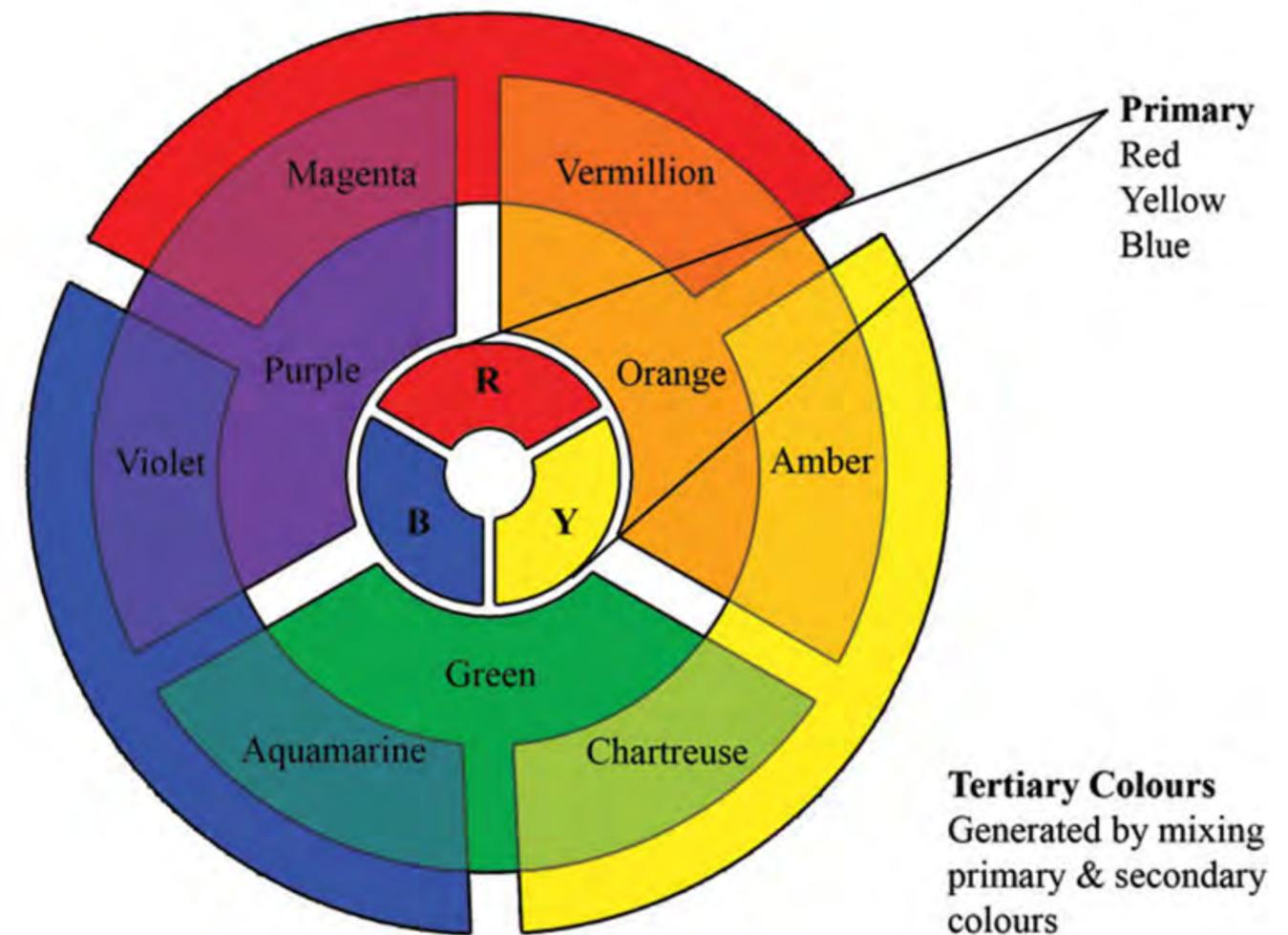
- Which outfit did you choose?
  - Did you like the clothes worn by the musician? Why or why not?
  - What is the first thing you noticed about the outfit the musician is wearing?
  - What do you think their outfit says about who they are? What image might they be trying to project with this outfit?
  - What role does the main color or the combination of color play in the outfit?  
Do the colors compliment or contrast with one another?
  - Based on what they are wearing, what might this artist's music sound like?
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Popular music today is as visual as it is sonic. With fashion, album covers, music videos, live concert events, visual albums, and custom clothing lines, musicians often work with designers to establish a “look” that matches their music.

Just as there are guidelines for creating musical harmony, there are also guidelines for creating color harmony.

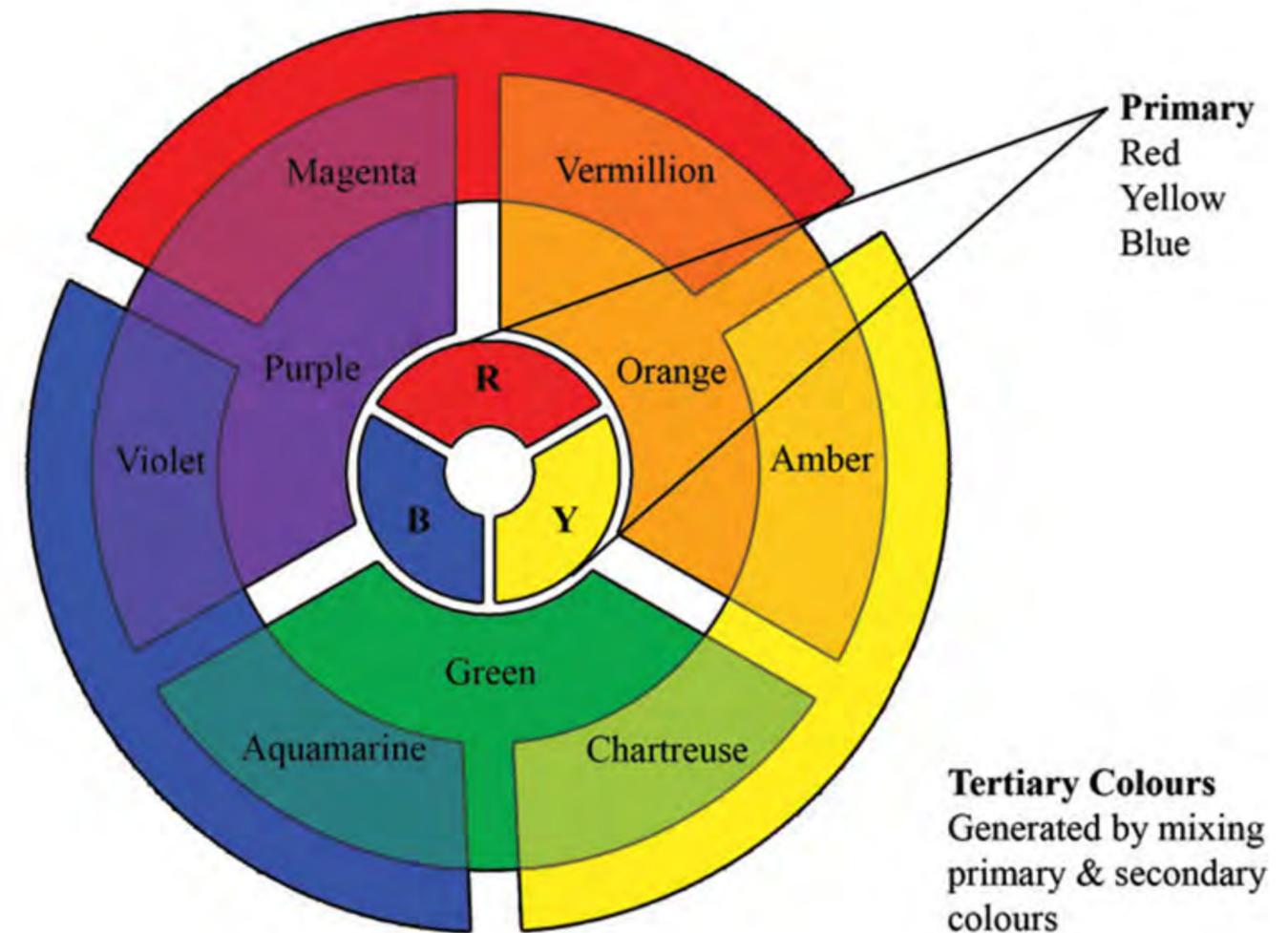


A color wheel is an illustration which represents the organization of color hues around a circle, and shows the relationships between primary colors, secondary colors, tertiary colors. Explore this color wheel.



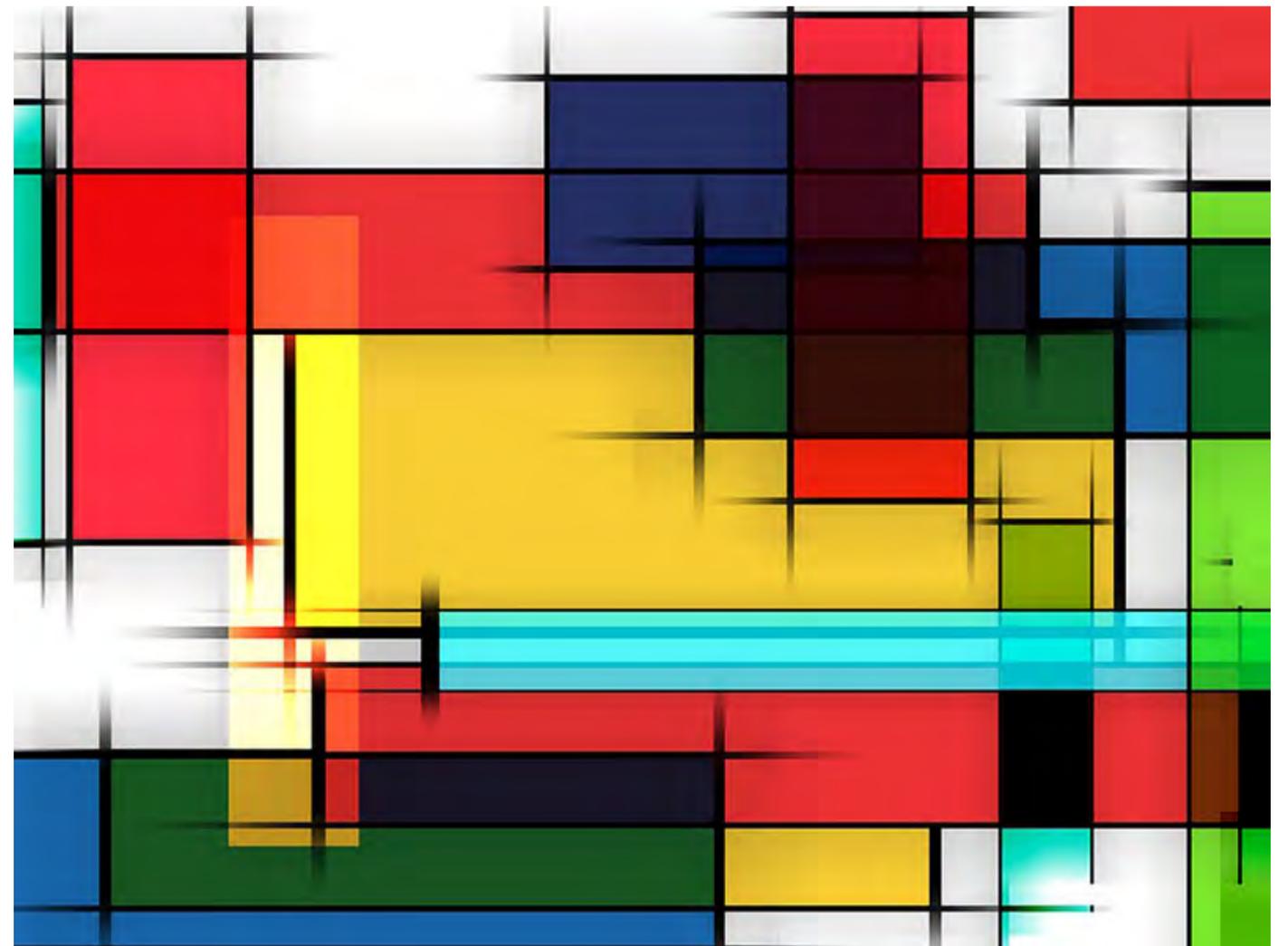
Consider or talk with a friend:

- What does the innermost circle show?
- What does the middle circle show? What are those colors combinations of?
- What does the outermost circle show? What are those colors the combination of?



A color wheel is a component of **Color Theory**, which creates a logical structure for color.

Read [this handout](#) to learn more about color theory.





Examine **these album covers** from Billboard's List of Best Album Covers of 2017.

Try to apply the principles of color theory to some of the album covers using **this handout**.





Consider or ask a friend:

- What did you notice about the relationship between color and the emotional effect an album cover had on you? How did you react to the use of colors or color combinations?
  - Which album covers had easily identifiable principles of color harmony?
  - Which album covers on this list do you feel deserve to be considered one of the “best” album covers of 2017? Are there any that you feel don’t deserve to be on this list? Support your arguments by drawing upon the principles of color theory.
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# SUMMARY

- Color theory creates a logical structure for color, it allows us to see harmony in arrangements of color
- A color wheel or is an illustration which represents the organization of color hues around a circle
- Artists and designers use the color wheel and color theory to create work that conveys intent and creates a reaction to the work



# BE CREATIVE

- Design an original album cover and share it with your friends and family. You may want to write a description of the type of music you are designing for and what you hope that viewers will see in your work. Try to use color theory to inform your album design.
- Imagine that you are filming a video, making a public appearance, or performing on stage as a superstar artist. Design an outfit for yourself. Then explain your motivation, when you would wear the outfit, and how you used the principles of color theory in the design.
- Examine an album cover or watch a performance of one of your favorite artists. Then write a short essay on the ways the colors used on the album cover or during the performance relate to the music.



# BE CURIOUS

- Check out Billboard's **“Greatest Album Covers of All Time”**
- Color Psychology explores the impact that color has on our moods, emotions, and behaviors. Watch **this video** to learn more.



# CONNECT

Share with us! Either you or an adult in your life can share your original album cover or outfit with TeachRock on **Instagram** or **Facebook**, email to **info@teachrock.org**, or Tweet it to **@TeachRock**

