



Group 4 Performance Style

Source 1 Video of Chuck Berry Live, "Johnny B. Goode"

Discuss:

- How would you describe Berry's performance style? Does he stand still while playing? What sorts of things does he do?
- Does Berry's performance style remind you of any other Rock and Roll performers?

Source 2 Chuck Berry Doing the "Duck Walk"



Discuss:

- This publicity shot of Berry from 1958 shows him crouching to do his signature move, the "duck walk." What did doing this move bring to his live performances?

Source 3 Aerosmith Guitarist Joe Perry on Chuck Berry

"The other thing is, Chuck Berry was a showman: playing the guitar behind his head and between his

legs, doing the duck walk. It's not like you could close your eyes and hear his playing suffer because of it. He was able to do all that stuff and make it look like it was so easy and natural."

-- Source: *Rolling Stone*, "100 Greatest Artists of All Time," March 6, 2013

Discuss:

- What does being a "showman" bring to Rock and Roll? Is it all about the music, or is the kind of showmanship Perry describes an important element as well?

Source 4

Excerpt from "Rock 'n' Roller Chuck Berry Still Duck-Walking at 80," 2006

"When he takes the stage Wednesday night, Berry will sling his guitar with an ease belying his age, and scoot across the stage in his famous one-legged hop, his extended leg kicking off the stage.

"The old man, still as lean and agile as a teenager, will also surely please the crowd with his signature duck walk, the iconic crouched move he patented in a 1956 performance in New York.

"He intuitively choreographed the first stage moves of the rock era, setting the tone for what a rock performance could be visually as well as through the music,' [friend and club owner Joe Edwards] said.

"He used the guitar as a foil on stage, moving it around his back and in front of him. Jimi Hendrix and all that followed got it all from him first."

-- "Rock 'n' Roller Chuck Berry Still Duck-walking at 80,"
Associated Press, Oct. 18, 2006

Discuss:

- Why might audiences still pay to see Chuck Berry at the age of 80? What does this suggest about his status and influence as a Rock and Roll star?
- How did the duck walk influence later generations of guitar players?
- According to Edwards, how did Berry change the way Rock and Roll was performed?

Summary Questions:

- Chuck Berry was one of the first Rock and Roll artists to incorporate "guitar showmanship" into his performances. What did this aspect of his music contribute to his success and influence on future artists?
- What other artists can you identify who incorporate guitar showmanship? What does this element bring to their performances?
- How important is showmanship to Rock and Roll?