

THE INDIGENOUS ROOTS OF ROCK AND ROLL

RUMBLE

The Indians Who Rocked The World


Est. Time: 45 -60minutes

Subjects: Art, General Music, History/Social Studies

Age Range: Middle School

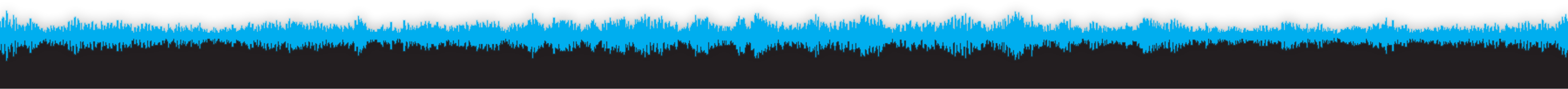
View the classroom lesson version [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



What does Link Wray's biography say about how Native Americans lived in the first half of the 20th century, and what role did Wray's upbringing have on his music?

In this lesson you will:

- Uncover the history of Link Wray and investigate how his Shawnee heritage influenced the creation of one of Rock and Roll's most profoundly inspirational and enduring songs
 - Analyze why "Rumble" had such a powerful effect on generations of musicians and listeners alike
 - Compare Link Wray's "Rumble" to the poem Nationhood by Laura Da'
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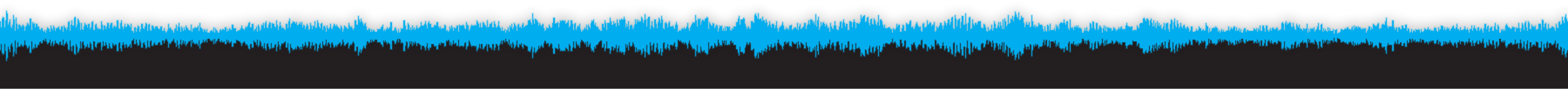


BIRTH OF RUMBLE

Watch [this video](#) to learn about the creation and legacy of the song “Rumble.”



Think about or discuss with a friend:

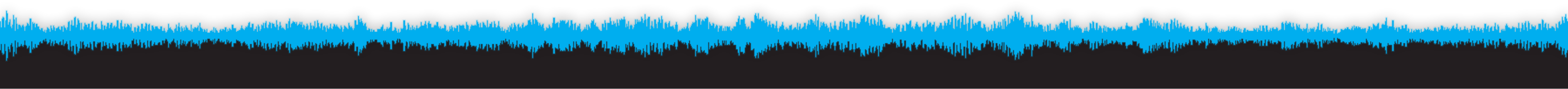
- What is notable about the guitar sound of “Rumble”? Why do you think so many guitarists were influenced by that specific sound?
 - How might you describe Wray’s demeanor on stage in the video clip? What about this might have influenced young musicians in the late 1950s?
 - Though it is an instrumental song, “Rumble” was banned on many radio stations, including those in major cities such as New York and Boston. What about the song do you think some found so threatening?
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Read **this handout** to learn about the history of Link Wray's ancestral heritage - the Shawnee Tribe.





Think about or discuss with a friend:

- What do you imagine life for an “assimilating” Shawnee in the American South may have been like in the 19th and early 20th Century? Do you think Shawnee people would have easily fit in within existing communities? Why or why not?
 - How do you think the history of the Shawnee affected American-born people with Shawnee heritage? How might their unique perspective shape their views of American society?
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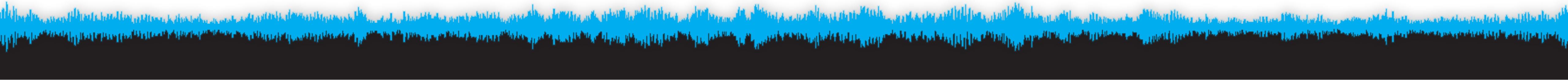


LINK WRAY'S ENDURING LEGACY - GUITAR DISTORTION

Watch [this video](#) to learn about the importance of guitar distortion.



Think about or discuss with a friend:

- How is this unique guitar sound described?
 - Can you think of a song that features distorted guitar?
 - Why might this unique sound be a desired quality for musicians?
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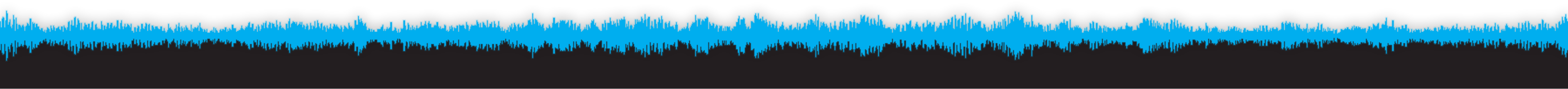


ANTONINO D'AMBROSIO ON RUMBLE

Watch [this video](#) to go deeper into the inspiration behind “Rumble.”




Think about or discuss with a friend:

- What does D'Ambrosio suggest was the motivation behind “Rumble”?
 - What does D'Ambrosio mean when he says “Rumble” was not “reductive, but proactive” in the face of discrimination?
 - Do you think Wray would agree with D'Ambrosio's argument that “Rumble” isn't about fighting, but more about “disrupting” and “being active”?
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Read the poem *Nationhood* by Laura Da'. Then consider of discuss with a friend:

- Personally, what do you think Laura Da' is expressing in this poem?
 - How would you describe the relationship between the first and second paragraph of the poem? How are they connected?
 - What claims might Laura Da' be making about the United States of America in this poem?
 - What similarities do you find between Link Wray and Laura Da'? How might this poem be similar to "Rumble"?
 - Do you see this poem as being "disruptive," similar to Rumble? Why or why not?
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SUMMARY

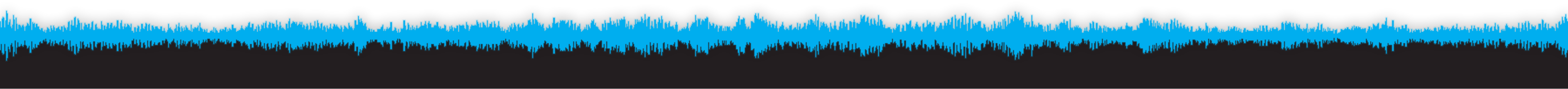
- Link Wray came from a marginalized culture and created music of rebellion and angst
- He translated a lifetime of discrimination into the raw growl of his distorted guitar on “Rumble”
- Wray’s story typifies how early Rock and Roll was shaped by outsiders with new tools for expressing their world-view and experience through music



BE CREATIVE

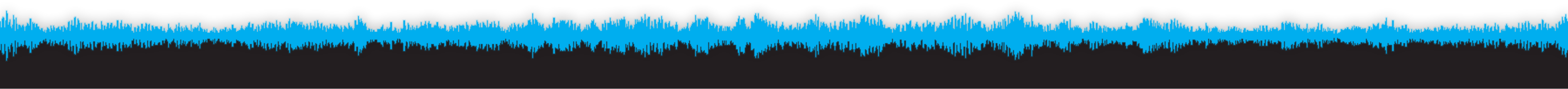
Create a playlist of songs about discrimination and rebellion. For each song, write a few sentences about each artists' personal background and how you feel their experience of marginalization is captured in their music. The songs can be from any genre and don't have to feature lyrics a la "Rumble."

Because it evoked such strong emotions, "Rumble" is famous for being the only instrumental song banned on radio. Find another instrumental song, and discuss what emotion you think it evokes. How is it able to do this?



CONNECT

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





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