

Canadian Celebrity Readers

Famous Male Musicians

Grades 4-8

Written by Ruth Solski
Illustrated by Dan Day

About the author:

Ruth Solski was an educator for 30 years. She has written many educational resources over the years and is the founder of S&S Learning Materials. As a writer, her main goal is to provide teachers with a useful tool they can implement in their classrooms to bring the joy of learning to children.

ISBN: 978-1-55495-025-6

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Published in Canada by:
S&S Learning Materials
15 Dairy Avenue
Napanee, Ontario
K7R 1M4
www.sslearning.com

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★ Famous Male Musicians ★

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About this Book:

This book is a compilation of nineteen biographies and nineteen worksheets pertaining to famous Canadian male musicians. The profiles have been created to promote Canadian musicians and their music and to provide an interesting topic to strengthen students' reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. The worksheets that accompany the biographies focus on the development of reading comprehension skills, the development and reinforcement of vocabulary and language skills and the continuing development of research skills.

Ways to Use the Biographies and Worksheets:

- 1. Reproducible Worksheets:** Staple each biography and worksheet together for a handout. The students reads the biography and then completes the activities on the worksheet.
- 2. Laminated Folders:** Each story and its worksheet could be reproduced and glued to the inside of a file folder. A photograph of the musician(s) obtained from a music magazine or the Internet could be adhered to the front of the file folder.

Example:

The file folders should be laminated to ensure longer usage. The folders could be placed at an Interest Centre in the classroom. The student chooses one of the musicians, reads the biography and records the answers to the worksheet in a workbook.

Discussion Topics:

- musical styles and genres of the various musicians
- background and lifestyle of each musician and group
- popularity and awards and honours
- singles and albums
- locate the city and province in Canada of each musician's birthplace

Graphing Activities:

- popularity of the Canadian male musicians and groups with the students
- number of albums and singles for the musicians and groups
- number of Junos and Grammys won by Canadian musicians
- instruments played by the musicians
- music genres of Canadian musicians



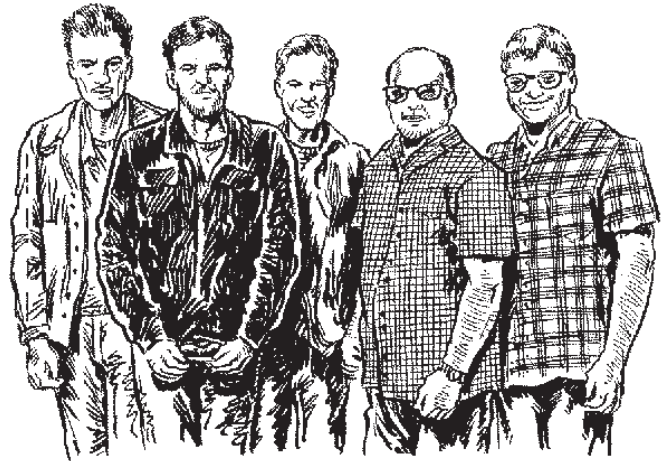
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For over a decade, a band called the Barenaked Ladies, or BNL, has been the pride of Canada, achieving great success at home, across the border, and abroad. The band's funny and very unconventional style, and its members ability to get away with singing about whatever they please, has made the Barenaked Ladies famous. The members of the band are Jim Creeggan, Kevin Hearn, Steven Page, Ed Robertson, Tyler Stewart and former band member Andy Creeggan.

In the beginning, the band began with the duo of Ed Robertson and Steven Page. Both attended the same schools in Scarborough, Ontario but were not friends until they met at a Harvey's restaurant after a concert when they were teenagers. During their conversation they found out they shared many of the same interests and they became good friends. Their friendship grew stronger when Ed and Steven were counsellors at a music camp, where they played songs together, and Steven discovered Ed's ability to harmonize. Both teens attended a Bob Dylan concert together which they found boring so they began to amuse themselves by critiquing the show and making up names for various bands. Out of this brainstorming exercise came the name "Barenaked Ladies," which they both have had to defend on several occasions during the band's career.

The Barenaked Ladies' first performance took place when Robertson needed Page to help him play at a benefit because his former band had just broken up. Neither musician had been able to attend any rehearsals and as a result they played every song they both knew and improvised during the show. This element of improvised raps, songs and banter are still part of each BNL concert.

One night, while performing in Toronto, Page and Robertson invited friends Andy Creeggan, a percussionist, and Jim Creeggan, a bassist, whom they had met at music camp, to play with them at a Christmas club show. The brothers soon became part of the band. Six months later, Andy Creeggan went to Ecuador on a student exchange trip, leaving the band without a percussionist. During the summer of 1990, at a Busker's festival, the members met drummer Tyler Stewart, who took over Andy's job. When Andy returned, he found out he had been replaced and was disappointed at first, but moved on to play keyboards for the band. During 1991, the band set out on their first full tour of Canada and also recorded their first song, "Yellow Tape." A copy of the



recording was sent to all the labels in Canada and was rejected by everyone. The band began selling them off the stage and before long, people began asking for the tape in local stores. Sales of the tape grew, making it the first independent (Indie) rock release to achieve platinum status in Canada.

BNL released its first full album, "Gordon," in 1992 and it was a big success in Canada. In 1994, BNL's second album, "Maybe You Should Drive," didn't do as well and the tour they made to the United States failed miserably. It was then that Andy Creeggan decided to leave the band as he was disappointed with the band's direction and was not comfortable with its reputation as well. At the same time, some of the other band members were unhappy with each other and not speaking. In order to save the band from falling apart, the members signed with Terry McBride and Network as their management with whom they are still working today.

In 1997, Tyler Stewart invited his friend Kevin Hearn to replace Andy Creeggan as keyboardist for their new tour. In 1998, the band released an album called "Stunt," which became their greatest success and break through into the United States. Just after this great achievement, Kevin Hearn was diagnosed with leukemia, had to have a bone marrow transplant and spent several months at a Toronto hospital recovering. Two of his friends covered for him until he could rejoin the band.

The Barenaked Ladies have continued to produce many more albums and singles in 2008, including "Snacktime" which is a collection of original children's songs. They have received numerous nominations and won four Junos in 1993. These talented band members still have much more to offer to their fans and will be heard from in the future. ★



The Barenaked Ladies

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reading Skills

Complete the sentences with the names of BNL band members.

1. _____ was diagnosed with leukemia in 1998 and spent several months in the hospital.
2. _____ and _____ were percussionists for the BNL band.
3. _____ and _____ were counsellors at a music camp in Scarborough.
4. _____ left the band to go on a student exchange trip to Ecuador.
5. _____ and _____ formed and named the BNL band.
6. Feeling disappointed and unhappy, _____ left the BNL band after their United States tour in 1994.
7. _____'s ability to harmonize was a useful skill.
8. _____ and his brother Andy were invited to play with the BNL band at a Christmas show.
9. _____ met the members of the BNL band at a Busker's festival.
10. Ed Robertson needed _____ to help him play at a benefit when his band broke up.
11. _____ and _____ met at a Harvey's restaurant after a concert.
12. _____ invited his friend _____ to take Andy's place as the band's keyboardist.

Vocabulary Skills

A. Look up the following words in the dictionary and record their meanings on the lines provided.

1. banter: _____
2. improvised: _____
3. reputation: _____
4. decade: _____
5. duo _____
6. harmonize: _____

B. Write the root word for each of the following on the line provided.

1. unconventional: _____
2. harmonize: _____
3. conversation: _____
4. performance: _____
5. rehearsals: _____
6. miserably: _____
7. collection: _____
8. nominations: _____

Research Skills

Locate a map of the world to find the country of Ecuador. In which continent is it located?
