

Songs from the Soul

book by Billy Dye with Dan Ryan
 music and lyrics by various composers

Audience: Students in 3rd to 12th
 grades

Additional Resources:

Carnegie Hall: A History of African
 American Music

<http://www.carnegiehall.org/honor/history/>

Smithsonian National Museum of
 African American History and Culture

<http://nmaahc.si.edu/>

The Kennedy Center ArtsEdge

- Blues Journey
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/multimedia/series/AudioStories/blues-journey>

- Hip Hop Culture
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/themes/hip-hop>

- Jazz & Blues
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/themes/arts-resources-jazz-blues>

U.S. Library of Congress: Performing Arts
 Encyclopedia

<http://loc.gov/performingarts/>



Louis Armstrong. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Digital ID: cph 3c27236.

This musical narrative of the history of African-American music - from slave spirituals to jazz to blues to rap - is part toe-tapping entertainment, and part vital history lesson. Join us as we examine the evolution of African American music and its role in American life. From African spirituals and their essential function in allowing slaves to communicate during the Underground Railroad movement, to the role of soul to declare pride during the Civil Rights Movement, music has always been more than entertainment in African American life. Indeed, it acts as a mirror to, and an instrument in overcoming, the challenges of a people from the early days of enslavement to the present day.

Musical Genres: Songs from the Soul

This electrifying history lesson traces the social and cultural underpinnings of a variety of African-American music, including:

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| Spirituals | Soul |
| Blues | Motown |
| Jazz | Rap |
| Swing | Hip Hop |
| R&B | |

Slave Spirituals and Secret Codes

When they were kidnapped from their homes in Africa and transported as property to America, slaves lost every tangible possession. The slave traders and owners could not take *tradition, spirit, and music* from these people. Slave spirituals soon emerged in the New World. These were different than traditional hymns because they were slaves' way of sharing their unique hardships. They also came to contain coded meanings helping fugitive slaves escape to northern states and freedom.

Read the following slave spiritual. Use the key to the right and social studies resources to infer what the alternate meaning of this song might have been for slaves hoping to flee.

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.*

*I looked over Jordan and what did I see
Coming for to carry me home,
A band of angels coming after me,
Coming for to carry me home.*

*If you get there before I do,
Coming for to carry me home,
Tell all my friends that I'm coming, too,
Coming for to carry me home.*

Extend It

Can you write a "coded message" using some of the terms to the right? Try it out and see if a classmate can crack your "code."

Underground Railroad Secret Codes

Agent or Operator: Coordinator, who plotted escape.

Baggage: Fugitive slaves carried by Underground Railroad workers.

Bundles of wood or Parcels: Fugitives expected to arrive.

Canaan or Heaven, Home or Promised Land: Canada, freedom

Conductor or Shepherd: Person who escorted escaped slaves

Drinking Gourd: Big Dipper and the North Star

Freedom (or Gospel) train: The Underground Railroad

Stockholder: Those who donated money, food, clothing.

Load of potatoes: Escaping slaves hidden under farm produce in a wagon

Moses: Harriet Tubman

Preachers: Leaders of The Underground Railroad

River Jordan: Ohio River

Station: Place of safety and temporary refuge, a safe house

Station master: Keeper or owner of a safe house

Source: *The Harriet Tubman Historical Society* at <http://www.harriet-tubman.org/underground-railroad-secret-codes/>



Explore Further

To learn more about the Underground Railroad and the role of spirituals as codes, watch the following videos from PBS's *Underground Railroad: The William Still Story*

Freedom's Land: <http://video.pbs.org/video/2365024892/>

Coded Spirituals: <http://video.pbs.org/video/2181639247/>

A Tuneful Timeline

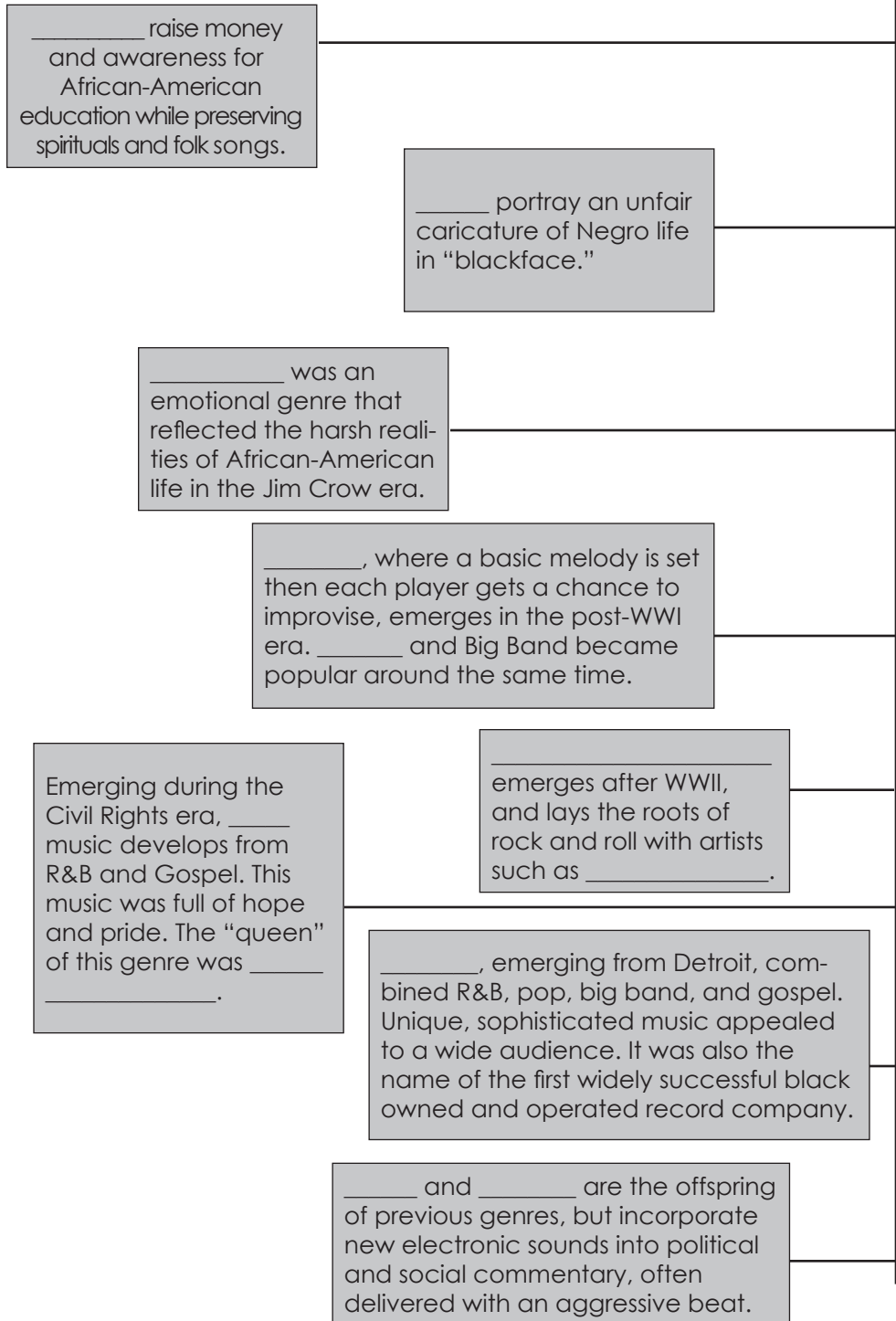
Review the following timeline of the development of musical genres. Use the word bank to complete the event descriptions. Add date ranges for each description.

Word Bank

R&B (rhythm and blues)
 Fisk Jubilee Singers
 Motown
 Swing
 Rap
 Soul
 Blues music
 Hip Hop
 Little Richard
 Minstrels
 Aretha Franklin
 Jazz

Extension

What events, movements, or struggles affecting African Americans (and the development of different musical genres) were happening in each of these eras of American history?



Making Music: The Science of Sound

Sound waves are vibrations moving through a medium (like air or water). **Pitch** is determined by **frequency**, the number of vibrations per second. The higher the frequency, the higher the pitch. The normal human ear can hear sounds with frequencies between 20 and 20,000 vibrations per second.

A system of vibrations produces musical sound. Whether it be a drum, guitar, or clarinet, vibrating systems on most musical instruments work together to make sounds. Many instruments (guitar, violin, cello) use strings to make sounds. However, a lone vibrating string makes very little sound. Therefore, most string instruments have a component called a sounding board.

Try the following exploration to demonstrate how sounding boards work.

Materials:

Rubber band and a metal or aluminum pie pan

Procedures:

1. Stretch a rubber band between your pointer finger and thumb. Pluck.
2. Observe the sound. Record your observations.
3. Stretch the same rubber band around a pie plate. Pluck.
4. Observe the sound. record your observations.

Observations:

Rubber band between fingers	Rubber band across pie pan

Conclusions:

Based on your exploration, how does a sound board work? _____

Extension:

Repeat this exploration using sound boards of different materials (plastic, cardboard, wood, etc.).

Try This: Visualizing Vibrations

Materials:

tuning fork
bowl of water (clear is best for observing)

Procedures & Observations:

1. Strike the tuning fork and hold it in the air.
2. What do you see and hear? Record your observations.
3. Strike it again, and put the ends in the bowl of water.
4. What do you see and hear? Record your observations.

Conclusions:

Why do you think the water reacted the way it did?

Famous African-American Musicians

Match the name on the left to the statement or song title on the right. You'll find there is an extra name on the left. What is the significance of that name?

Diana Ross

Their concerts raised funds for Fisk University in Tennessee.

Duke Ellington

Say it Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud, and **Living in America** are two of his most famous hits.

Aretha Franklin

Known as the Queen of Soul, one of her most famous songs is **Respect**.

The Jackson Five

A band of siblings that helped bring the sounds of Motown to every corner of the world. Hint: **ABC**.

W.C. Handy

Famous minstrel performer who said, "Nothing is more absurd than to see a colored man making himself ridiculous (by imitating black-face white performers) in order to portray himself."

Jim Crow

A **supreme** talent born in Detroit, one of her most famous hits is **Baby Love**.

Stevie Wonder

This jazz great was a composer, pianist, and band leader.

Fisk Jubilee Singers

Known as the *Father of the Blues*.

Bert Williams

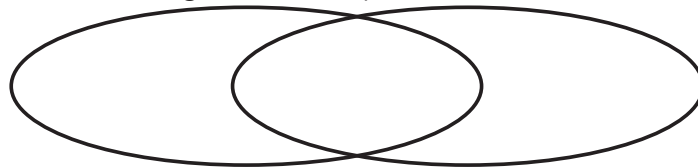
This Motown great is a singer, songwriter, musician, record producer, and a multi-instrumentalist. he is also blind.

James Brown

Some of his most famous songs include **Superstitious** and **Isn't She Lovely?**

Gospel and Blues

Among the genres considered "American roots music," blues and gospel are foundational to the sounds of jazz, R&B, rock, soul and hip hop. They are known and cherished around the world and in the U.S. How are the genres of Gospel and Blues similar and different?



Go online to http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_saa_artists_bygenre.html to see a listing of gospel and blues greats. Choose an artist to research. Create a short (5 - 7 slides) Power Point presentation about your artist. Share with your class.

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Virginia Rep Presents...

Songs from the Soul

book by Billy Dye with Dan Ryan
music and lyrics by various composers

Virginia Repertory Theatre
Bruce C. Miller, Artistic Director
Phil Whiteway, Managing Director

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Theater Etiquette



Clap, but know when to do so.

You should clap after a play, act, or song, or right before intermission. If you loved the show, you can give a "standing ovation" at the end. That's when you stand up while applauding.

It's quiet time (sort of).

If the play makes you laugh or cry, that is fine, but you can chat with your friends afterwards. Be respectful and quiet so the actors can focus on their roles. Being quiet allows the rest of the audience to concentrate on the play.

Behind the Curtains

Many people with different skills and talents work together to make a production such as *Songs from the Soul* come to life. Can you match these theater jobs with their descriptions?

set designer

a person who plays a role or character in stage plays, motion pictures, television broadcasts, etc.

playwright

a person who creates the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance.

stage manager

this person's job is to pull together all the pieces and parts of a play – the script, actors, set, costumes, lighting and sound, and music to create a production.

actor

this job focuses on using light to create effects that match the mood of various scenes in a performance.

costume designer

this person is a writer of scripts for plays. The script tells a story through the actions and words of the characters.

lighting designer

this person creates the physical surroundings of a play, including any scenery, furniture, or props used throughout the play.

director

this person helps the director and helps organize the actors, designers, stage crew, and technicians throughout the production of a play.