



***VH1 Rock Docs:
The Night James Brown Saved Boston***

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12
Lesson 3

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the eras portrayed, to substance abuse, violent acts, and topics of a sexual and/or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom.

Objectives

- Students will learn about the events following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and how James Brown's concert helped keep peace in Boston.
- Students will examine how music has served as a voice in the civil rights movement and in the African-American community

National Standards for music education:

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Materials

- Television
- DVD or VCR player
- CD player and speakers
- CD recordings of music reflecting African-American History and/or the Civil Rights Movement (suggestions and examples below)
- Boomboxes, portable CD players, or computers allowing CD audio playback
- Headphones for students, headphone splitters (optional)
- Lyric sheets for chosen recordings (suggestions and examples below)
- Transparencies of lyrics and an overhead projector, or means of projecting lyrics onto a screen
- Video recording: *Vh1 Rock Docs: The Night James Brown Saved Boston*
- Lesson 3 Reference Sheet – *Brief background information on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Brown* (below)
- Lesson 3 Worksheet – *Video Discussion Questions* (below)
- Lesson 3 Worksheet – *African-American Group Report* (below)
- Pens/Pencils (students)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have a basic understanding of the musical elements of music (style, timbre, expression, melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and lyrics).
- Students have a basic understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and African-American History.
- Lesson 1 (optional) and Lesson 2 (optional)

Procedures

[Note: If you have completed Lesson 1 or Lesson 2 with your class, please skip to step 5.]

1. As students enter class, have a recording of an African-American song playing (your choice).
2. Preface the viewing of the video with the following discussion questions.
 - a. Discuss what students already know.
 - i. What do you know about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Who was he? What did he represent? What can you tell me about the Civil Rights Movement? How did Dr. King die?
 - ii. How many of you know of a singer named James Brown? What can you tell me about him? Do you know any of his songs?
 - b. Distribute and read the handout “Brief background information on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Brown” in class.
3. Watch the video “Vh1 Rock Docs: The Night James Brown Saved Boston” in its entirety.
4. After viewing the video, instruct students answer the questions on the hand-out “Video Discussion Questions.” Allow the students time to write, and then discuss their answers together in class.

5. Share with students that like “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud),” there have been many songs of pride, empowerment, hope, and protest associated with the Civil Rights movement, and written to reflect African-American culture, some of which they will examine today.
6. Instruct to students to divide into groups and assign each group a song. Give each group a recording of the song, the corresponding lyrics sheet, means to listen to the song, and the group report worksheet. Read over the instructions on the group report worksheet, and allow students time to work.
7. Ask each student group to present their report. Project the song lyrics for the entire class to view, and listen to each song as a class at the conclusion of the group report. Discuss student impressions of the song and the lyrics as a class. Repeat for each group.

Extensions:

1. Discuss other songs of pride, empowerment, hope, or protest (African-American/Civil Rights, Vietnam War, Environmental Concerns, Holocaust, WWII, The Depression, Peace, Revolution, Women’s Rights, Labor Rights, international folk songs, Apartheid, AIDS, etc.). Examine how music helps to communicate the lyrics and/or message of the song.
2. Ask students to bring in an example of their own music which they feel has powerful lyrics or an important message. Examine how the music helps to communicate the lyrics and/or message of the song.

Supplemental Resources:

- **VH1 Website:** http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/vh1_rock_docs/134183/episode.jhtml which includes links to videos, interviews, and a list of “Ten Essential James Brown Tracks”
- **Television Station WGBH – Boston** http://www.wgbh.org/article?item_id=3196439 . This site has a link to view the 1968 James Brown Live at the Boston Garden concert in its entirety.
- **Wikipedia – James Brown** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Brown A comprehensive biography and resource on James Brown with many links.
- **Wikipedia - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King A comprehensive biography and resource on Dr. King, with many links and references, including links to web-based video and audio materials
- **Wikipedia – Strange Fruit** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strange_Fruit Story of and historical/societal impact of the song.
- **PBS Website:** <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/protest.html> A good source of historically important protest music, and music that “served as catalysts for thought, action and even social change.”
- **iTunes: iTunes Essentials – Black History** A comprehensive collection of songs, highlighting music from “The Middle Passage Through the Depression,” “The Civil Rights Struggle,” and “Modern Times.”
- **Wikipedia – Protest Songs** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protest_music
- **Google Search** – type in “protest music” and you will find numerous lists and articles.

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Lesson 3 Worksheet – Brief background information on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Brown

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., born January 15, 1929, was a prominent leader in the American civil rights movement. He entered Morehouse College at age 15, continuing his education at seminary, and eventually earning his doctorate at Boston University. As a Baptist minister, Reverend King preached for peaceful actions, demonstrations, and government lobbying to end segregation and racial discrimination. He championed the rights of African-Americans through civil obedience and non-violent means. His efforts led to several historic events in the civil rights movement, including the 1963 March on Washington, where King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1964, King became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his work promoting civil rights. Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. He was only 39 years old. Although Dr. King preached non-violence and civil obedience, his tragic death led to a nationwide wave of riots across the country. His death had shaken the nation, causing great sadness and anger. President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a national day of mourning for the lost civil rights leader in the days following his death. Years later in 1986, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established as a national holiday in the United States to honor this American leader's life and remember his important message of peaceful actions and civil rights.

James Brown, known as the "The Godfather of Soul", the "King of Funk", and "The Hardest Working Man in Show Business", was born May 3, 1933. He is recognized as one of the most influential figures in 20th century popular music and was renowned for his singing, his energetic and theatrical concerts, and his signature dance moves. Brown began his professional music career in 1953, and rose to fame during the late 1950s and early 1960s on the strength of his thrilling live performances and numerous hit songs. In addition to his acclaim in music, Brown was a presence in American political affairs during the 1960s and 1970s, noted especially for his activism on behalf of fellow African Americans and the poor. During the early 1980s, Brown's music helped to shape the rhythms of early hip-hop music, with numerous groups sampling his funk grooves and turning them into what became hip hop classics and the foundations of the music genre. During his long career, James Brown received several prestigious music industry awards and honors, including being named as one of the first inductees to the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame, and receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 1992 Grammy Awards Ceremony. In 2004, *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked James Brown as #7 on its list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time. On Christmas Day, 2006, James Brown died from congestive heart failure resulting from complications of pneumonia. Brown's relatives and friends, who included several celebrities and African-American leaders, along with thousands of fans attended public memorial services at the Apollo Theater in New York.

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Brown

Lesson 3 Worksheet – Video Discussion Questions

1) What emotions did the African-American community feel upon hearing the news of Dr. King's assassination?

2) How did James Brown's concert help "save" Boston? How did this concert help people deal with their emotions?

3) What affect did this have on James Brown's career? How did the African-American community view him? What was the response to his song "Say It Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud"?

Lesson 3 – Song Suggestions

(All recordings can be found on iTunes, amazon.com, or at your local music store.)

Oh, Freedom
(post-Civil War)

Performed by Harry Belafonte
Album: Greatest Hits

Performed by Joan Baez
Album: Let Freedom Sing – This Land is Your
Land II

Lift Every Voice and Sing
(1900)

Performed by Women of the Calabash
Album: The Kwanzaa Album

Strange Fruit
(1939)

By Billie Holiday
Album: The Commodore Master Takes
(1939-44)

We Shall Overcome
(1947)

Performed by Pete Seeger
Album: (Live) The Essential Pete Seeger

Performed by Mahalia Jackson
Album: God Bless America

Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)
(1968)

By James Brown
Album: Foundations of Funk

When Will We Be Paid
(1970)

By The Staple Singers
Album: The Very Best of the Staple Singers

Young, Gifted and Black
(1970)

By Nina Simone
Album: Anthology

Get Up, Stand Up
(1973)

By Bob Marley
Album: Legend

Tennessee
(1992)

By Arrested Development
Album: 3 Years, 5 Months, and 2 Days in the
Life of...

Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Oh, Freedom (post-Civil War)*

By Harry Belafonte or By Joan Baez

(Lyrics often vary with performances)

Oh freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom over me
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

No more mourning, no more mourning, no more mourning over me
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

No more crying, no more crying, no more crying over me
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

Oh freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom over me
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

There'll be singin', there'll be singin', there'll be singin' over me
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

Oh freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom over me
And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

**Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Lift Every Voice and Sing (1900)*
Performed by Women of the Calabash**

Lift every voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land

Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Strange Fruit* (1939)

By Billie Holiday

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *We Shall Overcome* (1947)

By Pete Seeger - or - By Mahalia Jackson

(Lyrics often vary with performances)

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The Lord will see us through, The Lord will see us through,
The Lord will see us through someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We're on to victory, We're on to victory,
We're on to victory someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We're on to victory someday.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We'll walk hand in hand someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We are not afraid today.

The truth shall make us free, the truth shall make us free,
The truth shall make us free someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
The truth shall make us free someday.

We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace,
We shall live in peace someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall live in peace someday.

Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)* (1968)

By James Brown

Uh! With your bad self!

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

Some people say we've got a lot of malice
Some say it's a lot of nerve
But I say we won't quit moving until we get what we deserve
We have been bucked and we have been scorned
We have been treated bad, talked about as just bones
But just as it takes two eyes to make a pair, ha
Brother we can't quit until we get our share

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

One more time!

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

I worked on jobs with my feet and my hand
But all the work I did was for the other man
Now we demand a chance to do things for ourselves
We're tired of beatin' our head against the wall
And workin' for someone else

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud (repeat)

We're people, we're just like the birds and the bees
We'd rather die on our feet
Than be livin' on our knees

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud (repeat)

**Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *When Will We Be Paid* (1970)
By The Staple Singers**

When will we be paid for the work we've done?
When will we be paid for the work we've done?

We have worked this country from shore to shore
Our women cooked all your food and washed all your clothes
We picked all your cotton and laid the railroad steel
Worked our hands to the bone at your lumber mill. I say...
When will we be paid for the work we've done?
When will we be paid for the work we've done?

We fought in your wars in every land
To keep this country free, y'all, for women, children and men
But any time we ask for pay or a loan
That's when everything seems to turn out wrong
We been beat up, called names, shot down and stoned
Every time we do right, someone say we're wrong
When will we be paid for the work we've done?
When will we be paid for the work we've done?

We have given our sweat, and all our tears
We stumbled through this life for more than 300 years
We've been separated from the language we knew,
Stripped of our culture, people you know it's true. Tell me now...
When will we be paid for the work we've done?
When will we be paid for the work we've done?

(When will we be paid for the work we've done?
When will we be paid for the work we've done?)

Will we ever be proud of "My country, tis of thee"?
Will we ever sing out loud, "Sweet land of Liberty"?
Will we ever have peace and harmony?
(When will we be paid for the work we've done?
When will we be paid for the work we've done?)

Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Young, Gifted and Black* (1970)

By Nina Simone

To be young, gifted and black,
Oh what a lovely precious dream
To be young, gifted and black,
Open your heart to what I mean

In the whole world you know
There are a billion boys and girls
Who are young, gifted and black,
And that's a fact!

Young, gifted and black
We must begin to tell our young
There's a world waiting for you
This is a quest that's just begun

When you feel really low
Yeah, there's a great truth you should know
When you're young, gifted and black
Your soul's intact

Young, gifted and black
How I long to know the truth
There are times when I look back
And I am haunted by my youth

Oh but my joy of today
Is that we can all be proud to say
To be young, gifted and black
Is where it's at.

**Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Get Up, Stand Up* (1973)
By Bob Marley**

Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up: don't give up the fight!

Preacher man, don't tell me,
Heaven is under the earth.
I know you don't know
What life is really worth.
Its not all that glitters is gold;
all of the story has never been told:
So now you see the light, eh!
Stand up for your rights. Come on!

Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up: don't give up the fight!
Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up: don't give up the fight!

Most people think,
Great God will come from the skies,
Take away everything
And make everybody feel high.
But if you know what life is worth,
You will look for yours on earth:
And now you see the light,
You stand up for your rights. jah!

Get up, stand up! (jah, jah!)
Stand up for your rights! (oh-hoo!)
Get up, stand up! (get up, stand up!)
Don't give up the fight! (life is your right!)

Get up, stand up! (so we cant give up the fight!)
Stand up for your rights! (lord, lord!)
Get up, stand up! (keep on struggling on!)
Don't give up the fight! (yeah!)

We sick an' tired of-a your ism-skism game -
Dyin' n goin to heaven in-a Jesus name, lord.
We know when we understand:
Almighty God is a living man.
You can fool some people sometimes,
But you can't fool all the people all the time.
So now we see the light (what you gonna do?),
We gonna stand up for our rights! (yeah, yeah, yeah!)

So you better:
Get up, stand up! (in the morning! git it up!)
Stand up for your rights! (stand up for our rights!)
Get up, stand up!
Don't give up the fight! (don't give it up, don't give it
up!)
Get up, stand up! (get up, stand up!)
Stand up for your rights! (get up, stand up!)
Get up, stand up! (...)
Don't give up the fight! (get up, stand up!)
Get up, stand up! (...)
Stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up!
Don't give up the fight! /fadeout/

**Lesson 3 – Lyrics: *Tennessee* (1992)
By Arrested Development**

Lord I've really been real stressed
Down and out, losin' ground
Although I am black and proud
Problems got me pessimistic
Brothers and sisters keep messin' up
Why does it have to be so damn tuff?
I don't know where I can go
To let these ghosts out of my skull
My grandmas past, my brothers gone
I never at once felt so alone
I know you're supposed to be my steering wheel
Not just my spare tire (home)
But lord I ask you (home)
To be my guiding force and truth (home)
For some strange reason it had to be (home)
He guided me to Tennessee (home)

(Chorus) Take me to another place
Take me to another land
Make me forget all that hurts me
Let me understand your plan

Lord it's obvious we got a relationship
Talkin' to each other every night and day
Although you're superior over me
We talk to each other in a friendship way
Then outta nowhere you tell me to break
Outta the country and into more country
Past Dyesburg into Ripley
Where the ghost of childhood haunts me
Walk the roads my forefathers walked
Climbed the trees my forefathers hung from
Ask those trees for all their wisdom
They tell me my ears are so young (home)
Go back to from whence you came (home)
My family tree my family name (home)

For some strange reason it had to be (home)
He guided me to Tennessee (home)

Chorus

Now I see the importance of history
Why people be in the mess that they be
Many journeys to freedom made in vain
By brothers on the corner playin ghetto games
I ask you lord why you enlightened me
Without the enlightenment of all my folks
He said cuz I set myself on a quest for truth
And he was there to quench my thirst
But I am still thirsty...
The lord allowed me to drink some more
He said what I am searchin for are
The answers to all which are in front of me
The ultimate truth started to get blurry
For some strange reason it had to be
It was all a dream about Tennessee

Chorus



These standards-based materials are provided through a partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education. This lesson plan was created by MENC member Kathryn E. Briggs, St. Mary's Academy, Portland, Oregon.