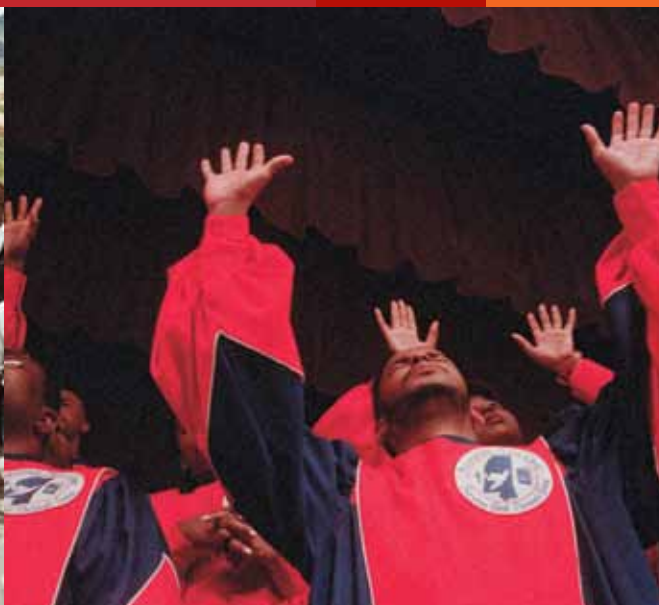


An Educational Program in Support of  
*HONOR! A Celebration of the African American  
Cultural Legacy* Curated by Jessye Norman



CARNEGIE HALL presents  
Perelman American Roots

A Program of The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall

# AFRICAN AMERICAN SONG

Uniting Voices

Student Guide

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PRE-CURRICULUM SURVEY

1. How is music a part of your everyday life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What kinds of ideas are expressed in the music you listen to now? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some occasions or events during which people sing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What does the word *united* mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Can music unite a group of people or a society? If so, how? If not, why? Give at least one example to support your opinion. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who or what comes to mind when you think of African American song? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SG 1

**WORKSHEET: Discovering Unity in African Song**

**PART 1:** Listen to the Fisk Jubilee Singers sing the Ghanaian song “Mawu Nye Lolo.”

1. Where do you notice unity in this performance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you notice about how the singers blend their voices together in this song?  
How does their unity allow for individual expression? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. African music also has a strong rhythmic and percussive tradition. What do you notice  
about the drumming or the finger-snapping in this song? How does it rhythmically  
relate to the singing? Do we ever hear the percussion or the singing on its own? What  
does the rhythmic accompaniment add? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is similar between this performance and some of the African American music  
and musicians you have discussed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2:** As in many cultures, music is an integral part of the African religious experience. Listen to “Africa Anointed” by Limit X, Christafari, and Stitchie. This is a contemporary example of a song about the entire continent of Africa being unified in religious praise.

1. How is the use of percussion and singing similar to or different from “Mawu Nye Lolo”?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is similar between this performance and some of the African American music  
and musicians you have discussed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUALS



The plantation songs known as ‘Spirituals’ are the spontaneous outbursts of intense religious fervor, and had their origin chiefly in camp meetings, revivals, and other religious exercises.

Success in singing these Folk Songs is primarily dependent upon deep spiritual feeling. The voice is not nearly so important as the spirit; and then rhythm, for the Negro’s soul is linked with rhythm, and it is an essential characteristic of most all the Folk Songs.

... through all these songs there breathes a hope, a faith in the ultimate justice and brotherhood of man. The cadences of sorrow invariably turn to joy, and the message is ever manifest that eventually deliverance from all that hinders and oppresses the soul will come, and man—every man—will be free.

—Harry T. Burleigh, *The Spirituals of Harry T. Burleigh*

Spirituals can be separated into two primary classifications, folk Spirituals and concert arrangements of the Negro Spiritual.

Some folk Spirituals are sung in a call-and-response style, while others are based on a verse-chorus format. Most folk Spirituals are accompanied by hand-clapping and foot-stomping with singers encouraged to contribute spontaneous expressions, including sighs, cries, and hollers.

Concert arrangements of the Negro Spiritual are the post–Civil War form of the folk Spirituals that emerged from Black colleges established to educate the emancipated slaves. Choral directors arranged the folk Spiritual using four-part harmony and other Western-based vocal techniques and styles. To preserve the Spiritual tradition, however, the fundamental elements remained—a call-and-response structure, repetitions of melodies and texts, and percussive vocal timbres.

—Portia Maultsby

## WORKSHEET: Listening to Spirituals

As you listen to each Spiritual, take notes based on the questions below.

**EXAMPLE 1: “Goin’ Up to Glory (No More Auction Block for Me)”** is a Spiritual that contrasts a life of hard work with the hope of “goin’ up to glory.” Many Spirituals have double meanings: “Goin’ up to glory” could mean dying and going to Heaven, or it could mean escaping from slavery to freedom. The auction block was a platform where people were sold into slavery to the highest bidder. Families were often separated, and sometimes even free African Americans were kidnapped and sold at these auctions.

1. Where do you notice unity in this performance? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What words stand out as you listen? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What kind of moods or feelings do you hear expressed by the singers? \_\_\_\_\_

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**EXAMPLE 2: “Wade in the Water”** is an example of a Spiritual with coded instructions for a successful escape. On the surface, the song references a number of Bible stories involving water. In focusing on the role of water in spiritual salvation, the song also implies that waterways are a means to find freedom from slavery. Crossing rivers, wading, or swimming enabled slaves to evade the search dogs used to track escaped slaves, since water caused the dogs to lose the scent of the person being tracked.

1. In this choir do you hear men, women, or both? \_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---



2. African American songs often include a soloist who sings an independent part while a choir sings something else. Is the main soloist in this recording a man or a woman?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
3. What message is the choir emphasizing? What does the soloist seem to be saying? Where do you hear unity in this performance? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**EXAMPLE 3: “Rise, Shine, For Thy Light is a’ Comin’”** is a Spiritual celebrating freedom. According to Hebrew law in the Bible, every 50 years is a “year of jubilee.” In the jubilee year, nobody works, slaves are set free, and all stolen land is given back to its original owner. Many Spirituals refer to the year of jubilee as a way of expressing hope for freedom.

SG 6

1. How does this Spiritual’s mood compare to “Goin’ Up to Glory (No More Auction Block for Me)” and “Wade in the Water”? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
2. At one point the soloist sings, “I intend to shout and never stop until I reach the mountaintop.” In addition to speaking, the word “shout” refers to an energetic circle dance used in both traditional African religions and Christian traditions developed by African Americans. What does “Rise, Shine” have in common with dance music that you know? Where do you notice unity in this performance?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
3. All of these Spirituals include meaningful messages. Singing these songs unites the singers by having them proclaim the same message together. What are some messages you would like to hear people sing about today? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Before Africans were brought to the Americas, most of them practiced the religion of their individual societies. Traditional African worship often involved drumming, chanting, prolonged dancing and music making, and altered states such as trances and spirit possession. Most Americans, who were predominantly Christian or secular, did not approve of African religious practices, so slaves were forbidden to practice their African faiths. Drums and other items associated with traditional religious practice were confiscated because loud instruments were associated with the organization of slave revolts.

Introducing Christianity to slaves was a controversial issue. Some slave owners feared that the Christian ideals of universal brotherhood would cause slaves to resent their masters and revolt. Other slave owners believed that Christianity would have moral and spiritual benefits for slaves, so they encouraged religious education, and invited preachers to hold meetings for the slaves to pray and worship.

Despite their eventual acceptance into Christianity, slaves and freed African Americans were constantly pressured about how they should or should not express their religious beliefs. Some ministers, both Anglo American and African American, actively discouraged such vestiges of African-style worship as dancing, clapping, shouting, and the singing of Spirituals.

To escape religious oppression, many slaves would hold independent prayer meetings and church services late at night in secret locations deep in the woods. In this way, African Americans were able to practice religion freely as they saw fit. Spirituals played a central role at these meetings, and new ones would be regularly improvised and composed to address the needs and prayers of the day.

Material excerpted from Dena Epstein’s *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War*, presented in edited form.

SG 7

WORKSHEET: Personal Beliefs

PART 1

1. Name two people whom you admire. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What kind of person do you want to be known as? What do you hope other people will say about you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is something you strongly believe in? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What would you do if other people told you that you were not allowed to believe this or talk about it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is something you don't believe in doing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: Adapting “I Want to Be a Christian” to the \_\_\_\_\_ Belief System**  
(assigned belief system)

\_\_\_\_\_, I want to be  
(name of a leader, founder, or god for this belief system)

a \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart.  
(what people practicing this belief system are called)

I want to \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart.  
(a personal goal of someone practicing this belief system)

I want to be like \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart.  
(name of an important individual to this belief system)

Melody

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

SPIRITUAL  
Arr. M. Roger Holland II

Moderate ♩ = 72

1 Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

5 Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. 1. I

10 looked o - ver Jor-dan and what did I see, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. A

14 band of an-gels com-ing af-ter me. Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet

19 char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot,

24 Com-ing for to car-ry me home. 2. If you get there be - fore I do, 3. I'm some-times up and some - times down,

28 Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Tell all my friends I'm com-ing too, But still my soul feels heav-en - ly bound,

32 Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me

37 home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home.



# Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

**SPIRITUAL**  
**Arr. M. Roger Holland II**

Moderate ♩ = 72

1. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

2. (Sing 2nd time only, optional all on part 1 first time)  
Swing low, char - i - ot, Com-ing to car-ry me home.

5. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. home. 1. I  
Swing low, char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. 1. I

10. ① looked o - ver Jor-dan and what did I see, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. A  
looked o - ver Jor-dan and what did I see, Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

14. ② band of an-gels com-ing af-ter me. Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet  
Hm, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low,

19. char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot,  
char - i - ot, Com-ing to car-ry me home. Swing low, char - i - ot,

24. ③ Com-ing for to car - ry me home. 2. If you get there be - fore I do,  
3. I'm some-times up and some - times down,  
Com-ing for to car - ry me home. 2. If you get there be - fore I do,  
3. I'm some-times up and some - times down,

28. Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Tell all my friends I'm com-ing too,  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. But still my soul feels heav-en - ly bound,  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Hm,  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Hm,

32. ④ Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home.  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, char - i - ot, Com-ing to car-ry me  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

SG 10

SG 11

37

home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

home. Swing low, char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car-ry me, car-ry me home.

**“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”**  
Wallace Willis, 1862

*Chorus*

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

*Chorus*

If you get to Heaven before I do  
Coming for to carry me home  
Tell all my friends I’ll be coming there, too  
Coming for to carry me home

*Chorus*

I’m sometimes up and sometimes down  
Coming for to carry me home  
But still my soul feels heavenly bound  
Coming for to carry me home

*Chorus*

Melody

**Free at Last**

**SPIRITUAL**  
Arr. M. Roger Holland II

Lively ♩ = 132

All on melody, 1st time

1

Free at last, free at last, thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last, Free at last, free at last, thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last. One o' these morn - ings so bright and fair, Thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last, Gon-na put on my wings and try the air. Thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last. Free at last, free at last, thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last. Free at last, free at last, thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last. If you get there be - fore I do, Thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last. Tell all o' my friends I'm com-ing too. Thank God a'-might-y we're

Free at Last

SPiritual  
Arr. M. Roger Holland II

32 4

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Free at last, \_\_\_\_ free at last, \_\_\_\_ thank God a'-mighty we're

36

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Free at last, \_\_\_\_ free at last \_\_\_\_ thank God a'-mighty we're

40

free at last. \_\_\_\_ thank God, thank God, thank God,

**Broad**

44 *rit.*

thank God, Thank God a'-mighty we're free at last. \_\_\_\_

*rit.*

**Lively** ♩ = 132

*All on melody, 1st time*

1

Free at last, \_\_\_\_ free at last, \_\_\_\_ thank God a'-mighty we're

2

Free at last. \_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_ I wan-na thank God we're

4

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Free at last, \_\_\_\_ free at last \_\_\_\_ thank God a'-mighty we're

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Free at last. \_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_ I wan-na thank God we're

1

8

free at last. \_\_\_\_ One o' these morn - ings so bright and fair, \_\_\_\_ Thank God a'-mighty we're

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Thank God a'-mighty we're

12

free at last, \_\_\_\_ Gon-na put on my wings and try the air. \_\_\_\_ Thank God a'-mighty we're

free at last, \_\_\_\_ try the air. \_\_\_\_ Thank God we're

2

16

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Free at last, \_\_\_\_ free at last, \_\_\_\_ thank God a'-mighty we're

free at last. \_\_\_\_ Free at last. \_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_ I wan-na thank God we're

20

free at last. Free at last, free at last, thank God a-mighty we're

free at last. Free at last. Oh, I wan-na thank God we're

24

free at last. Thank God a'-might-y we're

free at last. If you get there be - fore I do,

28

free at last. Thank God a-might-y we're

Tell all o' my friends I'm com-ing too. Oh, we're

32

free at last. Free at last, free at last, thank God a-might-y we're

free at last. Free at last. Oh, I wan-na thank God we're

40

free at last. thank God, thank God, thank God,

free at last. thank God a-might-y, thank God a-mighty, thank God a-mighty,

44

thank God, Thank God a'-might-y we're free at last.

thank God a-mighty, Thank God a'-might-y we're free at last, we're free at last.

### "Free at Last"

#### Chorus

Free at last, free at last  
Thank God Almighty, we're free at last.  
Free at last, free at last  
Thank God Almighty, we're free at last.

One of these mornings, so bright and fair  
Thank God Almighty, we're free at last.  
I'm gonna put on my wings and try the air  
Thank God Almighty, we're free at last.

#### Chorus

If you get there before I do  
Thank God Almighty, we're free at last.  
Tell all of my friends, I'm coming too  
Thank God Almighty, we're free at last.

#### Chorus

WORKSHEET: My Hopes and Dreams

1. What are some of the hopes and dreams expressed in Spirituals? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How can Spirituals be meaningful in today’s world? How do they unify us?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. If there is one thing you could change for your family or community, what would it be?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are some dreams you have for yourself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are some dreams you have for your country? For the world? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SG 18

WORKSHEET: “A New Dream”

Complete this worksheet based on the dreams you have for your world, including places where you would like to see these dreams fulfilled.

- I have a dream that one day \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have a dream that one day \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have a dream that one day \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have a dream that one day \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have a dream today.
- And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring.  
Let freedom ring from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Let freedom ring from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Let freedom ring from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Let freedom ring from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

And when this happens, we’ll be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro Spiritual, *Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*

SG 19

Permission to reprint excerpts from the “I Have a Dream” speech is granted by Intellectual Properties Management, Atlanta, Georgia, as exclusive licenser of the King Estate.

**WORKSHEET: Gospel Music and Inspiration**

**PART 1: Songs that Inspire**

- 1. A song that inspires me is \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. A few words I would use to describe the music to this song are \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. A few words I would use to describe the voice and style of the singer are \_\_\_\_\_



Mahalia Jackson

**PART 2: “Amazing Grace,” performed by Mahalia Jackson**

- 1. What do you notice about Mahalia Jackson’s singing? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What kind of unified mood or message do you think she is trying to inspire? \_\_\_\_\_

**“I Can Go to God in Prayer” by Calvin Bridges, performed by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir**

- 1. What kind of unified mood or message do you think this song is trying to inspire? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Do you notice unity in this performance? Give at least one example to support your opinion. \_\_\_\_\_

**“Wade in the Water,” from the soundtrack of Alvin Ailey’s *Revelations***

- 1. What kind of unified mood or message do you think this song is trying to inspire? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Is that mood or message the same or different from the Spiritual-style version of “Wade in the Water” performed by the Fisk Jubilee Singers? \_\_\_\_\_



## CULTURAL AMBASSADOR BIOGRAPHIES



**MARIAN ANDERSON** was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on February 27, 1897. She joined a junior church choir at the age of six, and applied to an all-white music school after graduating from high school in 1921, but was turned away because she was black. Consequently, she continued her singing studies with a private teacher. She debuted with the New York Philharmonic on August 26, 1925, and was an immediate success. In 1928, she sang for the first time at Carnegie Hall. Her reputation was further advanced by her tour through Europe in the early 1930s where she did not encounter the racial prejudices she had experienced in the US. During this time, Anderson made numerous commercial recordings of Spirituals.

In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused permission for Anderson to sing to an integrated audience in Constitution Hall in Washington, DC. Instead she sang a concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The concert, which began with a dignified and stirring rendition of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" attracted a crowd of more than 75,000 people of all colors and was a sensation with a national radio audience of millions.

On January 7, 1955, Anderson broke the color barrier by becoming the first African American to perform with the New York Metropolitan Opera. On that occasion, she sang the part of Ulrica in Verdi's *Un ballo in Maschera*. In 1958 she was officially designated a delegate to the United Nations by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a formalization of her previous role as "goodwill ambassador." She received the UN Peace Prize in 1972.

🎧 To hear Marian Anderson, listen to "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" [Track 17] on the Perelman American Roots CD.

**MAHALIA JACKSON** was born in New Orleans on October 26, 1911, and has been called "the queen of gospel." Jackson began singing at an early age at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church. When she was 16, Jackson moved to Chicago, where she began singing with the Johnson Gospel Singers. She also met Thomas A. Dorsey, a musician, composer, and songwriter who was beginning to write sacred music in a style that borrowed from jazz and blues. During the 1930s, Jackson began touring with Dorsey, and she began to make her first commercial recordings with Decca records. In 1947, her rendition of "Move On Up a Little Higher" sold over one million copies, resulting in an increased demand for her to appear on radio and television. In 1954, Jackson hosted a gospel music program on CBS television.

At the request of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jackson sang "Move On Up a Little Higher" at the March on Washington in 1963 just before he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. A supporter of Dr. King during the 1960s, Jackson also sang "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" at his funeral.

Although she refused to sing secular music throughout her entire career, Mahalia Jackson's style derived much from blues singers Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. She also served as a mentor to Aretha Franklin and has been a major influence on singers of many different genres and styles.

🎧 To hear Mahalia Jackson, listen to "Move On Up a Little Higher" [Track 18] on the Perelman American Roots CD.



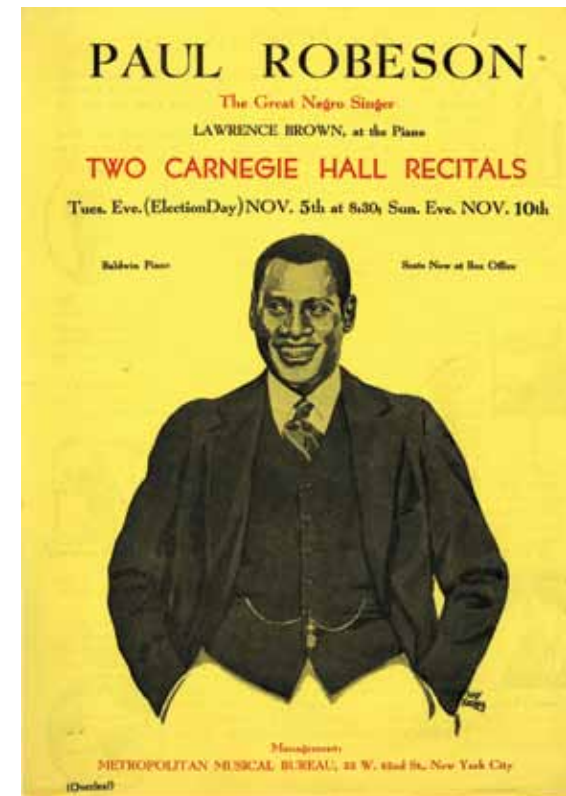
**JESSEY NORMAN** is “one of those once-in-a-generation singers who is not simply following in the footsteps of others, but is staking out her own niche in the history of singing.”\* This rich history continues as she performs around the world, bringing her joy of singing and passion to recital performances, operatic portrayals, and appearances with symphony orchestras and chamber music ensembles. The sheer size, power, and luster of her voice share equal acclaim with that of her thoughtful music making, innovative programming of the classics, and advocacy of contemporary music.

Miss Norman is the recipient of many awards and honors, including the Kennedy Center Honor awarded in December 1997 when she made history by becoming the youngest recipient of this, the highest award in the US for performing artists, in its then 20-year history.

She is an honorary ambassador to the United Nations and was awarded the French Legion of Honor by President Francois Mitterand.

Her many other prestigious distinctions include honorary doctorates at 35 colleges, universities, and conservatories around the world, the most recent being the Doctor of Fine Arts from the University of North Carolina in May 2008. Miss Norman, a five-time Grammy winner, is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

\* *New York Times*



**PAUL ROBESON** was born April 9, 1898, in Princeton, New Jersey. His father had run away from a North Carolina plantation where he was born into slavery. Robeson won an academic scholarship to Rutgers University. He was only the third African American student ever accepted at Rutgers and was the only black student on campus at the time. After graduation, Robeson moved to Harlem and began to study law at Columbia University. Between 1920 and 1923, Robeson helped pay his way through school by working as a professional football player and as a performer.

With his beautiful and powerful bass voice, Robeson found fame as a singer and actor. He was one of the few true basses in American music, able to sing as low as C below the bass clef. Robeson was among the first to bring Spirituals to the concert stage in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. Throughout his career he appeared in countless stage and film productions, all while fighting racial injustice in the US. He was closely associated with the song “Ol’ Man River,” which he sang in the stage version of *Show Boat* and in concert.

After a long hiatus from performing, he gave two sold-out recitals at Carnegie Hall in 1958 that were later released on record. He was also celebrated at Carnegie Hall on the occasion of his 75th birthday.



To hear Jessye Norman, listen to “O, By and By” [Track 19] on the Perelman American Roots CD.

To hear Paul Robeson, listen to “Deep River” [Track 20] on the Perelman American Roots CD.

WORKSHEET: Cultural Ambassadors

Name of artist: \_\_\_\_\_

What role has music played in this artist’s life and career? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use the information to create a bio-poem for your artist, filling in the blanks as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of artist)

Who believed \_\_\_\_\_,  
(something the artist strongly believed in)

Who \_\_\_\_\_,  
(something the artist accomplished)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(a second accomplishment of the artist)

and \_\_\_\_\_,  
(a third thing the artist accomplished)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(conclude with a final thought about the artist)

WORKSHEET: Fisk Jubilee Singers

1. When and where were the Fisk Jubilee Singers founded? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Where have the Fisk Jubilee Singers performed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What qualities does Mr. Paul Kwami, Music Director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, look for in applicants? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What Spirituals did you hear on this DVD? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. In what ways have the Fisk Jubilee Singers empowered or united African Americans? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What was something else that you learned about Spirituals from watching this DVD? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SG 26

SG 27



WORKSHEET: Letter to Paul Kwami

Paul Kwami  
Fisk University  
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Mr. Kwami:

Sincerely,

POST-CURRICULUM SURVEY

1. Name a memorable experience you have had in your study of African American song.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who or what comes to mind when you think of African American song?\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does the word *united* mean to you? How have you experienced or witnessed unity in your study of African American song? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Can music unite a group of people or a society? If so, how? If not, why? Give at least two examples to support your opinion. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



SG 30

**MEET THE ARTISTS: Fisk Jubilee Singers**

The Fisk Jubilee Singers are young men and women—vocal artists and students—from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. The original Jubilee Singers introduced “slave songs” to the world in 1871 and were instrumental in preserving this American musical tradition. They broke racial barriers in the US and abroad in the late 19th century by becoming the first African American ensemble to tour Europe, entertaining many of the world’s kings and queens. At the same time, they raised money in support of their beloved school.

In 1999, the Singers were featured in the documentary *Singers: Sacrifice and Glory*, part of the PBS award-winning television series *The American Experience*. To this day, the Fisk Jubilee Singers continue the tradition of singing Negro Spirituals around the world. This has allowed the ensemble to share its rich heritage while preserving this distinct style of music.

In July 2007, the Fisk Jubilee Singers went on a sacred journey to Ghana at the invitation of the US Embassy. During this historic event, the ensemble joined Ghanaians in celebrating the nation’s 50th independence anniversary (Golden Jubilee).

