

08109 Youth Education

Creative Teachers...Intelligent Students...Real Learning



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Sweet Honey In The Rock Teacher Resource Guide

About UMS

One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS serves diverse audiences through multi-disciplinary performing arts programs in three distinct but interrelated areas: presentation, creation, and education.

With a program steeped in music, dance, theater, and education, UMS hosts approximately 80 performances and 150 free educational activities each season. UMS also commissions new work, sponsors artist residencies, and organizes collaborative projects with local, national as well as many international partners.

While proudly affiliated with the University of Michigan and housed on the Ann Arbor campus, UMS is a separate not-for-profit organization that supports itself from ticket sales, grants, contributions, and endowment income.

UMS Education and Audience Development Department

UMS's Education and Audience Development Department seeks to deepen the relationship between audiences and art, as well as to increase the impact that the performing arts can have on schools and community. The program seeks to create and present the highest quality arts education experience to a broad spectrum of community constituencies, proceeding in the spirit of partnership and collaboration.

The department coordinates dozens of events with over 100 partners that reach more than 50,000 people annually. It oversees a dynamic, comprehensive program encompassing workshops, in-school visits, master classes, lectures, youth and family programming, teacher professional development workshops, and "meet the artist" opportunities, cultivating new audiences while engaging existing ones.

For advance notice of Youth Education events, join the UMS Teachers email list by emailing umsyouth@umich.edu or visit www.ums.org/education.

Cover Photo: Sweet Honey In The Rock (Photo by Dwight Carter)

UMS gratefully acknowledges the following corporation, foundations, and government agencies for their generous support of the UMS Youth Education Program:



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This Teacher Resource Guide is a product of the University Musical Society's Youth Education Program. Researched, written and edited by Bree Juarez. Edited by Claire Rice. All photos are courtesy of the artist unless otherwise noted.

UMS Youth Education 08/09

Sweet Honey In The Rock

Thursday, February 12, 2009

11:00am-12:00pm

Hill Auditorium

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE



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We've starred the most important pages.

Only Have 15 Minutes? Try pages 7 or 9!



Sweet Honey In The Rock (Photo by Dwight Carter)

The Performance at a Glance

Coming to the Show



We want you to enjoy your time in the theater, so here are some tips to make your Youth Performance experience successful and fun! Please review this page prior to attending the performance.

What should I do during the show?

Everyone is expected to be a good audience member. This keeps the show fun for everyone. Good audience members...

- Are good listeners
- Keep their hands and feet to themselves
- Do not talk or whisper during the performance
- Laugh only at the parts that are funny
- Do not eat gum, candy, food or drink in the theater
- Stay in their seats during the performance
- Do not disturb the people sitting nearby or other schools in attendance



Who will meet us when we arrive?

After you exit the bus, UMS Education staff and greeters will be outside to meet you. They might have special directions for you, so be listening and follow their directions. They will take you to the theater door where ushers will meet your group. The greeters know that your group is coming, so there's no need for you to have tickets.

Who will show us where to sit?

The ushers will walk your group to its seats. Please take the first seat available. (When everybody's seated, your teacher will decide if you can rearrange yourselves.) If you need to make a trip to the restroom before the show starts, ask your teacher.

How will I know that the show is starting?

You will know the show is starting because the lights in the auditorium will get dim, and a member of the UMS Education staff will come out on stage to introduce the performance.

What if I get lost?

Please ask an usher or a UMS staff member for help. You will recognize these adults because they have name tag stickers or a name tag hanging around their neck.

How do I show that I liked what I saw and heard?

The audience shows appreciation during a performance by clapping. In a musical performance, the musicians are often greeted with applause when they first appear. It is traditional to applaud at the end of each musical selection and sometimes after impressive solos. At the end of the show, the performers will bow and be rewarded with your applause. If you really enjoyed the show, give the performers a standing ovation by standing up and clapping during the bows. For this particular show, it will be most appropriate to applaud at the beginning and the ending.

What do I do after the show ends?

Please stay in your seats after the performance ends, even if there are just a few of you in your group. Someone from UMS will come onstage and announce the names of all the schools. When you hear your school's name called, follow your teachers out of the auditorium, out of the theater and back to your buses.

How can I let the performers know what I thought?

We want to know what you thought of your experience at a UMS Youth Performance. After the performance, we hope that you will be able to discuss what you saw with your class. Tell us about your experiences in a letter or drawing. Please send your opinions, letters or artwork to: **UMS Youth Education Program, 881 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1011.**



The Performance at a Glance

Who is Sweet Honey in the Rock?

Founded by Bernice Johnson Reagon with Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson, and Mie in 1973 at the D.C. Black Repertory Theater Company, the internationally renowned a cappella ensemble has been a vital and innovative presence in the music culture of Washington, D.C., and in communities of conscience around the world. Sweet Honey In The Rock often touches of the themes of hope, love, justice, peace, and resistance in their songs.

About the performance

When you sit down to listen to CDs, do you plan what you'll listen to in advance? Of course not, you decide as you go, depending on what mood you're in. One day, you might listen to songs about one topic (like love); another time, you might choose songs on another topic written by the same artist. The members of Sweet Honey In The Rock are like you. They can't tell us in advance what they'll feel like singing. It can depend on the mood they're in and the mood that they sense from the audience. Sweet Honey in the Rock's founder Bernice Johnson Reagon describes Sweet Honey's approach to performance as engaging in 'conversations with the audience'.

Another unique feature of Sweet Honey's performance is that each song is sign language interpreted. Since 1985, Sweet Honey has included their interpreter Shirley Childress Saxon's picture on their albums and in their publicity photos. As Sweet Honey became synonymous with sign language interpreted performance, they added Saxon as a full member of the group.

How did Sweet Honey in the Rock get its name?

From Psalm 81:16 comes the promise to a people of being fed by honey out of the rock. Honey - an ancient substance, sweet and nurturing. Rock - an elemental strength, enduring the winds of time. The metaphor of sweet honey in the rock captures completely these African American women whose repertoire is steeped in the sacred music of the Black church, the clarion calls of the civil rights movement, and songs of the struggle for justice everywhere.

What kinds of songs does Sweet Honey sing?

Sweet Honey draws from many musical traditions, including rap, gospel, Civil Rights songs, folk tunes, spirituals, jazz, and other traditions. Each performance features a "caller," someone who decides what the group will sing. Oftentimes, the singers don't know what is coming next until it is announced onstage by the caller during the performance! This keeps each performance fresh and interesting and allows the caller freedom to select music based on the audience's feedback and reactions.

Why is Sweet Honey important to the deaf community?

Sweet Honey is one of a handful of musical ensembles in the world that has a sign language interpreter as a permanent, equal member of its ensemble. Sweet Honey's sign language interpreter is Shirley Childress Saxton, who uses American Sign Language to communicate the moving, thought-provoking lyrics of Sweet Honey to the deaf community.

I have always believed art is the conscience of the human soul and that artists have the responsibility not only to show life as it is but to show life as it should be... For a quarter of a century, Sweet Honey In The Rock has withstood the onslaught... Her songs lead us to the well of truth that nourishes the will and courage to stand strong. She is the keeper of the flame.

- Harry Belafonte



Sweet Honey In The Rock (Photo by Petro Exis)

About the Artists

About Sweet Honey In The Rock

Founded by Bernice Johnson Reagon with Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson, and Mie in 1973 at the D.C. Black Repertory Theater Company, the internationally renowned a cappella ensemble has been a vital and innovative presence in the music culture of Washington, D.C., and in communities of conscience around the world.

Sweet Honey In The Rock has been “a path, a way, a discipline, and a process,” as its founder and mainstay Bernice Johnson Reagon wrote in the book *We Who Believe in Freedom - Sweet Honey In The Rock Still On The Journey* (1993), a chronicle of this extraordinary African-American female vocal group. Indeed, Sweet Honey has been a glorious, evolving process of growth and change throughout its existence.

Rooted in a deeply held commitment to create music out of the rich textures of African American legacy and traditions, Sweet Honey In The Rock possesses a stunning vocal prowess that captures the complex sounds of Blues, spirituals, traditional gospel hymns, rap, reggae, African chants, Hip Hop, ancient lullabies, and jazz improvisation. Sweet Honey’s collective voice, occasionally accompanied by hand percussion instruments, produces a sound filled with soulful harmonies and intricate rhythms.

In the best and in the hardest of times, Sweet Honey In The Rock has come in song to communities across the U.S., and around the world raising her voice in hope, love, justice, peace, and resistance. Sweet Honey invites her audiences to open their minds and hearts and think about who we are and what we do to one another and to our fellow creatures on this planet.

In May 2004, Sweet Honey In The Rock performed at the ninth annual Ford Honors Program, where they received UMS’s Distinguished Artist Award. Sweet Honey not only has a performance history with UMS in Ann Arbor extending back to 1993, but they also performed in Washington DC prior to and in support of U-M’s oral argument on affirmative action at the Supreme Court.

Sweet Honey’s latest release, *Experience... 101* (on the Appleseed label) was a 2008 Grammy® Award nominee.



**Founder and leader
of Sweet Honey
until 2004, Bernice
Johnson Reagan**

Members of Sweet Honey



Aisha Kahlil

Born in Buffalo, New York, Ms. Kahlil's interest in music was evident at an early age. She was a member of local choirs and performed as a vocalist with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. At Northeastern University in Boston, Ms. Kahlil began experimenting with innovative, improvisational vocal techniques. She studied voice and music theory at the New England Conservatory of Music, and performed with Ebony Jua, a local jazz ensemble that toured the east coast. Ms. Kahlil's career has taken her all over the United States as a musical performer, teacher, actor, director, choreographer and dancer. Most recently, Ms. Kahlil has toured with her band performing songs from her CD release *Magical*, featuring her own original compositions and arrangements.



Carol Maillard

Carol Maillard was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Although she originally attended Catholic University of America on scholarship as a Violin Performance major, she soon began writing music and performing and eventually changed her major to Theater. Her love of performing led her to the D.C. Black Repertory Company where Ms. Maillard became a founding member of Sweet Honey. Her powerful rendition of "Motherless Child" arranged for Sweet Honey, is featured in the motion picture, *The Visit* and the Dorothy Height documentary, *We Are Not Vanishing*. In addition to her vocal performance, Ms. Maillard is also an accomplished actress and has performed in film, television and on stage. Ms. Maillard lives in Manhattan and is the mother of Jordan Maillard Ware, currently attending Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.



Louise Robinson

Louise Robinson, a native New Yorker and graduate of Howard University, began professional career began at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage. From the Arena stage, Ms. Robinson moved to the new D.C. Black Repertory Company Acting Ensemble. There she helped form the a cappella group, Sweet Honey In The Rock. In addition to her performances with Sweet Honey, Ms. Robinson's career includes both on and off-Broadway performing, along with film and studio recording. She was the founding director of the Bay Area a cappella quintet, Street Sounds, that toured the country and the world for 14 years. Ms. Robinson returned to Sweet Honey In The Rock in 2004 after a 27 year hiatus.

Nitanju Bolade Casel

Nitanju Bolade Casel (nih-TAHN-joo bo-LAH-day CAH-cell) became a member of Sweet Honey In The Rock in 1985, after four years of studying and performing in Dakar, Senegal. She is the co-founder, with Marie Guinier, of Artistes Des Echanges Africaines, an alliance of local Senegalese artists and the former director of Young Afrique Dance Company in Massachusetts. Ms. Casel now works with her sister, Aisha Kahlil, as co-director of First World Productions, and heads her own publishing company, Clear Ice Music. Ms. Casel was a finalist in both the 2006 and 2007 International Songwriter's Competition, and a Grammy nominee for Sweet Honey's *Experience...101*, which she produced. She lives on the east coast with her husband, Oso Tayari and their teenage son, Obadele.



Shirley Childress Saxon

A native of Washington, D.C., Shirley Childress Saxon is a skilled professional Sign language interpreter who learned American Sign Language (ASL) from her Deaf parents. Ms. Saxon's extensive performing arts interpreting includes signing for an off-Broadway production of *Lost in the Stars* and for such stellar writers as Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, and Audrey Lorde. She was first to recognize the need for more African-American interpreters and as a result she founded the organization BRIDGES to focus attention on Black Deaf consumers and interpreters. Ms. Saxon has been recognized for her interpreting service to the community with awards from Deaf advocacy organizations: the Silent Mission Circle at Shiloh Baptist Church, Deafpride, Inc., Women Unlimited, and National R.I.D. Interpreters of Color. She holds a bachelor's degree in Deaf Education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Ysaye M. Barnwell

Ysaye (ee-zay) M. Barnwell was born in New York City and has lived in Washington, D.C., for over 40 years. In 1976, she founded the Jubilee Singers at All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C. It was, there in 1979, that Bernice Johnson Reagon witnessed her as a singer and a Sign Language interpreter and invited her to audition for Sweet Honey In The Rock. Over the past two decades, Ms. Barnwell has earned a significant reputation as a commissioned composer and arranger, author, master teacher and choral clinician in African American cultural performance.

. She created the Community Sing which she conducts monthly in Washington, D.C., and the workshop Building a Vocal Community® - Singing In the African American Tradition, which she has conducted on three continents, utilizing both an African world view and African American history, values, cultural and vocal traditions to work with and build community among singers and non-singers alike. Ms.

Barnwell is also a Speech Pathologist with a Bachelors , Masters (SUNY, Geneseo 1963-68) and Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh 1975) degrees and was a professor in the Howard University College of Dentistry for over a decade.



The African-American A Cappella Singing Tradition

Many people credit the Fisk Jubilee Singers with bringing African-American music to national prominence. For more about their history, visit:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/singers/>

On February 28, 1927 in Memphis, Tennessee, the blind sanctified singer Mamie Forehand recorded a refrain based on Psalm 81:16. In this passage of scripture, the poet and musician David advised his people that if they would serve the Lord, they would be rewarded by being fed “honey out of the rock. While Forehand titled her song, Honey in the Rock and sang those words, random congregations soon added the adjective “sweet” to the title, and the song has come down through history as “Sweet Honey in the Rock.”

Forty-six years after Forehand introduced the song, a quintet of African-American women, singing as a unit of the vocal workshop of Washington, DC’s Black Repertory Theater company, organized an a cappella group and called themselves Sweet Honey In The Rock. It would not overstate the case to add the overworked – but definitely applicable – phrase “and the rest is history.’

A female a cappella group was a strange sight and sound in 1973. This in itself seemed strange, for female singing groups have been a part of African-American musical history since the first quarter of the 20th century, when African-American male a cappella groups were organized. But the groups remembered and written about have been the piano-accompanied groups such as the Hyers Sisters, The Ward Singers, The Shirelles, and En Vogue. Completely forgotten are the trailblazers, among whom were the powerful Virginia Female Singers, whose 1921 recording of “Lover of the Lord” has recently resurfaced. Little-known facts that have surfaced about this group and others that followed are that they used the voice classification of the male quartets (tenor, bass, etc.) and arranged their own songs. Moreover, the bass for the group could compete, without a handicap, with the bass of any of the male groups, including the famous Blue Jay Singers and the Birmingham Jubilee Singers.

Also forgotten are The Southern Harps, organized in New Orleans in 1935 and whose 1942 group was comprised of a lead, swing lead, alternate lead, tenor, baritone, and bass. Of particular interest is the fact that the lead was Bessie Griffin, who, in the 1950s, would emerge as a gospel superstar, while the tenor was Helen Matthews, featured in the 1970s Broadway musical *Purlie* under the name Linda Hopkins. Their hometown compatriots were the Jackson Singers, organized in 1936, a group that produced a sound not unlike The Southern Harps, with whom they were often paired in concerts.

The Golden Stars of Memphis were another renowned ensemble, organized in 1938, as well as the more famous Songbirds of the South, organized in the same city in 1940. Fortunately, one of its members, Cassietta George, made a significant musical contribution as a member of the Caravans.

Indeed, the African-American a cappella quartet or quintet was created during the last half of the 19th century and became a staple of American minstrelsy. It came into popularity in 1905 when Fisk University, realizing it was too costly to send out their large group of Jubilee Singers, dispatched a quartet to replace them. African-American colleges and universities through out the nation quickly organized similar groups, which inspired a battalion of Jubilee Singers in Birmingham and Bessemer, Alabama, in the second decade of the 20th century. Beginning with the organization of The Foster Singers in 1915, quartets of Jubilee Singers sprang up around the nation. The Fairfield Four were organized in 1921, The Dixie Hummingbirds in 1928, and these groups, in turn, inspired the organization of such

secular music groups as The Mills Brothers in 1922, The Ink Spots in 1934, and the Delta Rhythm Boys in 1935. Sweet Honey In The Rock thus joined one of the most prestigious companies of music makers in the history of the United States.

Sweet Honey In The Rock

Sweet Honey In The Rock is uniquely distinct from all of these groups. Like Forehand and the groups that preceded, Sweet Honey makes melody, harmony, rhythm, and message. And therein lies their unique quality: more than any group on the music scene today, "Sweet Honey" – as the group is affectionately called – carries a message. Absent from the group's songs are the "moon and June" rhymes, the pretty melodies with senseless words, and any sign of the slightest fear of topical subjects.

At a concert of Sweet Honey, even before they open their mouths to sing, one is struck by the elegant, and beautiful attire of the singers. Clad in colorful dresses of the finest African and Eastern fabric, their heads are covered with striking (and intricately wrapped) turbans, or their hair is braided into elaborate designs adorned with ribbons and scarves. The singers grandly – and with a purpose – make their way to a group of chairs assembled in a semi-circle onstage and take their seats. Glancing briefly at each other, they burst into sound, a sound unlike any heard in many years. As often as not, they accompany themselves on rattles, gourds, or sticks. The song is that of sisters sitting around the fireplace singing songs of social commentary, a female choir in rehearsal, a congregation of Wednesday evening Prayer Services singers, or a village that has come together to sing through happiness, trials, or death. Even as the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms soar, one is immediately struck by the message of the songs, for the message is what Sweet Honey is all about.

In writing about Sweet Honey in *Epic Lives – One Hundred Black Women Who Made a Difference* (Visible Ink Press, 1993), Jesse Carney Smith notes "despite their name, which comes from a gospel song, Sweet Honey In The Rock's message is more often political (and social) than religious."

"I think everything is political," [member Bernice Johnson] Reagon stated in *People Magazine*. "We are about being accountable." To be sure, Sweet Honey has become the surrogate conscience of the United States in that her songs will not let us rest while there is still work to be done. Indeed, the topics of the songs range from the controversial Joanne Little case to the instructively ceremonial "Seven Principles," detailing, in English and Swahili, the principles of Kwanzaa. And the message is delivered without hostility or rancor but with the care of a friend and concerned loved one.

As the words of the songs become intense, Sweet Honey accents the meaning through a time-honored African-American practice of standing up and singing. The audiences, more than often, accept this as a sign for them, too, to show their involvement. They, too, stand, clap their hands, and sway to the music. Before long, the concert has turned into an ecstatic community revival. And clearly, Sweet Honey is the leader of the revival. Just as clearly, the group is the Greek chorus of our society, commenting on all matters of importance to the populace.

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They are more than just community singers. These women, unlike the jubilee quartets of the 1920s, are not simply singers who, for lack of preparation or want of something else to do, or to make a living and contribution at the same time, fell into a singing group. They are educated (the group contains two members with earned Ph.D. degrees) and professional women who have accepted the charge of reminding us that we are all God's children. They have taken their songs and message not only throughout the United States and Africa but throughout Mexico, Germany, Australia, Japan, England, and Russia, among many nations.

Article by Horace Clarence Boyer. Excerpted from *Continuum: The First Songbook of Sweet Honey in the Rock*, compiled and edited by Ysaye M. Barnwell with Sweet Honey In The Rock (Contemporary A Cappella Publishing, 1999).



Sweet Honey In The Rock (Photo by Sharon Farmer)

About the Performance

About the Performance

When you sit down to listen to CDs, do you plan what you'll listen to in advance? Of course not, you decide as you go, depending on what mood you're in. One day, you might listen to songs about one topic (like love); another time, you might choose songs on another topic written by the same artist. The members of Sweet Honey In The Rock are like you. They can't tell us in advance what they'll feel like singing. It can depend on the mood they're in and the mood that they sense from the audience.

Sweet Honey In The Rock's founder Bernice Johnson Reagon describes Sweet Honey's approach to performance as engaging in 'conversations with the audience'. She states:

We come out and take a seat, since we are going to talk together. We many times walk into a conversation. Our audiences are so intense, everyone checking each other out, that sometimes we walk in and have to say "excuse me" to the air charged with nonverbal attitudinal exchange. We come out and try to answer why we have all come together in this place, using the songs and singing of the African American legacy as language.

When we come out and sit down on chairs, the opening song is usually gentle. In a conversation, it's better to say hello, no need to show off and try to find a showstopper in the first response...As the programmer, I would be on the stage and would sit down and call a song or start a song and the conversation would continue. At a Sweet Honey concert, the programmer is the person steering the discussions. Here the concert becomes a composition of the programmer. The singers turn themselves over to the programmer's composition and try to fulfill her efforts to communicate. We can shake off a song if we can't sign it, and the programmer is responsible for selecting another song, finding a way through songs to keep the conversation going.

Another unique feature of Sweet Honey's performance is that each song is sign language interpreted. Since 1985, Sweet Honey has included their interpreter Shirley Childress Saxon's picture on their albums and in their publicity photos. As Sweet Honey became synonymous with sign language interpreted performance, they added Saxon as a full member of the group. Saxon describes her role in an excerpt from *Continuum: The First Songbook of Sweet Honey In The Rock*:

The goal and responsibility of a Sign Language Interpreter is to facilitate communication between Deaf and Hearing people. This is most effectively achieved by using the language of the Deaf, which is American Sign Language (ASL).

For many deaf people, music and singing are foreign media, and its relevance in their lives is debatable. Music is often perceived as another sound-based communication barrier, an instrument of discrimination and oppression of Hearing upon Deaf. So why would Deaf people be interested in a Sweet Honey In The Rock singing experience? Perhaps for some of the same reasons as Hearing people – to exult, celebrate, and praise God, life and living, creativity and culture; to sing the blues or discuss politics; or maybe to share a good time with family members and friends. Each Deaf (and Hearing) person "hears" Sweet Honey differently. While the vocal harmonies may not register, a poignant message can leave a memorable impression.

The challenge of interpreting the songs of Sweet Honey In The Rock is to accurately convey the message of the songs, reflect the mood and emotional intent of the singers, and render visually the melody, harmony, and rhythm of the music....Sweet Honey In The Rock had...made a commitment to making concerts accessible to the Deaf and to developing a Deaf audience. From the beginning, the group included the Sign Language Interpreter in her costuming and in the semi-circle in which she sits or stands to perform. This inclusion has been a clear statement to the Deaf audience that they are included in the conversation.

Each song is an expression of the self. Each has a story line and personality. For example, in "Breaths," the tempo is slow, the attitude is spiritual, encouraging an open heart and mind. The first word is "Listen;" the first sign represents the concept of gaining one's attention. Interpretation may include information useful as a frame of reference. I indicate which singer is leading the song. Because all members of Sweet Honey in the Rock lead songs, the Deaf audience may not otherwise recognize who the leader is for a particular song. The signed interpretation of the song may also include relevant cultural and historical information, and broader identification and definition of concepts and vocabulary. In my use of American Sign Language, the interpretation of a song is not an exact word-to-sign translation, but a full and vibrant visual depiction of the message.

Sweet Honey's repertoire includes songs in languages other than English. "Denko," for example, is in the Bambara language of Mali, West Africa. I am not yet proficient in any of the African Sign Languages, so my interpretation focuses on an explanation of the song's origin and meaning with a spelling of some of the lyrics using American Sign Language. Some songs, like "Fulani Chant," have no words at all. Here, the interpreter is challenged to visually represent the sounds being made – a moan, a hum, a breath, a brisk wind, an ocean wave, a complex rhythm or a singer's a cappella characterization of a musical instrument. I imagine an abstract painting using color and shape to create a picture. Thus a movement or gesture with grace or force, a fluctuation of the hand, arm, or shoulder with patterns big and small may be used in combination with verbal descriptions to help visualize the sound. Each Sign Language Interpreter will have her or his own unique interpretive style. My style tends to be fluid, loosely scripted, not static. Vocabulary and movements may change from performance to performance as the lead singer may not sing a song the same way each time it is performed. As thoughts or concepts may be expressed using various word and musical choices, so, too, can American Sign Language use a selection of signs and/or phrases representing the same idea.

Determining that a signed interpretation of a song is "good" can be subjective as well as objective. One can assess the interpreter's comfort level, pacing, visual clarity, vibrancy of vocabulary, and visually poetic presentation. Effectiveness also can be measured by the Deaf audiences' ease in understanding the message of the song. As Sweet Honey In The Rock opens her mouth to sing, the Sign Language Interpreter moves her hands to sign. As the lyrics exclaim their message and as the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms are vocalized, they are paralleled by the poetry and power of the visual language of American Sign.

LISTEN!

The songs Shirley Childress Saxon talks about in her essay are on the Sweet Honey in the Rock music sampler included with this guide.

See page 24 for more details.

Musical Influences

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Sweet Honey in the Rock credits Blues, spirituals, traditional gospel hymns, rap, reggae, African chants, hip-hop, ancient lullabies, and jazz improvisation for their unique sound. This section will explore some of the important musical traditions that influence their work.

African American Spirituals

Although African American sacred music is deeply rooted in Christianity, its influence crosses religious, ethnic, and racial boundaries. While it is not possible to explore the beauty of spirituals, congregational singing and gospel without discussing their roots in religion, we hope students and teachers from all backgrounds will approach the topic as an opportunity to learn about the history and culture of this important musical traditions.

If you did not grow up listening to this music, you may be surprised to learn how it has influenced the music you hear every day. Without knowing it, your life has certainly been touched by this historic musical story that began in Africa and evolved in the United States as a reflection of the experiences of enslaved people, capturing their spirit and dreams.

African American spirituals are songs born in the souls of enslaved men and women as they toiled long and hard in the fields, sawmills, seaports, and “big houses” of the South; as they endured lashes across their backs; and as they gathered together in the still of the night for prayer, worship, and peace. They are songs that have, at various times, been called “slave songs,” “jubilees,” and “sorrow songs,” but they are, fundamentally, religious folk songs. They are songs that cry out about the slaves’ daily encounters with brutal oppression and their struggles to be free.

Spirituals are songs of survival on many levels. First, the music’s complex rhythm, call-and-response, and improvisation, are illustrative of the African presence within the slave community. Second, these songs played an important role in the emotional and physical survival of their singers and were key to the miracle of community building .

Some of the songs represented a way of “talking back” to slave owners and taskmasters without fear of retribution, while others were used to impart life-changing, life-saving information such as the time for rebellions and for escapes through the Underground Railroad. Spirituals were songs of resilience in that they testified to the survival instinct of the enslaved—not survival as downtrodden or dehumanized creatures, but as human beings, as “God’s children.” These songs not only recounted the sorrows of being Black in America but also voiced a firm belief that Black people were not inferior to other people. Spirituals also attested to the enslaved’s abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of “Good” ...they were songs of anticipated liberation.

Spirituals are songs of survival because they continued to live and be performed—originally through aural transmission, generation to generation, and later by the printed page. The efficacy of oral transmission notwithstanding, some of today’s spirituals might well have drifted into relative obscurity were it not for the phenomenon of the concert spiritual. The adaptation of spirituals for the concert stage was an important part of the history: the songs were learned as they were performed. They are passed from older singers to the younger and newer members of the congregation.

The African American Congregational Singing Tradition

Picture yourself in a room with others; all are seated. Some people are still entering the room when someone begins a song. Before the first line is completed, others join in. This is the way congregational singing is created: there are no rehearsals to learn the songs. The repertoire is learned as it is performed in worship services. There is no audition to pass; you become a member of the singing group when you enter the room and when, as you hear the song being “raised,” you find yourself singing along, helping to build a song.

The term “raised” means that when the song is started by a songleader, it is not yet fully developed—it requires additional voices to come in and help raise the song to its fullest expression. All members in the group are members of the congregation. In congregational singing, the songs can be different genres: spirituals and hymns are the most widely used in sacred services. Sometimes, you know the song because you have heard and sung it many times. Sometimes the song is new, but the tune is one that you have sung with other lyrics. Sometimes you do not know the specific tune or lyrics, but you know the form or the shape of the song, and as it is repeated you catch on.

If the songleader begins: I see the sign

The group answers: Yea.

Songleader calls again: I see the sign

The group responds: Yea.

Songleader: See the sign of the judgement

Congregation or Group: Yea Lord, time is drawing nigh.

After a few rounds, even if you have never heard the song before, you can pick up the response, or answer, that is sung by the congregation. This musical form is called “call and response.” It was brought over from Africa by slaves and is found in many styles of African-American music.

The African-American congregational style is an unrehearsed tradition. This 19th-century congregational singing and worship practice is an example of aural transmission within a literate society. It also reveals the crucial role that traditional culture plays in stabilizing a community as it moves upward within the larger society. During the first half of the 20th century, most traditional congregations reluctantly made room for gospel music in the form of organized choirs (accompanied by piano, and sometimes by organ) as part of the worship experience. The gospel choir’s formalized rehearsals, new song arrangements, and performances separating the choir from the rest of the congregation sometimes created tensions with the unrehearsed and unaccompanied congregational style. Within some congregations, both styles now co-exist, which attests to the survival of and need for congregational song in African American communities.

The African American Gospel Music Tradition

African American gospel music is a phenomena in sacred music that has evolved over the past 100 years. It is an urban music born out of a people who moved from the rural South to cities across the nation at the turn of the century.

Into these new urban communities, African Americans brought dreams of change. They also brought as much of the past as they could carry—traditions that provided solid ground for uprooted families in strange, often hostile, new environments. Gospel music supported and cushioned these new communities, and many of the churches that embraced the new gospel songs became centers for migrant families. Gospel music, distinguished by a highly-charged emotional sound, emerged as a new repertoire and song style in the 20th century. Horace Clarence Boyer, an expert on gospel music, points to the driving cultural force in the Pentecostal congregations— especially to the rapidly expanding Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C.)—as the root of gospel music. Shout songs like “I’m a Soldier in the Army of the Lord” and the reformulation of the spiritual “Soul is a Witness for My Lord” into the overpowering shout “Witness” became staples in Pentecostal congregational song services. These songs and this new style of singing with instrumental accompaniment were a departure from traditional Methodist and Baptist congregational styles. With tambourines, washtub bass and, later, piano and other instruments as percussive forces in the musical compositions, 20th century gospel music found its musical nurturing ground.

Gospel is both a repertoire of songs and a style of singing. Gospel music can be based on a known hymn or spiritual, or it can be composed as a new song and performed in a variety of gospel styles. Although gospel composers committed the music to the printed page, the tradition has been passed on, nurtured and expanded through the aural process.

The early gospel music composers understood the plight of the average African-American well enough to create a style of music that would enable worshippers to maintain their cultural roots and give voice to their new urban experiences. These pioneering composers—most notably, Charles Albert Tindley, Mattie Moss Clark, Lucie Eddie Campbell, Thomas Andrew Dorsey, William Herbert Brewster, Roberta Martin, and Kenneth Morris—created not only the new sacred songs of the 20th century urban community but also a model for presenting music outside of worship services, gatherings where the sole purpose was the enjoyment of thenewest performance tradition coming out of the Black church. Gospel music composers also led the way in developing a written music literature that would become an instrument of the oral transmission process. The sheet music, however, did not fully capture the composition: that was left to the singers and to each performance. The composers provided the text and a skeleton of accompanying melody and chord progressions upon which the choir directors could draw to teach local choirs or groups new songs. Thus, live concerts by performers trained by the composers served as the most important conveyor of the new music to its enthusiastic and growing constituency. These concerts were eventually surpassed by 20th century technologies such as radio and records, which carried this new performance style to the many local and regional worship communities who embraced it.

Conclusion

Gospel still thrives in the fabric of the contemporary African American community, as the dominant music form in sacred services or programs. It is easy to hear more than one style of gospel, as the music continues to evolve. There are still groups singing spirituals, lined hymns, congregational pieces and other musical traditions. While the music of professional artists also comes into a community through concert performances, radio, television and recordings, it is only one aspect of the gospel experience.

Gospel music remains a way of developing and asserting a sense of individual and group identity, of finding one's individual and collective voice in one's own time, and speaking through one's heart and soul for all to hear.

Student busily working during a UMS in-school visit.



Lesson Plans

Curriculum Connections

Introduction

The following lessons and activities offer suggestions intended to be used in preparation for the UMS Youth Performance. These lessons are meant to be both fun and educational, and should be used to create anticipation for the performance. Use them as a guide to further exploration of the art form. Teachers may pick and choose from the cross-disciplinary activities and can coordinate with other subject area teachers. You may wish to use several activities, a single plan, or pursue a single activity in greater depth, depending on your subject area, the skill level or maturity of your students and the intended learner outcomes.

Learner Outcomes

- Each student will develop a feeling of self-worth, pride in work, respect, appreciation and understanding of other people and cultures, and a desire for learning now and in the future in a multicultural, gender-fair, and ability-sensitive environment.
- Each student will develop appropriately to that individual's potential, skill in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening, problem solving, and examining and utilizing information using multicultural, gender-fair and ability-sensitive materials.
- Each student will become literate through the acquisition and use of knowledge appropriate to that individual's potential, through a comprehensive, coordinated curriculum, including computer literacy in a multicultural, gender-fair, and ability-sensitive environment.

**Are you interested
in more lesson
plans?**

**Visit the Kennedy
Center's ArtsEdge
web site, the
nation's most
comprehensive
source of arts-
based lesson
plans.**

**[www.artsedge.
kennedy-center.
org](http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org)**

Meeting Michigan Standards

UMS can help you meet Michigan's Curricular Standards!

The activities in this study guide, combined with the live performance, are aligned with Michigan Standards and Benchmarks.

For a complete list of Standards and Benchmarks, visit the Michigan Department of Education online:

www.michigan.gov/mde

ARTS EDUCATION

Standard 1: Performing All students will apply skills and knowledge to perform in the arts.

Standard 2: Creating All students will apply skills and knowledge to create in the arts.

Standard 3: Analyzing in Context All students will analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.

Standard 4: Arts in Context All students will understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.

Standard 5: Connecting to other Arts, other Disciplines, and Life All students will recognize, analyze and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Standard 3: Meaning and Communication All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.

Standard 5: Literature All students will read and analyze a wide variety of classic and cotemporary literature and other texts to seek information, ideas, enjoyment, and understanding of their individuality, our common heritage, and common humanity.

Standard 6: Voice All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Standard I-3: Historical Perspective All students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.

MATH

Standard I-1: Patterns Students recognize similarities and generalize patterns, use patterns to create models and make predictions, describe the nature of patterns and relationships and construct representations of mathematical relationships.

CAREER & EMPLOYABILITY

Standard 7: Teamwork All students will work cooperatively with people of diverse backgrounds and abilities, identify with the group's goals and values, learn to exercise leadership, teach others new skills, serve clients or customers and contribute to a group process with ideas, suggestions and efforts.

Using the Resource CD

The CD accompanying this guide is a variety of songs recorded by Sweet Honey In The Rock over the last 30 years. This CD is for education purposes only. Please do not distribute or reproduce.

Track 1

“Breaths” on *Breaths* (1988).

Track 2

“Fulani Chant” on *Raise Your Voice* (2005). This song does not have lyrics, instead it showcases group’s ability to use their voices as musical instruments.

Track 3

“Intro to Denko” on *Raise Your Voice* (2005). A member of the group gives an introduction to the song, “Denko” (Track 4).

Track 4

“Denko” on *Live at Carnegie Hall* (1988).

Track 5

“Calypso Freedom” on *All For Freedom* (1989). This track is to be used with Lesson Plan #5.

Track 6

“Give The People The Right To Vote!” on *The Women Gather* (2003). This song was written for the DC Vote Campaign, a movement to give Washington, DC voting representation in Congress.

Track 7

“Wade In the Water” on *Live at Carnegie Hall* (1988). This song is an example of a classic African American spiritual. It was first published in *New Jubilee Songs as Sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers* (1901).

Tracks 8

“Redemption Song” on *...Twenty Five...* (1998). This song is an example of reggae’s influence on Sweet Honey’s sound. The original version of “Redemption Song” is the last track on Bob Marley and the Wailer’s ninth album, *Uprising*.

Tracks 9

“In the Morning When I Rise” on *Raise Your Voice* (2005). This track is to be used with Lesson Plan #2. This song is an example of call-and-response in Sweet Honey’s music.

Visit UMS Online

www.ums.org

Listening Activity

Grade Levels:
K-12

Objective

By listening to a recording of Sweet Honey In The Rock before seeing them live on stage, the students can familiarize themselves with the music and be better able to appreciate the performance they will see. This activity is also the ideal time to discuss how to behave at performances, how to listen to music and about the specific genres of music Sweet Honey in the Rock sings.

Curriculum Connections

ARTS STANDARD	CONTENT STANDARD
Arts Education 3: Analyzing in Context	Career & Employability 7: Teamwork

Materials

Resource CD
CD player
The educational materials included in this guide
Pencils and papers for the students

Activity

1) Ask the students what kind of music they like to listen to. Do any of them play instruments? Do any of them sing in a choir or as a soloist? Does the culture or background they come from influence the styles of music they like? Explain that much of the music sung by Sweet Honey in the Rock has roots in the African-American tradition.

2) Use Part II of this resource guide to teach the students about the history of African-American sacred music: spirituals, congregational singing, and the gospel music tradition.

3) After learning about the music, play the CD for the students. As they listen to the songs, ask them questions such as the ones below:

- What do you hear?
- Is the music fast or slow?
- Does it make you happy? Sad? Feel like dancing?
- Do you hear soloists? Or does it sound like one voice?
- Listen to the words. What are they singing about?

Have students discuss these questions in small groups, if appropriate.

4) When the songs are over, review the questions with the students and discuss their answers. What did they like? What didn't they like? Were they able to distinguish between different voices and groups of voices? Could they understand the words? Does listening to the CD make them more excited about seeing the performance?

LESSON ONE

Call-and-Response

Grade Levels:
5-12

Objective

This activity allows students to become familiar with a style of song employed by Sweet Honey In The Rock. They will also compose their own melodies and experiment with group singing techniques such as call-and-response.

Curriculum Connections

ARTS STANDARD	CONTENT STANDARD
Arts Education 1: Performing	Career & Employability 7: Teamwork
Arts Education 2: Creating	English Language 5: Literature
Arts Education 4: Arts in Context	English Language 6: Voice

Materials

Handout: Texts for Call-and-Response

Resource CD

CD player

Activity

- 1) Distribute copies of the handout to each of the students.
- 2) Introduce the concept of call and response in music. Call and response is two distinct phrases usually played by different musicians, where the second phrase is heard as a direct commentary on or response to the first. Use the information in this guide to teach them about African American sacred music and gospel traditions (p. 18), if you have not already done so.
- 3) Play Track 9 on the Resource CD, *In the Morning When I Rise*. It is an example of how Sweet Honey uses the call-and-response technique in their arrangements.
- 4) Divide the class into groups of four or five people. Select one of the texts on the handout for the entire class to work on. Then assign one line of the text to each group.
- 5) Give the class a beat they can clap and a starting pitch. Have each group create a melody to their line of the song using the given beat and pitch. Allow them time to practice singing and clapping their line together until they all know it well.
- 6) Explain that you will sing the song in call-and-response style. Have everyone clap or tap the beat together and direct Group 1 to sing the first line as a group. Then direct the entire class to echo what the group sang. Continue this way until all groups have had a chance to be the leader and the song is over. Feel free to do as many songs as is appropriate.

LESSON TWO

Call-And-Response Handout

I Have a Dream

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama . . . will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm>

Ain't I A Woman?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me!

And ain't I a woman?

- Sojourner Truth

<http://eserver.org/race/aint-i-a-woman.txt>

Call-And-Response Handout

Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward

Say to them,
say to the down-keepers,
the sun-slappers,
the self-soilers,
the harmony-hushers,
"even if you are not ready for day
it cannot always be night."
You will be right.

For that is the hard home-run.
Live not for battles won.
Live not for the-end-of-the-song.
Live in the along.

-Gwendolyn Brooks
<http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/brooks/poems-GB.html#gb0>

Listen Children

listen children
keep this in the place
you have for keeping
always
keep it all ways

we have never hated black

listen
we have been ashamed
hopeless tired mad
but always
all ways
we loved us

we have always loved each other
children all ways
pass it on

-Lucille Clifton
<http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/clifton/poems-LC.html#listen%20children>

Melody, Harmony and Rhythm

Grade Levels:
K-12

LESSON THREE

Objective

Students will understand three important elements in music (melody, harmony, and rhythm) and how singing in “parts” fulfill these roles.

Curriculum Connections

ARTS STANDARD	CONTENT STANDARD
Arts Education 3: Analyzing in Context	Math I-1: Patterns

Materials

Your voice or a musical instrument

Opening Discussion

At different times, instruments and voices do one of three jobs: being the melody, providing the harmony, or setting the rhythm. The melody is the tune. The harmony is the notes above and/or below the tune that make the tune sound richer. The rhythm is the beat.

Activity

1. Ask the class to choose a common childhood song. We recommend simple tunes like “Mary Had a Little Lamb” or “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”
2. First, ask the class to sing the song (or the first verse) as a group. Remind them that this “main tune” is the melody; it’s the part of the song everyone knows best.
3. Now, ask students to hold their hands over their heart and to hear their heartbeat. It has a regular pattern or rhythm. Ask students to tap their desk at the same time they hear a heartbeat.
4. Next, ask them to sing the song again, while they tap the rhythm on their desks. Melody and rhythm are working together.
5. Ask them to sing and tap again. This time, join the singing by adding a harmony line that you sing or play.
6. Now take turns altering one of the elements. What happens if the melody changes? If the rhythm accelerates or slows down? If the harmony complements the melody? If it clashes?

Discussion/Follow-up

When students listen to Sweet Honey In The Rock sing at the Youth Performance, can they hear the different parts represented? Can they hear the melody, rhythm, and harmony?

Appreciating the Performance

Grade Levels:
K-12

Objective

Students will gain increased appreciation for and understanding of Sweet Honey in the Rock by observing the performance closely.

Curriculum Connections

ARTS STANDARD	CONTENT STANDARD
Arts Education 3: Arts in Context	Language Arts 3: Meaning and Communication
	Social Studies II-1: People, Places, and Cultures

Materials

None

Opening Discussion

Going to a live performance is different from listening to a CD. The audience gains visual cues and clues that can enhance the music (or even detract from it). The following questions can help you feel more “tuned into” what is happening onstage.

Activity

Encourage students to look for the following at the Youth Performance.

1. Who appears to be leading the vocalists? What is this person’s role called?
2. Does the caller lead the melody, harmony, or rhythm? Does the same person lead each piece?
3. How does the caller use his/her body to show the singers what he/she wants to hear?
4. Do the singers look at and listen to each other? How can you tell?
5. How are Sweet Honey dressed? Evening gowns? T-shirt and jeans? Suits? How does their clothing affect how you respond to them as people? As musicians?
6. Do the singers use their bodies or faces to express how they’re feeling?
7. Do any of them sing more than one part? Who? How are the sounds of those parts similar? Different?
8. Which singers seem to be the most important? The least? How did you determine how important they are? Do the leading and/or melody vocalists stay the same with each song or change?
9. Songs can convey different moods, emotions, stories, or feelings. Do most of the performed songs communicate similar feelings?

Discussion/Follow-up

Are you able to answer any of the above questions now that you’ve seen the performance? What was your favorite part of the show? Is there anything you didn’t like about the show? Were all of the songs sung in English? If not, how did that effect your experience? Could you still understand what the singers were trying to convey?

LESSON FOUR

Historical Perspectives Through Music

Grade Levels:
6-12

LESSON FIVE

Objective

Students will gain an understanding of the civil rights struggle through the music of Sweet Honey In The Rock.

Curriculum Connections

ARTS STANDARD	CONTENT STANDARD
Arts Education 3: Arts in Context	Language Arts 3: Meaning and Communication
	Social Studies I-3: Analyzing and Interpreting the Past

Materials

Resource CD and CD player

Opening Discussion

Sweet Honey In The Rock often sing about the topics of peace and social justice. The struggle of Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights for women and African Americans, and specific historical events of injustice are frequent topics of their songs.

Activity

1. Read an account of the Freedom Riders and their struggles to desegregate interstate bus systems at http://afroamhistory.about.com/od/freedomrides/a/freedomrides_2.htm. Also, read a primary source document from a Freedom Rider's father at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/sources/ps_riders.html.

2. Listen to Sweet Honey in the Rock's interpretation of the Freedom Riders story through song in *Calypto Freedom* (Track 5 on the Resource CD).

3. Discuss the song and the historical events of the Freedom Riders with students.

What were the Freedom Riders protesting against?

Why do you think they picked that exact moment in history to relaunch the Journey of Reconciliation? What else was happening in America?

Many significant events took place between May 4 and May 24, 1961. Why do you think Sweet Honey chose the events for their song? What events would you have included in the song?

Why was John Dolan's father so angry at his son for joining the Freedom Riders? After the success of the Ride, do you think he felt differently?

Why do you think Sweet Honey chose to sing about an issue a historical event, rather than contemporary life?

4. Ask students to pick another moment in the Civil Rights movement and write song lyrics expressing its major themes. More milestones can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/milestones/index.html>.

Discussion/Follow-up

Even under great oppression, the Freedom Riders had hope. In the song, Sweet Honey specifically focuses on the new found freedom that will come with desegregation and the realization of their dream. Ask students, what does freedom mean to you?

The Vocabulary of Music

a capella

This musical term comes from Italian meaning, "in the style of the chapel." Developed during the Renaissance, this term was used to describe choral music that was pure and unaccompanied by musical instruments. There were no independent instrumental parts, thus the voices sang alone.

AABA form

A song pattern. Each letter represents a musical pattern. In AABA, the first pattern is played twice, then the second pattern once, then the first pattern again. This is a common song pattern in jazz.

American Sign Language (ASL)

A language developed for those who are hearing impaired or deaf, it uses hand signals and motions as a language to communicate letters, numbers, and ideas. Shirley Childress Saxton bases her signing on ASL, but it is not the only sign language available.

Arrangement

The orchestration of a musical work; i.e., choosing which instruments play at what time (or which singers sing when) and where improvisation can happen.

Blues

A non-religious folk music that rose among African-Americans during the late 19th century and features several African influences: a call-and-response pattern, blue notes (see below), and imitation of the human voice by musical instruments. Classic blues have a twelve-measure, three-line form, with the second line repeating the first.

Blues note

Any note that is bent or smeared, generally a half step away from the obvious note.

Blues scale

A musical scale based on the pentatonic (five-note) scale.

Call-and-Response

A musical "conversation" when players answer one another; exchanges between instrumentalists.

Chord

A combination of usually three or more notes sounded/played simultaneously or one after another.

Harmony

The relation of the notes in a musical piece, or the playing of two or more notes at the same time. The patterns formed by the notes create the key that the piece is in and, with rhythm, give it expressiveness and momentum.

The Vocabulary of Music

Improvisation

Music played without written notation; an “instant composition” that is central to jazz.

Key

The principal scale of a piece, in which many or most of its notes are played.

Melody

A succession of notes that together form a complete musical statement; a tune.

Meter

The basic succession of beats in a musical piece, the framework against which the rhythm is played.

Phrases

A section of a melodic line. In writing, if a melodic line is a paragraph, then a phrase is a sentence.

Pitch

A note or musical tone.

“Raising”

The word used to describe how a congregational-style song is sung.

Soloist

A singer or instrumentalist performing a song or part of a song alone.

Sound check

A rehearsal before a performance when the singers practice with microphones while the sound engineer adjusts the volume and balance of the sound in the auditorium. A sound check lets musicians practice and hear what their voices sound like in that particular theater.

Spirituals

Religious songs composed by American slaves. Often, their words had double meanings: both a religious meaning and a hidden message about escaping from slavery.

Syncopation

The shifting of a regular musical beat to place emphasis on a normally unaccented beat. (For example, we normally say HAP-py BIRTH-day, but a syncopated way of saying it would be hap-PY birth-DAY.)

Texture

The instrumentation of a musical passage or the sound and qualities of an instrument or voice.



Sweet Honey In The Rock (Photo by Petro Exis)

RESOURCES

UMS FIELD TRIP PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We will be taking a field trip to see a **University Musical Society (UMS) Youth Performance of Sweet Honey In The Rock** on **Thursday, February 12** from **11am-12:00pm** at **Hill Auditorium**.

We will travel by car by school bus by private bus by foot
Leaving school at approximately _____am and returning at approximately _____ pm.

The UMS Youth Performance Series brings the world's finest performers in music, dance, theater, opera, and world cultures to Ann Arbor.

We need do not need
additional chaperones for this event. (See below to sign up as a chaperone.)

Please send do not send
lunch along with your child on this day.

If your child requires medication to be taken while we are on the trip, please contact us to make arrangements.

If you would like more information about this Youth Performance, please visit the UMS website at www.ums.org/education. Copies of the Teacher Resource Guide for this performance are available for you to download.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at _____
or send email to _____.
Please return this form to the teacher no later than _____

Sincerely,

My son/daughter, _____, has permission to attend the UMS Youth Performance on Thursday, February 12, 2009. I understand that transportation will be by _____.

I am interested in chaperoning if needed. YES NO

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Relationship to student _____

Daytime phone number _____

Emergency contact person _____

Emergency contact phone number _____



Internet Resources

Arts Resources

www.ums.org

The official website of UMS. Visit the Education section (www.ums.org/education) for study guides, information about community and family events, and more information about the UMS Youth Education Program.

www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org

The nation's most comprehensive web site for arts education, including lesson plans, arts education news, grant information, etc.

Sweet Honey In The Rock

<http://www.sweethoney.com/>

American Sign Language

<http://www.aslpro.com/>

Created to be a free resource for the classroom teacher. This resource contains video of a ASL vocabulary.

Civil Rights

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/tguide/middle.html>

Eyes on the Prize is an award-winning television series that uses contemporary interviews and historical footage to cover all of the major events of the civil rights movement from 1954-1985.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/civil_rights/

The struggle for Civil Rights is not a thing of the past. The White House maintains a rigorous agenda of Civil Rights goals it would like to achieve.

Spirituals and Gospel Music

<http://www.sbgmusic.com/html/teacher/reference/styles/spirituals.html>

A guide to the different genres of African American spirituals and gospel music.

Although UMS previewed each web site, we recommend that teachers check all web sites before introducing them to students, as content may have changed since this guide was published.

Visit UMS Online

www.ums.org

Selected Discography

For a complete discography, visit:

<http://www.sweet-honey.com/discography.php>

GENERAL RELEASES

Sweet Honey in the Rock (Flying Fish, 1976)

The Other Side (Flying Fish, 1985)

Breaths (Flying Fish, 1988)

Feel Something Drawing Me On (Flying Fish, 1985)

Live at Carnegie Hall (Flying Fish, 1988)

In This Land (Earthbeat!, 1992)

Still On The Journey (Earthbeat!, 1993)

Sacred Ground (Earthbeat!, 1996)

Selections 1976-1988 (Rounder two-disc set, 1997)

Twenty-Five... (Rykodisc, 1998)

Freedom Song (soundtrack from TNT movie) (Sony, 2000)

The Women Gather (Earthbeat!, 2003)

Go in Grace (She-Rocks 5, Inc., 2008)

ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

All For Freedom (Music for Little People, 1989)

I Got Shoes (Music for Little People, 1994)

Still The Same Me (Rounder Kids, 2000)
Grammy nominated.

Raise Your Voice (Music for Little People, 2005)

Experience... 101 (Appleseed, 2007)
Grammy nominated.

Recommended Reading

RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

This page lists several recommended books to help reinforce music education through literature.

PRIMARY & ELEMENTARY GRADES

Barnwell, Ysaye M. *No Mirrors in My Nana's House*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Children's Books, 1998.

Bausum, Ann. *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Children's Books, 2005.

Bryan, Ashley. *All Night, All Day: A Child's First Book of African-American Spirituals*. New York: Aladdin, 2003.

Bryan, Ashley. *Let it Shine: Three Favorite Spirituals*. New York: Atheneum, 2007.

Levine, Ellen. *Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories*. New York: Putnam Juvenile, 2000.

Stanley, Leatha. *Be a Friend: The Story of African American Music in Song, Words, and Pictures*. Madison, WI: Zino Press Children's Books, 1995.

UPPER MIDDLE & SECONDARY GRADES

Barnwell, Ysaye with Sweet Honey in the Rock, eds. *Continuum: The First Songbook of Sweet Honey In The Rock*. San Fransisco: Contemporary A Cappella Publishing, 2000.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson. *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me: The African American Sacred Song Tradition*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson. *We'll Understand It Better By and By: Pioneering African American Gospel Composers*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson and Sweet Honey in the Rock. *We Who Believe in Freedom: Sweet Honey In The Rock ... Still on the Journey*. New York: Anchor, 1993.

There are
many more
books available
about music!

Just visit
www.amazon.com

Community and National Resources

These groups and organizations can help you to learn more about musical performance styles and African American culture

University Musical Society

University of Michigan
Burton Memorial Tower
881 N. University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1011
(734) 615-0122
umsyouth@umich.edu
www.ums.org

University of Michigan Center for Afro-American and African Studies

4700 Haven
505 S State St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734) 764-5513
caasinfo@umich.edu
www.umich.edu/~iinet/caas/

African Heritage Cultural Center

21511 McNichols (at Grand River)
Detroit, MI 48219
(313) 494-7452
www.africanheritageculturalcenter.org/

Black Folk Arts, Inc.

4266 Fullerton
Detroit, MI 48238
(313) 834-9115
contact: Kahemba Kitwana

Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Book Store

13535 Livernois
Detroit, MI 48238
(313) 491-0777
www.shrinebookstore.com/detroit.ihtml

Detroit Institute of Arts

5200 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI
(313) 833-7900
www.dia.org/

Evening Performance Info

Sweet Honey In The Rock

Thursday, February 12, 8pm
Hill Auditorium

Honey — an ancient substance, sweet and nurturing. Rock — an elemental strength, enduring the winds of time. The metaphor of “sweet honey in the rock” captures completely these African American women whose repertoire is steeped in the sacred music of the Black church, the clarion calls of the Civil Rights movement, and songs of the struggle for justice everywhere. Rooted in a deeply held commitment to create music out of the rich textures of African American legacy and traditions, Sweet Honey In The Rock possesses a stunning vocal prowess that captures the complex sounds of Blues, spirituals, traditional gospel hymns, rap, reggae, African chants, hip-hop, ancient lullabies, and jazz improvisation. Founded by Bernice Johnson Reagon in 1973 at the DC Black Repertory Theater Company, Sweet Honey’s collective voice, occasionally accompanied by hand percussion instruments, produces a sound filled with soulful harmonies and intricate rhythms. In the best and in the hardest of times, Sweet Honey In The Rock has come in song to communities across the US and around the world, raising their voices in hope, love, justice, peace, and resistance. Sign language interpreted.

Approximately one hour, no intermission.

TEEN Rush Ticket

The UMS Teen Ticket is a special opportunity for high school students to purchase one discounted ticket to UMS performances. Tickets are subject to availability. There are two ways to purchase the Teen Ticket:

\$10 Teen Ticket

Students may purchase a Teen Ticket for \$10 the day of the performance for weekday performances or the Friday before for weekend performances at the Michigan League Ticket Office. The Michigan League Ticket Office is located at 911 North University Avenue and is open from 9 am - 5 pm weekdays.

\$15 Teen Ticket at the Door

Students may purchase a \$15 Rush Ticket, if available, 90 minutes prior to a performance at the performance venue.

To purchase UMS
tickets:

Online
www.ums.org/tickets

By Phone
(734) 764-2538



Send Us Your Feedback!

UMS wants to know what teachers and students think about this Youth Performance.
We hope you'll send us your thoughts, drawings, letters, or reviews.

UMS Youth Education Program
Burton Memorial Tower • 881 N. University Ave. • Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1011
(734) 615-0122 phone • (734) 998-7526 fax • umsyouth@umich.edu
www.ums.org/education