



**CLASSROOM
COMPANION**

2018-19 SEASON



***Too Hot to Handel:
The Jazz-Gospel Messiah***

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

THE THEATRE FOR THE PEOPLE



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Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah

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ENGAGE

We are so excited to welcome you and your students to our National Historic Landmark theatre in downtown Chicago for a memorable performance experience. Before you walk through our doors, we invite you to use this Classroom Companion to prepare for the show.



CONNECT

In the pages that follow, you will find ways to encourage and guide your students to **ENGAGE** with the performance and participate in activities that **CONNECT** the performance to what they're learning in class. You'll also find ways to help inspire your students to **CREATE** their own unique art!



CREATE

We hope that this experience continues after the performance and beyond the walls of the theatre to actively encourage your students to immerse themselves in artistic culture.

What is music?



MUSIC (n): Vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in a certain way to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion.



“Jazz speaks for life. The Blues tell the story of life’s difficulties, and if you think for a moment, you will realize that they take the hardest realities of life and put them into music, only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph. This is triumphant music.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Auditorium Theatre annually presents *Too Hot to Handel* in celebration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The show encapsulates Dr. King’s notion of “beloved community,” with many unique voices joining together each January to create one beautiful sound. As a piece of music, *Too Hot to Handel* is a jazz-gospel reimagining of Handel’s *Messiah* — a classical masterpiece that, by its nature as an oratorio, draws inspiration from religious themes.

This Classroom Companion aims to provide you with tools to guide your students in exploring the historic connection between the civil rights movement and the music of American religious communities, as well as the roots of Dr. King’s message of “beloved community” and how this message remains relevant today.

What is the *Messiah*?

George Frideric Handel, born in 1685, composed his most famous work, the *Messiah*, in 1741. Despite modest initial reaction, the oratorio gained fame and became one of the best known choral works in Western music. (An oratorio is a large-scale musical work for orchestra and voices, typically a narrative on a religious theme, performed without the use of costumes, scenery, or action.)

Over 200 years later, Marin Alsop, Gary Anderson, and Bob Christianson wanted to create a fresh feel for the *Messiah*. They aimed to do this by fusing jazz, gospel, rock, and funk music styles with the classical score, hoping to create a piece that encouraged the audience to be actively involved in the performance. The show you and your students are about to experience is the result of that collaboration!



What does *Too Hot to Handel* have to do with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?

Dr. King spoke about the concept of a “beloved community” and, as a Christian minister, drew lines directly from the Christian Bible in some of his speeches. Since oratorios such as the *Messiah* pull from religious themes, their lyrics are also drawn directly from the Christian Bible. And since *Too Hot to Handel* is directly based on Handel’s *Messiah*, you can actually find phrases that appear both in Dr. King’s speeches and the lyrics of *Too Hot*. These common quotations and phrases, such as “every valley shall be exalted,” highlight the search for social equality and justice that was pivotal to the civil rights movement that Dr. King worked for throughout his life.

Additionally, the joining-together of each unique voice of the choir and orchestra for a common purpose is a small, but mighty reflection of our own “beloved community” here in Chicago.

In preparing your students to come to the show, have them consider the many unique and different voices in your classroom.

-  In what ways do you use the **strengths** of each individual voice to benefit your classroom community?
-  What is the **common purpose** or goal of your classroom community?
-  What **similarities** can you draw between coming together as students in a classroom community every day and the musicians in the performance coming together as a musical community for each show?

Religion and the Civil Rights Movement

Since the civil rights movement was not aligned with any particular religion or set of beliefs, people from many different religious backgrounds were involved in the organizing and leadership of the movement. Explore a brief history of this below, and check out the provided web resources to further explore the connection with your students!

In the 1950s, leadership and activism of the civil rights movement shifted from elite organizations in the north (who focused mainly on legislative changes) to southern communities (who focused on direct action). This movement was supported financially and intellectually by major religious denominations from across the country. Many African American churches served as the meeting spaces, training grounds, and sources of inspiration for those “on site” in the movement.

In 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was created to harness the organizing power of black churches to conduct nonviolent protests for civil rights reform. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the first president of the SCLC.

The influence of Dr. King’s background as a clergyman can be seen in many of his writings and speeches. Historians have noted that King “cherished the great hymns of the church, particularly those that spoke to the ethic of service, and to be involved in changing the quality of life of human beings.” As an example, Dr. King’s well-known “I Have a Dream” speech directly aligns with some of the lyrics in “Every Valley” from *Too Hot to Handel*.

We recommend these sites for more information on the role religion played in the civil rights movement:



americanprogress.org/issues/courts/news/2004/06/09/861/the-role-of-religion-in-the-civil-rights-movements/



religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-492

Discussion

Here are a few discussion points you can use to encourage your students to connect with what is happening on stage:

NOTICE

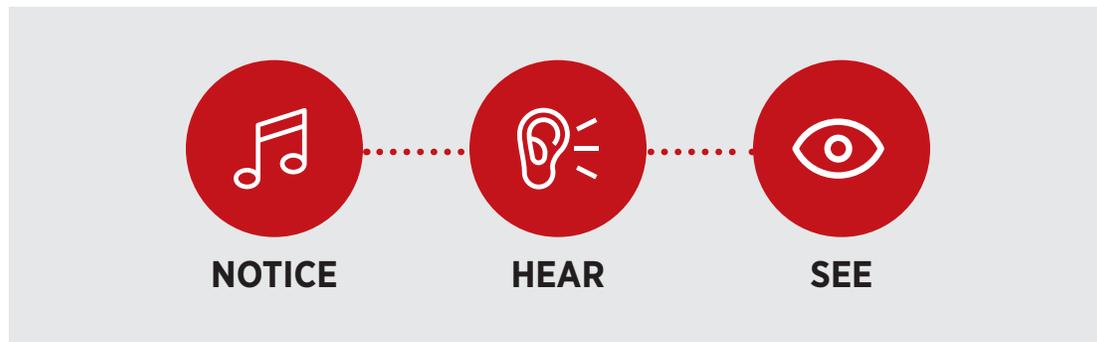
Pay attention to how the artists interact with each other. How do the individual musicians work together within a full orchestra? How do the soloists interact with one another and with the choir? How does the conductor guide the performers through the performance? Where else do you see people working together to achieve a common goal? What “give and take” do the musicians bring to the stage in order for each performance to be a success?

HEAR

Listen to the dynamics used by the musicians to guide you through the story. How does the change in volume impact the audience’s experience? What about different tempos (the pacing or speed of a given piece)? These are tools that musicians, as well as orators such as Dr. King, use to invoke emotions and express meaning throughout their art.

SEE

Look at the diversity that exists among the performers and the instruments they use! This is a group of performers that represents the entire Chicagoland area, with members from different backgrounds, races, religions, and ages — each with unique talents for different instruments. Every sound is absolutely necessary to the performance! All of the performers on stage are tied together by the common piece of music they have gathered to perform, and by the fact that they believe music can inspire, empower, and unite people. Is there anything missing from this ensemble? How would the piece change if one of these elements (for example, the choir or the trumpet section) were not present?





Musicians and Instruments Cheat Sheet

You will see a variety of musicians and instruments at the performance. Here is a cheat sheet to help you engage with your students.

THE CONDUCTOR

Unifies the performers. She will set the tempo, execute clear beats, shape the sound of the ensemble, and control the pace.

WIND INSTRUMENTS

Used to create music using the vibration of air, usually created by the musician blowing into the instrument. These include saxophones, horns, trumpets, and trombones.

STRING INSTRUMENTS

Make sound by vibrating strings, either by plucking or drawing a bow across them. These include electric guitar, electric bass guitar, bass, violin, and viola.

THE TOO HOT CHOIR

Composed of diverse singers. Choirs are made up of sopranos (the highest part for women), altos (the lowest part for women), tenors (the highest male part), baritones (halfway between tenor and bass), and bass (the lowest male part). The singers work to blend their voices into a unified sound.

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

Create music by striking one object with another. These include timpani, drum kit, jazz, and piano.

SOLO VOCALISTS

Featured singers during a performance. You will recognize these singers because they will sing alone, as well as improvise and scat.

Curriculum Connection Activities

LANGUAGE ARTS

Have students take a closer look at the language used in Handel's *Messiah*, in Dr. King's speeches, or in a speech by another historic figure you or they admire. Explore the writer's use of various aspects of the English language (rich adjectives and adverbs, imagery, syntax, sentence structure) that have an impact on the listener. Have students use some of these tools to write their own original works.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Explore the lives and work of leaders from social movements that have taken place in our country's history (along with the civil rights movement) with your students. Ask them to examine the following:

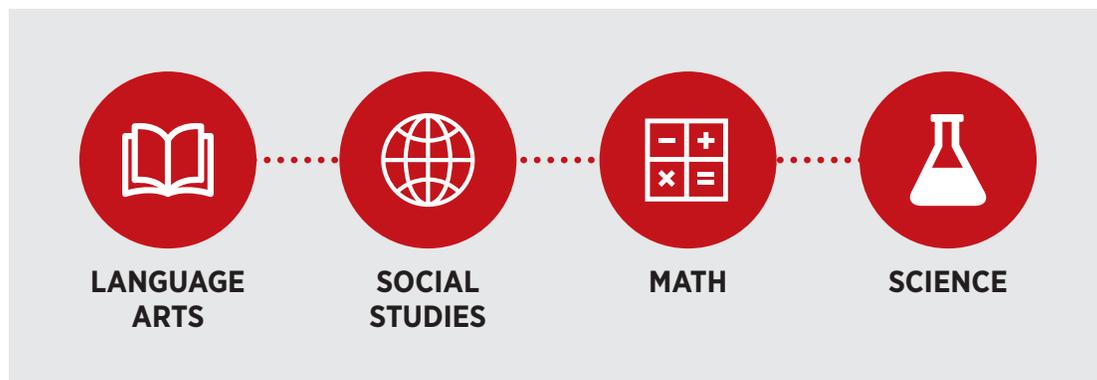
- How did the leaders of these movements use public speaking skills to further their causes?
- In what ways do these movements still impact us today?
- Where do you think there is more work to be done?

MATH

Explore note values and time signatures in music (dummies.com/art-center/music/piano/common-music-time-signatures/). These directly affect the tempo and feeling of a piece of music, and are based in fractions of a whole. Have students explore how they can shift the equations of the signatures to change the way a piece of music sounds.

SCIENCE

Ask students to explore the mechanics of how the various instruments that are used in *Too Hot* — from the piano to the human voice — create sound, and have them create their own instrument using their bodies or found objects in your classroom.



Too Hot Activity Sheets

The following sheets have activities to engage your students in the *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah* performance. While grade levels have been listed for each activity sheet, please feel free to utilize the one that best aligns with your class!

SUBMIT TO THE TOO HOT POETRY CONTEST!

Did you know the Auditorium Theatre has an annual **Too Hot Poetry Contest?** This year the theme is “How Am I Shaped By My Community.” Winners are selected from across the city to perform their piece on the Auditorium Theatre stage before a *Too Hot To Handel* performance! Use the activity sheets to help students create poetry for this fantastic opportunity. **ENTRY DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 14, 2018.**

Mail (or email) a copy of all Poetry Contest entries, including the student’s name and email, and a teacher contact’s name/email/phone number.



MAIL TO

Auditorium Theatre | ATTN: Creative Engagement
50 E Congress Pkwy (50 E Ida B Wells Dr) | Chicago, IL 60605

OR



EMAIL

atru-education@auditoriumtheatre.org

Name: _____

Date: _____

Community Quilt Activity

K-2nd Grade Activity



DRAW YOUR COMMUNITY

Choose a community you are a part of and ***draw a picture*** of your favorite thing about your community.

SOME EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

- School
- Classroom
- Neighborhood



Name: _____

Date: _____

Community Quilt Activity

3rd-6th Grade Activity

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech contains a powerful message about diversity and community. We are all a part of many communities.



BRAINSTORM

- What does community mean to you?
- What communities are you a part of (your neighborhood, your family, a club or sports team, your school)?
- What do these communities look like?



DRAW

Draw a picture of your community. Include something that you wish the world knew about or saw in your community.

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a thin black border, intended for the student to draw their community.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Spoken Word Poetry Activity

3rd–6th Grade Activity

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke often about creating a “beloved community” in which we love our fellow human beings and everyone is treated equally. Many pieces of history and stories continue to be passed down to younger generations through spoken word.



FILL IN the following to create a spoken word poem about your community!

1. **List** communities you are a part of—these could be your neighborhood, your family, a club or sports team—and select one you want to explore further.

2. **Brainstorm** 4 sounds you HEAR in your community, 4 smells you SMELL in your community, and 4 things you SEE in your community.

3. **Circle** three words from your list that you enjoy, and underline two you wish you could change.

4. **Use** one or more of the selected words as inspiration for your poem. If you’re stuck, think if you can turn that word into a phrase that communicates an idea, image, or feeling. Repeat that phrase as much as you like. It can start or end your poem, or even be your title! Use the reverse side of this paper to write your poem.



TIME TO PERFORM! Consider:

- What tone of voice do you want to use?
- What emotions do you feel when reading your poem?
- What emotions do you want your audience to feel?
- Which words do you want to say the loudest?
- Where do you want to take pauses in your speaking?



TIME TO SHARE! Find a partner and practice reading your poem aloud.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Spoken Word Poetry Activity

7th-12th Grade Activity

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used the power of his voice to inspire change. He often spoke about the concept of a “beloved community” in which all people are treated as equals and “can share in the wealth of the earth.” His skills as a public speaker allowed him to spread this message to people around the world. Many pieces of history and stories continue to be passed down through spoken word.

FILL IN the following to create your own spoken word poem:

1. List communities you are a part of — these could be your neighborhood, your family, a club or sports team — and select one you want to explore further.

2. Brainstorm 4 sounds you HEAR in your community, 4 smells you SMELL in your community, and 4 things you SEE in your community.

3. Circle three words from your list that strike you, and underline two you wish you could change.
4. Use one or more of the selected words as inspiration for your poem. If you’re stuck, think if you can turn that word into a phrase that communicates an idea, image, or feeling. Repeat that phrase as much as you like. It can start or end your poem, or even be your title! Use the reverse side of this paper to write your poem.

Now that your poem is complete, it’s time to think about how you want to perform your piece.

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT YOUR POEM AND CONSIDER:

- What tone of voice do you want to use?
- What emotions do you feel when reading your poem?
- What emotions do you want your audience to feel?
- Which words do you want to emphasize?
- Where do you want to slow down or pause for more effect?

TIME TO SHARE! Try reading it in a variety of ways to elicit new emotions, or changing your tone and pace to highlight different parts of your poem.



How does this connect to Common Core State Standards?

COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS FOCUS (USING THE PERFORMANCE AS A "TEXT")

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

P21 PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST LEARNING SKILLS

Learning and Innovation Skills: A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration

- Think creatively
- Work creatively with others
- Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution

Life and Career Skills

- Be flexible: Incorporate feedback effectively, dealing positively with praise, setbacks, and criticism. Understand and negotiate diverse views to reach workable solutions.
- Be self-directed learners: All programming challenges students to explore and expand their own learning in the connected areas.
- Interact effectively with others: Both the teamwork and the attendance at the performance teach students to know when it is appropriate to listen and to speak, and to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

How does this connect to Illinois and National Arts Standards?

NATIONAL CORE MUSIC ANCHOR STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Essential Question: How is a piece of music or musical performance understood?

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Essential Question: How is a musical performance interpreted?

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. Essential Question: How does music deepen our understanding of ourselves, other knowledge, and events around us?

Additional Resources

BOOKS

-  *Jazz* by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers
-  *Jazz: My Music, My People* by Morgan Monceaux
-  *MLK: Journey of a King* by Tonya Bolden

ONLINE

-  “What’s Your Life’s BluePrint?” (Dr. Martin Luther King)
youtube.com/watch?v=ZmtOGXreTOU
-  folkways.si.edu/say-loud-african-american-spoken-word/struggle-protest/article/smithsonian
-  More information and recordings of Handel’s *Messiah*:
classicfm.com/composers/handel/music/george-frideric-handel-messiah/

MULTIMEDIA

A recording of sermons by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — “[A Knock at Midnight](#)” allow students to hear Dr. King’s speaking style and also come paired with a companion book of the text.

-  Jazz music: jazzradio.com
-  Baroque music: radionomy.com/en/style/classic/baroque

Theatre Etiquette

Here's what to expect when you come to the show!

BE ON TIME! Be prompt! Walking in late is distracting and takes away from your theatre experience.

SAY NO TO CELL PHONES! When in the theatre, it is important to devote your entire attention to the performance. Taking pictures or using social media during a show is distracting to you and to those around you! Remember, you've come for the performance, so let yourself get lost in the experience.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHOW YOUR REACTIONS! One of the unique things about live performance is that the performers are there in the same room with you! They pick up on your energy and it feeds their performance. So if you are enjoying something, don't be afraid to applaud. If you think something's funny, it's okay to laugh. And it's even okay to dance in your seat a bit, so long as you stay seated and don't bother the folks sitting next to you!

BUT DON'T TALK DURING THE SHOW! Save your thoughts for post-performance discussions. Because talking during the performance disturbs fellow audience members, having conversations afterwards are highly encouraged. Take note of all of your personal comments and share them with your friends after the show.

STAY CALM AND SIT STILL!

Avoid leaving in the middle of the performance, because this is considered disrespectful. Use the restrooms during an intermission or before the show begins. Of course, if it's an emergency, let your teacher know.

KEEP THE AUDITORIUM CLEAN!

The Auditorium Theatre is 128 years old, so we need to make sure that this National Historic Landmark is taken good care of! Food and drink can damage the theatre. Instead of eating during the show, enjoy a pre- or post-performance meal.

WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO THE THEATRE?

- Entertainment
- Engage in social change
- To learn
- For enjoyment

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE THEATRE?

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