



*freedom*  
*Cabaret*

*Stratford*  
FESTIVAL

2021 STUDY GUIDE

*freedom  
Cabaret*

CURATED AND DIRECTED BY BEAU DIXON

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS  
SPONSORED BY



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PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY **MARY ANN & ROBERT GORLIN** AND BY **SYLVIA SOYKA**.

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# **FREEDOM STUDY GUIDE**

## **ABOUT THE CABARET**

### ***Freedom***

#### **Spirit and Legacy of Black Music**

#### **Curated and Directed by Beau Dixon**

[Freedom House Program](#)

[Selections from Freedom Songs & Readings List](#)

#### **Grade and Curriculum Connections**

- Grades 7+
- Global Competencies: Critical Thinking, Innovation, Creativity, Self-Directed Learning, Collaboration, Communication and Citizenship
- The Arts
- English
- Language
- Canadian and World Studies
- Social Sciences and Humanities

#### **Synopsis**

From the moment Black people landed on North American soil, their music took root and became the basis for much of the popular music we hear today. There is an endless list of exceptional Black musicians who have been lost to history while their white counterparts gained fame. From church hymnals to the blues, from jazz to rock 'n' roll, R&B and rap, we owe much of our musical history to Black culture, and it's time to give credit where it is due.

#### **Themes and Motifs**

- The Influence of Black Culture on Music
- Black Stories, Artistry and History
- Resistance and Reclamation

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- In what ways is music connected to our understanding of human history?
- Why have the Black roots of popular music been erased?
- How does music play a role in resistance and social justice?
- What is the difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation?
- Which song resonated with you most? Why do you think this is the case?

## MINDS ON

**Objective:** Students will explore the influence of Black artistry on popular music by way of the poem that inspired Beau Dixon to create this cabaret.

**Materials:** Computer/internet access

**Directions:**

- After viewing *Freedom* cabaret, invite students to read and/or listen to [this poem](#) by George Elliott Clarke.
- Ask students to make note of their first impressions.
- Invite students to choose another Black musical artist and, like George Elliott Clarke, to create a poem using just titles of their songs.
- Invite students to share their poems, written or spoken, with one another.

**Debriefing Questions:**

- Why did you choose the artist that you did?
- What did you learn about them when researching their song titles?
- What artists were they inspired by?
- Did anything surprise you when listening to each other's poems?

## CONNECTION TO THE ARCHIVES

In 1957, Duke Ellington composed *Such Sweet Thunder*, a jazz suite performed at the Stratford Festival in which Duke Ellington created original pieces inspired by the works of Shakespeare. [Explore the house program](#) for this cabaret to learn more about the influence of jazz on musical practices.



The Stratford Festival's Archives maintains, conserves and protects recent and historical records about the Festival and makes those materials available to people around the world. Our multi-media archival holdings date from 1952 and extend through to contemporary materials. We house correspondence, production records, Board minutes, photography, design artwork, scores, audio-visual records, costumes, props and set decoration, press releases and other promotional materials: these document the processes that bring a production to the stage and reflect all aspects of mounting a play, from the administrative to the creative and beyond.

In addition to visiting the Archives in person, you can explore our [online catalogue](#).

## RESOURCES

[Freedom Showstarters](#)

Contact us to book a streamed viewing of this production for your class: [groups@stratfordfestival.ca](mailto:groups@stratfordfestival.ca)