

Aretha Franklin/Otis Redding - *Respect* (Topic: Popular Music - Soul, MANDATORY)

Lesson plan ideas by Rachel Hocking

About: *Respect* is a well-known Soul song that uses typical soul elements which demonstrate the style's development from gospel and jazz. This includes the use of Blues scales, call/response between soloist and backing singers, brass stabs, uptempo rhythm. It was written and originally recorded by Otis Redding (of The Temptations fame) and re-recorded by Aretha Franklin in 1967, in the midst of equal rights/civil rights changes (race and gender). Aretha Franklin is an Afro-American female singer, and this alongside social upheaval, meant that the song *Respect* carried even more significance. There is a series on Ray Charles, social issues, and the invention of Soul Music available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdiG9baQmfo>.

Musical Elements: *Duration*

Respect uses an upbeat tempo, traditional rhythm section, brass stabs, and declamatory phrasing. The interplay between the soloist and the backing vocalists paces at a different rhythmical rate between the verses, chorus, and the final refrain. Each aspect of the rhythm, including the time signature, tempo, interjecting accents, pace of each vocal line, are worth analysing in this piece and recognising in other soul music.

Musical Elements: *Tone Colour*

This piece is an example of typical Soul music instrumental combinations, including rhythm section, brass section (with a saxophone solo), solo singer and backing vocals. The female singers generally are in a higher range compared to many singers today. This combination has its roots in jazz (brass section, rhythm section) and gospel (call/response idea of singing roles). The timbre of each instrument can be analysed and then each instrument's role can be discussed alongside an analysis of the textural changes throughout the piece.

Teaching Activity: *Creativity/Composition - Sampling Respect*

Provide students with a small loop sampled from the piece. Give a choice of loops from:- the introduction (2 bars); the first two lines of the verse ('what you want, baby I got'); the break ('R-E-S-P-E-C-T, find out what it means to me'); or the final refrain (2 bars of 'sock it to me'). Ask students to create a 1 minute GarageBand composition around one of these loops and present it to the class.

Teaching Activity: *Aural - Critiquing a Performance*

Listen to the different versions of Aretha over the years of her career. One is typical of energetic gospel music, one is the standard soul recording that most are familiar with, and one is slower, in a rhythm/blues style. In a class discussion, ask students to comment on differences in tempo, melody, structure, role of backing singers. Ask students to choose a favourite and give musical reasons why. Original Recording: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYbs_O_iMfU; Gospel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0POMdK18WU> Blues Brothers 2000: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W4Bn3OiSng>

Teaching Activity: *Performance - Soul Karaoke*

This is a small group activity. Ask students to choose one of the following songs: Aretha Franklin's *Respect*; The Temptations' *War (What is it good for?)*; James Brown's *I got you (I Feel Good)*; or Marvin Gaye's *I heard it through the grapevine*. Provide students with a backing track of their choice and ask them to create a vocal performance that they could present to the class. Ask students to choreograph dance moves for the backing vocalists that are in the style of Soul Music.

Teaching Activity: *Musicology - Discover Soul*

Ask students to research one song from the list below (sites such as www.soulmusic.com are to be encouraged), and give a 3 minute presentation to the class using slides and YouTube video. A guide for the presentation is below. The song choices are:- *If I ain't got you* (Alicia Keys); *Heard it through the grapevine* (Marvin Gaye); *Unchain my heart* (Ray Charles); *I Got You (I feel good)* (James Brown); *Doggin' Around* (Michael Jackson); *You had me* (Joss Stone); *War (what is it good*

for?) The Temptations/Otis Redding; *Living for the city* (Stevie Wonder). Presentation Guide:- give a little background about the recording artist; who wrote the song? what is the song about? which instruments are playing? are there backing vocalists? what are they doing?