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## Welcome to the BSO Midweeks!

On behalf of today's conductor Kellen Gray, the members of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and the BSO Education Department, we are delighted to welcome you to our 2023-2024 Midweek Concert Series. We are thrilled to have you join us here at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall.

This year we are celebrating 100 years of Midweek Concerts! The BSO's Midweek Concert Series is not only the longest running education initiative at the BSO, but the first regular educational concert series of any orchestra in the country. Our rich history of educational programming started with the first Midweek Concert on February 16, 1924, and we are pleased to be providing students from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, Washington, D.C., and beyond with exciting and engaging education concerts to this day.

This Midweek Concert Season, we present four concerts: *Music to Give You Goosebumps*, *The Nutcracker: A Magical Tale in Mount Vernon*, *Jazzing the Symphony*, and *Philharmonia Fantastique: The Making of the Orchestra*. Each concert incorporates an Arts-Integrated, STEAM-Activated approach to create a relevant, interactive, and interdisciplinary experience.

## About This Guide

On the next pages you will find the Teachers' Guide for *Jazzing the Symphony*, written by a highly skilled group of Maryland educators with specialism in Music, Drama, Science, English/Language Arts, and Visual Arts, led by award-winning curriculum writer and editor, Richard McCready.

At the start of the guide is a "Snapshot" of your concert experience. This will give you a sense of what to expect in the concert, along with some thoughts about the various curricular connections, and music we suggest you listen to in the classroom before the performance.

Beyond the Snapshot pages you will find a variety of activities called "Tunes" to signify the various directions that you can explore in order to prepare for this concert. Each Tune may be used in any order you wish. We have also highlighted the various cross-curricular links that align with each Tune so that you may jump to areas that are of particular interest to you and your students. We hope that your students try at least one activity prior to coming to the concert so they can make the most of their live experience at the Meyerhoff.

Each activity is written to encourage students' natural sense of creativity and exploration. They will be able to read the activity pages or you can read the activities with them. Some of the activities are scientific, some are movement games, some employ and encourage art skills, and some involve storytelling and role-play. You best know your students, their capabilities, and their interests. You should encourage students to try the activities that you feel most appropriate for them and for your classroom. Encourage other teachers in your building to try some of the activities as well.



These guides are designed and intended as a mere starting point for exploration, with the essential piece being the work that is created by the student, for the student. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate a strong connection between the music performed by the BSO and the everyday lives of your students, so that they may continue to take music with them wherever they go.

**Please feel free to share your students' work with us at the BSO—we love to see where the ideas from these activities might take your students and all the inspired, arts-integrated work they will produce in the classroom. If you wish to share any materials with us at the BSO, please send them to [education@bsomusic.org](mailto:education@bsomusic.org).**

We hope you enjoy this guide, your explorations that are yet to come, the concert experience, and sharing your creative work with us.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Precht".

Brian Precht  
Interim Director of Education & Community Engagement  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mateo Mendez".

Mateo Mendez  
Manager of Education & Community Engagement  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra



## *Jazzing the Symphony* Concert Program

Below is the list of pieces that will be performed on the *Jazzing the Symphony* Midweek Concert. Please take a moment to listen to these pieces in advance of the concert on YouTube, Spotify, or iTunes.

- ❖ EUBIE BLAKE: “Baltimore Buzz” from *Shuffle Along*
- ❖ JAMES P. JOHNSON: “Harlem Strut”
- ❖ DUKE ELLINGTON: “Saddest Tale (Lost My Man Blues)”
- ❖ BILLIE HOLIDAY: “God Bless the Child”
- ❖ CAB CALLOWAY: “Hi De Ho Man”
- ❖ ELLINGTON: Excerpt from “Fast Rhumba” from *Harlem*
- ❖ JOHN KLENNER: “Just Friends”
- ❖ ELLINGTON: Excerpts from *Night Creature*
- ❖ LEONARD BERNSTEIN: “Cool” from *West Side Story*
- ❖ CARLOS SIMON: “Tap!” from *Four Black American Dances*





## *Jazzing the Symphony* Snapshot for Teachers and Students

Today's concert is all about **JAZZ**! Jazz is one of America's most quintessential art forms. Originating in the late 19th century, jazz was born out of several different musical styles, including blues, hymns, ragtime, spirituals, and more. Jazz music was developed by African American communities in New Orleans, which led to the rise of traditional jazz, also known as **Dixieland Jazz**. The genre continued to evolve throughout the 20th century, giving rise to big band swing, bebop, hard bop, free jazz, jazz fusion, smooth jazz, and much more.

Jazz is often played by small combos or big bands. Today is a special treat, as you will get to hear an entire symphony orchestra play jazz! While the symphony orchestra is traditionally known for playing classical music, many orchestras have begun adding jazz music into their programming, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra is no exception! This program will feature music from Baltimore natives Eubie Blake, Billie Holiday, and Cab Calloway, as well as Washington, D.C. natives Duke Ellington and Carlos Simon.

First up is the "Baltimore Buzz" from Eubie Blake's wildly successful musical *Shuffle Along*. *Shuffle Along* was the first Broadway musical to be written, directed, and performed entirely by African Americans. *Shuffle Along* helped to launch the careers of several of the biggest stars of the 20th century, including Josephine Baker, Adelaide Hall, and Paul Robeson. *Shuffle Along* appealed to audiences of all races and helped to improve race relations in the American arts scene. The "Baltimore Buzz" is a foxtrot, a popular dance style of the era. As you listen to the music, imagine the energetic dance steps that would have accompanied the music.

The next tune you'll hear is James P. Johnson's "Harlem Strut." Johnson innovated the **stride** technique of piano playing, characterized by large leaps in the left hand pulsing up and down the keyboard. The "Harlem Strut" influenced many jazz pianists of the time, including Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Count Basie, and Thelonious Monk. Johnson also composed the "Charleston" one of the most popular dance tunes of the Harlem Renaissance.

Duke Ellington was an influential pianist and bandleader, regarded as one of the most significant composers of the 20th century. He wrote countless jazz standards, like "C-Jam Blues," "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)," "In a Mellow Tone," and "Mood Indigo." Ellington liked collaborating, and for three decades he worked side-by-side with Billy Strayhorn, composer of the Ellington signature tune "Take the A Train." "Saddest Tale (Lost My Man Blues)" was written by Ellington for the 1935 short film *Symphony in Black: A Rhapsody of Negro Life*, which stars a 19-year-old Billie Holiday in her on-screen debut. Holiday's performance in the film solidified her status as young star of the jazz scene.



## *Jazzing the Symphony* Snapshot for Teachers and Students

In addition to singing, Baltimore native Billie Holiday tried her hand at songwriting. In 1939, the same year she recorded the protest song, “Strange Fruit,” Holiday composed another popular song, “God Bless the Child.” The title and song hook – “God bless the child that’s got his own” – was inspired by a conversation with her mother. The lyrics reference the economic inequalities plaguing the United States: “Yes the strong gets more/While the weak ones fade/Empty pockets don’t/ever make the grade.” Holiday co-wrote the song with Arthur Herzog Jr.

Cab Calloway, also known as the “Hi-de-ho Man,” grew up in Baltimore’s Druid Hill neighborhood. He attended Frederick Douglass High School, and before graduating in 1925 he played professional basketball with the Baltimore Athenians and performed in nightclubs on Pennsylvania Avenue. In New York, Calloway led one of America’s most popular dance bands. “The Hi De Ho Man” features a call-and-response chorus that was also used in Calloway’s biggest hit, “Minnie the Moocher.” Call-and-response was a hallmark of the jazz. A soloist performs (or calls out) a phrase, and the others respond by repeating the phrase. At the concert, we will be expecting the audience to fully participate in this song.

Duke Ellington’s *Harlem* is a symphonic suite that depicts various aspects of life in Harlem, New York’s primary African American neighborhood. Ellington was a leading proponent of symphonic jazz. His works seamlessly translated big-band music to the symphonic realm. “Fast Rhumba” is part of the second movement. It captures the dance rhythms of the Latin American culture that had become a vital part of Harlem in the 1950s.

“Just Friends” is an iconic jazz standard written by John Klenner with lyrics by Sam M. Lewis. It is a love ballad about breaking up. In 1950, Charlie Parker, one of the greatest saxophone players in the history of jazz, recorded this tune for an album titled *Charlie Parker with Strings*. Parker is best known helping to create Be Bop, a virtuosic style of modern jazz. At our concert, we will reproduce Parker’s Be Bop performance of the tune. Note the way he first plays the tune as written, then improvises something completely new over the same harmony.

Ellington’s *Night Creature* is another symphonic suite. Here the full orchestra and a saxophone section create a three-movement **concerto grosso**. According to Ellington, the first movement depicts a very specific dancing character: “[It] is about a blind bug who ... is king of the night creatures... The reason he is king, of course, is that being blind, he lives in night all day, and when night really comes, he sees as well as anyone else, but with the difference that he is *accustomed* to not seeing. So, he puts out his antennae and goes into his dance, and if his antennae warn him of danger, he pauses, turns in another direction, and continues bugging the jitterbugs.”



## ***Jazzing the Symphony*** **Snapshot for Teachers and Students**

Leonard Bernstein, a prominent conductor and composer of the 20th century, borrowed some of Ellington's *Night Creature* music when composing the dance tune "Cool" for his Broadway musical *West Side Story*. *West Side Story* is a modern-day retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* set in the streets of New York City. But instead of Shakespeare's rival families, the musical features rival gangs. "Cool" captures the anxious energy felt by one gang, the Jets, as they wait for the arrival of a rival gang, the Sharks.

The final piece featured on our concert is "Tap!" from Carlos Simon's *Four Black American Dances*. This is the newest composition on the program. It was composed in 2022 for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. As Simon explains, "*Four Black American Dances* highlights how dance is – and always has been – the fabric of social gatherings in Black American communities." The work is divided into four movements that each capture a moment in history: Ring Shout, Waltz, Tap Dance, and Holy Dance. "Tap!" engages with the sounds of jazz and the rhythms of tap dancing, which uses a special type of shoe with metal plates on the soles that strike the floor and act as a percussion instrument.





## Tune One: Jazz from Matisse's Bed



Have you ever read a book in bed? How about making some music or art from bed? Henri Matisse is an artist that made art from his bed. One form of art that Matisse is famous for are his paper cutouts that he called “drawing with scissors”. He originally used these to help him develop his larger pieces of artwork. As Matisse aged, he became bedridden but could continue to make his art from his bed.

Matisse made a series of works that he titled Jazz. These works explored the connection between improvisation in music and art. This collection of images can now be found in his book titled Jazz. However, you could go down the street from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra to The Baltimore Museum of Art to see a large collection of Matisse’s work. You can learn more about Matisse from the resources below. Now get your scissors ready because we are going to make our own paper cuts ala Matisse.



## Activity

1. Listen to some jazz music. Let the sounds you hear inspire you and draw shapes that remind you of the music you hear.
2. Use the shapes to make a collage inspired by the style of Matisse.
3. Include 4-6 large shapes on different colors of paper in your drawings.
4. Include 5-8 medium and large shapes on different colors of paper, such as stars, swirls, zigzags and blobs or [organic shapes](#) on different colors of paper in your drawings.
5. Include many little geometric shapes on different colors of paper in your drawings.
6. Overlap the large pieces and glue them to a piece black background paper.
7. Leave some of the black background paper showing.
8. Cut out and glue 5-8 medium and large shapes, such as stars, swirls, zigzags, and blobs.
9. Cut out and sprinkle little [geometric shapes](#) throughout your collage. Glue your pieces once you are happy with your composition.
10. If you would like to include a figure on your artwork like Matisse did in many of his works now is the time to do it. Be sure to include a head, body, arms, and legs. Keep it very simple.



## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts Standards**

#### **❖ Creating**

- 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

#### **❖ Performing**

- 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

#### **❖ Responding**

- 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

#### **❖ Connecting**

- 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



## **Resources**

- ❖ **Matisse: The Cut Outs**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APB5AXUF-hQ>
- ❖ **Art with Mati and Dada – Henri Matisse**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s37OoBXkYAc>
- ❖ **What Do Henri Matisse's Collages Mean? | Tate Kids**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA17BZuCt30>
- ❖ ***Matisse The King of Color* Read Aloud Book**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pzhgu7x2wyM>
- ❖ ***Henri's Scissors*, by Jeannette Winter**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgKvV13wEs8>
- ❖ **Geometric Shapes**  
<https://www.mashupmath.com/geometric-shapes>

Suggested Music to Listen to:

- ❖ **Saudade – Thievery Corporation**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjyFhmj8eNA>
- ❖ **The Best of Gipsy Kings**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4PKLKSx1xU>
- ❖ **Best of L'Impératrice**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XftLMLs7wW8>





## Tune Two: Renaissance Metamorphosis



The Harlem Renaissance was a transformative time of creative expression in all forms for African Americans. This cultural metamorphosis of music, art, dance, poetry, fashion, theater, literature, and politics greatly influenced people of both that time and for years to come. Jazz clubs were a place for people to relax, celebrate, experience joy, and showcase talents that would be trendsetting moments in time. Prior to the age of social media, word of mouth, photography, and music technology played a huge part into the spread of traditions that we know today. We will explore mainstream jazz clubs and venues that influenced nightlife in NY, and their impact on the culture of artistic expression of the African American experience.





## **Activity**

Read the descriptions of some of the venues that were essential to the “viral” moments of the Harlem Renaissance. How did the influence of the Harlem Renaissance spread without the use of social media and the digital tools that we have today?

### **The Savoy Ballroom**

Located in Lenox Avenue in Harlem, New York, The Savoy Ballroom was pivotal to the advancement of African American performers in the Harlem Renaissance Era. Their non-discriminatory policies were revolutionary during the time, as they were the first and only integrated ballroom during the Harlem Renaissance. This venue was 10,000 square feet and could fit up to 4,000 people! In The Savoy Ballroom, the only thing that mattered was your ability to dance and enjoy the trendsetting moves such as the Lindy Hop and Snake Hips. Langston Hughes, the prolific author and poet, wrote poems and stories painting a lyrical picture of The Savoy Ballroom's influence in dance. Their “Battle of the Bands” would take place during the Swing Era, allowing people to experience multiple bands at the same venue. Radio broadcasts would bring the sounds of Big Bands to the living rooms of Americans nationwide.

### **The Cotton Club**

Another major venue of Lenox Avenue, The Cotton Club was a legendary jazz club that launched the careers of some of the most influential performers of the Harlem Renaissance. Heavy hitters like Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway made their debuts in The Cotton Club as leaders of the big house bands and orchestras. Performers such as Louis Armstrong, Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, and the Nicholas brothers increased the club's popularity by gracing the stage. Though only African American people were allowed to perform, the club had non-Black celebrity appearances regularly. Similarly to other clubs during the time, radio played a large role in its increased popularity.



## **The Apollo**

Located at 253 West 125th Street in Harlem, New York, The Apollo Theater became one of the top venues for live theatrical performances. It played a large role in promoting the music of the swing, jazz, bebop, soul, and blues genres. African American comedians, dancers, singers, and musicians would perform regularly. The Apollo Theater introduced its Amateur Night in 1934, a trademark of the venue that continued for over 50 years, with winners that later became famous like Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday. In 1937, it was the largest employer of African American theatrical workers in Harlem, New York and the only theater in NYC hiring African American people as backstage workers.

## **Did you know?**

Baltimore had many clubs that were popular during the Harlem Renaissance? Similarly to New York, Baltimore's Pennsylvania Avenue was a hot spot for performers, providing them with creative opportunities. Cab Calloway, the famous singer and band leader of the Harlem Renaissance, grew up in Baltimore in his adolescent years and would regularly perform on Pennsylvania Avenue venues after his debut at The Cotton Club. "The Avenue" had a host of restaurants, clubs, venues and hotels that was the epicenter of African American entertainment. Establishments such as The Royal would host performers like Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and others who could not perform at certain Baltimore venues due to strict segregation policies.

## **Extension Activity**

1. By yourself or as a group, choose one of the following influential buildings that you would like to recreate (The Savoy Ballroom, The Cotton Club, The Apollo, The Royal.)
2. Brainstorm ways that this venue could serve your community. (What type of entertainment would you have?)
3. Create a poster, radio advertisement, or newspaper description that would attract customers to your club.



## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts Standards**

#### ❖ **Responding**

- 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#### ❖ **Connecting**

- 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



## **Resources**

#### ❖ **Whitey's Lindy Hoppers Performing The Big Apple (1939)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49ocW71YPfs>

#### ❖ **Duke Ellington & His Cotton Club Band – Old Man Blues (1930) Check and Double Check**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih97QJmkgUo>

#### ❖ **Rhythm & Blues on 125<sup>th</sup> St. Vol. 1 (Live @ Apollo Theater) Part 1**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GBeZQYME5c>



## Tune Three: Taking a Music Walk



Sound is all around us, but how much attention do we actually give to what we hear? How many sounds do you think you might hear when you walk around your neighborhood? How about when you walk in the countryside, or when you walk around the school?





## **Activity**

Duke Ellington lived in Harlem, New York. Harlem is a very highly populated and busy neighborhood, so it's always noisy. Many musicians live in Harlem, so Duke Ellington would hear a lot of music as he walked around the streets, as well as the natural sounds of the city. He put his memories of these sounds into the music for a piece he called "Harlem", which you will hear in the concert. It is full of the busy fun sounds of jazz.

As a class, take a walk through the neighborhood near your school, or through the school hallways. Before you go, write down a few things which you might expect to hear as you go. When you go on the walk, take a notepad and pencil with you. Stop every couple of minutes on your walk and listen intently to what you can hear. Be as quiet as possible, but write down the things you notice as sound.

After the walk, everyone should write down on the chalkboard, or a large piece of paper, all the things you heard. How many things did you predict you would hear? How many things did you not anticipate? How many things would you classify as sound, and how many as music?

Music is actually the name we give to organized sound. When Duke Ellington composed "Harlem", he organized the sounds and music that he heard in a way that we can still hear today in a concert. That's pretty cool, huh?

This is what Duke Ellington said about his music –

We would now like to take you on a tour of this place called [Harlem](#)... It is Sunday morning. We are strolling from [110th Street](#) up [Seventh Avenue](#), heading north through the Spanish and West Indian neighborhood towards the [125th Street](#) business area... You may hear a parade go by, or a funeral, or you may recognize the passage of those who are making Civil Rights demands.

Listen to [Harlem by Duke Ellington](#). As you listen, write down some of the sounds you hear. See if you can hear what Ellington describes in the above description. As you listen, close your eyes to imagine the scene (though you'll have to open them again to write things down). Did any of the things you heard on your own musical walk match what Ellington heard on his musical walk?





## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts Standards**

#### ❖ **Responding**

- 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#### ❖ **Connecting**

- 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



## **Resources**

#### ❖ **Duke Ellington – *Harlem* (1950)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZSwhFUcfbs>



## Tune Four: Jazz Poetry!



"Life is Jazz-Shaped" wrote Ralph Ellison, but one might also argue that both poetry and jazz are also life-shaped! Both use rhythm, line, tone, structure, improvisation, and mood to connect people with big feelings and big truths in their lives. Be inspired by a poet from the Jazz Age whose works you will hear at the concert and then write your own poem in honor of a special place, person or thing and submit it to the BSO to be read at the concert!



## Activity

The poet Langston Hughes loved jazz. He listened to it in nightclubs where he lived in Harlem, collaborated with famous jazz musicians, read his poems accompanied by jazz combos (one might even call him one of the first “spoken Word” poets!) and even wrote a children’s book called “The First Book of Jazz.” Jazz and poetry were a way of life for him.

Langston Hughes considered jazz and blues uniquely African American art forms that promoted racial consciousness and celebrated black heritage and creativity, rather than the desire for assimilation and acceptance by white culture. He believed the blues elevated the everyday lives and troubles of the people around him into art, rather than wishing away the daily hardships of African Americans living at the time

Early on, Hughes’s love for the music found its way into his writing, giving rise to a new literary genre known as Jazz Poetry. Hughes felt that Jazz Poetry could be a uniquely African-American literary form, too - freed from the limits of formal (and very white) traditional poetic forms. When he wrote about jazz, Hughes often used loose rhymes, syncopated rhythms, what he called “jive” language, and relaxed phrasing to mimic the improvisatory nature of jazz music. In other poems, his verse reads like the lyrics of a blues song. Here’s the beginning of his poem, “The Weary Blues:”

*Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,  
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,  
I heard a Negro play.  
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night  
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light  
He did a lazy sway . . .  
He did a lazy sway . . .  
To the tune o’ those Weary Blues.  
With his ebony hands on each ivory key  
He made that poor piano moan with melody.  
O Blues!*

Hughes also used “jazz poetry” to celebrate his own neighborhood and the many of the musicians and artists around him. You will hear examples of both of these at the concert. Hughes also wrote poems about his own life, even the experience of being the only black student at school in “Theme for English B” (the word “theme” meant “essay” in schools at the time):



**Theme for English B -**

The instructor said,

*Go home and write  
a page tonight.*

*And let that page come out of you—  
Then, it will be true.*

I wonder if it's that simple?  
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.  
I went to school there, then Durham, then here  
to this college on the hill above Harlem.  
I am the only colored student in my class.  
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,  
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,  
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,  
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator  
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me  
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what  
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:  
hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, talk on this page.  
(I hear New York, too.) Me—who?  
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.  
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.  
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,  
or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.  
I guess being colored doesn't make me *not* like  
the same things other folks like who are other races.  
So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.  
But it will be  
a part of you, instructor.  
You are white—  
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.  
That's American.  
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.  
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.  
But we are, that's true!  
As I learn from you,  
I guess you learn from me—  
although you're older—and white—  
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.



Now it's your turn! Write a poem in any form that you'd like that's about your own life, school, neighborhood, or a musician, artist, or person you admire. You probably already have a good idea of what you'd like to write but if you need any inspiration, check out these prompts and ideas.

**1. Pick a Subject: Write from your Life**

In all of world history there has never been anyone like you before and there will never be anyone like you again. That means that everything you notice or feel has value and you can use it as the basis for a wonderful poem. Try filling out this list and see if any of your answers can lead you to the subject of a spoken word piece. Write down:

A place you love or feel the most comfortable  
A song you love  
A piece of clothing you love  
A taste you love  
A smell you love  
A sound you love  
The one thing you wish every adult knew  
The one thing you wish everyone your age knew  
The best change that's ever happened to you

**2. Start with the Title**

Sometimes it's good to just randomly pick a title for your poem and start writing. You can close your eyes and pick a book off a shelf and use its title or use one of the titles to poems below.

"Say my Name"  
"My Hair"  
"Ode to my \_\_\_\_\_"  
"The Letter Never Delivered"  
"I'm Sorry"  
"I Believe"  
"I Fear"  
"What I Wanted to Say Was"

**3. Pick a Social Issue to Address**

This topic can cover a wide range of sub-topics such as racism, hunger, climate change, poverty, healthcare, local or national government, education, addiction, etc. But try to make a PERSONAL statement about the issue. What do you believe? Why? What EXPERIENCE have you had that leads you to this? TELL THE STORY. We want to know about THE STORY.





#### **4. Watch Some Models of Young People Sharing Their Poetry**

Try the Button Poetry YouTube Channel! The link below is for videos that are classroom friendly, and there is also new content posted daily on their home page, too.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUGDwmlb\\_yc&list=PLC5PJtWBigV2f4TM4Gx7lIPe1ummqg5jt&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUGDwmlb_yc&list=PLC5PJtWBigV2f4TM4Gx7lIPe1ummqg5jt&index=2)

Listen to as many as you can and take notes on which poems you liked best and what words, phrases, techniques (like repetition or rhyme or alliteration) you might like to play with yourself..

Here's our very own Wordsmith (whom you will meet at the concert), sharing his spoken word poetry:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/features/black-history/bs-fe-black-month-history-essays-wordsmith-20210225-jmrn3r3wvzcejnhck5dqjjq7i-story.html>

Once you've written your poem, record yourself speaking it and share it with the BSO – perhaps you and your poem will be featured at the concert!

Submit your poem to the BSO by December 16, 2023 for a chance to have it featured on the “Jazzing the Symphony” Midweek Concerts on February 7 and 8, 2024! Submissions can be sent to [education@bsomusic.org](mailto:education@bsomusic.org) – we look forward to reading your poetry!



## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts Standards**

#### **❖ Creating**

- 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

#### **❖ Performing**

- 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

#### **❖ Responding**

- 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

#### **❖ Connecting**

- 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



## **SPECIAL THANKS**

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**Richard McCready, Lesson Plan Writing Workshop Facilitator; Lead Writer, Editor**  
River Hill High School, Howard County

**Anna Harwell Celenza, Consultant & Script Writer**  
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore City

**Gina Braden, Writer**  
The Park School of Baltimore, Baltimore County

**Rebecca Ludwig, Writer**  
Roland Park Elementary/Middle School, Baltimore City

**Tiffany Walker, Writer**  
Wilde Lake Middle School, Howard County

**Alisa Wasilewski, Writer**  
Fulton Elementary School, Howard County

**Brian Precht, Interim Director of Education & Community Engagement**  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

**Mateo Mendez, Manager of Education & Community Engagement**  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

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