

Black music has always advanced the struggle for Black liberation, through its mobilization of radical imagination, trenchant critique, affective intensity, and sonic fullness. Here are some musical selections from across the last century curated by our faculty, offering a vital soundscape for this summer of protest.

Suzanne Blier:

Johnson Brothers – “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” [composed 1900/1905]
Nina Simone - “Strange Fruit” [from *Pastel Blues*, 1965]
Gil Scott Heron – “The Revolution will not be Televised” [*Pieces of a Man*, 1975]
Bob Marley - “One Love” [*Exodus*, 1977]
Angelique Kidjo - “Afrika” [*Black Ivory Soul*, 2002]

Vincent Brown:

Fela Kuti, “Power Show” [*Original Suffer Head*, 1981]
Mutabaruka, “The People’s Court” [*Blakk wi Blak...k...k*, 1991]
KRS-One, “Sound of da Police” [*Return of the Boom Bap*, 1993]

Jarvis R. Givens:

Gregory Porter, “1960 What?” [*Water*, 2010]
Jr. Walker & The All Stars, “Shotgun” [*Shotgun*, 1965]
Aretha Franklin, “Young, Gifted and Black” [*Young, Gifted, and Black*, 1972]
Bob Marley, “War” [*Rastaman Vibration*, 1976]
Goapele, “Closer” [*Closer*, 2001]
Nina Simone, “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free” [*Silk & Soul*, 1967]
The Impressions, “We’re a Winner” [*We’re a Winner*, 1968]

Vijay Iyer:

Max Roach & Abbey Lincoln, “Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace” [*We Insist!*, 1960]
John Coltrane Quartet, “Alabama” [*Live at Birdland*, 1963]
Stevie Wonder, “Big Brother” [*Talking Book*, 1972]
Olly Wilson, “Sometimes” for tenor and tape [notated work, composed 1976]
Peter Tosh, “Downpressor Man” [*Equal Rights*, 1977]
Public Enemy, “911 is a Joke” [*Fear of a Black Planet*, 1990]
Mike Ladd, “Feb 4 ‘99 (For All Those Killed by Cops)” [*Welcome to the Afterfuture*, 1999]
Wadada Leo Smith, “Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 381 Days” [*Ten Freedom Summers*, 2012]
Lauryn Hill, “Black Rage (sketch)” [single, 2014]
Alicia Keys, “We Gotta Pray” [single, 2014]
J. Cole, “Be Free” [single, 2014]

[Courtney Bryan & Sharan Strange, *Yet Unheard* for soprano and orchestra, in memory of Sandra Bland \[notated work, composed 2016\]](#)

[Tyshawn Sorey & Terrance Hayes, "Inhale, Exhale" from *Cycles of My Being* for tenor and piano \[notated work, composed 2018\]](#)

Nas, "Cops Shot the Kid" [*Nasir*, 2018]

Cynthia Errivo & Joshua Brian Campbell, "Stand Up" [*Harriet* o.s.t., 2019]

Moor Mother feat. Saul Williams, "Black Flight" [*Analog Fluids of Sonic Black Holes*, 2019]

Walter Johnson:

Boosie Badazz - "F*ck the Police" (feat. Webbie) [single, 2016]

Max Roach with the J.C. White Singers - "Joshua (For Rev. Charles Koen And The People Of Cairo, Ill.)" [*Lift Every Voice And Sing*, 1971]

Jesse McCarthy:

Tracy Chapman, "Across the Lines" [*Tracy Chapman*, 1988]

Lauryn Hill, "I Find It Hard To Say (Rebel)" [*MTV Unplugged No. 2.0*, 2002]

De La Soul, "Stakes Is High" [*Stakes Is High*, 1996]

YZ, "Thinking of a Master Plan" [*EP*, 1989]

2Pac feat. Talent, "Changes" [1992/1998]

Marvin Gaye, "Inner City Blues (Makes Me Wanna Holler)" [*What's Going On*, 1971]

Public Enemy, "Fight the Power" [*Fear of a Black Planet*, 1990]

Pete Rock and C.L. Smooth "Straighten It Out" [*Mecca and The Soul Brother*, 1992]

Nas feat. Lauryn Hill, "If I Ruled the World (Imagine That)" [*It Was Written*, 1996]

Kendrick Lamar, "Alright" [*To Pimp a Butterfly*, 2015]

Mick Jenkins and Supa BWE, "Treat Me (Caucasian)" [single, 2014]

Curtis Mayfield, "We The People Who Are Darker Than Blue" [*Curtis*, 1970]

D'Angelo and the Vanguard, "The Charade" [*Black Messiah*, 2014]

Jurassic 5, "Freedom" [*Power in Numbers*, 2002]

James Brown, "Funky President (People It's Bad)" [*Reality*, 1974]

Bernice Johnson Reagon, "There's a New World Coming" [*Give Your Hands to Struggle*, 1997]

The Staple Singers, "Stand by Me" [*Swing Low Sweet Chariot*, 1961]

Jimi Hendrix, "The Star Spangled Banner" [*Woodstock*, 1969]

Abbey Lincoln & Max Roach, "Freedom Day" [*We Insist: Freedom Now Suite*, 1960]

Pharoah Sanders, "You've Got To Have Freedom" [*Journey to the One*, 1980]

Funkadelic, "One Nation Under a Groove" [*One Nation Under a Groove*, 1978]

Aretha Franklin "Bridge Over Troubled Water" [*Aretha Live at Fillmore West*, 1971]

Darondo, "Let My People Go" [*Let My People Go*, 2006]

The Internet, "Come Together" [*Hive Mind*, 2018]

Janelle Monáe, "Cold War" [*The ArchAndroid*, 2010]

Gil Scott-Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" [*Small Talk at 125th & Lenox*, 1970]

Ingrid Monson:

Bernice Johnson Reagon, *Give Your Hands to Struggle*, 1975

Archie Shepp, "Blues for Brother George Jackson" [*Attica Blues*, 1972]

Jill Scott, "Sweet Justice" [*Experience: Jill Scott 826+*, 2001]

Max Roach, "Garvey's Ghost" [*Percussion Bitter Suite*, 1961]

John Coltrane, "Song of the Underground Railroad" [*Africa/Brass*, 1961]

Rahsaan Roland Kirk, "There is a Balm in Gilead" [*I, Eye, Aye*, 1972]

Charles Mingus, "Original Faubus Fables" [*Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus*, 1960]

Marcyliena Morgan:

Les McCann and Eddie Harris - "Compared to What" [*Swiss Movement*, 1969]

Jean Grae - "Keep Livin'" [*The Bootleg of the Bootleg*, 2003]

Sweet Honey in the Rock - "We are the Ones" [*Twenty-Five*, 1998]

The Staple Singers - "I'll Take You There" [*Be Altitude: Respect Yourself*, 1972]

Esperanza Spalding - "Black Gold" [*Radio Music Society*, 2012]

NAS - "One Mic" [*The American Epic Sessions*, 2001]

NAS - "If I Ruled the World" [*It Was Written*, 1996]

NAS "The World is Yours" [*Illmatic*, 1994]

J Cole - "G.O.M.D." [*2014 Forest Hills Drive*, 2014]

Talib Kweli - "For Women" [*Train of Thought*, 2000]

Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth- "They Reminisce Over You" [*Mecca and the Soul Brother*, 1992]

Earth Wind and Fire - "Keep Your Head to the Sky" [*Head to the Sky*, 1973]

Ice Cube - "It Was a Good Day" [*The Predator*, 1992]

Five Stairsteps - "O-o-h Child" [*Step by Step by Step*, 1970]

Rhapsody - "Aaliyah," "Maya" [*Eve*, 2019]

Earth Wind and Fire - "Devotion (Live)" [*Open Our Eyes*, 1974]

Beyonce - "Freedom" [*Lemonade* (2016)]

Souls of Mischief - "93 'til Infinity" [*93 'til Infinity*, 1993]

Fresh Prince and Jazzy Jeff - "Summertime" [*Summertime*, 1991]

Too \$hort - "I Want to Be Free (That's the Truth)" [*Shorty the Pimp*, 1992]

Dead Prez - "Police State" [*Let's Get Free*, 2000]

2Pac - "Keep Ya Head Up" [*Strictly 4 My N.I.G.A.Z.*, 1993]

Naughty by Nature - "Why Me? (Ghetto Bastard)" [*Naughty by Nature*, 1991]

Mystic - *Cuts for Luck and Scars for Freedom* [2001]

Tommie Shelby:

Lupe Fiasco, "Strange Fruition" [*Food & Liquor II*, 2012]

9th Wonder and Murs, "Tale of Two Cities" [*The Final Adventure*, 2012]
Rapsody, "The Man" [*Beauty and the Beast*, 2014]
Killer Mike, "Don't Die" [*R.A.P. Music*, 2012]
Dead Prez, "I Have a Dream, Too" [*RGB: Revolutionary But Gangsta*, 2004]
T.I., "We Will Not" [*Us Or Else*, 2016]

Kay Kaufman Shelemay:

K'naan (Keinan Abdi Warsame), "Wavin' Flag" [*Troubadour*, 2008]
Meklit Hadero, "This Was Made Here" [*When the People move the Music Moves Too*, 2017]

Braxton Shelley:

Nina Simone, "Mississippi Goddamn" [*Nina Simone in Concert*, 1964]
Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit" [1939]
Sam Cooke, "A Change is Gonna Come" [*Ain't That Good News*, 1964]
The Isley Brothers, "Fight the Power" [*The Heat is On*, 1975]
Mavis Staples, "We Shall Not Be Moved" [*We'll Never Turn Back*, 2007]
Mahalia Jackson, "I've Been Boked" [at the March on Washington, 1963]

Todne Thomas:

Janelle Monae ft. Wondaland artist collective, "Hell You Talmbout" [2015]
Outkast, "Liberation" [*Aquemini*, 1995]
Rhiannon Giddens, "Brown Baby" [*There Is No Other*, 2019]
Amel Larrieux, "Get Up" [*Get Up*, 1999]
A Tribe Called Quest, "We the People" [*We Got It From Here... Thank You 4 Your Service*, 2016]
Sizzla, "Solid as a Rock" [*The Overstanding*, 2006]
Jamila Woods, "Blk Girl Soldier" [*Heavn*, 2016]

Brandon Terry:

Ice Cube feat. Chuck D, "Endangered Species" [*Amerikkka's Most Wanted*, 1990]
LL Cool J, "Illegal Search," [*Mama Said Knock You Out*, 1990]
Mos Def feat. Q-Tip, "Mr. Nigga" [*Black on Both Sides*, 1999]
Nas feat. Nature, "In Too Deep," [*In Too Deep* o.s.t., 1999]
Erykah Badu, "Soldier" [*New Amerykah Part One New World Order*, 2007]
Kendrick Lamar, "The Blacker the Berry" [*To Pimp a Butterfly*, 2015]
Meek Mill feat. The Dream, "Young Black America" [*Wins and Losses*, 2017]
Beyonce feat. Kendrick Lamar, "Freedom" [*Lemonade*, 2016]
Joshuah Campbell, "Sing Out/March On" [single, 2017]
Childish Gambino, "This is America" [single, 2018]

Note: Given that streaming recorded music on the various existing online platforms perpetuates the structural injustices of the music industry, we have chosen not to create a clickable playlist, which would constitute an implicit endorsement of those platforms. We invite you to access this music through an outlet of your choosing, bearing in mind the potential financial impact on the artists. Some of the more recent recordings may be found on Bandcamp, which offers one of the more favorable arrangements for recording artists.