

Featured Performers



VocalEssence Singers Of This Age (VESOTA) is a dynamic group of 40 young people from high schools in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Louis Park school district who sing, dance, write their own music, rap, and—most importantly—reflect the diversity of our community in its membership. The students sing a wide range of music; perform in world-class venues; study voice, dance, theatre, and spoken word; rehearse at Augsburg University to provide exposure to life in college; and belong to an accepting community of peers from all walks of life. VESOTA, open to all high school students upon successful completion of an interview process, is under the visionary leadership of its founding conductor G. Phillip Shoultz, III.



The Aeolians from Oakwood University was organized in 1946. Since its beginning, the choir has traveled widely, touching the hearts of both young and old with their inspirational singing. Aeolian performances include a repertoire of choral music ranging from the Baroque era to the present. They have become an authoritative exponent of Negro spirituals and Work songs which express the yearnings of their forefathers to be free. The choir’s conductor, Dr. Jason Max Ferdinand, is a former Aeolian. Oakwood University is a private, historically Black University located in Huntsville, Alabama. [Click here for a short video on HBCU and Oakwood.](#) (4:38)

“O Praise the Lord” by Daniel Knagg (7:43-10:23)

I can describe the use of musical elements and performance skills to communicate meaning.

Names _____

LISTENER’S FOUR SQUARE – Have each person in your group choose a different square, then watch, listen, and describe how The Aeolians execute that element of their performance. Discuss your observations.

Tone and intonation	Balance and blend
Posture, poise, stage presence	What else did you notice?

Praise means “to express approval or admiration of a person’s achievements or characteristics.”
Synonyms of **praise** include commend, honor, and celebrate. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>

What do you hear in the sound of the music or performance skills that helps communicate **praise, admiration, honor, celebrate**?

“Sing Unto God” from *Judas Maccabaeus* by George Frideric Handel (10:26-13:05)

I can analyze and describe the use of musical elements to communicate meaning.

melisma – many notes sung on one syllable

oratorio – a large-scale composition based on a religious subject with choruses, soloists, and instrumental accompaniment; similar to an opera but without the costumes, scenery, and actions

Handel composed this oratorio in 1746. The libretto (text) was based on events that happened more than 1900 years earlier (around 160-167 BCE), but the story also seemed to have a close connection to current events: Prince William, the son of England’s King George II, had just returned from a battle in Scotland where his army soundly defeated the army of Charles Edward Stuart. Stuart claimed *he* was heir to the British throne.

Judas Maccabaeus is dedicated to Prince William and has overall themes of liberty, courage, triumph over oppression, and peace. “Sing Unto God” is a movement from Act III and is based on only 14 words.

Handel’s original text:

*Sing unto God, and high affections raise,
To crown this conquest with unmeasur’d praise.*

Text of the arrangement performed by The Aeolians:

*Sing unto God, Let joyful voices raise
A song of gladness with unending praise.*

Sing un - to God. Let joy - ful voic - es raise a song of glad - ness with un - end - ing praise, _____

_____ with un - end - ing praise.

Listening Map

Theme	Description	Length of the theme
1 st time	Introduction by the piano	As shown above
2 nd time	Altos sing alone, “Sing unto God...”	As shown above
3 rd time	Tenors sing alone, “Sing unto God...”	As shown above
4 th time	Full choir starts together, “Sing unto God...”	8 measures
5 th time	Sopranos sing the melody, “Sing unto God...”	As shown above
6 th time	Full choir starts together, “Sing unto God. Sing unto God...”	Extended to 15 measures
7 th time	Full choir starts together, “Sing unto God. Sing unto God...”	Extended to 12 measures
Ending	“with unending praise.” <i>ritardando</i>	Stretched to 3 measures

What do you hear in the sound of the music or performance skills that helps communicate Handel’s intended mood or meaning?

“I Choose Love” by Mark Miller, lyrics by Lindy Thompson (24:32-28:50)

“Today we sing for all of those who are the victims of gun violence or who have it in their communities.”

I can relate music to personal experiences.

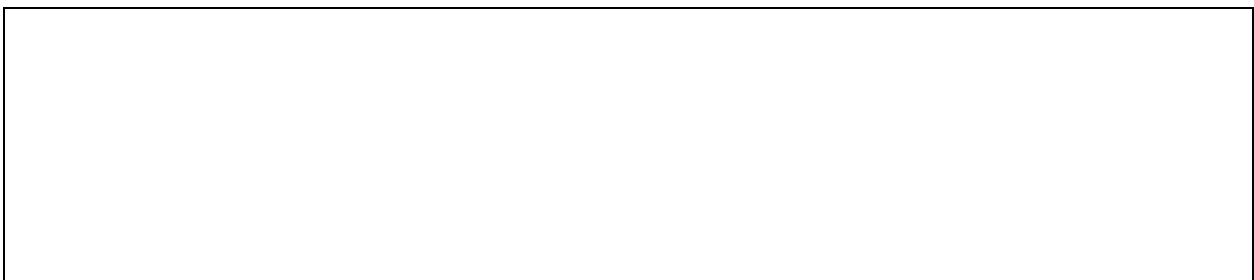
Watch the performance of this song at least two times, then respond to your choice of two questions.

1. Does the music convey to you of a sense of despair... or a sense of hope? Explain.

2. How does listening to the music make you feel? Does the music remind you of another time when you've felt the same way? Explain.

3. Do you think that the ending of the song fits the composer's meaning? Explain.

4. Draw a small image to convey the feeling of the music.



In small groups, discuss the use of choreography.

[Click here for a short video behind the scenes with “I Choose Love.”](#) (5:39)

“Stand Up” from *Harriet* by Cynthia Erivo and Joshuah Brian Campbell (29:46-34:30)

I can connect music to personal and historical situations.

Before you watch this song on the WITNESS concert, view these videos as an introduction to Harriet Tubman’s amazing life.

Harriet Tubman’s Road to Freedom - Article on CBS Sunday Morning show posted Oct 20, 2019 (8:26)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI09jwM9F98>

Harriet – Official Trailer (2:47)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqoEs4cG6Uw>

1. As you view these videos, write down adjectives to describe Harriet.

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Now watch this song from the WITNESS concert and respond to one of the questions below.

2. Does—or how does—“Stand Up” and the performance of Singers Of This Age choir communicate some of the same adjectives in their performance?

3. Is there someone else you know who could also be described by this song? Explain.

BONUS!

Cynthia Erivo played the role of Harriet in the movie and was also one of the composers of this song. What else do you notice in her performance? Stand Up – Official Lyric Video – Performed by Cynthia Erivo (5:02)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn19xvfoXvk>