



NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERTS

HOW AMERICA FOUND ITS
SOUND

MOTOWN/SOUL

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MOTOWN/SOUL

Grades 5 - 8

STANDARDS

5.GM.P1.B, 5.GM.P2.A, 5.GM.Cr3.A, 5.GM.R1.A, 6.GM.Cn1.A, 6.GM.R1.C, 6.GM.R1.A, 7.GM.Cn1.A, 7.GM.Cn2.A, 7.GM.R3.A, 8.GM.Cn2.A, 8.GM.Cn1.A, 8.GM.R1.C

OBJECTIVES

Students will understand how Motown/Soul music inspired positive social change.

TIME NEEDED

45 - 60 minutes

MATERIALS

- Video: [What's Going On - Marvin Gaye \(Lyric Video\)](#)
- Computer or Paper/Pencil

GENRE OVERVIEW

Motown and Soul music during the 1950s, 60s and 70s grew from the sounds of gospel, blues, jazz, and rhythm and blues (R&B). These styles came together to create music filled with powerful singing, catchy melodies, and messages of hope, love, and perseverance. Motown helped bring this music to people all across America and around the world. Today, you can hear its influence in pop, R&B, hip-hop, funk, and even movie soundtracks. Motown and soul remind us that music can tell stories, bring people together, and inspire positive change.

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PROCEDURES:

Students will listen to an example of Motown/Soul, and then go on to create their own chorus in the style of Motown/Soul

1. **Listen:** [What's Going On - Marvin Gaye \(Lyric Video\)](#)
2. **Say:** What message is this artist communicating through his lyrics?
3. **Discussion:** Students share what they hear and notice in the lyrics.
4. **Activity:** Collaborate with classmates to compose a simple chorus that communicates a positive message. (small groups of 4)
 - Choose a message (hope, kindness, friendship, courage, belonging).
 - Write a 4-line chorus with repeated words or phrases.
 - Add desired instrumentation.
 - Decide where to include call and response or harmonies.
 - Students share their compositions with the class.
5. **Extended Activity:** Students utilize Quaver's Q Grooves, SoundTrap, Garage Band, [Chrome Music Lab](#), or Suno AI to craft a musical piece.

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