

Black History in Harmony, Reverb – A Musical Play

Description and Sequence

- Introductions.
- Reverb performs “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

Students learn the song’s cultural significance and the role of musical harmony. The five performers introduce themselves individually and identify their voice part (tenor, baritone and bass) by singing “The Burger Roll Call Song.” Students learn the song and sing along, using the standard call-and-response technique, which builds trust between the performers and the students.

- Reverb explains the significance of a cappella singing and demonstrates the use of hand-held percussive instruments (clave, egg shaker, and tambourine). Students are taught a vocal warm-up technique that encourages them to use their voices and bodies as an instrument. Students vocalize the warm-up each time a new scene is revealed.

- Using a metaphorical “time machine,” students are led on a journey, focusing on the years 1619, 1866, 1960 and 2008. At each “stop,” the students hear songs and watch the actors create a tableau that highlights the social issue of the era.

- Reverb uses several tools in the storytelling.
- The stage becomes a canvas to tell the freedom story. One story involves a village in Africa, another tells of a slave plantation in Jamestown, VA. An Indian reservation in the American West is also included. Each year in the timeline is represented by an oversized, colorful placard. The performers wear black and white masks to illustrate racial themes.

- Reverb then recaps each story. Students are invited to answer aloud the Narrator’s questions about key facts, as a measure of what they have learned. The review also reinforces the Enduring Understanding: Each of us, through our talent, has the power to make our world a better place. Students are urged to ask themselves: What is my talent, and how will I use it to make my world a better place?

- Reverb ends the program with a sing-along: “This Little Light of Mine.” The Song Leader tells the students that each of them has a talent, a light they can shine to make their world a better place. Students are reminded that the educational journey is one of the best ways to discover their light.