

What is the Power of Music?

Discovering
American
Jewish History
Through
Objects

01 HOW TO PRAY

— What's the difference between saying and singing something?

Say your prayers in a melody that is most pleasant and sweet to you... Then you shall pray with proper *kavanah*, because the melody will draw your heart after the words that come from your mouth.

וכשתתפלל אמור אותן באותו ניגון שנעים ומתוק... ותתפלל תפלתך
בכוונה וימשוך לבך אחרי מוצא פיך

Rabbi Yehudah HeChasid, *Sefer Hasidim* 158

02 RUNNING A COUNTRY

When will they know that running a country includes running the arts of a country, that art is not a fad, but one of the [most] direct means of communication that human beings have, and their most personal expression?

Leonard Bernstein, "Arts Belong to the People," *New York Times*, 1946

03 MARIA

Maria! / I've just kissed a girl named Maria, / And suddenly I've found / How wonderful a sound / Can be. / Maria! / Say it loud and there's music playing— / Say it soft and it's almost like praying— / Maria... / I'll never stop saying / Maria!

Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, "Maria," from *West Side Story*, 1957

Say it loud and there's music playing / Say it soft and it's almost like praying / Cabo Rojo, Corozal / Naguabo, Guaynabo / San Lorenzo y San Germán / San Sebastián, mi viejo San Juan / Isabela, Maricao...

Leonard Bernstein, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Stephen Sondheim, "Almost Like Praying," 2017

04 SONG OF FREEDOM

— Do you have a song that you turn to when you're feeling sad or hopeless? What is it, and why?

When Israel was in Egypt's land / Let my people go / Oppressed so hard they could not stand / Let my people go / Go down, Moses / Way down in Egypt's land / Tell old Pharaoh / Let my people go.

"Go Down Moses," African American spiritual, 1800s

POLITICAL MUSIC 08

The artist's first duty is to the voices within. In my experience, very few topical or protest songs end up having much staying power. And often you end up preaching to the choir — singing to a group of like-minded people who already agree with you anyway.

Howard Eisberg, songwriter and retired immigration lawyer, 2017

Springsteen, he went on a 12-minute rant. And I love Springsteen. But I don't want to sit there and listen to a political rant, even if it's exactly my views. I'm not at a political rally.

Matt Zupetic, music fan and veteran, 2016

SINGING WORDS OF WISDOM 07

We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. / We say to girls: "You can have ambition, but not too much. / You should aim to be successful, but not too successful. / Otherwise, you will threaten the man."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, sampled in Beyoncé's "Flawless," 2013

SAY SOMETHING 06

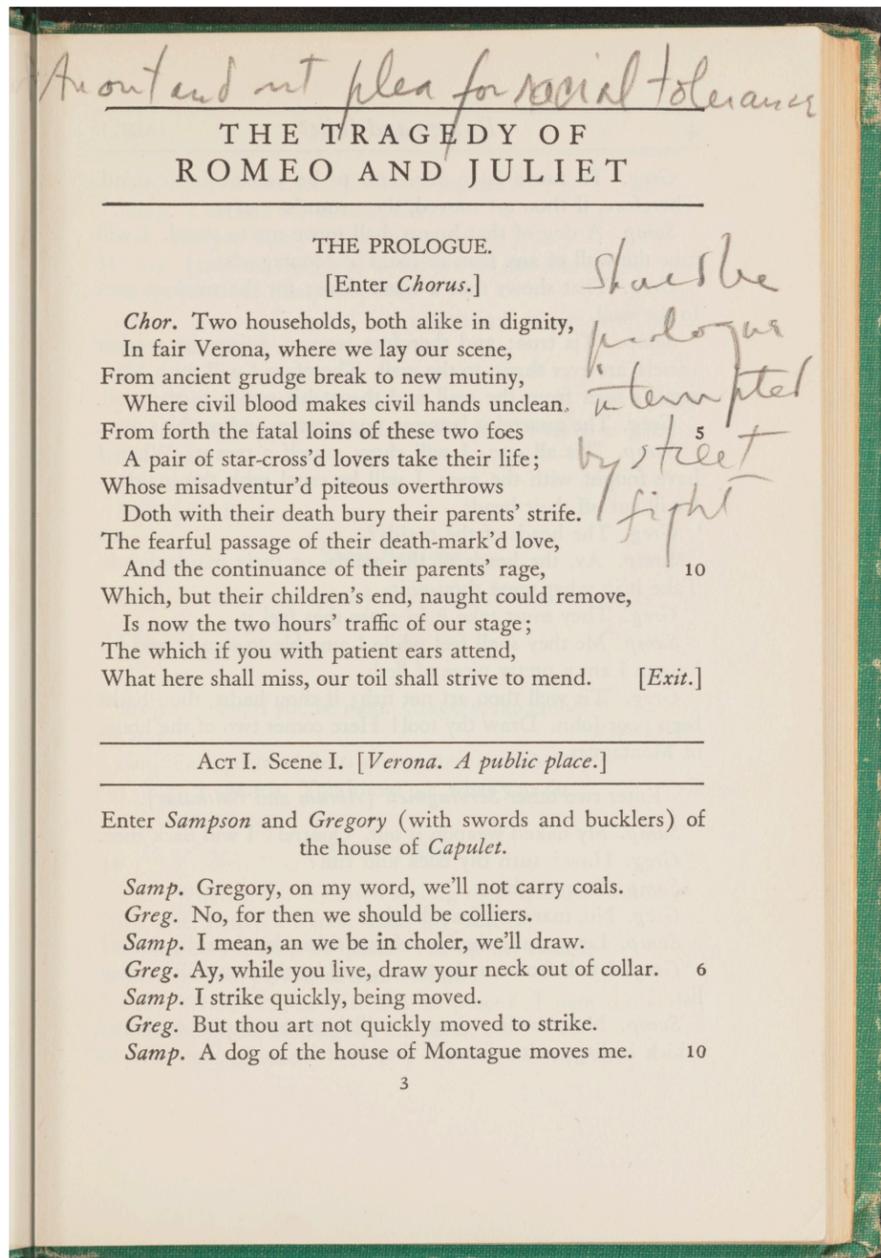
I feel like say somethin', I feel like take somethin' / I feel like skatin' off, I feel like waitin' for 'em / Maybe it's too late for 'em / I feel like the whole world want me to pray for 'em.

Kendrick Lamar, "Feel," 2017

SONG OF HOPE 05

Oh let us turn our thoughts today / To Martin Luther King / And recognize that there are ties between us / All men and women / Living on the earth / Ties of hope and love / Sister and brotherhood / That we are bound together / In our desire to see the world become / A place in which our children can grow free and strong.

James Taylor, "Shed a Little Light," 1991



William Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet*. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1940. Edited by George Kittredge. Annotated by Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins, 1940s-50s. Courtesy of the Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC

How would you compare the audiences for Adichie's speech and Beyoncé's song?

How do you express yourself?