



Musical Heroes: Stories of African-American Composers

George Walker (1922-2018)

Suggested Recordings, Resources, and Topics for Classroom Discussion

Recordings

Lyric for Strings

Chineke! Orchestra at BBC Proms; Kevin John Edusei, conductor
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZLLVacAT6Y>

Violin Concerto: third movement

Gregory Walker, violin
Sinfonia Varsovia; Ian Hobson, conductor
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSBzXjHVBxg>

Lilacs: The Music of George Walker

Featuring *Lilacs* for Voice and Orchestra (Pulitzer Prize-winning composition), *Tangents* for Chamber Orchestra, Wind Set for Woodwind Quintet, Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano, String Quartet No. 2
George Walker, conductor; various artists
<https://open.spotify.com/album/39cYuMyCLDjeihcjm37gsq?si=as3uqnHLOq-A0u6JqpFbZw>

George Walker In Recital

Featuring piano works by George Walker, performed by the composer
<https://open.spotify.com/album/0IjsMI4P7GVDvfn8Z41xbU?si=-weyDciUTaeTmHqwqbW8Fw>

Additional Resources

Website: [George Walker \(georgetwalker.com\)](http://georgetwalker.com)

Video Interview: [George Walker, Composer](#) (This 1991 "State of the Arts" story was rebroadcast in 1996 on the occasion of George Walker's 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Music.)

Website Article: [Pulitzer In Memoriam: George Walker](#)

Topics for classroom discussion, further research, and discovery

- African-American Musicians in American Culture
- Civil Rights movement
- Pulitzer Prize

African-American Musicians in American Culture

- The American musical landscape is richly populated with African-American musicians—composers, performers, and practitioners in many different musical genres. Research and summarize the work and impact of African Americans as:
 - Orchestral music composers
 - Orchestral music performers
 - Opera singers
 - Jazz composers and performers
 - Rhythm and blues composers and performers
 - Folk music composers and performers
 - Hip-hop composers and performers
 - Rock and roll composers and performers
 - Film music and video soundtrack composers

Civil Rights movement

- What are Civil Rights? What were the central issues of the Civil Rights movement?
- Create a timeline of important events in the Civil Rights movement.
- Research a leader from the Civil Rights movement—their views, life, and legacy.
- What changes in political, social, and racial policy resulted from the Civil Rights movement? Do the central issues of the movement continue to resonate in today's political and social climate? Have the issues been resolved or do some of them remain under debate?

Pulitzer Prize

- What is the history and significance of the Pulitzer Prize?
- Research other notable prizes rewarding excellence, such as the Nobel Peace Prize, MacArthur Fellowship, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. What purpose do these awards serve? Who are some of the famous recipients?
- Create an imaginary award for exemplary accomplishments in a field of your choosing. Determine the criteria for eligibility, nomination, judging/assessment, and selection of awardees.
- Research and summarize the achievements of some African American recipients of the Pulitzer Prize:
 - Gwendolyn Brooks – poet
 - Alex Haley – writer
 - Alice Walker – writer
 - August Wilson – playwright
 - Toni Morrison – writer
 - Wynton Marsalis – musician
 - Anthony Davis – composer