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REGGAE ROOTS

module 2.2. Redemption Song



NAC+O
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Orchestra

nac-cna.ca/en/reggae-roots



A NOTE FOR EDUCATORS

Throughout Module 2.2, students learned how reggae music can be an artist’s vehicle for social change. Music serves important purposes *beyond* entertainment. In 1937, Jamaican political activist **Marcus Garvey** addressed the community of Sydney, Nova Scotia, calling for the emancipation of Black people from systematic racism, oppression, and slavery. Garvey’s memorable speech later inspired Bob Marley to write his widely-recognized **Redemption Song**.

In Module 2.2, students are introduced to “Redemption Song.” After reflecting upon the thoughts, ideas, and feelings that arise when listening to Marley’s composition, students adopt the role of detectives in uncovering the song’s unique connection to Canada. Lastly, students listen to Jah’Mila’s captivating cover of “Redemption Song” alongside the NAC Orchestra. At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. **Explain the origins of Bob Marley’s “Redemption Song”**
2. **Draw meaningful connections between music and real-world social change**

A downloadable slide presentation of Module 2.2 is available on the NAC Reggae Roots webpage. It is recommended that these materials be adapted to your teaching environment.

The various project-based activities included in Module 2.2 are structured around the following 21st-century competencies: *critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation*.

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Cover Page: “Bob Marley” (2022)



PART 1: BOB MARLEY

Note to Instructor

Activity Time length: 10 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Cue “Redemption Song” by Bob Marley from the internet.

Jamaican singer-songwriter **Bob Marley** is well known for his contributions to the fight for liberation. Before we listen to one of his most famous songs, reflect on the following question:

1. **Do you already know anything about Bob Marley or about “Redemption Song?” If not, what comes to mind when you read the word “redemption?”**

Make any notes or doodles to reflect your thinking below.



Now you are ready to listen! As you do, complete the column on the left with thoughts or drawings. Leave the right side blank for now. We will come back to that later!

→ Listen First: “Redemption Song” by Bob Marley ←



	Bob Marley's Version	Jah'Mila's Version
Lyrics <i>Same or Different?</i>		
Instruments <i>What do you hear?</i>		
Dynamics <i>How loud or soft?</i>		
Feelings <i>What do you feel?</i>		
Visuals <i>From the Music Video</i>		
Other <i>Anything else?</i>		

PART 2: UNCOVERING CONNECTIONS TO CANADA

Note to Instructor

Activity Time length: 20 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Ensure that students have access to devices connected to the internet.

Optional: Divide students into groups of 2 to 6.



1. **Let's put our detective hats on and uncover how Marley's "Redemption Song" is connected to Canada!**

In this activity, you will undertake research to uncover an important influence behind the creation of this now-famous song. This can be done by yourself, with a partner, or with a small group!

Note: If you choose to work in a group, make sure that you have someone filling each of the following roles:

- A Scribe who takes notes
- A Reader who reads out materials to the group
- A Spokesperson to present the group's findings to the class
- A Time-keeper
- Researchers

2. **Using a device connected to the internet, locate the answers to the questions below!**

Be sure to use credible websites like Encyclopedia Britannica, Kids Britannica, or Canadian Encyclopedia.

Research Questions	Research Results
Who is Bob Marley, and why do we remember him today?	
What does the word "redemption" mean?	
Do some quick research on the history of Jamaica, Make a timeline of the five most important events in Jamaica's history.	
What was Africville? Why can't we visit this community today?	
Who was Marcus Garvey? And what is his connection to Black communities in Canada?	
What was happening in Bob Marley's personal life when he wrote "Redemption Song?"	



PART 3: MARCUS GARVEY

Note to Instructor

Activity Time length: 5 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Ensure that students have access to devices connected to the internet.

By the end of the last activity, you will have learned that Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" was inspired by a speech given by **Marcus Garvey** in Nova Scotia in 1937.

1. **Take a look at the lyrics below. What are the similarities? What are the differences?**

Quote from Marcus Garvey's Speech	Excerpt from Bob Marley's "Redemption Song"
<p>"We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind.</p> <p>Mind is your only ruler, sovereign. The man who is not able to develop and use his mind is bound to be the slave of the other man, who uses his mind, because man is related to man under all circumstances for good or ill. If man is not able to protect himself from the other man, he should use his mind to good advantage."</p>	<p>Won't you help to sing These songs of freedom? 'Cause all I ever have Redemption songs Redemption songs</p> <p>Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery None but ourselves can free our minds Have no fear for atomic energy 'Cause none of them can stop the time</p>

2. **What connections can you find between Garvey's speech and Marley's Song?**



PART 4: A NEW TAKE ON “REDEMPTION SONG”

Note to Instructor

Activity Time length: 10 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Cue “Redemption Song” from the video series.

Let’s return to your reflections on the music, lyrics, and visuals of Bob Marley’s “Redemption Song” earlier in Module 2B.

1. Listen to Jah’Mila and Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser’s discussion on the importance of the song and the message it conveys to listeners. Then, watch the performance.

→ Listen First: “Redemption Song” performed by Jah’Mila & NAC Orchestra ←

2. Revisit the comparison chart from earlier in this module. Reflect on Jah’Mila’s performance by completing the column on the right side.

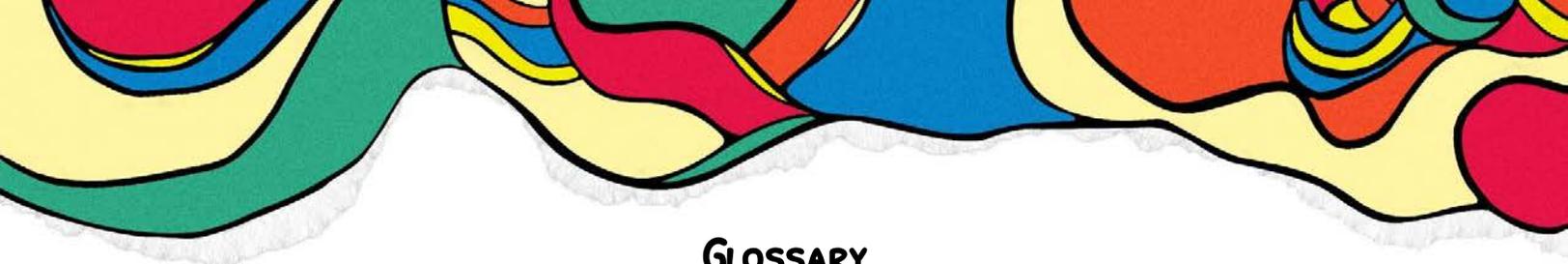
Chris Palmer, a bassoonist with Symphony Nova Scotia, is also a composer and arranger. Palmer created the orchestral version of “Redemption Song” heard in the video!

3. **Why do you think Palmer chose the instruments that he did?**

Do you think these choices help communicate the message of the song?

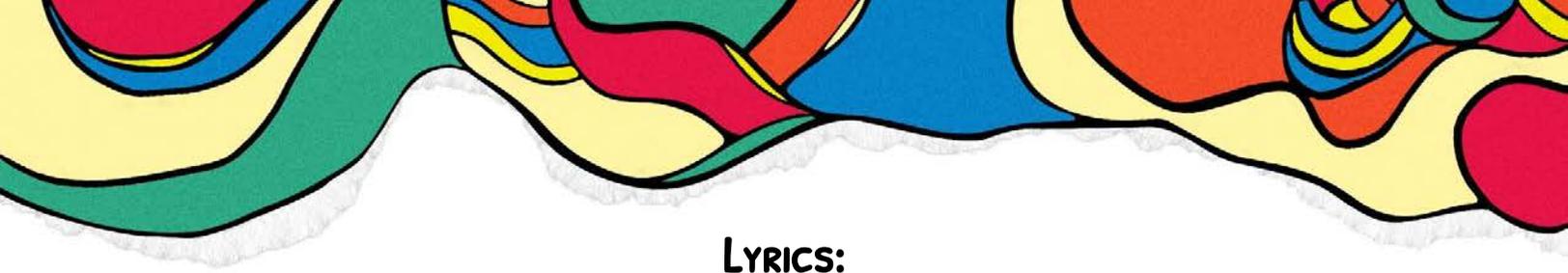


Complete module 2 by discussing your comparison chart and overall thoughts on “Redemption Song” with a partner, or with the class!



GLOSSARY

- **Bob Marley:** A Jamaican singer-songwriter and pioneer of Reggae Music. He lived from 1945 until 1981.
- **Chris Palmer:** A Bassoonist and composer who wrote the orchestral arrangement for “Redemption Song.”
- **Genre:** Unique categories of musical compositions with similar style, form, emotion, or subject.
- (On Music, 2016)
- **Marcus Garvey:** A Jamaican activist and journalist. He lived from 1887 until 1940.
- **Redemption Song:** A Reggae song written by Bob Marley. Released in 1980.
- **Reggae:** Popular music of Jamaican origin that combines native styles with elements of rock and soul music, and is performed at moderate tempos with the accent on the offbeat. (Merriam Webster)



LYRICS:
BLACK WOMAN (1979)

Black woman, ooh, black woman,
Like me, you've struggled long,
You trod one of life's roughest roads,
You bear the heaviest load,
To be someone, to belong,
You're bearing your mile and a half furlong,
Don't give up now,
Just pray for strength now,
For you I dedicate my song.

Wadada Wadada Wadada Wada da
Da da da da,
Woo ooh ooh ooh ooh woo ooh.

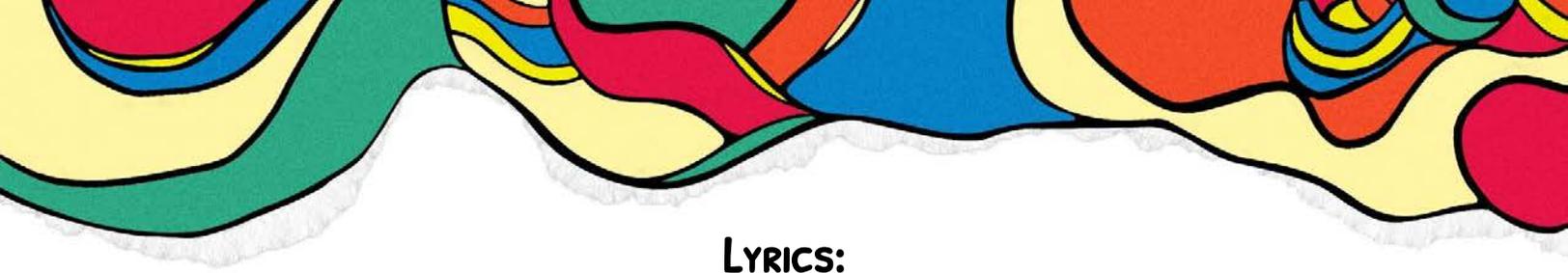
Forsaked once in the plantation,
Lashes to our skin,
On auction blocks we were chained and sold,
Handled merchandise,
Highly abused and when we were refused,
Were thrown in the garbage bins,

No need for that now,
Free yourself from that now,
and help me sing my song.

Wadada Wadada Wadada Wada da
Da da da da,
Woo ooh ooh ooh ooh woo ooh.

When you're fighting stand up for the right thing,
Not that which is wrong,
Heard Rachel mourning for her children,
When Herod took their little heads,
Like Mary and like Joseph,
Mother of Moses too,
All overcame their evil devices,
I dedicate my song for you,

Wadada Wadada Wadada Wada da
Da da da da,
Woo ooh ooh ooh ooh woo ooh.



LYRICS:

REDEMPTION SONG (1980)

Old pirate, yes, they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the Almighty
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly
Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
are my Redemption songs
my Redemption songs
Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the time

How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look? Ooh
Some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfil the book
Won't you help to sing
Another song of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Are my Redemption songs
Oh my Redemption songs

Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever had
Are my Redemption songs
Oh my Redemption songs
My Redemption songs
These songs of freedom