



Guy Davis

An American Blues Ambassador

Friday, February 3, 2017

10:00 & 11:30 AM



Study Guide

Using the Study Guide

This guide has been created to provide you with information about the performance which you will see at Flushing Town Hall. We have provided an activity that will familiarize your students with the art forms and key themes prior to their visit. The study guide also includes a follow-up activity that can be used to continue the learning experience back in the classroom. The activities in this guide can be adapted to suit any age range or grade level.



Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts (FCCA) is a not for profit organization which receives major support from the National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Mayor Bill de Blasio; Queens Borough President Melinda Katz; New York State Assembly Members Ron Kim, Ed Braunstein and Nily Rozic; New York City Council, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, the Queens Delegation; the Howard Gilman Foundation and the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation.

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WHAT IS FLUSHING COUNCIL ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS?

Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts' (FCCA) mission is to present multidisciplinary global arts that engage and educate the global communities of Queens, New York and New York City in order to promote mutual appreciation. As advocates of arts equity since 1979, we support local, immigrant, national and international artists, developing partnerships and collaborations that enhance our efforts. Our vision is to foster artistic excellence and innovation. We bring audiences together via high quality arts programs in Jazz, classical, and world music, theater, dance, and spoken word, family and education programs, senior programs, exhibitions, and free community events.

FCCA manages and programs the historic Flushing Town Hall, a NYC landmark built in 1862, on behalf of the City of New York which owns the building. In 1999, FCCA completed an \$8 million restoration of the landmark, converting it from an abandoned eyesore into a thriving center for the visual and performing arts. Flushing Town Hall's facilities include a 308-seat theater that can be converted into a banquet hall, a professional gallery, a garden that accommodates up to 200 people for outdoor events, and a Gift Shop that features work by local-based artists based. The hallmark of FCCA's current programming is a cross-cultural focus: works that fuse or bridge different cultures as well as larger programs that bring presentations of art forms from different parts of the world.

FCCA is a member of New York City's prestigious 33-member Cultural Institutions Group and an Affiliate Member of the Smithsonian Institution.

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU COME TO FLUSHING TOWN HALL:

- Students should leave all bags and food items at school.
- Plan to arrive fifteen (15) minutes before the performance.
- Buses should drop students off in front of our building
- No lunch facilities available at Flushing Town Hall.

DIRECTIONS TO FLUSHING TOWN HALL:

Flushing Town Hall address: **137-35 Northern Boulevard, Flushing, NY 11354**
(located at the corner of Northern Boulevard and Linden Place)

By Subway from Main Street Station:

Take the **7** train to the Flushing-Main Street station. Walk north on Main Street (towards 39th Avenue). From Main Street, make a right onto Northern Boulevard. Heading East, (right) on Northern Boulevard, cross the street. Flushing Town Hall is the large brick building on the corner of Linden Place.

By Bus:

The following bus stops are located at the intersection of Main Street and Northern Boulevard: **Q 1, Q 13, Q 19, Q 25, Q28, Q 34, Q 44, Q 50, Q 65, Q 66**



About the Artist



Guy Davis is an American Blues musician, author, music teacher, and actor. Growing up in a family of artists (his parents were acclaimed actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis), he fell under the spell of Blind Willie McTell and Fats Waller at an early age. He spent a lot of his childhood listening to the stories of his parents and grandparents about their life in the South which later became his inspiration for his music.

Over the past twenty years, he has recorded over a dozen albums that have gained accolades both nationally and internationally often times landing him a spot in the end of year top 10 music charts. He has performed in theaters and festivals in more than 30 countries including the Ukraine, Spain, Russia, Denmark, Ecuador, Greenland, Canada, and of course the United States. In addition to his music, he has had an acting career on Broadway and Off-Broadway starring in the productions *The Adventures of Fishy Waters: In Bed With the Blues*, *Robert Johnson: Trick the Devil*, and *Finian's Rainbow*. He is the recipient of the Blues Foundation's "Keeping the Blues Alive" award and has been nominated for a number of other Blues awards.

As an American Blues Ambassador, he strives to help children gain an appreciation for the diversity of musical styles and traditions found in the United States and experience music as an expression of community through friendship, welcome, caring, and courage!

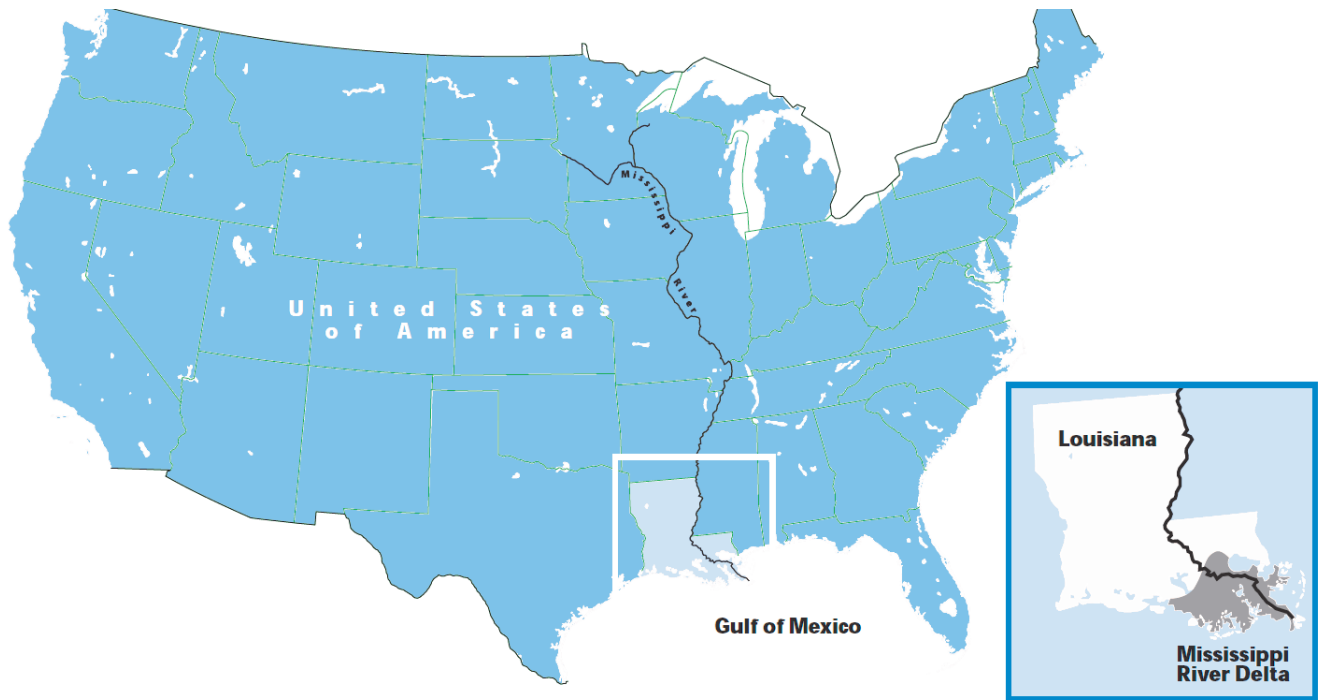
"With the world falling apart, it's up to all of us to be ambassadors and to spread the music everywhere we can."

- Guy Davis

What is *Blues* Music?

The Blues is a style of music created by African Americans living in the southern states of the US in the late 19th century around the time slavery ended. The music is often associated with the stories of newly freed slaves in the South and the many hardships they faced. While incorporating the sounds of spirituals, work songs, field hollers, shouts, and chants, the oldest Blues songs expressed hard times and suffering.

Most of the people who created the Blues lived in a region called the "Mississippi River Delta." This is an area along the southern most tip where the Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico.



The most common instruments played in Blues music include:



Guitar



Piano



Double Bass



Drums



Harmonica



Trumpet



Trombone

Blues Words

Blue– To feel sad.

Bone Orchard– A graveyard.

Bourbon Street– The most famous street found in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Call and Response– The back and forth between two musical voices or instruments with the leader as the “call” and the group as the “response.”

Delta Blues– The blues style of music that has its origins from the Mississippi River Delta region.

Field Hollers– A rural African American vocal song performed by an individual as opposed to a group while engaging in manual labor.

Great Migration– A mass movement during the first half of the 20th century of African Americans, from primarily rural areas in the South, who moved to urban cities (particularly in the North).

Harp– Another term for a harmonica.

High Water– A flood.

Highway 51– A metaphor used to describe one’s longing to join the Great Migration for a better life.

Improvisation– The act of playing a song without prior planning or looking at a sheet of music.

Jelly Bone Jelly– A girlfriend.

Oral Culture– Traditions that have been passed on between generations through spoke word, stories, tales, and songs.

Piedmont Blues– A regional style of music from the Southeast United States (Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia).

Slide– A method of playing the guitar where the player places an object to press down hard on the strings to change the sound.

Work Songs– A way to synchronize the rhythms of group tasks in a call and response fashion, typically in time with their work motions such as chopping or digging.



Resources

History of Blues (Youtube clip): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7f3lgs_3Db0

About Mississippi Delta Blues: <https://www.pbs.org/theblues/roadtrip/deltastyle.html>

About the Blues (Mississippi): <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/41/mississippi-blues>

Pre-Show Activity

Feelin' the Blues

Blues music is often associated with the stories of newly freed slaves in the South and the many hardships they faced. In this activity, students will be introduced to the many emotions that can be felt in Blues songs and be able to discuss the lyrics and feelings found in a song.



Vera Hall, (1902-1964)

Adell Hall Ward, better known as “Vera Hall” is an American Blues singer during the 1930s and 1940s.

She was born just after the turn of the century in Livingston, Alabama.

Vera Hall is most well known for her song, “ Trouble So Hard” that was written in 1937.

Trouble So Hard

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Don't nobody know my troubles but God

Don't nobody know my troubles but God

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Went in the room

Didn't stay long

Looked on the bed, and

Brother was dead

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Don't nobody know my troubles but God

Don't nobody know my troubles but God

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Ooh, Lordy, troubles so hard

Directions:

Read through the lyrics “Trouble So Hard” by and answer the following questions:

1. What does this song suggest about the condition of the people who sang or listened to this song?
2. Does this song make you feel happy, sad, frustrated, tired, etc? Please explain.
3. What do you think is the singer's attitude about the experiences they are talking about?
4. What do the lyrics tell you about their outlook on life or their perspective?



This activity supports the following Learning Standards:

New York Common Core State Standards-

English Language Arts [ELA]- Reading; Writing; Speaking & Listening; Language; **Social Studies [SS]-** History of the United States & Geography

New York City Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts– Music

Making Connections; Working with Community & Cultural Resources; Exploring Careers & Life-Long Learning

National Core Arts Standards- Responding; Connecting

I Got the Blues

The music that you heard by Guy Davis at Flushing Town Hall, was called the Blues. In this activity, students will explore some of the common themes found in Blues music and create their own Blues interpretation inspired from the show.



When we say “ someone has the blues” what does that mean? Try to think of a few words that can describe the “Blues.”

Once you have define what it means to have the blues, think about a time when you were blue or some thing that would make you feel blue.

Now from your list of things that have or would make you feel blue, write a three-line blues song or draw a picture that describes how you feel when you are blue.

Share your stories and/or pictures with a group or with your class.



This activity supports the following Learning Standards:

New York Common Core State Standards-

English Language Arts [ELA]- Reading; Writing; Speaking and Listening; Language

New York City Blueprint for Teaching & Learning in the Arts- (Visual Arts)

Art Making; Developing Literacy, Making Connections, Working with Community and Cultural Resources; Exploring Careers and Life Long Learning

National Core Arts Standards-

Creating; Performing/Presenting/Production; Responding; Connecting



***CONTACT FLUSHING TOWN HALL
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