Strange Fruit: A poem written by Abel Meeropol in 1937 in reaction to the lynching of two black men. Strange Fruit was first published in *The New York Teacher*, a union magazine. Billie Holliday first performed it in 1939 after it had gained popularity as a protest song. Columbia refused to record the song, but allowed her to record it for Commodore. The song itself is a powerful condemnation of lynching. Its power is derived from the simple juxtaposition of the horrors of lynching with an idyllic southern landscape. This version performed live by Billie Holliday demonstrates the effectiveness of this song as her delivery and voice pair with the lyrics and produce a haunting effect.

Billie Holliday sings *Strange Fruit*

Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around: A protest song from the 1950’s and 1960’s Ain’t Gonna was probably based on a black spiritual from the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This song was an assertion of the solidarity and determination of the black civil rights movement in the face of oppression. Despite the power that was being directed against blacks they were able to remain defiant and focused on their goals such as real freedom. Sweet Honey In the Rock is a Grammy winning female a cappella ensemble that was formed in 1973 at the Black Repertory Theater Company in Washington D.C.

Sweet Honey In The Rock sings *Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round*

Say It Loud (I’m Black And I’m Proud), Pt. 1: Written and performed first in 1968 by James Brown, Say It Loud is a strong statement of Brown’s pride in being black. In the song he talks about the challenges to equality that faced black people and his refusal to celebrate the gains of the civil rights movement unless he also had the ability to rejoice in his own humanity. This song was adopted by the Black Power movement of the late 1960’s. Here it is performed live by the Godfather of Soul.

James Brown sings *Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud), Pt. 1*
*Fables of Faubus:* This song was composed and written by Charles Mingus to protest the deployment of the National Guard in Arkansas by Governor Orval Faubus. Faubus was attempting to prevent school desegregation. Columbia refused to include the lyrics on the *Mingus Ah Um* album which was released in 1959 with the track presented as an instrumental. The song was released with the lyrics included by the Candid label in 1960 on the album *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus.* Charles Mingus was an influential avant-garde jazz composer as well as a virtuoso bassist and stands as one of the great American artists of the 20th Century.

Charles Mingus and Dannie Richmond sing *Fables of Faubus*

*By The Time I Get To Arizona:* Written by Chuck D and performed by his band Public Enemy this song took exception to Governor Evan Meacham’s decision to end state observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. In the song Chuck D. threatens the life of the governor due to his refusal to honor the great civil rights leader. Aside from the irony of threatening violence on behalf of a man who devoted his life to non-violence, *By The Time I Get To Arizona* is a forceful repudiation of racism.

Public Enemy performs *By The Time I Get To Arizona*

- How important was music in disseminating information about the civil rights cause to a population that had been deprived of formal education?
- Would mainstream releases of *Strange Fruit* and *Fables of Faubus* have been effective in producing support for the movement?
- Does the presence of spiritual songs and melodies from these songs indicate the pervasive influence of the church in the black civil rights movement, or is it merely the co-opting of available, emotive tunes?
Strange Fruit

By Billie Holiday and Abel Meeropol (1937)

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.
Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around

Ain't gonna let nobody
   Turn me around! Turn me around! Turn me around!
   Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around
   I'm gonna keep on a - walkin' keep on a - talkin'
   Marchin' down to freedom's land!

Ain't gonna let injustice
   Turn me around! Turn me around! Turn me around!
   Ain't gonna let injustice turn me around
   I'm gonna keep on a - walkin' keep on a - talkin'
   Marchin' down to freedom's land!

Ain't gonna let segregation...

Ain't gonna let oppression...

Ain't gonna let your jail cells...

Ain't gonna let your violence...

Ain't gonna let nobody...

* DON'T LET NOBODY TURN YOU
  DON'T LET NOBODY TURN YOU AROUND! (REPEAT 5 TIMES)
  I'M GONNA KEEP ON A WALKIN', KEEP ON A TALKIN'
  KEEP ON A WALKIN', KEEP ON A TALKIN',
  KEEP ON A WALKIN', KEEP ON A TALKIN',
  MARCIN' DOWN TO FREEDOM'S LAND
Uh! With your bad self!

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

Some people say we've got a lot of malice
Some say it's a lot of nerve
But I say we won't quit moving until we get what we deserve
We have been bucked and we have been scorned
We have been treated bad, talked about as just bones
But just as it takes two eyes to make a pair, ha
Brother we can't quit until we get our share

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!
One more time!
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!

I worked on jobs with my feet and my hand
But all the work I did was for the other man
Now we demand a chance to do things for ourselves
We're tired of beatin' our head against the wall
And workin' for someone else

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud

We're people, we're just like the birds and the bees
We'd rather die on our feet
Than be livin' on our knees

Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Fables of Faubus

Charles Mingus

Oh, Lord, don't let 'em shoot us!
Oh, Lord, don't let 'em stab us!
Oh, Lord, don't let 'em tar and feather us!
Oh, Lord, no more swastikas!
Oh, Lord, no more Ku Klux Klan!

Name me someone who's ridiculous, Dannie.
Governor Faubus!
Why is he so sick and ridiculous?
He won't permit integrated schools.

Then he's a fool! Boo! Nazi Fascist supremists!
Boo! Ku Klux Klan (with your Jim Crow plan)

Name me a handful that's ridiculous, Dannie Richmond.
Faubus, Rockefeller, Eisenhower
Why are they so sick and ridiculous?

Two, four, six, eight:
They brainwash and teach you hate.
H-E-L-L-O, Hello.

Orval E. Faubus was the governor of Arkansas in 1957 and against desegregation. He sent the National Guard to prevent black children from attending high school in Little Rock.
By The Time I Get To Arizona

I'm countin' down to the day deservin'
Fittin' for a king
I'm waitin' for the time when I can
Get to Arizona
'Cause my money's spent on
The goddamn rent
Neither party is mine not the
Jackass or the elephant
20,000 nig niggy nigas in the corner
Of the cell block but they come
From California
Population none in the desert and sun
Wit' a gun cracker
Runnin' things under his thumb
Starin' hard at the postcards
Isn't it odd and unique?
Seein' people smile wild in the heat
120 degree
'Cause I wanna be free
What's a smilin' fact
When the whole state's racist
Why want a holiday F--k it 'cause I wanna
So what if I celebrate it standin' on a corner
I ain't drinkin' no 40
I B thinkin' time wit' a nine
Until we get some land
Call me the trigger man
Looki lookin' for the governor
Huh he ain't lovin' ya
But here to trouble ya
He's rubbin' ya wrong
Get the point come along

An he can get to the joint
I urinated on the state
While I was kickin' this song
Yeah, he appear to be fair
The cracker over there
He try to keep it yesteryear
The good ol' days
The same ol' ways
That kept us dyin'
Yes, you me myself and I'ndeed
What he need is a nosebleed
Read between the lines
Then you see the lie
Politically planned
But understand that's all she wrote
When we see the real side
That hide behind the vote
They can't understand why he the man
I'm singin' 'bout a king
They don't like it
When I decide to mike it
Wait I'm waitin' for the date
For the man who demands respect
'Cause he was great c'mon
I'm on the one mission
To get a politician
To honor or he's a gonner
By the time I get to Arizona

I got 25 days to do it
If a wall in the sky
Just watch me go thru it
'Cause I gotta do what I gotta do
PE number one
Gets the job done
When it's done and over
Was because I drove'er
Thru all the static
Not stick but automatic
That's the way it is
He gotta get his
Talin' MLK
Gonna find a way
Make the state pay
Lookin' for the day
Hard as it seems
This ain't no damn dream
Gotta know what I mean
It's team against team
Catch the light beam
So I pray
I pray everyday
I do and praise jah the maker
Lookin' for culture
I got but not here
From jah maker
Pushin' and shakin' the structure
Bringin' down the babylon
Hearin' the sucker
That make it hard for the brown
The hard Boulova
I need now
More than ever now
Who's sittin' on my freedah'
Opressor people beater
Piece of the pick
We picked a piece
Of land that we deservin' now
Reparation a piece of the nation
And damn he got the nerve
Another niga they say and classify
We want too much
My peep plus the whole nine is mine
Don't think I even double dutch
Here's a brother my attitude hit 'em
Hang 'em high
Blowin' up the 90s started tickin' 86
When the blind get a mind
Better start and earn while we sing it
Now
There will be the day we know those down and who will go