

Responding to Key Scenes

Enriching the Humanities Through Opera

**OPERA
AMERICA**

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How can poetry and music enhance a key scene in a story?

Today's Objectives:

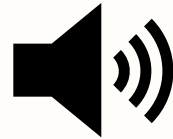
- Identify characters' emotions and responses in a key scene.
- Identify poetic devices found in presented examples.
- Create a response poem, at least four lines in length, using two poetic devices to represent a character's response to a key scene in the work.
- Demonstrate understanding of chosen key scene through response poems.

Listening Activity



Option 1

As you listen to the music, write down the emotions you hear being expressed.

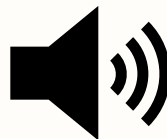


Listening Activity



Option 2

As you listen to the music, write down the emotions you hear being expressed.



00:00 – 01:28

Listening Activity

Emotions observed:

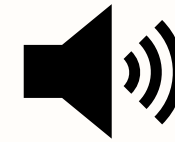


X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X

Synopsis

The opera presents 12 vignettes from the life of Malcolm X, from youth to his death: abject poverty in Depression-era Lansing to adolescence in Boston to Mecca (the site of his pivotal hajj, the traditional Muslim pilgrimage), as well as a number of places in New York City, including a mosque, the streets of Harlem, and, finally, the site of his assassination in 1965, the Audubon Ballroom and West 165th Street.

Listening Activity



Option 1

Act I, Scene 3: “You want the story, but you don’t want to know” (Excerpt)

In a police interrogation room, Malcolm expresses his anger over the struggles and injustices that have long burdened people like him.

MALCOLM

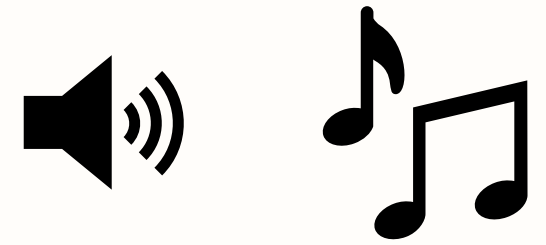
I’ve shined your shoes, I’ve sold your dope,
Hauled your bootleg, played with hustler's hope.
But the crime is mine, I will do your time
so you can sleep.

I won’t be out to get you on the street at night
but I won’t forget any evil that’s white.

My truth is a hammer coming from the back.
It will beat you down when you least expect.
I would not tell you what I know.

You want the truth,
You want the truth,
You want the truth, but you don’t want to know.

Listening Activity



Option 2

Act III, Scene 2: “When a man is lost” (Excerpt)

Malcolm is disheartened by the turmoil dividing his family and the reporters hounding his every step. His wife, Betty Shabazz, hands him a ticket and tells him to go to Mecca to spend time alone and find his way.

BETTY

Alone with his dreams in a light seldom seen.

Soon the henchmen will come take his sky and stars,
and leave only blood.

When a man is lost what is left inside?

What makes him take one step
or keep on breathing?

Listening Activity



How does viewing the text change your understanding?

Does knowing the character(s) singing change your understanding?

How does the text and music add to your understanding of the scene?

Poetic Devices

- Rhyme
- Symbolism
- Repetition
- Meter
- Alliteration
- Metaphor
- Simile
- Imagery
- Personification
- Onomatopoeia

Poetic Devices Examples

Metaphor, Rhyme and Repetition:

“The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.

The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,

And the highwayman came riding –

Riding – Riding

The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.”

Excerpt from **“The Highwayman”** by Alfred Noyes

Imagery:

“I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin

The rumbling sound of load on load of apples coming in”

Excerpt from **“After Apple Picking”** by Robert Frost

Simile:

“O my Love is like a red, red rose

That’s newly sprung in June;

O my Love is like a melody

That’s sweetly played in tune.”

Excerpt from **“A Red, Red Rose”** by

Robert Burns

Poetic Devices Examples

Alliteration:

“And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain”

Excerpt from **“The Raven”** by Edgar Allen Poe

Personification and Symbolism:

“Because I could not stop for Death –

He kindly stopped for me –

The Carriage held but just Ourselves –

And Immortality.”

Excerpt from **“Because I could not stop for Death”** by Emily Dickinson

Option 1: “You want the story, but you don’t want to know” (Excerpt)

In a police interrogation room, Malcolm expresses his anger over the struggles and injustices that have long burdened people like him.

MALCOLM

I’ve shined your shoes, I’ve sold your dope,
Hauled your bootleg, played with hustler's hope.
But the crime is mine, I will do your time
so you can sleep.
I won’t be out to get you on the street at night
but I won’t forget any evil that’s white.

My truth is a hammer coming from the back.
It will beat you down when you least expect.
I would not tell you what I know.
You want the truth,
You want the truth,
You want the truth, but you don’t want to know.

Option 2: “When a man is lost” (Excerpt)

Malcolm is disheartened by the turmoil dividing his family and the reporters hounding his every step. His wife, Betty Shabazz, hands him a ticket and tells him to go to Mecca to spend time alone and find his way.

BETTY

Alone with his dreams in a light seldom seen.

Soon the henchmen will come take his sky and stars,
and leave only blood.

When a man is lost what is left inside?

What makes him take one step
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Response Poem Guidelines

Choose 1 character in the key scene, identify their emotions, and write a poem from their point of view in response to the scene's action.

Response poem should include:

- Minimum of 4 lines
- At least 2 poetic devices

Option 1: Response Poem Example



I know this rage that lives inside of you.

It burns and consumes,

It fueled me too.

Use this fire to fight this foe,

Lead with purpose and show them what you know.

Option 2: Response Poem Example



I walk with the weight of shadows behind,
but truth carves a path, fierce and unkind.
If blood stains my stars and clouds my sight,
let justice rise bold, let it burn bright.

Present 

Reflection

Share thoughts on the response poem process.

How does poetry and music enhance the scene?

What did you learn from viewing and presenting our response poems?

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