

Music Loyola Task

Year 9 Autumn Term

During your lessons this term, you will be learning about **R&B Music**. To extend your learning, we have curated this playlist for you to listen to, reflect upon, and consider not only the [MADTSHIRT elements](#), but also the emotional impact it has upon you. We have told you some of the things you may wish to look out for as you listen.

You may wish to make notes, or simply close your eyes and enjoy the sound! Hopefully it inspires you and gives you a more varied diet of music to listen to.

Enjoy!

Rhythm and Blues (R&B) is characterized by **strong rhythmic grooves, powerful vocal techniques, and harmonic complexity** rooted in Gospel and Blues. These tracks cover the evolution of the genre from its roots to modern production.

1. Ray Charles: 'What'd I Say' (Part 1 & 2) (1959)

- **Key Concept for Analysis: Foundational R&B/Soul, Call and Response, and Twelve-Bar Blues.**
- **Analysis Focus:** Students should analyze the clear, repetitive **12-bar blues** chord progression that structures the song. The core R&B element is the powerful **Call and Response** between the lead vocal/piano and the backing vocals/horns, directly traceable to **Gospel** and **Blues** traditions. The driving, energetic rhythm defines early R&B.
- **Key Features:** Clear **12-bar Blues** progression; definitive use of **Call and Response**; Gospel and Blues influences; strong, infectious rhythmic drive.

2. Aretha Franklin: 'Respect' (1967)

- **Key Concept for Analysis: Soul/R&B Vocal Performance** (Improvisation/Delivery), **Instrumentation**, and **Harmonic Language**.
- **Analysis Focus:** Focus on Franklin's extraordinary **vocal delivery**, which features significant **improvisation**, **melismatic** singing (multiple notes per syllable), and emotional power. The arrangement is key, featuring a tight, punchy **brass section** and layered **backing vocal harmony**. Harmonically, the use of **dominant 7th chords** and blues-inflected notes adds depth.
- **Key Features:** Powerful, improvised **vocal delivery**; prominent use of **backing vocals** and **brass** section; sophisticated R&B/Soul harmony; the famous "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" breakdown.

3. Stevie Wonder: 'Superstition' (1972)

- **Key Concept for Analysis: Funk/R&B Groove, Synthesizer use, and Arrangement** (Riff-based structure).
- **Analysis Focus:** This is a definitive example of a **riff-based groove**. The entire song is built around the highly distinctive **clavinet riff** (played on a Hohner Clavinet D6). Students can analyze how the different parts—**bass line**, **drum beat** (with a strong backbeat), and multiple **percussive keyboard** lines—interlock to create a dense, **syncopated** texture characteristic of Funk and 70s R&B.

- **Key Features:** Dominant, repetitive **clavinet riff**; complex, syncopated **funk groove**; pioneering use of **electronic instruments** (clavinet, synthesizers); clear, prominent **backbeat**.
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4. TLC: 'Waterfalls' (1995)

- **Key Concept for Analysis:** Contemporary R&B (Hip-Hop Influence), Production Technique, and Melodic Harmony.
 - **Analysis Focus:** This track bridges classic R&B harmony with modern **Hip-Hop production**. Students can contrast the smooth, close **vocal harmony** in the chorus (classic R&B) with the more rhythmically spoken, Hip-Hop influenced **rap breakdown** by Left Eye. Analysis should include the use of **programmed drums** and atmospheric synthesizers that create a reflective mood.
 - **Key Features:** Smooth, complex **vocal harmony**; blend of R&B and Hip-Hop elements; use of **programmed drum machine** sounds; reflective, atmospheric production.
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5. Beyoncé: 'Crazy in Love' (feat. Jay-Z) (2003)

- **Key Concept for Analysis:** 21st Century R&B, Sampling, and Form/Hook Construction.
- **Analysis Focus:** This song is a prime example of modern R&B built around a massive, sampled **hook**. Students can analyze the prominent **horn loop** (sampled from The Chi-Lites) and how modern production techniques (heavy **compression**, digital effects) are used to make the sound impactful. It also showcases the typical integration of a **Hip-Hop** element (Jay-Z's rap verse) into the standard R&B song form.
- **Key Features:** Use of an iconic **sample/horn riff** as the main hook; integration of **Hip-Hop** (rap verses); high-energy, **compressed** modern production; strong, declarative **vocal performance**.