Black Music: Resistance, Protest, and Affirmation In These Dissenting Times and Beyond
Saturday, September 19, 2020, 2:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. EST

Messages of resistance, protest, and affirmation have been woven into Black music in America since the first banjos were refashioned from African memories and patting juba and the ring shout defied restrictive laws that sought to curtail Black faith and community building. Black composers and artists regularly use music to tell a living story of the Black experience as well as champion the resilience and humanity of Black people. In the 20th and 21st centuries songs like “Respect,” “Say it Loud,” or “Thank You” have become globally successful and iconic examples of these themes. Black music continues to give voice to the movements that empower people towards self-worth, self-love and ultimately liberation.

This session will be a conversation between Dr. Michelle Scott (historian) and Dr. Birgitta Johnson (ethnomusicologist) about several examples of Black music that provide hidden and not-so-hidden soundtracks of resistance, protest, and affirmation in addition to the more well-known compositions. The discussion will be accompanied by a rich playlist of Black music that encompasses the session’s themes for further contemplation.

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