

STUDY GUIDE: Bryan Michael Cox

This study guide is to support virtual and in-person classes for students and teachers inspired by the movie *Respect* about the life of Aretha Franklin.

Overview

Bryan-Michael Cox (1977-) is an acclaimed GRAMMY award-winning song writer, producer and DJ. Recent film credits include the Aretha Franklin film *Respect* (2021). Cox has written and/or produced songs for artists such as Usher, Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige and Toni Braxton.

Here is a link for a list with performances of ten of his award-winning songs:

<http://www.soulinstereo.com/2019/01/top-10-songs-written-or-produced-by-bryan-michael-cox.html>

This lesson will explore the unique career path of music producer Bryan-Michael Cox and the support of immediate and extended families in his career. Bryan-Michael Cox's career path highlights:

- First recordings at age 4
- Early Influences of mother, aunts and other family members
- Later Influences of classmates at Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (Robert Glasper, Beyonce, etc.)
- Various ways of learning about music and the music industry:
 - studying early vinyl 12-inch LP album and CD liner notes
 - viewing artist documentaries and films such as *Respect*.

Objectives

- Students will consider the unique career path of song writer/producer Bryan-Michael Cox through small group discussions about careers in music.
- Students will consider the importance of establishing an “extended family” for career support by discussing the role of Aretha Franklin's extended family in the film *Respect*.

Essential Questions for Reflection Critical Thinking

- Describe possible career path for a songwriters and music producers? How might these paths overlap? How might they turn in different directions?
- How does a music producer get a song to the “finish line”?

Suggested Student Activities

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- Students will view and analyze the role of Aretha Franklin’s immediate and extended families in the film *Respect*.
- Students will examine the liner notes from a variety of vinyl 12-inch LP recordings and CDs for information that credits performers/personnel, instrumentation, recording location, etc. Students will consider why this information is printed and which sorts of information are omitted.
- Students will compose liner notes for their favorite streamed recordings. The notes should include all accessible information including songwriters, producers, record company, side musicians, etc.
- **OPTIONAL:** Each student will create a personal family tree comprised of immediate and extended family members
- **OPTIONAL:** Students will take a field trip to a local record store that sells classic vinyl 12-inch LP recordings and CDs to browse the record collection and interview the store owner

Resources and Materials

- The film *Respect*
- Paper and pencil or access to any word app.
- Access to vinyl 12-inch LP recordings with detailed liner notes (many public libraries have these available)
- Bryan-Michael Cox video interview.
- Bryan-Michael Cox videos on posted on YouTube. Here are the links:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eT1M13-1Fgc>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LluCk9abpGI>

Key Terms

- Family
- Immediate family
- Extended family
- Vinyl 12-inch Long Playing (LP) Recording
- CD (compact disc)
- Liner Notes
- Music Producer

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