

# STUDY GUIDE: Kris Bowers

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

Kristopher Bowers (1989- ) is an acclaimed film, television, and video game composer and pianist. Recent film credits include *Respect* (2021) and *Greenbook* (2018). *Greenbook* won the Academy Award “Oscar” in 2019 for Best Picture. Other recent film credits include *The United States vs. Billie Holiday* (2021) and *Space Jam: A New Legacy* (2021).

For a full list of Bowers film credits click this link:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Kris+Bowers+movies&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

Bowers scored the music for the video game *Madden NFL*. Here is a link for his games:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Madden+NFL+score+by+Bowers&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

## Learning Objectives

- Students will consider the career path of film composer Kris Bowers through small group discussions about careers in music.
- Students will consider the effectiveness of film music to communicate feelings by discussing key musical moments in the film *Respect*.
- This lesson will explore the career path of film composer Kris Bowers and the range of feelings found in film and movie music.

Topics include:

- Kris Bowers’ career path highlights:
  - Piano class at age 4
  - Private jazz piano lessons
  - Colburn School classes in jazz, piano, classical piano theory, and jazz band
  - LA County High School for the Arts
  - The Juilliard School for undergraduate and masters degrees
- Examples of the emotions found in films and movies that employ Bowers’ music: anger, sadness, joy, pain, love, passion, happiness, etc.

## Essential Questions for Reflection Critical Thinking

- What is a possible career path for a film composer?
- What is the role of music in a movie?
- How does a film composer create music for a movie?

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## Suggested Student Activities

- Students will view and analyze the emotional musical moments in the film *Respect*
- Students will write a short emotional poem such as a *haiku*:  
*Haiku* is a short Japanese poem consisting of three “5-7-5” phrases. The first line must have five syllables. The second line must have seven syllables and the third line must have five syllables. Here is an example:  
“For love and for hate  
I swat a fly and offer it  
to an ant.”-Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902)
- Students will compose music for their poem. The music can consist of natural a percussive accompaniment or rhythm performed as body percussion or hand clapping.
- OPTIONAL: Students will create a short (3-4 minute) video performance of the original work.

## Resources and Materials

- The film *Respect*
- Paper and pencil or access to any word app.
- Natural rhythmic percussion sounds or beats created by hand clapping or body percussion.
- OPTIONAL: Garage Band or any music/beat creation app.
- OPTIONAL: Access to a video camera (phone, ipad, laptop, etc.)

## Key Terms

- Film score
- Music Theory
- Juilliard School
- Music Recital
- Composition
- Arrangement
- Orchestration
- Publicist
- Emotional Journey

## References

- Kris Bowers interview transcript.
- Kris Bowers videos on posted on YouTube. Here is the link:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=Kris+Bowers&client=safari&rls=en&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjhtbP3uLvyAhXICjQIHTBcCLAQ\\_AUoAHoECAEQAg&biw=1383&bih=816&dpr=2#wgvs=e&wptab=s:H4sIAAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3KEs2M7A0ecRoi3w8sc9YSmdSWtOXmNU4-IKzsgvd80rySypFJLgYoOy-KR4uJC08exiYgvLTEnNL17EKuRdlFms4JRfnlpUrFAGFgQA7VGSrmQAAAA](https://www.google.com/search?q=Kris+Bowers&client=safari&rls=en&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjhtbP3uLvyAhXICjQIHTBcCLAQ_AUoAHoECAEQAg&biw=1383&bih=816&dpr=2#wgvs=e&wptab=s:H4sIAAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3KEs2M7A0ecRoi3w8sc9YSmdSWtOXmNU4-IKzsgvd80rySypFJLgYoOy-KR4uJC08exiYgvLTEnNL17EKuRdlFms4JRfnlpUrFAGFgQA7VGSrmQAAAA)

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