

"A LADY OF ELEGANCE " MARIAN ANDERSON

STUDY GUIDE

Written by Joanna Maddox

ARTIST BACKGROUND

Joanna Maddox a professional actress, singer, storyteller writes and performs dramatic portrayals of historical American women. She received a BFA in Drama from the University of Georgia. She has toured throughout the US and is an approved Touring Artist of the National Women's History Project and Fulton County Arts Council's School Arts Program. She has appeared in numerous national television and radio commercials, corporate videos and is a member of Screen Actor's Guild and AFTRA.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This program connects with the units on American history, social studies and music education.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To introduce a woman who with a combination of dignity, serenity, perseverance and talent, became a World Renowned classical singer despite numerous obstacles including racial prejudice.
- To learn about Marian Anderson and her place in American history.
- To gain an appreciation for classical music, opera and spirituals.
- To present a positive female role model.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Marian Anderson's family struggled to make ends meet after her father's untimely death. She even had to discontinue her high school studies to help support the family. Her church congregation in Philadelphia raised enough money for her to return to school and work with a private voice teacher. Marian Anderson's dream was to sing opera but opera houses were closed to her because of her race. Unable to have a successful career in the US she traveled to Europe where she learned to speak German fluently. In Europe her race was mainly seen as a novelty rather than an impediment, and she slowly began to win critical acclaim. Ten years later she returned home to America "as one of the great singers of our time." Marian Anderson performed before heads of state, including the King and Queen of England and at the presidential inaugurations of Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.

VOCABULARY

Contralto – the lowest female singing voice

Dignity – the quality of being worthy, honored or esteemed, formal reserve of manner or language

Serenity – being calm, tranquil

Perseverance – to persist in spite of obstacles, opposition or discouragement

Prejudice – an irrational attitude of hostility against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics: preconceived judgment or opinion

DAR – Daughters of the American Revolution

OVERVIEW OF ART FORM

The art forms presented in this program are storytelling, dramatic art and music. Information presented in the narrative form is the information that will be remembered. Before television and radio people told stories and the ancient art of storytelling is making a comeback. Storytelling can be used to entertain, inspire, encourage, heal and to pass down cultural history and information from generation to generation. Through stories people can connect, learn about and appreciate each other's differences. Marian Anderson always included Negro Spirituals in each of her concerts as well as classical pieces and German lieder. Artist will sing several spirituals and Ave Maria.

PRE & POST ACTIVITIES

- Read a biography of Marian Anderson.
- Discuss why it was difficult for Marian Anderson to have a successful career in her own country.
- Discuss some of the obstacles she faced while touring in America?
- Discuss the challenges in being a positive role model for her race.
- Read about other Black Americans who have broken the color barrier in a variety of professions.
- In what careers or fields do Blacks still face barriers today

-To jumpstart a class discussion, point out that there has never been a Black president or vice-president.

RESOURCES

Books

When Marian sang: the true recital of Marian Anderson; The voice of the Century	by Pam Ryan
Marian Anderson: a great singer	by Pat McKissack
Keep on singing: a ballad of Marian Anderson	by Myra Livingston
What I had was singing	by Jeri Ferris
Marian Anderson	by Tobi Tobias
Marian Anderson: a singer's journey	by Alan Keiler
Marian Anderson	by Charles Patterson
Marian Anderson: what a morning (an autobiography)	by Marian Anderson
Marian Anderson	by Anne Tedards
Marian Anderson: lady from Philadelphia	by Shirlee Petkin

VIDEO RECORDING

Marian Anderson	Suzanne Hansbury
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Technical Needs

A podium and microphone

WEBSITES

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory>