

A SEGAL CENTRE PRESENTATION OF A SOULPEPPER CONCERT

FROM THE CREATORS OF *THE SECRET CHORD:*
A LEONARD COHEN EXPERIENCE



DETROIT

MUSIC OF THE MOTOR CITY

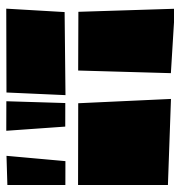
CREATED BY ANDREW PENNER, FRANK COX-O'CONNELL, & TRAVIS KNIGHTS
WRITTEN BY ERIN BRANDENBURG WITH FRANK COX-O'CONNELL & TRAVIS KNIGHTS

DIRECTED BY FRANK COX-O'CONNELL

MUSIC DIRECTED BY ANDREW PENNER

PRODUCTION SPONSOR

ALDO



STUDY GUIDE

April 12 –
May 3, 2026

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ABOUT THE STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to enrich the audience's experience of the production and support educators in using *Detroit: Music of the Motor City* as a springboard for student learning, collaboration, and inspiration, while connecting directly to the show's key ideas and themes. All content is intended for educational purposes only.

There are a number of tickets reserved for equity-seeking individuals and the Indigenous community at a \$20 accessibility rate available by contacting our box office:

514-739-7944

boxoffice@segalcentre.org

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Welcome to the Segal Centre! We are so pleased to have you join us at our presentation of *Detroit: Music of the Motor City*.

To make the most of your viewing experience and in consideration of the performers and audience members around you, please take a moment to review the following audience etiquette guidelines with your students:

1. *Detroit: Music of the Motor City* is a soundtrack that tells a story of the rise, fall, and resilience of Detroit. Through the rhythm of the assembly line, the echoes of abandoned factories, and the unstoppable pulse of a city that still sings. While there are moments to laugh and reflect, please hold comments for after the show. Your quiet attention allows the performers and the creative team to share this thoughtful story with the focus it deserves.
2. Cell phone use in the theatre is not permitted during the performance. Please put your cell phone on silent and refrain from taking pictures and videos or texting once the lights go down.
3. Food is not permitted in the theatre.
4. Please do not kick or step over the seats when entering and exiting the theatre.
5. If overwhelmed, please feel free to exit the theatre. Please use either exit at the top of the stairs toward the back of the theatre. Do not cross the stage to exit.
6. Enjoy the show!

A SEGAL CENTRE PRESENTATION OF A SOULPEPPER CONCERT

DETROIT MUSIC OF THE MOTOR CITY

CREATED BY ANDREW PENNER, FRANK COX-O'CONNELL, & TRAVIS KNIGHTS
WRITTEN BY ERIN BRANDENBURG WITH FRANK COX-O'CONNELL & TRAVIS KNIGHTS

DIRECTED BY FRANK COX-O'CONNELL

MUSIC DIRECTED BY ANDREW PENNER

FEATURED PERFORMERS

SATE

Hailey Gillis

Travis Knights

Andrew Penner

BAND

DRUMS Joe Bowden

REEDS Jacob Gorzhaltzan

BASS Raha Javanfar

KEYS Joel Joseph

TRUMPET Andrew McAnsh

CREATIVE TEAM

CREATOR AND MUSIC DIRECTOR Andrew Penner

CREATOR AND DIRECTOR Frank Cox-O'Connell

CREATOR Travis Knights

WRITER Erin Brandenburg

LIGHTING DESIGNER Noah Feaver

SOUND DESIGNER Andres Castillo-Smith

PROJECTION DESIGNER Frank Donato

ASSOCIATE LIGHTING DESIGNER Emily Soussana

ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER Michael Wanless

ASSOCIATE PROJECTION DESIGNER Nicole Eun-Ju Bell

STAGE MANAGER Tammy Vuckovic

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Scarlett Larry

THE RUNNING TIME IS APPROXIMATELY 90 MINUTES WITH NO INTERMISSION

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

ABOUT THE PLAY

From Motown to hip-hop, the music never stops.

Following last season's sold-out success, *The Secret Chord: A Leonard Cohen Experience*, Soulpepper returns to the Segal Centre with another electrifying musical journey.

Once called "The City of the Future," Detroit shaped the world with its innovation and music. From the Motown Sound to jazz, hip-hop, and rock, its soundtrack tells a story of rise, fall, and resilience. Witness Detroit's history come to life - through the rhythm of the assembly line, the echoes of abandoned factories, and the unstoppable pulse of a city that still sings.

Featuring iconic hits like "Dancing in the Street" by Martha and the Vandellas, "My Girl" by The Temptations, "Lose Yourself" by Eminem, and "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye.

FUN FACTS¹

- 1. Motown Roots & Industry:** Detroit earned the nickname “The Motor City” for becoming the global epicenter of the automobile industry in the early 20th century. It was the birthplace of the assembly line and automotive innovation, while also becoming the home of Motown Records, dubbed “The Sound of Young America”.
- 2. Genre-Crossing:** The performance spans across several musical genres including Motown, jazz, Detroit rock, and hip-hop. A true journey through time.
- 3. Signature Artists Featured:** From Marvin Gaye’s socially conscious ballads to Eminem’s defiant rap storytelling, the show bridges decades of emotional and cultural storytelling.
- 4. Poetic Creator Quote:** Loosely paraphrased from Berry Gordy Jr., founder of the Motown record label: Detroit’s music came from “rats and roaches, guts and love”. A gritty honesty celebrated onstage.
- 5. Soulpepper Series Success:** The show is part of Soulpepper’s acclaimed music concert format, which has gained a reputation for both educational depth and top-tier performance reddit.com.
- 6. Tribute to Resilience:** The narrative arc mirrors Detroit’s socio-economic rise, fall, and fight for revival much like the city’s musical evolution.

TIMELINE - MUSICAL STYLES IN DETROIT THROUGHOUT THE AGES

1920s–1940s: Jazz, Blues, and Gospel Roots

The Black Bottom² and Paradise Valley³ districts became entertainment hubs for jazz and blues. Artists like John Lee Hooker⁴ moved to the "Arsenal of Democracy" during the Great Migration⁵, fostering a raw, urban blues sound.

Detroit's Black churches produced gospel legends, including a young Aretha Franklin⁶ and Stevie Wonder⁷.

1950s: The Birth of Rock & Roll

Detroit native Bill Haley⁸ ushered in the era with "Rock Around the Clock"⁹ in 1955.

Hank Ballard¹⁰ & the Midnighters¹¹ bridged R&B and pop with hits like "Work with Me, Annie"¹².

1960s–Early 1970s: The Motown Empire and Proto-Punk

Motown Records¹³: Founded by Berry Gordy Jr.¹⁴ in 1959, the label produced a record-breaking string of #1 hits with artists like The Supremes¹⁵, Marvin Gaye¹⁶, and The Temptations¹⁷.

Proto-Punk¹⁸: Simultaneously, an aggressive underground rock scene emerged with The MC5¹⁹ and Iggy and The Stooges²⁰, laying the foundation for future punk movements.

Mid-1970s–Early 1980s: Hardcore Punk and Arena Rock

Bob Seger²¹ achieved a national breakthrough with his 1975 Live Bullet²² live album recorded at Cobo Arena.

One of America's first hardcore punk scenes exploded, centered around labels like Touch²³ and Go Records.

Mid-1980s–1990s: The Invention of Techno

Detroit Techno: The Belleville Three²⁴ (Juan Atkins, Derrick May, and Kevin Saunderson) fused funk with futuristic synths, creating a genre that became a global blueprint for electronic music.

Underground collectives like Underground Resistance²⁵ used techno as a form of social resistance.

1990s–Present: Hip-Hop Dominance and Garage Rock Revival

Hip-Hop: Detroit became a major rap hub with the global rise of Eminem²⁶, followed by artists like J Dilla²⁷, Big Sean²⁸, and a thriving local scene.

Garage Rock: The White Stripes²⁹ (led by Jack White) sparked a worldwide revival of raw, blues-influenced rock at the turn of the millennium.

Contemporary: The city celebrates its heritage annually via the Movement Electronic Music Festival.^{30 31}

TIMELINE - MUSICAL STYLES IN DETROIT THROUGHOUT THE AGES

Detroit's Global Influence & Regional Exchange

Detroit Genre	Influenced By...	Global Impact / Connected Regions
Motown	Southern Gospel & R&B (USA)	United Kingdom: Heavily influenced the British Invasion (The Beatles, Dusty Springfield) and the Northern Soul dance subculture in Manchester/Wigan.
Proto-Punk	Garage Rock & Electric Blues (Detroit/Chicago)	London & New York: Laid the blueprint for 70s Punk (Sex Pistols, The Ramones) and later the Seattle Grunge scene (Nirvana).
Techno	German Electronics (Kraftwerk) & P-Funk (Detroit)	Berlin & Tokyo: After the fall of the Wall, Detroit artists like Jeff Mills became icons in Berlin , helping create the city's modern club identity.
Garage Rock	60s Raw Rock & Blues (Detroit)	Nashville & Australia: Led to a global revival in the early 2000s; Jack White eventually moved to Nashville to found Third Man Records.
J Dilla / Lo-Fi	Jazz, Soul, & MPC Programming (Detroit)	Global/Internet: Dilla's "lazy" drum swing influenced Neo-Soul in NYC/LA and is the DNA of modern " Lo-Fi Hip Hop " worldwide.

Key Cross-Regional Landmarks

- **London, UK:** The **Northern Soul** movement kept Detroit's obscure R&B records alive long after they faded in the US.
- **Berlin, Germany:** The legendary Tresor club formed a **Detroit-Berlin Axis**, specifically to bring Detroit Techno DJs to Europe.
- **Nashville, TN:** Now acts as a sister city for Detroit's rock scene due to the relocation of **Third Man Records**.

DETROIT MUSIC THEMED DOCUMENTARIES

- [We Want The Funk](#)
- [From Detroit With Love](#)
- [Motor City's Burning](#)
- [The 25 Locations That Changed Music History](#)
- [The Motown Effect](#)
- [Somewhere In Detroit](#)

DETROIT MUSIC THEMED PLAYLISTS

- [Detroit: Music Of The Motor City](#)
- [Detroit Jazz](#)
- [Detroit Motown Tunes](#)
- [Detroit Hip-Hop Favorites](#)
- [Detroit Rock City](#)
- [Detroit Techno Classics](#)

SET LIST

This set list provides a guide to the songs and their artists covered in the show.

1. **"Dancing in the Street"** by Martha and the Vandellas
2. **"Don't You Mind People Grinning In Your Face"** by Son House
3. **"You Keep Me Hangin' On"** by The Supremes
4. **"My Girl"** by The Temptations
5. **"The Tears of a Clown"** by Smokey Robinson & The Miracles
6. **"You Haven't Done Nothin'"** by Stevie Wonder
7. **"Black Day in July"** by Gordon Lightfoot
8. **"What's Going On"** by Marvin Gaye
9. **"Seven Nation Army"** by The White Stripes
10. **Detroit techno:** The Belleville Three
11. **Rise of hip hop:** J Dilla, and Erykah Badu cover of **Nowhere to Run** by Martha and the Vandellas
12. **"Lose Yourself"** by Eminem
13. **"I Want You Back"** by The Jackson 5
14. **"About Damn Time"** by Lizzo
15. **"RESPECT"** by Aretha Franklin mashup with **Dancing in the Street** by Martha and the Vandellas

GLOSSARY

- **Motown:** Label founded by Berry Gordy Jr. in Detroit (1959) that produced universally beloved hits and shaped soul music.
- **Soul:** Genre defined by emotional vocals and gospel roots; Detroit was a major contributor through artists like Stevie Wonder and The Temptations.
- **Detroit Rock:** A style blending garage rock and punk sensibility, with icons like Iggy Pop and The White Stripes emerging from the region.
- **Hip-Hop:** Detroit's rap heroes such as Eminem and Big Sean explore identity, struggle, and empowerment.
- **Detroit Techno:** Born in the 1980s from The Belleville Three, it revolutionized global electronic music from the city's post-industrial heart.
- **Theatrical Concert:** A presentation combining live performance and storytelling without traditional stage production tropes. This show offers 90 minutes of musical immersion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These topics draw from Detroit's debates on music, identity, and history. They include broader context on music and the city's musical legends.

They suit classroom or post-show talkbacks at the Segal Centre, encouraging students to connect personal views to the show's questions.

1. Which musical era (Motown, gospel, rock, or hip-hop) resonated most with you, and why?
2. How did hearing hip-hop alongside Motown shape your understanding of Detroit's modern voice?
3. Did it feel like a continuous story, or more like distinct musical chapters?
4. What insights about the people, economy, or culture of Detroit stood out?
5. Did Detroit's struggles and triumphs mirror anything in your own city or personal story?
6. Was there a particular performance or song that took you by surprise? Why did it stand out?
7. Will you hear songs by Marvin Gaye, The Supremes, or Eminem differently after seeing the show?
8. How does this musical experience compare to a traditional narrative play?
9. What messages about resilience, creativity, or community did the show leave you with?
10. How did the staging and storytelling enhance your perception of Detroit's rise, decline, and revival?

FINAL TIPS FOR ENJOYING THE SHOW

- Stay fully present. Follow the ensemble's journey from Motown grooves to hip-hop beats, and notice how perspectives shift as they unpack art, identity, and Detroit's resilient spirit. Pay attention to the humour, the heart, and the unique relationship they build directly with the audience through song and story.
- Feel free to react. Laugh, cheer, or shed a tear. Experiencing the full range of emotions is part of enjoying live theatre.
- Respect the performer and your fellow audience members by not talking, texting, or using phones during the show. Keeping distractions to a minimum helps everyone enjoy the magic of the performance.

AUDIENCE ADVISORY

Themes:

- May include references to racial discrimination, civil rights struggles, police violence, or systemic inequalities.
- Possible references to performing artists who have experienced addiction issues.
- Some lyrics or segments may reflect outdated gender attitudes or highlight the role of women in the music industry at the time, often marginalized or exploited.
- Includes references to depression, domestic violence, and death.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Segal Centre is situated on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka people. The land was also a diplomatic meeting place with other Iroquoians and Algonquians including Algonquin-Anishinaabe, Atikamekw, and Huron-Wendat.

We acknowledge that we are located on a land that has been the site of human creativity and story-telling for thousands of years, and are thankful that we are able to create, collaborate, play, and work here.

If you would like to learn more about this Land Acknowledgement, about the Indigenous peoples' history, or about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, here are a few links to help you on your journey:

- About Land Acknowledgements: <https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/>
- About the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: <http://www.trc.ca/>
- Native Friendship Centre of Montreal: <http://nfc.m.org/>
- Native Montreal: <http://www.nativemontreal.com>
- Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network (NETWORK: The NETWORK is comprised of community sector groups, volunteers and government officials who work together to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal people living in the greater Montreal area): <http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/>

ABOUT THE SEGAL CENTRE

Driven by a belief in the transformative power of the arts to connect communities, the Segal Centre for Performing Arts is a not-for-profit theatre company with the unique mission to program high quality professional English language theatre, celebrate and explore Jewish cultural identity, and promote the diversity of voices and perspectives in society at-large via our artists, staff, content, and other programming. The Segal Centre is dedicated to creating, developing, producing, and presenting high quality theatre that is accessible to all. The Segal Centre is a nationally recognized institution with an emphasis on programming original interpretations of popular classic and contemporary works and invests in new Canadian musicals.

www.segalcentre.org

SOURCES

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