

# GET IT FROM THE DRUMS

## A HISTORY OF CIVIL RIGHTS, PROTEST AND PROTEST SONGS OF THE NINETEEN SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

By **WYNNE ALEXANDER**

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A total of **17 legendary music stars** donated the rights to their music and lyrics on behalf of History and learning in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

And this major, yet financially hard pressed urban school system now makes history because *Get It From The Drums*, is the first and only music-infused Civil Rights curriculum in the United States.

In their commendations and proclamations, United States Senator Bob Casey, both houses of the Pennsylvania Legislature and the Philadelphia City Council praised the book for its groundbreaking format. In its inside-cover story, the **Philadelphia Daily News** noted its universal appeal to readers of all ages, calling it "intriguing"... "fact-filled" and "unique."

Music legend, scholar and civil rights leader **Buffy Sainte-Marie** praised the book saying it is "beautifully written." Sainte-Marie has an earned Ph.D. in Fine Arts from the University of Massachusetts.

Originally commissioned by Dr. Dennis Creedon, Deputy Chief of Academic Enrichment and Support for the School District of Philadelphia, [PA] this book has been highly acclaimed for both its evocation of an era and superstar participation.

The history focuses on the Civil Rights Movements of the latter part of the 20th century. The anti-slavery origins, the Vietnam War, the Women's Movement, Earth Day, and liberation of South Africa are also part of the historical highlights.

In addition to the engaging text, permission was granted by the **John Lennon Estate** for use of the lyrics to *Imagine*. The four heirs of the **Marvin Gaye Estate** gave both the lyric and sound rights to *What's Going On*. Full rights were also granted for both lyrics and recordings by the **Nina Simone and James Brown estates, Buffalo Springfield, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Country Joe and the Fish, The Chambers Brothers, The O'Jays, McFadden and Whitehead, Strong & Whitfield, and Curtis Mayfield** for their songs *Mississippi Goddam, Say It Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud, For What It's Worth, The Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag, Fortunate Son, Time Has Come Today, For the Love of Money, Wake Up Everybody, War and Pusherman*, respectively. Sound recording rights to *The Eve of Destruction* by **Barry McGuire** and *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore* by **Phil Ochs** were also granted. All of which appear on a 15 song CD that accompanies the book in the classrooms.

Oscar winning composer, civil rights leader and educator **Buffy Sainte-Marie** gave the full rights to *Universal Soldier* and her interview appears in the book along with interviews with **Judy Collins** and **Janis Ian** who also gave the rights to *Society's Child*. Folk and Civil Rights legend **Pete Seeger** also granted an interview and donated *Where Have All the Flowers Gone*.

Rock & Roll Hall of Famer, two-time Grammy winner, Message Music Founding Father, **Kenny Gamble** not only donated two of the aforementioned songs, but also wrote the introduction and his interview appears in the book as well.

An extraordinary aspect of this work is the outpouring of concern from the entertainment community. The immense stature of the stars involved and their willingness to help elevate the struggling school system is extraordinary. For years now the music industry has run campaigns with Rock stars urging that music education be kept in the schools. The most recent round of federal budget cuts have been harsh and the Arts and Music are getting hit very hard. Philadelphia [Pa.] is an urban school district of predominantly Black and Hispanic students. To their credit, these musical stars and legends actually put their money where their mouths are and donated all the lyric and recording rights secured in this project. The work and its participants are an outstanding example of what can be accomplished when creative people of goodwill care deeply about people, education and the Arts.

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