

Music

Agape Love

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing.

Exodus 15:20

Love Offering

That's my song. This common refrain among Black women, said with the flair that only Black women have, recognizes the potency of music to mine spaces that mere words cannot access. When the children of Israel were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, Miriam picked up her tambourine, gathered some sisters, and made melody unto God. Words were insufficient. The mighty work of God in their lives was so great that these women were moved to sing and shout and play their instruments to express their deepest awe and gratitude. Can you hear it? It sounds like freedom. It sounds like joy. It sounds like salvation. Through melody these women claimed their space in the world and proclaimed their freedom.

Miriam isn't the only sister who recognized the power of music. She is part of a great cloud of witnesses that includes Hannah, the mother of Samuel, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, Beyoncé, and so many more. Black women lilt when our loads are lightened. We wail when our souls are wounded. We moan when melancholy won't allow for more. Music, particularly the brilliance of Black women musicians, has gotten Black women through individual instability and collective crisis.

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When I am questioning myself and feeling insecure, there is nothing like blasting “Just Fine” by Mary J. Blige to remind me that I am more than enough. When my children are working my last good nerve, if you lean in close you will hear me humming the hymn, “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross.” When the injustices of America feel too heavy to bear, Sweet Honey in the Rock’s “There’s a New World Coming” reminds me that the evil of this day will come to an end.

Is it Love?

What is your go-to song to invoke joy in your soul? What song has given sound to your deepest desires? What song do you play when you are going through and need to get to the other side?

Love Language

Stir up the music in my soul and give it voice that I may live and love deeply. Amen.



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