

**APME US Conference 2021**  
(Association for Popular Music Educators)  
Columbia College Chicago  
700 S. Wabash Ave. | Room 329  
Friday, June 11, 2021

*No Blues. No Music Ed.*  
Fernando Jones, Presenter

**Strand:** Social Justice Strand

**Length:** 10 Minutes

**Audience:** Live, socially distanced, and Zoom  
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## Outline

1. *What is the Blues?*
  - a. Connection to West Africa
  - b. Quotes
  - c. The Blues Never Sleeps
  - d. The Three M's: The Intangibles
  
2. *Past to Pedagogy?*
  - a. The Great Migration
  - b. Three M's: The Intangibles
  - c. Academia & America's "Root" Music
  
3. *Social Justice*
  - a. Born Too Brown Video
  - b. The Close

## Pre-Lecture: Backup Section (Extra)

Rooted in the African tradition of call-and-response, the Blues, mother and father of Jazz, Rock & Roll, Rhythm & Blues, Gospel, and even Hip-hop music, is an indigenous African American art form. It's also a cultural institution filled with volumes of autobiographical, economical, sociological, and historical information expressed through the arts in disciplines such as, but not limited to music, literature, dance, and theater. In brief, it's the soundtrack of America.

Woven into the fabric of this country, this art form is nothing short of an in-depth autobiography documenting the United States of America.

Comedy/Tragedy, Love/Lust, Bondage/Freedom, Superstition/Supernatural.

### Question:

If the Blues is the root of American music, then what are the *roots of the Blues*?

**One**, clearly is **the music** . . . created right here in the State of Mississippi by free and enslaved Black folks of African decent.

**Two**, **the cultural component** of making something from nothing, and liking it.

**Three**, the root of **spirituality / ancestral remembrance and a connection to the past.**

**Lastly**, **the root of youth** . . . the Blues Kid.

# Part I: The Blues'

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Blues is Black Music Month

## 3. What is the Blues? What is Social Justice?

**Billie Holiday** sang,

*"You don't know what love is until you learn the meaning of the Blues."* In the song "You Don't Know What Loves."

**Amiri Baraka** said this to me when I asked him, 'What is the Blues?' He said.

*"The Blues is the soul of American Classical Music."*

I, **Fernando Jones**, say that *'the Blues is the perpetual courtship of freedom.'*

### **Born Too Brown**

*The Blues never sleeps*

*Nor does it rest.*

*It's cool to get killed on TV,*

*But wrong to protest.*

*Go to church [and],*

*Get a degree [and],*

*Be all that you can be.*

*But when it comes to being*

*Red, White, Blue*

*Y'all don't mean me.*

*Go to work early*

*When you work downtown.*

*But you're the last to get promoted,*

*If ever, when you're born*

*Born too brown.*

*When you're born to brown.*

*Born too brown.*

*When you're born to brown.*

## 4. Now, what is "pedagogy?"

The science and art of teaching children.

## Part II: Two Worlds Connected

Though the Blues was created here in America the unmistakable connection is directly associated with West Africa. I like to say, 'From Mali to Mississippi.'

Not all Black folks who came to or brought to America were slaves. Therefore, we are not all descendents of slaves, Black folks, but we are of African DNA.

Long story short, when they came, some came as free men and women; some were explorers/adventurers, and some, of course, were enslaved and part of the *Slave Trade*. Nevertheless, they brought what I call the 'intangibles' . . . the 'Three M's':

1. Mysticisms (religious and spiritual beliefs)
2. Memories
3. Music

Compare this to the Great Migration where half of a million people migrated from the South, primarily Mississippi, to Chicago in search of the proverbial Promise Land. And during that journey they, too, brought their intangibles. Their . . .

1. Mysticisms (religious and spiritual beliefs)
2. Memories
3. Music

## Part III: Social Justice

*Performance:*

“Me” by Fernando Jones  
Every time I get stopped by the police  
I’m a thug.  
I’m a thing.  
I’m a thief.

And my wife don’t want me.  
And my woman won’t let her put me out.  
I said, ‘My wife don’t want me.’

There were two people in the race  
And nobody voted for me.  
They wanted to raise taxes  
And I wanted world peace.  
And my wife don’t want me.  
And my woman won’t let her put me out.  
I said, ‘My wife don’t want me.’

Ain’t it cruel?  
Ain’t it funny?  
You know people don’t like you  
When they don’t even want your money.  
And my wife don’t want me.  
And my woman won’t let her put me out.  
I said, ‘My wife don’t want me.’

Thank you, I’m Fernando Jones  
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