lyrics from
lockdown

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
This unbelievably true story begins when Bryonn Bain, Brooklyn’s own hip-hop theater innovator and spoken-word champion, is wrongly imprisoned in NYC jails—while studying law at Harvard.

Lyrics From Lockdown, executive produced by Gina and Harry Belafonte, weaves together the voices of more than 40 characters into a one-man tour de force. This groundbreaking multimedia production uses a live band and video DJ, fusing hip-hop, theater, spoken-word poetry, rhythm and blues, calypso and classical music, to tell a provocative story exposing racial profiling and wrongful incarceration in a nation that imprisons more people than any other in the world.

“Storytelling may be the most powerful way to shine light on the epidemic of mass incarceration ravaging families nationwide,” said Sandra de Castro Buffington, founding director of the Global Media Center for Social Impact. “Bryonn Bain delivers the truth and potential solutions to this critical public health issue through compelling stories of real people.”

Lyrics From Lockdown includes letters Bain exchanged with fellow poet and friend Nanon Williams, who was put on death row at 17 years old for a crime he did not commit. One year after the show’s New York premiere at The Public Theater, a federal court ordered that Nanon, who had spent nearly 20 years behind bars, be released.

Lyrics From Lockdown has had sold-out performances on three continents and has received extraordinary reviews around the world. The New York Times said of Bain, “He has style and considerable talent, and his lyrics—a stirring mix of lament and demand—pack a punch.”
Bryonn Bain is Brooklyn’s own prison activist, spoken-word poet, hip-hop artist, actor, author, and educator.

Wrongfully incarcerated during his second year at Harvard Law, Bain was featured on “60 Minutes” after writing “Walking While Black: The Bill of Rights for Black Men” for The Village Voice, an article that received the largest reader response in the newspaper’s history. Described by Cornel West as an artist who “…speaks his truth with a power we desperately need to hear,” Bain hosts BET’s critically acclaimed talk show “My Two Cents” and is the author of two books, including *The Ugly Side of Beautiful: Rethinking Race and Prisons in America*, published in 2013.

Bain’s grassroots organization, Blackout Arts Collective, which developed the annual *Lyrics From Lockdown* Tour, has reached prisons in 25 states and spawned a series of university courses that use the arts to teach critical literacy in correctional facilities.

Bain has lectured and performed at more than 100 colleges and correctional facilities in the U.S., Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. He founded the Lyrical Minded project, which brings hip-hop, theater, and spoken-word to high schools in New York, San Francisco, and Boston. A Nuyorican Grand Slam Poetry Champion, Bain ranked #1 in the nation and placed second in the world during the 2000 International Poetry Slam. Having taught courses on hip-hop, spoken-word, and the prison crisis at Brooklyn College, New York University, The New School, Columbia University and on the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University, Bain currently teaches as a Visiting Lecturer for Harvard University’s Dramatic Arts Division.

In addition to a law degree from Harvard, Bain holds a master’s degree in urban politics and cultural studies from New York University, and a bachelor’s degree in political science and African American studies from Columbia University.

“The Ugly Side of Beautiful” takes an unflinching look at the injustices of our prison system and strives to help us think outside the cage.
The P.E.R.F.O.R.M. activities will enable students to get the most out of a SchoolTime performance.

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<tr>
<th>PREPARE for the performance</th>
<th>Introduce students to Bryonn Bain.</th>
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<td>Show students the video clip &quot;Prison and Harvard.&quot;</td>
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<td>Ask students to discuss the question: What issues do you think <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em> will address?</td>
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<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE <em>Lyrics from Lockdown</em></th>
<th>Preview the story of <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em>.</th>
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<td>Show students the <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em> trailer. Ask students to make a prediction in response to this question: How will Bryonn Bain tell his story on stage?</td>
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<th>READ</th>
<th>Read and discuss “Walking While Black.”*</th>
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<td>“Walking While Black,” written by Bryonn Bain for <em>The Village Voice</em>, received the most reader responses in the newspaper’s history. After students read the essay, have them answer the following questions:</td>
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<td>• What happened to Bryonn Bain?</td>
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<td>• What are the three most important points made in the essay? Why are these points important?</td>
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<td>• Who do you think is the audience for this essay? What do you think Bryonn Bain wants this audience to know? Explain your answer using examples from the story.</td>
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<td>(<em>NOTE: Please read this essay beforehand to determine if it is acceptable for your class and to get the appropriate permission to use it as a part of your class discussion.</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<th>FOCUS on the performance</th>
<th>Write a review of <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em>.</th>
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<td>In <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em>, Bryonn Bain transforms into 40 characters and speaks through hip-hop, theater, spoken-word poetry, calypso, classical music, and blues. Have students write their own review of the show, in which they address the following questions:</td>
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<td>• What is the most important issue addressed in the show?</td>
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<td>• How effectively was this issue addressed during the show?</td>
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<th>ORIGINATE</th>
<th>Write your own version of <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em>.</th>
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<td>In groups, review the interview “Prison and Harvard,” the trailer for <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em>, and the “Walking While Black” essay. Create a skit inspired by <em>Lyrics From Lockdown</em> to address the issues explored in the piece, such as racial profiling and wrongful incarceration.</td>
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<tr>
<th>REHEARSE</th>
<th>Rehearse your skit.</th>
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| MAKE magic! | Share your skit with the class. |
Write a letter to Mr. Bryonn Bain explaining how his performance and chosen art forms helped you better understand his story. Then mail your letter to NJPAC.

NJPAC
SchoolTime Performance Series
One Center Street
Newark, NJ 07102

Name ___________________________________________ Grade ____________

School _______________________________________________________________________________________

School address _______________________________________________________________________________________

City __________________________________________ State _____ Zip ____________

Date __________________________________________________________________________

Dear __________________________________________

Sincerely,

________________________________________

Name ___________________________________________ Grade ____________

School _______________________________________________________________________________________

School address _______________________________________________________________________________________

City __________________________________________ State _____ Zip ____________

Date __________________________________________________________________________

Dear __________________________________________

Sincerely,

________________________________________
### English Language Arts

**Grades 9 & 10**

SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9-10.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

**Grades 11 & 12**

SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

### Visual and Performing Arts

**Grades 9 – 12**

1.1: The Creative Process
1.2: History of the Arts and Culture
1.3: Performance
1.4: Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies

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**National Core Arts Standards**

Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre And Visual Art

**What are the standards?**

A process that guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school.

http://www.nationalartsstandards.org
“60 Minutes” interview with Mike Wallace: “Prison and Harvard”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suTXhLXrqYc

Lyrics From Lockdown trailer

The Village Voice essay: “Walking While Black”

UCLA Newsroom: “UCLA presents L.A. premiere of Bryonn Bain’s Lyrics From Lockdown”
http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-presents-l-a-premiere-of-bryonn-bain-s-lyrics-from-lockdown

The New York Times review of Lyrics From Lockdown
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/15/theater/reviews/lyrics-from-lockdown-at-national-black-theater.html?_r=0

Bryonn Bain on ABC’s “Here and Now”

VOCABULARY
1. Lyric – Characterized by or expressing spontaneous, direct feeling.
2. Lockdown – The confining of prisoners to their cells, as following a riot or other disturbance.
3. Spoken Word – Performance-based poetry that includes collaboration and experimentation with other art forms such as music, theater, and dance.
4. Tour de Force – An exceptional achievement by an artist, author, or the like, that is unlikely to be equaled by that person or anyone else; stroke of genius.
5. Wrongful Imprisonment – When a person is imprisoned without just cause or not using legal channels.
6. Professor – a teacher at a university or college.
why arts education?

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE: THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON LEARNING STUDY

“The ultimate challenge for American education is to place all children on pathways toward success in school and in life. Through engagement with the arts, young people can better begin lifelong journeys of developing their capabilities and contributing to the world around them...The arts can play a vital role in learning how to learn, an essential ability for fostering achievement and growth throughout their lives. ... Young people can be better prepared for the 21st century through quality learning experiences in and through the arts.” — Richard Riley, former Secretary of Education

An extensive study performed by Judith Burton, Robert Horowitz and Hal Abeles of the Center for Arts Education Research at Columbia University looked into the effects of arts education on cognitive development and overall academic success. The study revealed that students at high arts schools out-performed students at low arts schools in several key areas:

CREATIVE THINKING
- Solutions: a greater number of ideas or approaches to solve problems.
- Originality: more innovative approaches to solving problems.
- Elaboration: mentally constructing more detail in formulating solutions.
- Resistance to closure: tendency to keep an open mind, to avoid rushing to premature judgments or being satisfied too quickly with a possible solution.

GENERAL COMPETENCIES
- Expression: better able to express thoughts and ideas to teachers and peers and to do so in different ways.
- Risk-taking: an increased willingness to try new things, use new materials and approaches, even at the risk of failing; more willing to risk expressing novel ideas to peers and parents.
- Cooperation: worked better with peers and with teachers.
- Synthesis: better at unifying divergent thoughts, feelings and facts.

PERCEPTION OF SELF AS LEARNER
- Higher self-concept in reading, math and general academics.
- Teachers rated them as having more self-confidence.

njpac arts education

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For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call our education sales team at 973-353-7058 or email us at artseducation@njpac.org. Visit us at www.njpac.org/education.

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