**PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY****Biography**

The son of Caribbean-born immigrants, Harry Belafonte was born in Harlem in 1927. As one of the most successful African American pop stars in history Belafonte has used his widespread cross-cultural popularity to spread the ideas of the Civil Rights Movement. Television's first black producer and the first African American to win an Emmy, Belafonte has broken ground as an actor, musician, producer, and activist. Throughout the 1970s and 80s Belafonte increasingly concentrated on humanitarian work. He was a central figure of the USA for Africa effort, initiating the fundraising effort that led to the 1985 single "We Are the World." In 1987 Belafonte became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

What is Mr. Belafonte's profession? (circle your answer or answers)

- A. Business Professional
- B. Actor
- C. Activist
- D. Professor

Answers:

B & C - Mr. Belafonte has worked as an Actor and an Activist.

Vocabulary

Activist: A person who practices direct action to effect changes in social conditions and governments.

Name two people (aside from Mr. Belafonte) who are **Activists**:



1.



2.



3.



4.

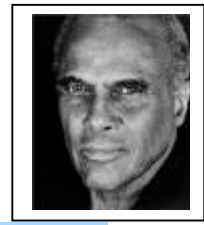
Can you identify the images above?

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

Answers:

1. World Map 2. the Caribbean 3. Jamaica 4. Jamaican Flag



POST-VISIT ACTIVITY

Race records were born when recording companies realized there was money to be made marketing music by black artists to black consumers. By 1920, even though the industry was already 20 years old, only a handful of black artists had ever been recorded. Then, on August 10, 1920, the black singer Mamie Smith recorded "Crazy Blues," an album that sold over two million copies. Race records began to be sold under separate labels and marketed exclusively in black neighborhoods and clubs. The musical style didn't matter; all recordings by black musicians were labeled race records. Despite the money they brought in, race records were thought inferior by the



white recording industry. Blues, for instance, was considered to be primitive. Still, until this time most "black" records had been recorded by white vaudeville performers in black makeup, portraying black people in a stereotypical, racist fashion.

Almost all record companies producing race records were white-owned. Since race records were marketed directly to the black community, most white Americans rarely heard any of this music. As radio became popular in the 1940s, "race music" became available to everyone and started catching on with white teens. Eventually, the term "race music" itself was used

less and less. In 1949, Jerry Wexler, a writer for Billboard, invented the term rhythm & blues, saying "race music" was "a little too close to "racist." Around the same time, disk jockey Alan Freed started using the phrase "rock 'n' roll." In the 1950s, white artists like Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis made the sounds of black music acceptable to white middle class listeners, paving the way for the popularity of black performers like Little Richard and Chuck Berry.

Do we still have categories of black and white music today? How are these categories different or similar to the race records of the 1920s and 1930s?

Name some celebrities who have broken racial boundaries in other entertainment or sports fields (for example in the film industry, basketball, television, etc.).

New Vocabulary:

Vaudeville: A light, comedic theatrical piece frequently combining pantomime, dialogue, dancing, and song

Minstrelsy: A musical show consisting of black American melodies, jokes, and impersonations with white performers usually wearing blackface