



*Performer Spotlight Engagement Guide:*

# Melanie DeMore



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# How to use this Engagement Guide

If you have photos or lesson plans to share, please let us know! Use #MelanieDeMore@cal

This engagement guide is organized around 4 key artistic practices (as identified by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards at <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/>)

**Investigating:** Questioning, exploring and challenging.

**Imagining:** Opening the door to what's possible, and even to what seems impossible.

**Creating:** Making artistic choices with a work of art in mind.

**Connecting:** Reflecting on both process and product and making connections to other aspects of life and study.

This Engagement Guide invites exploration before and after viewing the video, giving each student tools to make personal and meaningful connections as they watch. You'll be able to link to specific subjects that you or your students may want more information about.

We've included engagement activities to lead your students through before they view the video, and a post-viewing activity for artistic practice and reflection. By no means should you feel limited by these suggestions! Go, make art, learn more...and share your experiences where you can.

**Arts Engagement:** More than learning basic information about a performance, we think real arts engagement starts with having the skills and knowledge you need to connect meaningfully with works of art. Through these engagement guides, we aim to give you and your students a glimpse into the artistic process, and the opportunity to work on the same kinds of challenges the artists strive to solve creatively. We hope the next time you see a performance you'll use the insights you gained exploring the artist's process to connect with a work of art, and thus deepen your experience as an audience member.

Student audiences engaged in the arts come to understand that every artist draws from a core set of concepts skillfully chosen and applied in performance to create a work of art both unique to the artist, and connected to other works of art.

And along the way, we hope that students of all ages—and their teachers and adult mentors—will be inspired to experiment with artistic decision-making and creativity themselves. *Enjoy the performances in this video!*



## About Melanie DeMore

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Melanie DeMore is a Grammy-nominated vocal activist, songwriter, composer, and choral conductor who believes in the transformative power of voices raised together in song. She strives to preserve African American folk traditions through song and Gullah stick pounding, as showcased in the documentary in which she's featured, *Stick and Pound*.

Melanie was born in the Bronx, New York and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, and San Antonio, Texas. She moved to Taos, New Mexico as a young adult, then settled down in Oakland. For over 30 years, she's dedicated her life to teaching, mentoring, conducting, directing, and raising the awareness of children and adults about the power of song to effect social and political change. She is a highly regarded presenter, conductor, and soloist at national and international choral and music festivals, including Festival 500 in Newfoundland, Canada, and Chorus America.

A sought-after song/prayer facilitator, Melanie creates spontaneous choirs for The Trinity Institute, The Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Powell Foundation as well as a variety of spiritual and faith-based organizations. She is adjunct faculty at the California Institute for Integral Studies, a master teaching artist for Cal Performances at UC Berkeley, a featured presenter for SpeakOut! and the Institute for Social and Cultural Change, and the Artistic Conductor of The Oakland Children's Community Choir with Living Jazz. In 2019, she was Music Director for Obeah Opera by Nicole Brooks as part of the Luminato Festival.

She was a founding member of Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir, a charter member of Kate Munger's Threshold Choirs, and has shared the stage with such varied artists as Odetta, Pete Seeger, Judy Collins, Holly Near, Ani Di Franco, the Trinity Choir, MUSE Cincinatti Women's Chorus, and many others.

Melanie's mission is to share the connection, healing, self-expression, and celebration that song provides, especially in challenging times. As she likes to say, "A song can hold you up when there seems to be no ground beneath you."

# Song Lyrics

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## **Sun Up to Sun Down**

Spiritual/Work song: Composer unknown

Sun up to sun down pickin' that cotton  
Sun up to sun down whupped by the master  
Sun up to sun down work without water

No more auction block for me, I said  
No more auction block for me

Sun up to sun down pickin' that cotton  
Sun up to sun down whupped by the master  
Sun up to sun down chains and shackles

No more auction block for me, I said  
No more auction block for me  
Yeah, no more auction block for me

## **Lord, How Come Me Here**

Spiritual/Sorrow song: Composer unknown

Lord, how come me here?  
Lord, how come me here?  
Lord, how come me here?  
I wish I never was born

There ain't no freedom here, Lord  
There ain't no freedom here, Lord  
There ain't no freedom here, Lord  
I wish I never was born

They treat me so mean here, Lord  
They treat me so mean here, Lord  
They treat me so mean here, Lord  
I wish I never was born

They sold my children away, Lord  
They sold my children away, Lord  
They sold my children away, Lord  
I wish I never was born

Lord, how come me here?  
Lord, how come me here?  
Lord, how come me here?  
I wish I never was born  
I wish I never was born  
I wish I never was born



## **Glory, Glory, Hallelujah**

Spiritual/Jubilee song: Composer unknown

Glory, glory, hallelujah!  
Since I laid my burdens down.  
Glory, glory, hallelujah!  
Since I laid my burdens down!

Friends don't treat me like they used to  
Since I laid my burdens down.  
Friends don't treat me like they used to  
Since I laid my burdens down!

I'm goin' home to live with Jesus  
Since I laid my burdens down.  
I'm goin' home to live with Jesus  
Since I laid my burdens down!

I feel better, so much better  
Since I laid my burdens down.  
I feel better, so much better  
Since I laid my burdens down!

## **Throw Me Anywhere, Lord (The Buzzard Lope)**

Spiritual: Composer unknown

Throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field  
Throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field

Don't care where you throw me  
In that old field  
'Cause my Jesus owns me  
In that ole field

Throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field  
Throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field

You may beat and bang me  
In that ole field  
Since my Jesus saves me In that ole field

Oh, throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field  
Oh, throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field

Don't care how you treat me  
In that ole field  
Since King Jesus meet me  
In that ole field

Don't care how you do me  
In that ole field  
Since King Jesus choose me  
In that ole field

*(Sing 3 times:)*

Oh, throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field  
Oh, throw me anywhere, Lord  
In that ole field

Don't care where you throw me  
In that old field  
Sing King Jesus owns me  
In that ole field

Don't care how you treat me  
In that ole field  
Since King Jesus meet me  
In that ole field

Don't care how you do me  
In that ole field  
Since King Jesus choose me  
In that ole field

***Come By Here, My Lord***

Spiritual/Sorrow Song: Composer unknown

Come by here, my Lord, come by here  
Come by here, my Lord, come by here  
Come by here, my Lord, come by here  
O Lord, come by here

Someone needs you, Lord, come by here  
Someone needs you, Lord, come by here  
Someone needs you, Lord, come by here  
O Lord, come by here

Someone's prayin' Lord, come by here  
Someone's prayin' Lord, come by here  
Someone's prayin' Lord, come by here  
O Lord, come by here

Someone's cryin' Lord, come by here

Someone's cryin' Lord, come by here  
Someone's cryin' Lord, come by here  
O Lord, come by here

***Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around***

Spiritual: Composer unknown

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' down to freedom land

Ain't gonna let segregation turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let segregation turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let no Jim Crow turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let no Jim Crow turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let racism turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let racism turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let no hatred turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let no hatred turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let injustice turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let injustice turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let no jail cell turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let no jail cell turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around  
Turn me around, turn me around  
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around  
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'  
Marchin' up to freedom land

***Hold on Just a Little While Longer***

Spiritual: Composer unknown

Hold on just a little while longer  
Hold on just a little while longer  
Hold on just a little while longer  
Everything will be all right

Fight on just a little while longer  
Fight on just a little while longer  
Fight on just a little while longer  
Everything will be all right

Pray on just a little while longer  
Pray on just a little while longer  
Pray on just a little while longer  
Everything will be all right

Sing on just a little while longer  
Sing on just a little while longer  
Sing on just a little while longer  
Everything will be all right

***Lead with Love***

Composer: Melanie DeMore

*Chorus (sing twice):*

You gotta put one foot in front of the other  
And lead with love

Put one foot in front of the other  
And lead with love

Don't give up hope  
You're not alone  
Don't you give up  
Keep movin' on

*Chorus (sing twice)*

Lift up your eyes  
Don't you despair  
Look up ahead  
The path is there

*Chorus (sing twice)*

I know you're scared  
And I'm scared too  
But here I am  
Right next to you

*Chorus (sing 3 times)*



Protestors sing together at the March on Washington on August 28, 1963.



# About African-American Spirituals

adapted from *Slave Songs* by Sandra Graham

When Africans were brought to America as enslaved people in the 1700s and 1800s, they entered a frightening and dangerous world.

One thing gave enslaved people comfort in spite of the many hardships they endured: music, especially singing. Everyone had a voice, and so everyone could sing. When enslaved people sang, they sang together, just as they had back home in Africa. This created a feeling of community among them.

Spirituals were an extremely important type of song. You may know a few spirituals, such as “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore,” “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” or “Go Down, Moses.” The characters in spirituals come from the Bible, and the stories usually tell about someone who overcomes a big obstacle.

Spirituals are easy to sing for a good reason. They were created for a type of religious worship called a camp meeting. Most of the people who attended camp meetings could not read or write. The songs that they sang during worship had to be easy to remember. Therefore, spirituals usually have a lot of repetition and often have a chorus – a part of the song that repeats after each verse. That way, people could sing them without needing a book. Another thing that made written music unnecessary was the use of call and response. A leader would begin the song (the call), and everyone else would respond (the response).

Camp meetings were first held in the 1800s in Kentucky. People would go to the woods and fields and camp out in tents and attend worship services for several days at a time. There they would take part in the dances and song rituals of their homeland, along with new songs of faith, pain, and hope to the God of their inherited faith, Christianity. Camp meetings were a way for people who lived on the frontier – who didn’t live near neighbors or a church – to get together and worship.

Because these songs were passed on through oral tradition (they weren’t written down, but were learned from other singers), they didn’t have a specific number of verses or even specific words. The leader decided what verse to sing, and in what order to sing the verses. One of the advantages of this music is that people could make up new verses very easily, which they did to make the spiritual reflect their own lives. As a result, every performance of a spiritual was unique.

## The Function of Spirituals

Spirituals spread from camp meetings to plantations, and they became part of the everyday lives of enslaved people through the Civil War.

These were functional songs, meaning that they had a specific purpose in society. For example:

The term “spiritual” has come to encompass Black hymns, anthems, work songs, cabin and plantation songs, and even ring shouts, and field hollers.



- 1) WORK – Singing spirituals made work less boring. It also helped set a rhythm for work that had repetitive actions, like picking or digging. Enslavers liked this because it made the enslaved people more productive.
- 2) WORSHIP – Even though some enslavers didn't allow them to worship on the plantation, enslaved people found ways around this. One way was something called the invisible church. At night, after the enslavers were asleep, enslaved people would go out into the woods (their invisible church) and worship, where no one could see or hear them. Spirituals were an important part of this worship.
- 3) ENTERTAINMENT – At the end of a long day, or during time off on a Sunday, enslaved people would often sing spirituals for relaxation.
- 4) CODE SONGS – One important function of spirituals was their use in helping enslaved people escape. Code songs are songs that have hidden messages. The spiritual, "Deep River," for example, was sung to announce a meeting at the river:

*Deep river  
My home is over Jordan, yes  
Deep river, Lord,  
I want to cross over into camp ground*

When an enslaved person had run away and the enslaver discovered their absence, the other enslaved people on the plantation might sing, "Wade in the Water." Enslaved people on neighboring plantations would hear the song and take it up, and the runaway, wherever they were, would know that they should take to the river so the bloodhounds would not be able to follow their scent.

## Harriet Tubman's Code Song

Harriet Tubman was an enslaved woman who escaped from a plantation in Maryland in 1849 and who worked as an abolitionist (someone who wants to abolish, or get rid of, slavery.) She helped more than 300 enslaved people escape to freedom in the North using the Underground Railroad. This wasn't really a railroad, but a trail of homes owned by other abolitionists who were willing to shelter escaped enslaved people on their way North. Harriet Tubman's code name was Moses, because, as the Old Testament explains, Moses helped lead his people (the Israelites) out of slavery in Egypt. So, singing the spiritual, "Go Down, Moses" was a way of alerting enslaved people that Harriet Tubman was on her way.

If one enslaved person wanted to advise another that an escape was planned for that night, he might sing, "Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus." In coded language, "steal away"



means “escape” and “Jesus” means the North, or safety. Therefore, spirituals functioned as code songs to hide important messages from enslavers.

## Performance of Spirituals

Although sometimes musicians performed spirituals accompanied by banjo or fiddle, when instruments weren’t available, spirituals were sung unaccompanied, or *a cappella*. The singers improvised harmonies, singing pitches that were different from the melody, as well as clapping their hands and dancing.

There are two kinds of spirituals:

- **Sorrow songs** are sung slowly and mournfully, and told of the heavy burden of slavery and the belief that a better day was coming.
- **Jubilees** are up-tempo songs celebrating victory and joy through reference to biblical figures like Samson or David who had overcome tremendous hardships.

In today’s African American churches, the congregation most often sings spirituals and hymns. Some of the songs are traditional, the lyrics and melody passed down from hundreds of years ago. Sometimes the lyrics are new but the tune is from a familiar song. Together, church singers “raise” a song. This means that when a song leader begins a song, other voices from the congregation need to join in so that the song’s depth of emotion and beauty is fully expressed.

## Characteristics of African Musical Traditions

When Africans came to America, they may have lost their languages, but they remembered their music. They re-created African song in America, influenced by their new surroundings and their cultural memory of Africa. Everything in the list below applies to how spirituals were first performed, as well as to blues, gospel, rap, and other types of African American music.

As you watch Melanie DeMore perform spirituals in her Performer Spotlight video, notice these elements in the songs:

- Repetition with variation
- Movement (dance, gesture) is always present. Most African definitions of music include dance.
- Voice(s) and instrument(s) overlap, so there are very few silent moments.
- The voice quality tends to be intense and strong.
- Call and response is common.
- Music is communal: everyone participates, whether by singing, clapping, dancing, shouting, or playing an instrument. (If we were there with Melanie, she’d encourage us to sing along, participate in call and response, dance, clap, and more!



The Fisk Jubilee Singers started out after the Civil War as a group of young college students (most of them still teenagers) singing so-called “slave songs” in order to raise money for their school, the Fisk Free Colored School in Nashville, Tennessee. They were so popular they ended up touring all over America, including at the White House, and in Europe for more than 7 years. They came home to save their school, later renamed Fisk University, with the money they earned singing, having made the African-American spiritual a well-respected form of music all over the world.

# Spirituals: Historical Background

Developed by Rhonda Benin and Elouise Burrell



## Slavery in the United States

Between the years of 1518 and 1806, African men, women and children were captured and sold into slavery. The African people were members of many different tribal groups such as the Ashanti, Mandinka, Ewe, Fons, Fulani, Ibo, Hausa, Ibibio, Yoruba, Seke, Efik, Awikam, Kromen, Susu, Jolof, Gabon, Kru, etc. These people were stolen from their homelands, brought on slave ships from the west coast of Africa to the New World continents of North and South America and the Caribbean. Once captured, these African men, women, and children were chained together and packed into the bottom of large ships in the most miserable conditions.

The Middle Passage was the cruelest part of this 5-to-12 week journey from Africa to the New World. African people suffered through terrible living conditions, lack of space and food, diseases and physical violence aboard these slave ships. Over eighteen million African people were captured. One-third did not survive the voyage.

In the United States, slavery was legal in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. In 1861, these Confederate states seceded from the Union over economic differences, with slavery being a major issue, and the American Civil War began. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed enslaved people in the Confederate states.

## Life Under Slavery

Enslaved people lived on large plantations where they provided free labor. Men, women, and children worked from sunup to sundown in the cotton, tobacco, and rice fields, often under punishing conditions. Enslavers were often cruel and treated enslaved people as if they were not human beings. Family members were sold and separated. Enslaved people were not allowed to read or write, to speak their native languages, or to practice any of their African customs. Those caught disobeying were punished – mutilated, beaten, sold, or killed. Enslavers outlawed the playing of the drum, which was a primary instrument for West African people in communication (drums sent messages from one village to another), celebration, praise, and rites of passage ceremonies and events.

In response, enslaved people shifted the outlawed drum patterns and rhythms to their voices, hands, and feet, allowing them to keep alive many musical traditions of their homeland and tribes. These early song forms would later become the source of American popular music (like blues, jazz, gospel, funk, rock and roll, rap, and more.)



Protestors, including Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King sing together on the five-day march to Montgomery, Alabama, March 25, 1965.

## The Civil Rights Movement

The African-American civil rights movement refers to a period between 1954 to 1968, in which noted events and reform movements particularly in the Southern United States, aimed at abolishing racial discrimination against African Americans.

Civil rights protestors took part in demonstrations to raise awareness of the injustice of racism and segregation, and advocate for the rights of Black Americans, who among other things, were not allowed access to the same education, employment, or housing opportunities as whites.

For years, the church was the center of African American communities so it was natural that protestors adapted familiar church spirituals into “Freedom Songs.” Protestors sang spirituals “as is” or wrote new lyrics to further

emphasize the political message of their protest. For instance, “We Shall Overcome” is derived from a spiritual known as both “I’ll Overcome Some Day” and “I’ll Be All Right.”

### Spirituals As a Tool of Nonviolence

Over one hundred years after enslaved people found comfort in spirituals, and used them to communicate and even send hidden messages, the civil rights movement saw the power of spirituals to inspire and connect. Protestors adopted many spirituals as anthems to of social justice.

Embracing methods of nonviolent civil disobedience like marches, sit-ins, and voter registration drives, protestors were often threatened with violence. Activists found that singing spirituals together inspired courage in the face of danger and hatred, and brought separate groups together into a unified movement with a common purpose and language.

### Making a Difference: Civil Rights Leaders



**Rosa Parks:** A college-educated seamstress who effectively launched the first peaceful protest of the civil rights movement. The protest began when Parks boarded a Montgomery, Alabama city bus on December 1, 1955, and refused to give up her seat to a white man when the “white” section of the bus was full. Police arrested her for defying the city’s law, prompting outraged black residents to start the Montgomery bus boycott later that year which lasted for over 381 days.

Nonviolence is a moral philosophy that rejects the use of violence as a way to bring about social or political change. Nonviolent activists believe it is irrational to try to use violence to achieve a peaceful society.

There are three main categories of non-violent action:

- protest and persuasion, including marches and vigils;
- non-cooperation; and
- non-violent intervention, such as blockades and occupations.

*“Nonviolent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict. It is one response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics, especially how to wield powers effectively.”*

– Gene Sharp



**Malcolm X:** A prominent civil rights leader who quickly became the national voice for the Black nationalist Nation of Islam in the early 1950s. The son of a civil rights leader, Malcolm Little converted to Islam while serving a prison term in the 1940s. He then changed his surname to “X” to represent the heritage and identity of the Black people lost during centuries of slavery. A dynamic speaker, Malcolm X promoted self-reliance, militancy, and independence for Blacks, in contrast to Martin Luther King Jr.’s doctrine of love, nonviolence, and integration.

However, Malcolm X’s view of the civil rights movement changed while he was on a holy pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964. When he returned, he broke away from the Nation of Islam, and with non-violent organizations such as the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), began working toward racial integration. In a tragic turn of events, rivals within the Nation of Islam assassinated him in 1965. Although his career was cut short, Malcolm X’s early views and opinions greatly influenced the “Black Power” movement that began in the late 1960s.



**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** A civil rights leader during the 1950s and 1960s who fought to protect the rights of black people in the South. King rose to national fame after he took charge of the Montgomery Alabama bus boycott in 1955. A masterful speaker, he came to lead the civil rights movement. He hoped to desegregate the South and protect Black people’s political rights through love, nonviolence, and peaceful protest.

He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, which boosted global awareness of the civil rights movement and put pressure on the federal government to address racial inequality in the United States. However, King’s efforts were interrupted when he was assassinated in 1968.

**Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC):**

A civil rights organization founded in 1960, after the highly successful Greensboro sit-in, staged with the goal to organize students on campuses across the country. The SNCC was one of the most active groups of the civil rights movement and participated in nearly every major peaceful campaign.

Aware of the inspirational power of protest songs, the SNCC published books of protest songs and formed

singing groups such as the SNCC and CORE Freedom Singers. These groups performed around the country and made recordings of their music. (Bernice Johnson

Reagon, former Freedom Singer and founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock on How to Think of Freedom Songs: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/eyesontheprize-music-civil-rights-movement/>)



NCC Freedom Singers, Charles Neblett, Bernice Reagon, Cordell Reagon, and Rutha Harris..

# Engagement Activities

## Engagement Activity #1 (Before viewing the video)

### MAPPING TOGETHER: *What's Our Musical Mix?*



### Overview

**Time needed: 20-30 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration).

Students will reflect on where their families' roots are from and how the songs, stories, foods, and traditions from those places might still be part of their lives.

### Guiding Questions

As far back as your family knows, where did your people come from?

How many countries are represented amongst us?

### Artistic Tool Box

Attentive listening. Close Observation. Multiple Perspectives. Cultural Stories, Songs, Foods and Traditions.

### Supplies and Prep

- Large map of the world
- Sticky notes or removable tape
- Writing materials (journal, paper, writing implements)

### Instructions

It's remarkable to think of the history and longevity of Spirituals. Although these songs developed over two hundred years ago in the Southern states, they've been passed down through the generations and are still sung all over the world today. Our ancestors' songs are some of the most powerful connections we have with them. Are there songs your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents have taught you that tell you about the culture and traditions they were raised in?

**Step 1 Homework Assignment:** Ask students to interview family members (a grandparent, parent, aunt, uncle or guardian) to discover where their ancestors came from and where other family members might still live.

Students should also ask:

- What traditional, folk, or even just older songs do your family member(s) remember from when they were young?
- What kinds of foods did they eat?

- What are some cultural or family traditions (or rituals) they had or still have?
- What were some favorite sayings in their families?

Students may record the interview with their family member, but should also write key points down. (They'll return to these notes later.)

- Step 2**      **Display a large map of the world** and ask students to indicate where their ancestors came from, and mark that on the map with the students' names on post-it notes, or different colored markers. This can be from within the U.S. (e.g., parents moved from Ohio), or from anywhere in the world.
- Step 3**      **Songs.** Ask students to write the titles or short descriptions of songs they've learned from parents, grandparents, or other elders individually in their journals, or together in groups on large sheets of paper.
- Step 4**      **Look at the map** with your students and reflect together on how this one classroom contains so many journeys.
- Step 5**      **Share** some of the song titles or descriptions students wrote about. Invite volunteers to sing some of the songs they've remembered.
- Step 6**      **Reflect together** on what you heard and learned from each other.
- 



## Engagement Activity #2 (Before viewing the video)

### *Music Across Generations and Lands*

#### Overview

**Time needed: 30-60 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration).

Students will reflect on their family's songs, stories, foods, and traditions, share them in small groups, and seek both what is shared across cultures and what is unique and different among them.

#### Guiding Questions

How do music and other cultural traditions move with us through our lives?

What do we have in common through the music, food, stories and traditions we have from our families?

#### Artistic Tool Box

Attentive listening.      Multiple perspectives.      Cultural Traditions.

## Supplies and Prep

- Writing materials (journal, paper, writing implements)
- Chartpad or large paper or whiteboard for each group to take notes.
- Different colored markers for each student in a small group.



## Instructions

### Step 1 Warm Up

- Physical warm up and vocal expressiveness.
- Shabooya Roll Call or other familiar call-and-response

### Step 2 Introduce theme

If I say to you music travels with us, what does that mean to you?

There are few things that distinguish who we are and where we come from more than music and the comfort food of home. These are two things we carry with us wherever we go. As Melanie mentions, music can be both food and spiritual nourishment. After a terrible earthquake in Haiti years ago, a woman who was trapped under rubble for 7 days kept her hope alive – and was found – through her singing:

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/one-year-later-singing-quake-survivor/1921812/#:~:text=One%20year%20ago%2C%20an%20LA,t%20be%20afraid%20of%20death.%22>

In Chile, 33 miners trapped underground for 69 days, continued to sing their national anthem to keep their spirits up, and to help rescuers find them:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/27/trapped-chilean-miners-video>

Music speaks for us and to us, and sharing it is part of what keeps us connected to one another. Now, let's explore the song traditions, food traditions and other cultural traditions of your families and communities.

### Step 3 Individual Reflection

- Ask students to sit for a few minutes and revisit the notes they took from their interview with an elder family member. What were the songs, the foods, and the cultural traditions that their elders shared?
- Now, ask students to identify in writing (or drawn images) at least two songs, two foods, two cultural or family traditions, and two sayings that they remember people in their family using.
- Model this first, saying then writing on a board to share songs, food, traditions, and sayings in your family. Choose things you are comfortable sharing with your classroom.

### Step 4 Small Group Work

- In groups of 3-5, ask students share with one another their interview notes, and what they just wrote down.



- As they discuss one another's contributions, ask them to notice where they have things in common with another person, and where they have things that are unique for just one person.
- Take a moment to celebrate what's shared and what's different – they both are opportunities to enjoy other people.

**Step 5**

**Everyone's Contributions**

- After all students have discussed their traditions, give each group a large piece of paper and be sure that each student within a group has a different colored marker, so that each student's contributions will be visible in the color marker they are using.
- Ask each group to write on the shared piece of paper the things that they shared in common, each student using their marker to make their contributions.
- Then, ask each person to write in their marker what was the one thing in their list that made them unique. Remind students to enjoy the things that make them unique.

**Step 6**

**Whole Group Reflection**

Ask each group to share what they discovered from one another: what they had in common, and what was unique. Celebrate the process and the discoveries.

**Step 7**

**Back to the Map**

- Give each group a unique color of yarn or removable tape. One group at a time, ask students to go back to the map and connect all the places where people in their group came from. Whatever shape this creates, this color line represents their group.
- Take time to notice and name all the different connections. Ask each group what they particularly notice about the way their group intersects on the map. When completed, celebrate the color and creative chaos of the map. Consider leaving this map up as a representation of the diversity of the class.



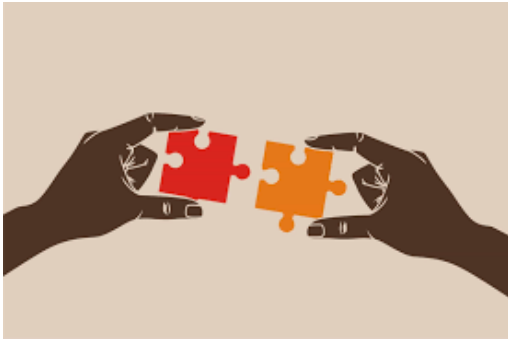
**Optional Musical Activity:**

- In their groups, ask students to choose one of the songs an elder family member shared.
- After doing some research on that song (listening to versions of it online, reading about it) ask students to return to their groups and sing some or all of the song together.
- Now, invite them to add or change some elements of the song. They might consider including:
  - A section where they rap
  - Call and response
  - Adding body rhythms, or different rhythms

- A section where they improvise
- Changing the melody in a section of the song
- Adding another or different harmony
- Repeating a section of the song

Encourage them to experiment, and be as creative as they wish!

- After rehearsing a few times, ask each group to share their song with the class. Consider recording these songs and continuing to work on them even after students have seen the video featuring Melanie DeMore.




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### Engagement Activity #3 (After viewing the video)

#### REFLECTION: LISTENING AND OBSERVING

#### Overview

**Time needed: 20-30 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration.)

Students will reflect on Melanie DeMore’s performance pieces in the video through individual reflection and group discussion to understand how an artist's choices influence our experience of a performance.

#### Guiding Questions

How does separating what our eyes and ears experience during a performance from our interpretations and feelings about that performance help us to see how artists’ choices evoke a specific response?

What roles did these songs play in people’s lives?





How does Melanie DeMore evoke the feeling, meaning, and quality of each song?

#### Artistic Tool Box

Attentive observing. Categorizing aural and visual information.  
Listening and responding. Musical genres or styles.

#### Supplies and Prep

- Writing materials for students (journal, paper, writing implements)

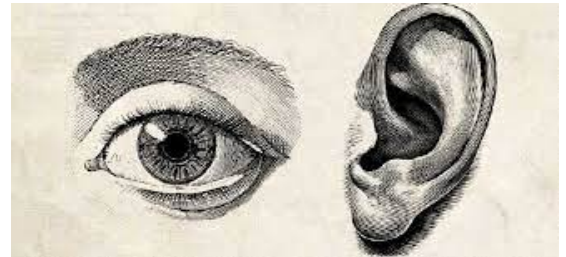
SEE 	HEAR 
THINK 	FEEL 

## Instructions

- Step 1**      **Think back** to Melanie DeMore’s video and jot or sketch some of your memories.
- What were melodies, spoken sections, and instruments you heard?
  - What stood out, or was most memorable to you?

**Step 2**      **What did you See and Hear?**

In order to understand more about the composers’ work, and the choices made by the musician (and even those of the videographer who filmed and edited the video) it helps to understand the actual elements of the performance, not what we may be interpreting or projecting that we heard or saw using our imaginations.



Before you jump into sharing your impressions of the performance, try to remember what you actually saw. (Not what was in your imagination or “mind’s eye”, but what visual information your eyes took in.)

- Share with others the images and elements you saw in the performance.
- Now, think back to what you actually heard. (Again, not the impression the music made on you, but the sounds your ears actually took in.)
- Share with others the sounds and music you heard.

**Step 3**      **What did you Think and Feel?**

Now let’s talk about how the choices of what music to include and what to show visually, brought up certain thoughts and feelings for you.

- What do you remember thinking as you watched Ms. DeMore perform?
- What did you wonder about? What other impressions, images or even stories came to mind when you were watching?
- And how did you feel as you watched Ms. DeMore perform? What emotions came up as you heard the songs and watched her sing them?



**Step 4**      **Discuss:**

- Describe the music you heard. What seemed familiar, and what was unfamiliar to you? Was there a moment you experienced both something familiar and unfamiliar at the same time? (For eg. a familiar melody sung slower or faster than you’ve heard before.)
- What did you notice about your listening as you watched Ms. DeMore? Were there moments when you listened more attentively? If so, why?
- What surprised you about the performance? Did you have an expectation at the beginning that changed as you watched the video?

*Suggestion for Teachers:* Notate for the class what your students saw, heard, thought, and felt.

## Engagement Activity #4 (After viewing the video)

### CREATING TOGETHER: *Songs for Social Change*

#### Overview

**Time needed: 60-120 minutes** (can be extended with layers of exploration).

Students will examine protest songs, consider the issues that are important to them, and create their own protest songs in small groups.



#### Guiding Questions

What issues happening in the world today are important to you?

How can we express the way we feel and think about something so that it inspires others to care about it too?

#### Artistic Tool Box

Research. Attentive listening. Narrative. Imagery & Figurative Language. Collaboration.  
Revision. Improvisation. Rehearsal.

#### Supplies and Prep

- Access to the internet
- List of protest songs
- Writing materials (journal, paper, writing implements)

#### Instructions

Protest songs have existed in the United States for centuries and continue to be part of American culture today. Inspired by the issues of their times, each generation of songwriters hope to bring awareness to urgent issues, and to motivate listeners to make change happen. What's an important issue you want to raise through the lyrics and music of a song?

**Step 1**      **Assignment:** Ask students to find a song that speaks about social change or brings light to an important situation or incident.

Students may:

- Ask older family members about protest songs they remember
- Research protest songs online

*Teachers:* You might list examples of protest songs, so students have a clearer idea of the characteristics of these kinds of songs.

Some examples might include:

- *What's Going On* by Marvin Gaye
- *This Land is My Land* by Woody Guthrie
- *Imagine* by John Lennon
- *Big Yellow Taxi* by Joni Mitchell
- *Glory* by Common, featuring John Legend
- *Freedom* by Beyonce, featuring Kendrick Lamar

### Step 2

**Share research:** Have students share the protest songs they researched. Choose a few of these songs and listen to them, or watch them online. (*Teachers:* print out lyrics to these songs so students can follow along.)

As students listen/watch, ask them to consider:

- What is the main message of the song?
- What emotions does the song convey?
- What words or phrases bring the songwriter's message home most meaningfully and directly? (Circle these phrases/words.)
- How does the songwriter tell a story?
- How do they use imagery, metaphors, or figurative language?
- How do they use repetition, rhyme, and rhythm?

### Step 3

**Song Brainstorm:** Have students get in groups of 3 or 4. They should discuss, then write down:

- What are some issues or subjects they want to address in their song?
- Then, ask them to narrow it down to one issue.
- Why are they choosing this issue/subject?
- What elements, images, words, and phrases might they want to include in their song?

### Step 4

**Create Your Song Lyrics:**

- Ask students to circle the most important elements, images, words and phrases they'd like to include.
- Individually, they might each write a line or two, then share these with the group. (Remember, song lines can be very simple, or have one basic line that is repeated as in *Throw Me Anywhere, Lord.*)
- Where do they want to use repetition, rhyme, rhythm?
- Students should also consider if they want the song to have a chorus (part of the song that is regularly repeated.)
- Have them revise and edit the song. (They can also use another class session to do this.)
- Encourage students to create at least one verse and one chorus.



## Step 5

### Add Music:

- To add music to their lyrics, students can:
  - Choose an existing melody that works with their lyrics.
  - Adapt an existing melody, or mix together a couple of melodies. (What tweaks can you make to a tune(s) to accompany your lyrics?)
  - Create a new melody for your lyrics.
- Encourage students to add to their song. They can include elements like:
  - A rap section
  - Call and response
  - Body rhythms, or different rhythms
  - A section where they improvise
  - Changing the melody in a section of the song
  - Adding another or different harmony
  - Repeating a section of the song

## Step 6

### Rehearse & Share!

- After rehearsing a few times, ask each group to share their song with the class.
- Consider recording these songs and continuing to work on them even after students have seen the video featuring Melanie DeMore.

## Step 7

**Reflect together** on what you heard and learned from each other.

You might consider seeking curricular connections in history, science, or literature. If you design a lesson that you'd like to share, please let us know! We'd like to include it future teacher resources.



Students protesting on February 21, 2018, after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

## Want to Learn More?

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Melanie touches on several fascinating subjects in her video, and we couldn't fit them all in this guide. To learn more about a few of these topics, we encourage you to visit the following sites:

### **Influence of African American Music**

#### **Roots: The Impact of Black Music on America and the World:**

<https://richardsingley.medium.com/roots-the-impact-of-black-music-on-america-and-the-world-ed00824f7f13>

#### **Musical Crossroads: African American Influence on American Music:**

<https://music.si.edu/story/musical-crossroads>

### **Gullah Culture & History:**

Study South Carolina on Gullah Culture:

<https://www.studysc.org/high-school/gullah-culture>

### **The Gullah Geechee People:**

<https://gullahgeecheecorridor.org/thegullahgeechee/>

**Gullah History:** <https://www.beaufortsc.org/things-to-do/gullah-culture/>



Traditional Gullah house on stilts.

**Children's Guide to Gullah Music:** <https://www.knowitall.org/series/gullah-music>

**Buzzard Lope:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dGamWaYcLg>

**Zipper Songs:** <https://www.riseupandsing.org/songs/resistance/zipper>

**United States Presidential Election of 2016:** <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-presidential-election-of-2016>

**Voting Rights Act of 1965:** <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/voting-rights-act>

**The Electoral College:** <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/electoral-college/390121>

# Additional Resources

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Melanie DeMore's web site: <http://www.melaniedemore.com/>

## Articles:

A Conversation with Melanie DeMore: <https://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=319>

Vocalist Activist Melanie DeMore uses her voice as a weapon of mass connection: <http://sfbaytimes.com/vocal-activist-melanie-demore-uses-her-voice-as-a-weapon-of-mass-connection/>

Melanie DeMore: Someone worth knowing: <https://www.sfbach.org/melanie-demore-someone-worth-knowing/>

## Videos:

Stick & Pound - short documentary on Melanie DeMore and the Gullah art of stick pounding:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQIlg-UomM8k>

Melanie DeMore on the History of Stick Pounding:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=66&v=9QafgYTItgw&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=66&v=9QafgYTItgw&feature=emb_logo)

Melanie performs *Sending You Light*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clsZuoNFtXg>

Melanie leads *Free, Free, Free*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rloOaLRwedo>

## African American Roots Music Specialists

Sweet Honey in the Rock: <https://sweethoneyintherock.org/>

Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir (Melanie DeMore was a founding member of this group):

<http://www.kitka.org/linda-tillery-and-the-cultural-heritage-choir>

## Lesson Plans:

Civil Rights: [https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/civil-rights-done-right?gclid=CjwKCAiA866PBhAYEiwANKlneBX-  
jl8mhmb50hYL9wKlMfUf8G8ypsrm5uPpYEymEQ27YcuOlvR7RxoC\\_tsQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/civil-rights-done-right?gclid=CjwKCAiA866PBhAYEiwANKlneBX-jl8mhmb50hYL9wKlMfUf8G8ypsrm5uPpYEymEQ27YcuOlvR7RxoC_tsQAvD_BwE)

American Slavery: [https://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery?gclid=CjwKCAiA866PBhAYEiwANKlneL95WmDBqshHKTNR5a49Ja8QONxN5qk-  
JsAYSbnQ7c0pmqJYBnRz\\_xoCeFcQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery?gclid=CjwKCAiA866PBhAYEiwANKlneL95WmDBqshHKTNR5a49Ja8QONxN5qk-JsAYSbnQ7c0pmqJYBnRz_xoCeFcQAvD_BwE)

The Music of African American History: <https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/music-african-american-history>

## Books

- *Black Popular Music in America*, by Arnold Shaw
- *Black Songs: The Forge and the Flame*, by John Lovell
- *Spirituals Triumphant Old and New*, edited and arranged by Edward Boatner
- *Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through its Songs* by Candie Carawan



## Children's Books

- *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans*, by Kadir Nelson
- *Many Thousands Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom*, by Virginia Hamilton
- *If You Lived When There Was Slavery in America*, by Anne Kamma
- *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*, by Ellen Levine and Kadir Nelson
- *Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round: Stories and Songs of the Civil Rights Movement*, by Doreen Rappaport
- *If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement*, by Gwendolyn Hooks
- *Black Heroes: A Black History Book for Kids: 51 Inspiring People from Ancient Africa to Modern-Day U.S.A.* by Arlisha Norwood

## Institutes of Black Culture

The Underground National Railroad Freedom Center: [www.freedomcenter.org](http://www.freedomcenter.org)

The African American Museum and Library at Oakland: [www.oaklandlibrary.org/AAMLO](http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/AAMLO)

Center for Black Music Research: [www.cbmr.org](http://www.cbmr.org)





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**FARGO**

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For information on supporting our Education & Community Programs, contact Taun Miller Wright: [twright@calperformances.org](mailto:twright@calperformances.org).