Lesson 3: Collaborative Songwriting Activity  
*Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone*

**Project Title:** The Classroom Album: Fostering Collaborative Behavior through Group Composition  
**Age(s):** 12-15  
**Time:** 30-50 minutes  
**Arts Discipline:** Music Composition/Songwriting/Music History/Social Justice

### ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

**Goal(s):**

**Objective:** Students will be able to use song composition (music and lyrics) as a tool for reflecting, shaping, and inspiring meaning.

This lesson encourages allied behavior through the act of contributing to a collaborative songwriting project.

**Materials:** digital software (i.e., Noteflight or Soundtrap) or Google Classroom (asynchronous)

**New Word(s)** collaborative songwriting

### NYS Arts Learning Standards (select no more than 2 - student audiences only)

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- **MU:Cr2.1.7**
  
a. Organize and/or demonstrate developed musical ideas for arrangements or compositions that express unity and variety (such as in AB or ABA form) and convey expressive intent.  
b. Use standard notation and/or audio/video recording to combine, sequence, and document musical phrases.
| STEPS | | |
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| **Step #1** | Each group (or individual) will write a short chorus/refrain for an original song inspired by a social justice issue raised in the ‘song portrait’ activity. For example, if the group was analyzing “This Land is your Land,” they might decide to focus on prejudice against minorities. |
| **Step #2** | The class is given 4-5 elements of a song, for example: “who is speaking?” “2-bar melody,” “lyrics for one phrase,” “tempo and time signature.” Each group member or individual chooses one of these elements, quickly composing this part of the song in 5 minutes. |
| **Step #3** | The group or individual will then share their parts and rehearse either virtually or on their own. The goal of the exercise is not to write a “perfect” chorus, but to work together quickly with passion and enthusiasm. |
| **Step #4** | The finished 4 measure chorus will be notated as a melody (on staff paper or digitally) with lyrics (either by instructor or with student help). |

**Activity Modifications (as needed):**