

Anti-Racism in the Music Classroom: **An Educational Resource List for Music Teachers**

Step 1:

Listen to [Episode 3](#) of the New York Times' "1619" podcast for a 35 minute, well-constructed explanation of how American folk music came to be through the development of Blackface minstrel singers.

Step 2:

Read [this](#) article, published by NAFME in 2019, on "The White Fear of Taking Racist Songs Out of Music Education".

Step 3:

Read this list of songs steeped in racist beginnings, and click the links to learn more about each (alphabetized: please add more with appropriate links/evidence as you see fit)

List of Songs Steeped in Racist Beginnings:

1. [Camptown Races](#)
2. [Canoe Song](#)
3. [Cotton-Eyed Joe](#)
4. [Dinah](#)
5. [Do Your Ears Hang Low?](#)
6. [Eenie, Meenie, Miny, Moe](#)
7. [Five Little Monkeys](#)
8. [I've Been Working on the Railroad](#)
9. [Jim Along Josie](#)
10. [Jimmy Crack Corn](#)
11. [John Kanaka](#)
12. [Johnny on the Woodpile](#)
13. [Jump Jim Joe](#)
14. [Oh! Susanna](#)
15. [Old Folks at Home](#)
16. [Old Dan Tucker](#)
17. [Pick a Bale of Cotton](#)
18. [Run, Children, Run](#)
19. [Shoo, Fly](#)
20. [Ten Little Indians](#)
21. [Turkey In the Straw](#)
22. [Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah](#)

Let's also have awareness around:

- The origins of "[Kumbaya](#)", and how it was co-opted from the Gullah Geechee culture.
- "[All The Pretty Little Horses](#)", which was sung by enslaved Black women to their white mistresses' children- second verse is centered around Black mother's anxiety about leaving her own children

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

[Songs with a Questionable Past](#) compiled by Lauren McDougle
[Wikipedia's List of Blackface Minstrel Songs](#)

Step 4:

Come up with a list of 5 replacement songs to teach concepts to students, like [this](#) teacher has started to do.

Personal Example: I used to use "Pick a Bale of Cotton" to introduce verse/chorus concept to kindergarteners. That can easily be replaced with "Going Over the Sea".

Step 5:

Read 2 or more items listed below.

- Published Articles on Racism in the Music Classroom:
 - http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bradley6_4.pdf
 - <https://nafme.org/you-might-be-left-with-silence-when-youre-done/>
- Blog Posts on Racism in the Music Classroom:
 - <https://www.ethanhein.com/wp/2018/teaching-whiteness-in-music-class/>
- Books on Anti-Racism in the Music Classroom:
 - [Marginalized Voices in Music Education](#)
 - [Music Education for Social Change: Constructing an Activist Music Education](#)
- More on American Folk Music's Roots:
 - On Stephen Foster:
 - <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/cant-escape-stephen-foster>
 - On T.D. Rice:
 - <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/who/index.htm>
 - <https://dancingmasters.com/jump-jim-joe/>

- An Incredibly Helpful Presentation on Racism in Children’s Music:
 - <https://pocc.nais.org/PoCC/media/documents/Racism-in-Children-s-Music-Presentation.pdf>
- GamePlan’s edits to rectify racist content:
 - http://www.kid-sounds.com/images/ReplacementLinks/Official_statement.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3gdrxBp0AHR1Q8CtjT0dTMR5gSQU3KyTQ_D3agwDpQE75ufd7PSpyF6tY
- Decolonizing the Music Room’s Website
 - <https://decolonizingthemusicroom.com/>

We can change the music classroom. What is more- we must. Don’t keep doing it because “everyone else is doing it”. A large part of anti-racism work is owning mistakes, which is where I am in this process. Please reach out to me with any questions/concerns at kristineley05@gmail.com.

Thank you,
Kristin Eley

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [Institute for Composer Diversity](#)
- [Leap Year Music](#)- incredible Black educator and composer that will do Zoom calls with students!
- [Putomayo Kids](#)
- Beyond Elijah Rock: The Non-Idiomatic Choral Music of Black Composers
<https://www.mlagmusic.com/research/beyond-elijah-rock?fbclid=IwAR1I6GdD5IUcMWWuXEZZudFgcRPdMm-3RmygXrLaefjvfRECoWSjj3zQxA>

Sources:

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3. <https://gen.medium.com/dinah-put-down-your-horn-154b8d8db12a>
4. <https://atlantablackstar.com/2015/08/20/12-childhood-nursery-rhymes-you-didnt-realize-were-racist/3/>
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6. [Decolinizingthemusicroom.com](#)
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9. <https://gen.medium.com/dinah-put-down-your-horn-154b8d8db12a>