

Title: *Exploring Women’s Rights Through the Song Pretty Bird*

Integrating global music into classroom instruction provides a gateway to exploring and connecting across cultures. Music has always been a vital part of human expression. It has the power to engage, motivate and inspire students and builds bridges between both what is familiar and what is unfamiliar. The integration of music across the curriculum enables students to engage in rich textual analysis of diverse, interdisciplinary primary source materials, as well further develop global competency skills such as recognizing perspectives and communicating across cultures. This lesson integrates music from the album [Wu Fei and Abigail Washburn](#), available through Smithsonian Folkways.

Lesson Theme: Exploring women’s rights through the music of Wu Fei and Abigail Washburn

Featured Song: “Pretty Bird”

Overview: Students will read and listen to the music of Abigail Washburn and Wu Fei. Using their music, students will be exposed to women’s rights issues and symbolism through an analysis of song lyrics.

Suggested Grade level: 8

Subject: ELA

Corresponding National Standards: [RL 8.1](#), [RL 8.2](#), [RL 8.3](#), [RL 8.4](#), [RL 8.5](#), [RL 8.7](#).

Corresponding Global Competency Skills: [Asia Society’s Global Competency Skills](#): Recognize perspectives.

Essential Question: How has the treatment of women evolved over time?

Lesson Objectives:

1. Determine symbolism based on background information.
2. Analyze figurative language.

Materials:

- [Pretty Bird song lyrics](#)
- [Pretty Bird Lesson Documents](#)
- The Smithsonian’s Folkways Magazine article on [Hazel Dickens](#).
- [Pretty Bird Description Transcript](#)

Student Activities:

- Read the following information about Abigail Washburn and Wu Fei prior to starting the lesson with the class <http://www.wufeimusic.com/collaborations#/abigail-washburn/>, as well as this introduction video to the [Guzheng](#).
- Hand out the lyrics for [“Pretty Bird.”](#) Have students read the lyrics and listen to the song while completing the questions on the [Pretty Bird Lesson Documents](#).
- Have students read the [transcript](#) of Abigail Washburn’s description of Pretty Bird and fill out the corresponding section in the [Pretty Bird Lesson Documents](#).
- Have students read the Smithsonian’s Folkways Magazine article on [Hazel Dickens](#). Students will use this text to answer the questions on the Hazel Dickenson Article response section of the [Pretty Bird Lesson Documents](#).
- Finally use the Pretty Bird Song Connections section of the [Pretty Bird Lesson Documents](#) as a guide for students to compare a song of their choice from any genre to “Pretty Bird”, making connections based on symbolism, theme, characters, tempo, literary elements, etc.

Assessment: Students will be assessed based on the Pretty Bird Song Connections assignment [Pretty Bird Lesson Documents](#). Students will take what they have learned about symbolism and women’s rights issues and connect it to a modern-day song which reveals the same themes.

Learning Extension(s) Have students visit the Women’s Suffrage National Park website and read the [Women’s Suffrage Timeline](#). They will learn about the many women who have had a positive influence on the women’s right movement. Instruct students to choose one person from the timeline and fill out the Women’s Suffrage Biography chart according to directions.

Bibliography:

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