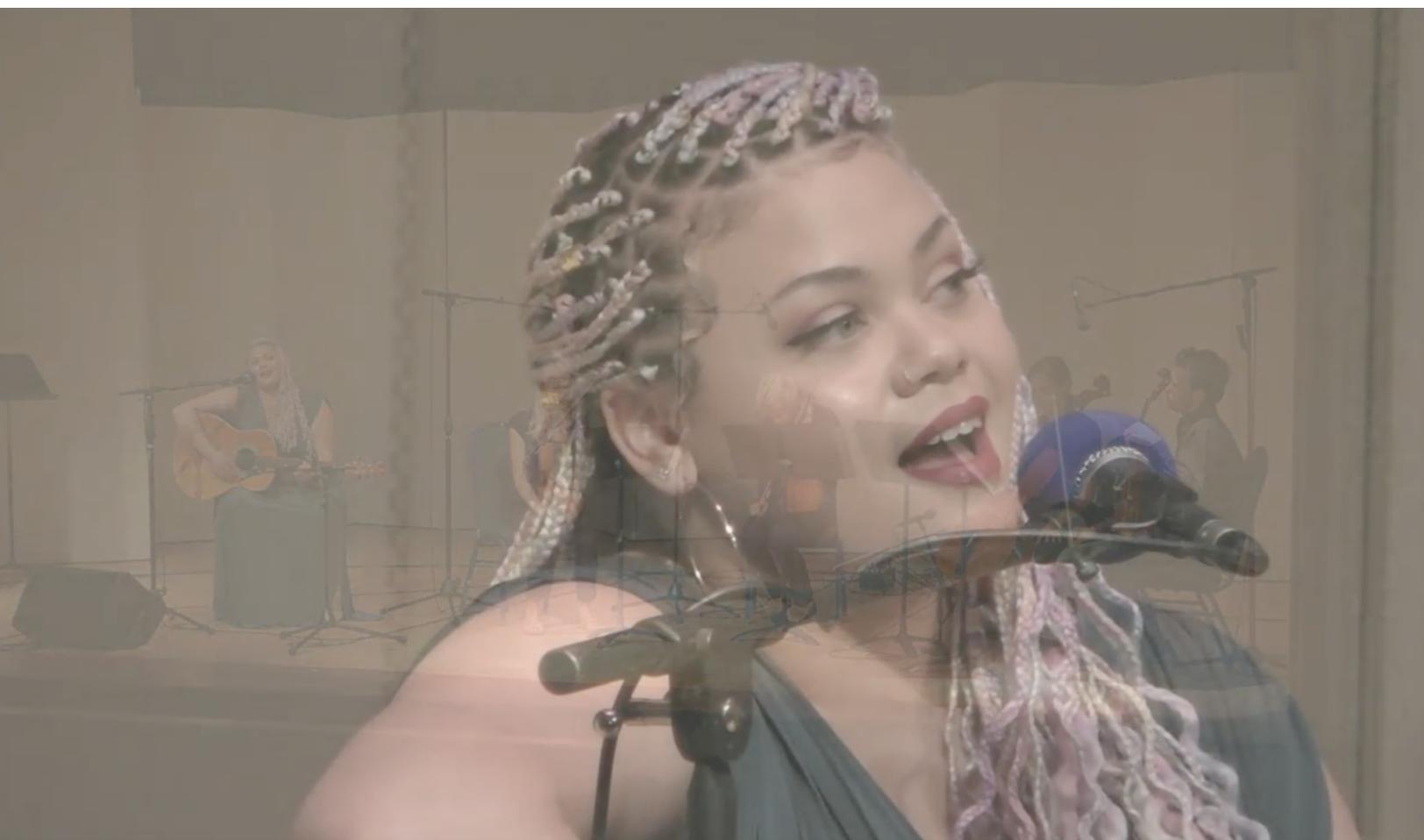




Documentary
Songwriters



Teaching Artist Training Program

July 18 - 22, 2022

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Director's Letter	3
What is Documentary Songwriting?	5
Summary of features	6
Learning Objectives	8
Milestones	8
Outcomes	8
Curriculum Overview (7 Modules for 7 Steps)	9
Prerequisites	10
Our Typical Teaching Artists	10
Application Process	11

Director's Letter

Dear Future DocSong Teaching Artist,

There are three things that set our training apart:

First, we teach a collaborative method of songwriting that creates lyrics directly from spoken stories. We harness the power inherent in human speech to create deeply emotional songs.

Second, we are committed to giving you the necessary skills to integrate this songwriting method with your ongoing work. In addition to learning the steps of the Documentary Songwriting Method, you will learn how to create a safe space that invites others to share, you will learn how to plan and follow through with projects, and you will learn valuable self-care and emotional processing tactics to implement when dealing with emotional stories.

Finally, our training rests in experiential education. Each day, you will be challenged to be open, vulnerable, and in a space of growth. You will have the opportunity to practice every skill that we learn, both musical and interpersonal, in real-world scenarios.

If you are ready to listen deeply and expand your musical offering and teaching techniques, then this course is for you. Join us as we learn to spread the power of high-quality songwriting across the globe.

Nora Willauer
Executive Director



Teaching Artist Raphaël Meulemans in Gotland, Sweden

What is Documentary Songwriting?

Documentary Songwriting is a unique, step-by-step method of co-writing music that fosters empathy, boosts self-confidence and strengthens community. It demystifies creativity and allows someone with no musical background to express themselves through high-quality songs.

Documentary Songwriting has been used to enhance understanding between Turkish and Greek Cypriots at the UN Buffer Zone on Cyprus, to tell the stories of refugees from the Middle East seeking asylum in Belgium, and to tell women's #MeToo stories. Our projects have been featured on TEDx and on NPR's Morning Edition.

Participants in Documentary Songwriting gain self-esteem when they can turn their experiences into song. A participant says of the process: "It was a glimpse into real human experience and emotion, unfettered by script and censorship. It was one of the precious moments in life that I truly felt I was witnessing (and a part of) something real."

"It is a fascinating process to see one of my very personal stories transformed into a song. For my refrain, every time I sing it, I become more grateful. Hearing other people sing along with me makes me feel more connected to them."

- Meiyue Liu, Camden, Maine

Summary of Features

A documentary song is a song that comes from a person's spoken words about an actual, lived experience. The song documents the emotions of the experience through music.

Three qualities:

- **Authenticity:** The song arises from the spoken words of an individual's lived experience.
- **Accessibility:** The melody and words can be sung by people without trained voices.
- **Artistry:** The song expresses a shared exploration of ideas and suggestions from its Story Source and Teaching Artist.

Two Roles:

The Story Source:

- recounts a personal experience
- generates the very beginnings of a melody
- contributes ideas and feedback throughout the complete writing and arranging process
- helps ensure that the song that emerges conveys the emotions of their story

The Teaching Artist:

- listens deeply to the story source
- leads them along the docsong process
- contributes ideas and feedback throughout the complete writing and arranging process
- provides songwriting expertise and perspective to ensure that the general listener might understand and feel the emotional message of the song

Both the Story Source and the Teaching Artist provide ideas and collaborate. Together, they explore different ways to shape the song and give it an identity that is authentic to the story source and accessible to future listeners.

- It is a method of creating songs from spoken words. You don't wait for inspiration.
- It is collaborative. Two or more people work together.
- It goes beyond witnessing a person's story. It transforms the spoken words into an art form – in this case, a song.
- No musical knowledge is needed from the person who tells the story.
- It is a step-by-step process. It is flexible, but you still know what to do next.
- The process invites vulnerability and openness, leading to a heightened sense of emotional well-being.
- The finished song can be shared worldwide, building empathy and community through authentic storytelling.

“The process of turning the words of a heartfelt story into a song was honestly fun and almost therapeutic. To not only share a story but to convert it into something artistic—Malcolm and Melodi have transformed my memories into a little gem that glows beautifully! Thank you both so much for helping me appreciate these memories even more!”

- Camila Solis Torrez, Cochabamba, Bolivia

Learning Objectives:

- Learn to communicate effectively and empathetically with communities in crisis
- Attend workshops and collaborate with industry professionals
- Build confidence through experiential learning
- Develop skills necessary to implement the Documentary Songwriting Method in your profession

Milestones:

Throughout our training week, you will have opportunities to put into practice what we are learning. Each day you will be matched with a community member, and you will write a song from their story over the course of the week. On Friday and Saturday, you will participate in two songwriting workshops with communities who have no experience with the Documentary Songwriting Method. You will use your new skills to guide these participants through the process. And finally, on Sunday of the training, you will have the opportunity to be a part of our end-of-training performance.

Outcomes:

At the end of this training, you will receive a certificate of completion. You will have the opportunity to register as a Documentary Songwriting Teaching Artist. Contingent upon positive evaluations, you will be able to lead paid workshops for DocSong.

Curriculum Overview (7 Modules for 7 Steps):

The Teaching Artist Training curriculum is divided into seven modules that provide insight into the seven steps of Documentary Songwriting.

Module 1: Draw forth a story

- How do I connect with possible story sources?
- How do I establish trust with a story source?
- How do I make sure that a story source tells me a story that has sufficient emotion to warrant a song?
- What makes a viable song?
- How do I identify what the emotional message of the story is?
- How do I manage a public session, with an audience?
- How do I manage my own emotional responses as I go through this process?

Module 2: Distill into a free verse poem

- How do I know what to keep and what to eliminate in order to turn a large amount of text into a short amount of lyrics?
- How do I know if I have enough material from which to draw lyrics?

Module 3: Shape into lyrics

- How do I know what to eliminate in order to turn a large amount of text into a short amount of lyrics?
- How do I know if I have enough material from which to draw lyrics?
- How do I know how many lines long the chorus and verses should be?
- How do I choose a model song form to guide me in guiding my story source?

Module 4: Design a melody for one verse and a refrain

- How do I get them to sing? And how do I get them to sing something distinctive?
- How do I create the arc of a melody from a shorter melodic idea?
- How do I decide how much direction I should give them?
- How do I complete the process so that the story source doesn't feel the need to keep improvising and refining?
- How can I tell if a song is singable?

Module 5: Edit the remaining verses to fit the melody

- If I have many verses, how many do I have to edit to fit the melody?
- What are ways to edit a verse to fit a melody?
- How do I decide when the lyrics are done?
- How do I know if the song could use a bridge?
- How do I design a bridge?
- How do I know if the melody and lyrics are done?

Module 6: Arrange the chords

- How do I know what key to play in?
- How do I tell if the song is in a major or minor key?
- How do I find the most probable chords to fit the melody?
- How do I know when to change chords?
- What if none of the most probable chords sounds right underneath a note?
- What are the possible rhythmic patterns and how do I test them out with the melody?
- How do I decide whether to use fancier chords than the most probable I, IV, and V major or minor chords?

Module 7: Perform the song in a recording or a live setting

- How do I arrange the song for performance?
- How do I rehearse it, record it, and share it?
- How do I manage the post-workshop reflection period when the story source or I have follow-up ideas to improve the song

Prerequisites:

- Openness to working in a collaborative setting with stories that could be sensitive in nature
- Openness to singing in solo or group settings
- Proficiency with a chordal instrument
 - Knowledge of finger patterns, scales
 - Knowledge of basic chords and progressions (I-IV-V, I-V-vi-IV, etc.)



Our Typical Teaching Artists:

Typical Documentary Songwriting Teaching Artists hold some degree of structured music training. Many have graduated from college music programs and are seeking to broaden their skillset and increase their impact in the world. Some Teaching Artists are music educators who are looking to bring a new method of teaching and learning into their classrooms or private studios. Regardless of their background, our Teaching Artists are committed to continuous growth: they are constantly seeking new ways to empathize with others, to communicate more effectively, and to create authenticity in their work.

“It was only after going through the process that I fully realised the benefit to my emotional well being. I told the story of an armed robbery that I was a victim of, a story that happened many years ago and was definitely buried under many layers of my mind. After being able to share the experience, make music while expressing my core emotions, I feel emotionally stronger and true to myself.”

- Jonathan Westhorp, Manchester, England

Application Process:

Secure your spot by emailing nwillauer@docsong.org with:

- Name
- Address
- Email
- Phone #
- Instrument
- 500 word overview of your personal mission statement and what you hope to gain by completing this training.
- If you are interested in applying for financial assistance, please create a 5-minute video that details:
 - Why you should receive scholarship
 - An overview of your current financial situation
 - Any extenuating circumstances

Tuition: \$1500

Payments can be made at docsong.org/donate or by sending a check to:

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