



EDUCATORS GUIDE

Martha Redbone

This guide is geared toward teachers of grades 3 - 6.

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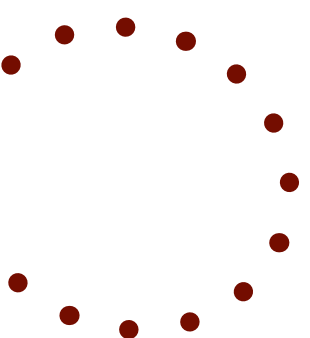


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About This Guide

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience. This guide is geared toward teachers of grades 3 - 6.

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The great thing about the arts is that they can often evolve to meet their context. That means that many of the activities shared are flexible to a lot of different contexts depending on how you choose to frame them in your class. We know that you all are experts on your classroom and your students and so we invite you to use these lessons and activities as guideposts and adapt them to fit your classroom management style, range of student ability, and time constraints.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ICON KEY



MUSIC



READING



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING



SPEAKING & LISTENING

Educators, we invite you to share with us what you did in your classroom around this guide or the production. You can email eschildkret@portlandovations.org or reach us via [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

We love to hear and see what great learning is happening in your classrooms.

About Martha Redbone

Martha Redbone is a vocalist, songwriter, composer, and educator of African American, Cherokee, Shawnee, and Choctaw descent. A multi-award-winning musician, Redbone is known for performing a unique “gumbo” of roots music embodying the folk and mountain blues sounds of her childhood in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky, mixed with the eclectic grit of her teenage years in pre-gentrified Brooklyn. Inheriting her powerful gospel-singing father’s voice and the resilient spirit of her mother’s Southeastern Indigenous culture, Redbone broadens the boundaries of American Roots music with songs and storytelling that share her life experience as a Black and Native American woman and mother navigating in the new millennium. On the Roots Project, Redbone works in partnership with longtime collaborator and husband, Aaron Whitby. Their works give voice to issues of social justice, connecting cultures and celebrating the human spirit.



MARTHA REDBONE (photo by Craig Bailey / Perspective Photo)

Being an Audience Member

An audience member is a part of a larger community – an audience – and you all work together to create your theater experience. Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform. Sharing their hard work and joy with you is one of the best parts of being a performer. Each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and talking from the audience can be distracting. A theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers can be heard throughout the auditorium. Martha Redbone highly encourages clapping at the parts of the performance that you enjoy. She may also invite you to sing along during the performance.

As you enjoy the show, think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? How many can you name?
- What kind of responses might an audience give to different types of performances?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is American Roots Music?

A leading singer-songwriter of American roots music, Martha Redbone blends elements of funk, blues and gospel music with the traditional sounds of her Cherokee, Shawnee and Choctaw heritage.

American Roots Music is similar to folk music and incorporates a broad range of musical genres including Blues, Country, Bluegrass, Gospel, Cajun, Zydeco, Tejano, and Native American music. At the beginning of the 20th Century, the term “folk music” was used by scholars to describe music made by white people of European ancestry, often in the relatively isolated rural South. The term American Roots Music expanded beyond this limited scope to encompass the many genres of music born in the United States. While it’s performed in concert halls like Merrill, this music is also a vibrant part of cultural life across the country. It rose out of songs sung in homes and can still be heard in churches, on front porches, in workplaces, at parties, and in homes. Often melodies and words are passed down through generations from parent to child, though songs—and their meanings—frequently change to reflect changing times. Because of its strong connection to oral history, American Roots Music offers a cultural window into the lives of everyday Americans through time.

See [*Song Stories*](#) on page 10 for an activity exploring storytelling in American Roots Music.



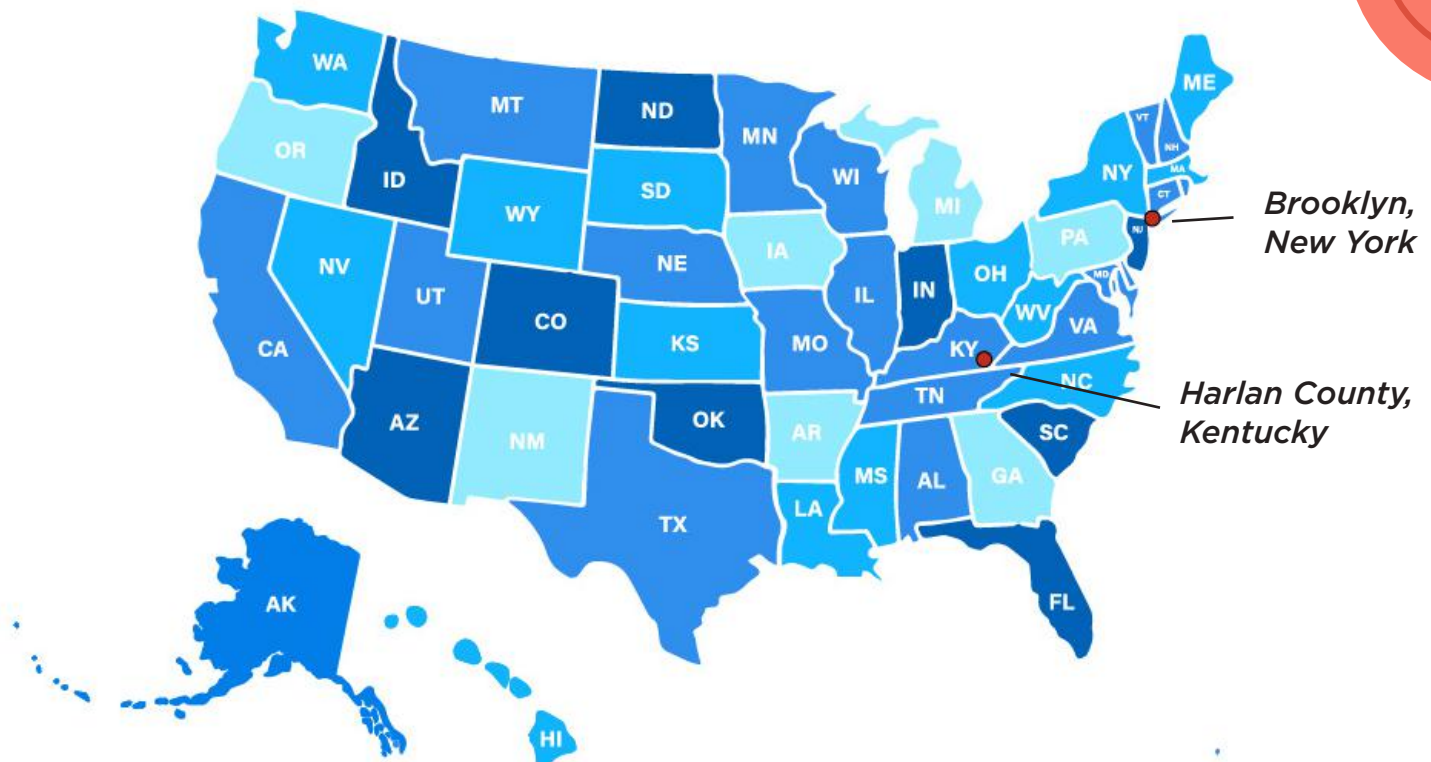
Where did Martha Redbone spend her childhood?

Martha Redbone grew up in the Appalachian Mountains in Harlan County, Kentucky and Brooklyn, New York. Both places have had a big impact on the music she writes and the stories she tells. Martha Redbone spent her childhood in Harlan County, Kentucky. The county is on the traditional land of the Cherokee and Shawnee people, a heritage Martha Redbone shares through her mother. Colonized by white settlers in the early 1800's, Harlan County's primary economic mainstays are coal and timber, like many Appalachian communities. Harlan County is known for its bluegrass and country music and has produced many famous singer/songwriters.

Redbone moved to Brooklyn, NY when she was in middle school and describes the community she lived in as "pre-gentrified Brooklyn." Gentrification is a housing, economic, and health issue that affects a community's history and reduces social capital. Through this process local people, often people of color and people of lower economic status, are displaced by businesses and wealthy homes under the guise of neighborhood improvement. Pre-gentrification, Brooklyn boasted a community of Black and Latine artists experimenting in music styles like Jazz, Funk, Electronica, and Rock.

Speaking about the way spending her childhood in two vastly different communities have influenced her songwriting, Redbone says,

"Growing up in Harlan County, Ky., I listened to folk, country and traditional mountain music. Then I moved to New York as a young teen, and let's just say I was the only one in the neighborhood who knew Conway Twitty. But I loved the music there, too...So there are many, many influences along the way. But I think what ties all those traditions together is strong melody and storytelling. That's what really inspires me." (Martha Redbone for nasvillescene.com 2022)



PRE-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Here are some ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes of Martha Redbone's Performance.

ACTIVITY: Guess the Rhythm

This game offers a fun way to introduce rhythm and encourage collaboration.

Materials:

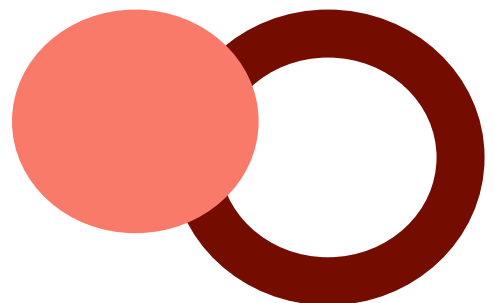
Enough open space for students to sit in a circle.

Procedure:

1. Invite students to sit in a circle on the floor. Join students on the floor and clap in a simple rhythm (a steady beat is easiest to begin with). Invite students to join you in clapping and encourage students to try and clap at the exact same time. Practice clapping in unison until students are comfortable with it.
2. Select a student to be the guesser. The guesser will attempt to guess who is leading the clapping. Ask the guesser to shut their eyes and ears and silently point to a student who will lead the clapping.
3. Invite the leader to begin clapping and the rest of the class to join. When students are clapping in unison, ask the guesser to rejoin the group. Invite them to guess who is the leader.
4. Repeat this activity until everyone who wants to guess has guessed and everyone who wants to lead has led.
5. If your students are great at clapping in unison, consider adding a second leader and challenging students to switch leaders at some point during the clapping without the guesser noticing.

Discussion:

1. What strategies did you use when clapping in unison?
2. What did you look and listen for when trying to guess who was the leader?
3. What could we do next time we play this game to be more effective leaders, clappers and guessers?



ACTIVITY: Drawing Songs

Practice active listening with this drawing activity.

Materials:

The Garden of Love album by The Martha Redbone Roots Project on Spotify
Paper
Crayons, markers, or color pencils

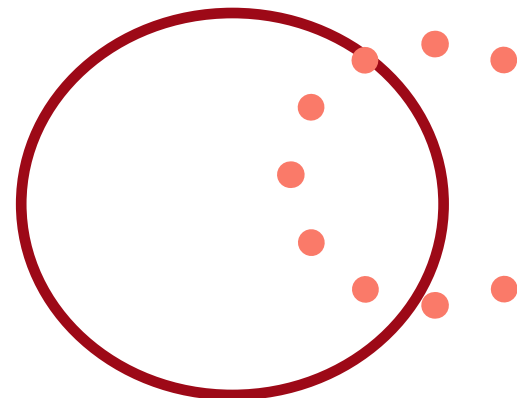


Procedure:

1. Play a song from the album the Garden of Love for students (or a verse of a song if you prefer). The Garden of Love is a great song for this activity! Invite students to listen carefully to how fast and slow the song moves, and how high and low the music goes.
2. After listening, ask students to describe the song in simple words like fast, slow, high, low, smooth, rough, etc. Write these words up on the board as inspiration for art.
3. Hand each student a piece of paper and a drawing implement and prepare to play either the second verse of the song you played or a new song. This time, invite students to draw what they hear on the page. Students can use lines, blocks of color, shapes, etc., to mimic the qualities of the music. For example: if the music goes high, students may want to draw a line that climbs up the page. If the music sounds very smooth and quiet they might choose to draw smoother shapes, or cooler colors. If it's loud and fast, they might choose to draw more jagged shapes or warm colors. This is an opportunity for students to use their creativity to draw what they hear.
4. After listening and drawing, invite students to share their art with a neighbor. No two pieces or art will be the same! What do these drawings have in common? How are they different?
5. Invite students to share their observations and their art with the whole class.

Discussion:

1. How did you choose what to draw as you were listening?
2. How was your art similar to the art your classmates created? How was it different?
3. Why might we all have different interpretations of the same song?
4. How can we use these same skills when listening to live music?



POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

1. What did you notice about the performance?
2. What instruments did you see and hear?
3. What did you learn about the instruments played during the performance?
4. How did the musicians work together while they performed?
5. What were some similarities you noticed between the songs? What were some differences?
6. The songs Martha Redbone played and sang in the performance are based on the music she grew up listening to. What kinds of music do you like to listen to? What kinds of music do you hear at home and in your school?



MARTHA REDBONE (photo by Craig Bailey / Perspective Photo)

ACTIVITY: Song Stories

Many of Martha Redbone's songs tell stories, and using music to tell stories is common in American Roots Music. Use this activity to explore musical stories and story structure with your students and get them up and moving at the same time.

Materials:

Open space

An age-appropriate narrative song. Some great songs for this activity (all of which can be found on Spotify):

- Puff the Magic Dragon by Peter, Paul and Mary
- The Sinking of the Reuben James by Woody Guthrie
- Eleanor Rigby by the Beatles
- Crocodile Rock by Elton John
- Thriller by Michael Jackson
- The Distance by Cake
- Space Oddity by David Bowie

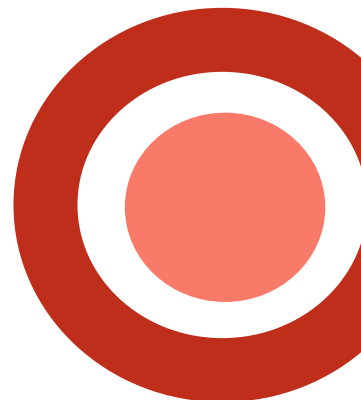
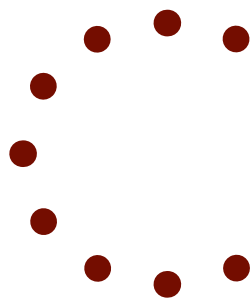
A board or large piece of paper for group brainstorm.

Procedure:

1. Select a song that is age-appropriate for your students and tells a story. Play the song for your students and invite them to listen for the story the song tells. Who are the characters? What happens?
2. After students have listened to the song (you might need to listen a few times), brainstorm the characters and parts of the story—write key characters and moments somewhere students can see them.
3. Divide the class into small groups (2-4 students works best). Ask each group to create a still image with their bodies that represents the story this song tells. You may choose to assign each group a moment or event in the story, or ask students to pick their own.
4. Once students have created and practiced their images, share images with the class. After each image, ask students to describe what they see and guess what event the image depicts.

Discussion:

1. What did you see? Describe how the bodies were positioned.
2. What events from this story did we share with our images?
3. What part of the story does each event represent?
4. Why use music to tell a story? What does the music add to this story?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about Martha Redbone: <http://www.martharedbone.com/>

Explore a lesson created by Martha Redbone for Carnegie Hall: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Programs/Musical-Explorers/Digital/Program-Two/Martha>

Read an interview with Martha Redbone about the Roots Project: <https://bozone.com/interview-martha-redbone-roots-project-at-ellen-bozeman-jan-12-2019/>

Explore the Library of Congress's collection of Appalachian music: <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200152683/>

Learn more at the American Folklife Center: <https://www.loc.gov/research-centers/american-folklife-center/about-this-research-center/>





Portland Ovation, founded in 1931, produces dynamic performing arts events including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway. We believe that cultural enrichment should be high quality and accessible to all. Ovation collaborates with other nonprofit organizations, education systems, and the business sector to promote lifelong learning while celebrating the power and virtuosity of the performing arts. We bring the exhilaration of the performing arts into our communities with free events as part of Ovation Offstage, connecting artists and audiences. Join us at unexpected “art happenings,” classroom workshops, masterclasses, community discussions, and pre-performance lectures to explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

Land Acknowledgment

Portland Ovation’s programs are presented on Wabanaki land, home of the Maliseet, Mi’kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki and Penobscot Nations, their elders past and present, and future generations.

We encourage you to learn more and take action in support of Maine’s Indigenous communities through the following organizations

[Abbe Museum](#)

Maine’s premier museum dedicated to indigenous history and culture. Their mission is to inspire new learning about the Wabanaki Nations with every visit.

[Maine-Wabanaki Reach](#)

A Native-led non-profit that supports the self-determination of Wabanaki people through education, truth-telling, restorative justice, and restorative practices in Wabanaki and Maine communities.

Created and written by Dr. Liz Schildkret

Designed by Katie Day

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We want to know what *you* thought about the performance. You can write your answers below or draw a picture on the back of this page. Thank you!

PERFORMANCE: Martha Redbone

SCHOOL NAME: _____ **TEACHER NAME:** _____ **GRADE:** _____

YOUR NAME: _____ May we use your name when we share your comments?
Yes__ No__

What did you like about Martha Redbone's Performance? Why did you like that part?

What was something that you learned during the performance?

What would you like to tell other kids about Martha Redbone?

What types of performance would you like Portland Oventions to offer in the future? (Feel free to share what type of art you are interested in (theater, dance, music), what cultures you might like to see, what topics the art might connect with, or specific artists.)

MAIL RESPONSES TO: Portland Oventions 120 Exchange St Portland, ME 04101
EMAIL SCANNED RESPONSES TO: offstage@portlandovations.org

We want to know what *you* thought about the performance.

Draw a picture of a part of Martha Redbone's Performance that you liked. Thank you!



YOUR NAME: _____ SCHOOL: _____ TEACHER: _____ GRADE: _____

Please scan and email to offstage@portlandovations.org or mail to Portland Ovations 120 Exchange St Portland, ME 04101

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey after you attend the performance. You can also fill it out [online here](#). Your response provides valuable insight on the impact, accessibility, and relevancy of the School-Time Performance Series and will allow us to improve and strengthen the program. Thank you.

PERFORMANCE: Martha Redbone - February 1 and 2, 2024

TEACHER NAME: _____ GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____ CITY/TOWN: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. From your perspective as a teacher, how would you rate Martha Redbone's Performance?

- Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

3. What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn't, what can we do better?)

4. What was your primary reason for choosing to bring your students to Martha Redbone's Performance?

- I wanted my students to experience the performing arts.
 The performance topic fit with my curriculum goals.
 The date and time of the performance fit our schedule.
 The ticket price is affordable.
 Other (please specify):

5. How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

6. Did you use the Educators Guide provided by Portland Ovation before or after attending the performance? Yes No

7. Why or why not?

8. What improvements could we make to the Educators Guide to serve you and your classroom better?

9. How would you rate the following components of attending the School-Time Performance?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Reserving & paying for tickets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication about the day of the performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrival at the venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Departure from the venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What types of performances would you like to bring your students to in the future? (Feel free to share art forms, topics/themes, specific artists, etc.)?

11. A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for Portland Oventions to offer these School-Time Performance tickets at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experiences or its impact on your students?