

CARNEGIE HALL
Weill Music Institute

Lullaby Project

For Prospective National Partners



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Planning for Lullaby



Carnegie Hall Contacts

Carnegie Hall and the Weill Music Institute offer ongoing support and consultation regarding program implementation and media and publicity planning. Below is contact information for the appropriate staff members:

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Planning for Lullaby



Program Information

Program Overview

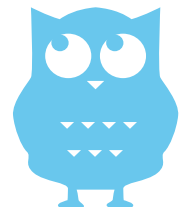
Through the Lullaby Project—part of **Social Impact Programs** of Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute—pregnant women and new mothers write personal lullabies for their babies with the help of professional artists to support maternal health, aid child development, and strengthen the bond between parent and child. In New York City, the Lullaby Project reaches mothers in hospitals, homeless shelters, schools, community centers, and at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. Extending across the country and through several international pilot programs, the Lullaby Project enables partner organizations to support families in their own communities.

[Lullaby One Sheet \(Filedrop\)](#)

National and International Partnerships

Carnegie Hall is committed to creating and sharing world-class resources to serve the field and communities locally, nationally, and internationally. Carnegie Hall offers partners an opportunity to connect through network meetings and concerts at Carnegie Hall.

Carnegie Hall provides at no cost	Your organization provides or arranges for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lullaby Project support materials for artists and arts organization partners • program evaluation materials created by WolfBrown, an arts and culture research consultant • access to data and reports from a range of research on the project • travel and hotel accommodation costs for one representative from your organization to attend one National Convening and concert (Winter or Spring) in New York City • a Carnegie Hall SoundCloud page that includes all lullabies created through the Lullaby Project • ongoing support and consultation regarding professional development for teaching artists, program implementation, communication, and media and publicity • press release • publication of national partners on carnegiehall.org/lullaby and in Lullaby materials • two live streaming concerts that showcase select national lullabies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all local program related needs: artistic, logistical, and administrative • lead and supporting artists for each lullaby project • a community venue to host each project that engages a group of participants • recordings of the lullabies (whether in a studio or the workshop space) • funds necessary to cover all local program costs • ongoing communication with Carnegie Hall regarding program implementation • participation in national partner conversations and National Convenings • confirmed dates and details for planned projects



Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a required number of participating women in the program?

No, there is not a minimum or maximum number for participation. Ultimately it works best when the ratio is roughly one teaching artist for every one or two participants to ensure the attention needed to write a personal lullaby. This can happen in a group context (a group of 6–10 participants that splits up to work with artists individually) or in one-on-one writing sessions.

How many teaching artists are needed?

The number of teaching artists involved depends on the structure of the project and on the roles that the artists play. Artists need to facilitate lyric-writing, melody, harmony, arranging, and performance. A 1:1 or 1:2 teaching-artist-to-participant ratio is helpful, but this is flexible, as long as one artist or a few work together to fulfill the roles.

Do the participants need to have musical knowledge or experience?

Everyone has innate musical capacity and music all around them. The Lullaby Project taps into this; no formal training is necessary.

What skills are needed to be a successful Lullaby Project teaching artist?

High-levels of artistry, empathy, and humanity are important. Artists should feel confident with songwriting, developing lyrics, melody, harmony, arranging the lullabies (creating charts, lead sheets, or fully notated scores) and be able to perform the lullabies. They should be comfortable drawing out songs from participants with little or no familiarity with songwriting or lullabies, and asking questions to get to the heart of what the participant wants for their personal song to their child. Teaching artists should ensure that participants are comfortable singing their lullabies with their own voice and to encourage its use beyond the project.

What professional development is provided for teaching artists?

Preparation sessions for artists are included in the schedule of our National Convenings each year. Carnegie Hall roster artists, program staff, and other national partners are available for meetings on Skype or other platforms throughout the year. Additional support can be tailored in response to the specific needs of partner organizations.



Planning for Lullaby



What do we need to give participants to take away from the sessions?

The materials provided by Carnegie Hall through Filedrop include a workbook in which participants can write a letter to their baby or answer prompts to help begin the lyric writing process. In addition, you'll find templates for baby onesies, a CD cover, and a printed version of the lyrics, which can be framed inexpensively and presented to lullaby writers. Participants also receive information about SoundCloud—an online platform where they can hear lullabies written in the program.

Are there specific instruments or genres that are required to be a Lullaby Project partner?

No, we have seen successful projects anchored by diverse instrumental ensembles and musical styles including classical, folk, jazz, R&B, Latin, and others. Participants have varied ideas about what their lullabies should sound like, and it's good to be open and flexible to carry out their ideas and wishes as much as possible.

Can I adapt the project for my community's specific needs?

Every community is different. The structure of the project and content for each session is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the needs and interests of partners.

How much does it cost?

Costs vary depending on your project structure, the rates of pay you offer teaching artists, and the extent of the recording process (one example of a cost-saving strategy is to procure a sponsored recording studio).

How do I refer to this project?

Please say: "This is a growing national network."

What organizations are currently partnering with Carnegie Hall on the Lullaby Project?

Austin Classical Guitar (Austin, Texas)

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (Baltimore, Maryland)

Bay Chamber Concerts (Rockport, Maine)

Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Chicago, Illinois)

The Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall (Toronto, Canada)

El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services (Winston-Salem, North Carolina)

El Sistema Greece (Athens, Greece)

Flint School of Performing Arts (Flint, Michigan)

Hiland Mountain Correctional Center (Eagle River, Alaska)

Instruments of Change (Vancouver, Canada)

Irene Taylor Trust / Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (London, United Kingdom)

Leeward Community College (Pearl City, Hawaii)

The Music Settlement (Cleveland, Ohio)

Notes with a Purpose (Las Vegas, Nevada)

Old Town School of Folk Music (Chicago, Illinois)

Palaver Strings (Boston, Massachusetts)

Seattle Symphony Orchestra (Seattle, Washington)

Vero Beach Museum of Art (Vero Beach, Florida)

Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, Virginia)

VocalEssence (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Carnegie Hall teaching artists have compiled the following resources that provide various tips and prompts to facilitate the songwriting process and explore the background of traditional lullabies.

10 Tips for Helping Someone Create an Original Lullaby Melody

Compiled by Emily Eagen with contributions from Thomas Cabaniss, Saskia Lane, Daniel Levy, and Deidre Struck

1. Simply ask songwriters, “How does it go?” and see what happens. They may be able to sing it. They might be able to describe it or speak the rhythm. Try to elicit their first uncensored impulses in whatever way they might be expressed, and then assess if there’s an opportunity.
2. Ask songwriters to speak the “hook” in rhythm multiple times and see if a tune emerges. Emphasize the simplicity of a lullaby and how it can really be in your own voice. “How would you say this phrase if you were alone with your baby at night? What’s the simplest way you could sing this?”
3. Ask the participant what kind of energy or mood they want in the song, then pick a word to try singing with this energy or mood in mind.
4. Play an accompaniment that you think reflects either an overall feeling or a particular word in the text. Ask the participant to sing the lyric while you play the accompaniment. Don’t suggest a starting pitch or a melodic rhythm—let their musical intuition guide them.
5. Talk about what musical styles they like, and try singing the words in a particular style. Ask them, “Who is your favorite performer or singer? How would they sing your line?”
6. See if a physical movement like cradling or swaying inspires a tune.
7. Use a melodic instrument to let them “pick out” a tune.
8. Choose a colorful word such as “star” or “laughter” and find a way to paint this word with music.
9. Go back to one of their circled words and find a way to make it stand out: For example, use repetition, make it a high note, or give it a special rhythm.
10. Sing the text for them on a single note and ask them to tweak which words could go up or down.

Additional Thoughts about the Process

- Encourage a free-flowing collaboration between participant and teaching artist. As soon as the participant lands on a musical idea, grab it, sing it back, praise it, and ask for more.
- Once you find the “hook,” it is tempting to take the song yourself and run with it. That might be just when the participant is getting the hang of things and feels comfortable enough to share musical ideas. Keep listening; keep collaborating.
- Be patient and allow for time and space, especially at the beginning of the collaboration. In this vulnerable process, don’t be afraid to let there be silence while ideas are percolating and people are thinking about what is really in their heart to express through a lullaby.

Example Songwriting Prompts

Prompts about the future:

- *What animal would your child be?*
- *Create a story of when you meet your baby for the first time.*
- *Who would you text baby photos to when they are born?*
- *What memory do you hope to create together?*
- *How might your child be like when he or she is grown?*
- *Who would be your child's best friend?*
- *What are some things to do with your child on a Saturday?*
- *Who would you want as a parent if you were your child?*

Prompts about what you want for your child:

- *What kinds of dreams do you want your child to have?*
- *Is there a song from your childhood you wish to pass on?*
- *What do you think makes a good mom or dad?*
- *What are you most looking forward to in your pregnancy?*
- *What are/were some positive moments in your pregnancy?*
- *Is there a family tradition you want to continue or a new tradition you want to start?*
- *What would other family members want for your child?*
- *Is there wisdom you want to share with him or her?*

Prompts for what you know about your child and your daily routines:

- *What moments with your baby are your favorite?*
- *What is a secret only you and your child know?*
- *List house objects or daily routines.*
- *What do you do to get ready with your child?*
- *What do you already sing or dance to?*
- *What is the name of your child? Is there a story behind name?*
- *What helps you calm down? What do you do in preparation for bed time?*
 - *What soothes you?*
 - *Imagery that comes to mind?*
- *What about siblings?*
 - *What's different or similar about your new child to the others?*
 - *Does mom want to create a song for all the kids?*
- *What moments with baby are your favorite?*
- *Is there anything else that's important for me to know?*

Some Thoughts on Traditional Lullabies

By Emily Eagen

Carnegie Hall Playlist

Lullabies have a long, rich, and wonderfully varied history around the world: The **oldest written-down lullaby** dates from around 2000 BCE in ancient Babylonia, where a mother tells her baby that his crying is waking up the house god who protects their home. As Lullaby artists, we can get a lot of inspiration and fresh ideas from listening to lullabies from around the world, both traditional ones and new ones that take up the world's traditions. Lullabies that have stood the test of time are almost like how-to manuals—they show us the tricks of the trade when we need a lullaby to do its job! On a deeper level, lullabies remind us of what we all share in common as parents who love and care for our children. It's amazing to see how many of our lullabies fit right in with the feelings and experiences expressed by parents throughout the ages who soothed their children to sleep. What can we learn by listening to some traditional lullabies? As Lullaby Project artists, what can we bring into our practice as we help to create new songs with parents today? Using the lullabies on [Carnegie Hall's Recommended Lullaby Favorites](#) on Spotify, let's delve into what magic is inside these little sleepy-time songs, and see what might inspire us today, both poetically and musically. Below are a few thoughts to get started.

Lullabies play with language, and the language is musical.

As parents sing to their children, they are connecting the preverbal and nonverbal worlds to the verbal world. Babies love and crave this connection to language, and it helps them learn about their language and their world. Many traditional lullabies have soothing combinations of vowel sounds in them, such as “Arrorró,” the title of which roughly means “hush” but also represents a beautiful sound to sing. Lullabies work well when there is a lot of space for the beauty of the language to come through. Many lullabies use nonsense syllables, assonance and alliteration (such as “do do” or “la la”), and repetitions of the same words over and over. The words don't always have to mean something! Once they are set to music, they still give the parent a chance to let their voice come through, and this is what the baby wants the most.

Lullabies use rhyme and rhythm.

It might seem obvious, but lullabies from all over the world use rhyme. Don't be afraid to rhyme and to use obvious rhymes! The lullaby will still be an original work of art. Rhymes are soothing, help create a regular rhythm (same word origin—see!), and often go along with the singsong, rocking, somatic quality we associate with lullabies. This predictability and repetition helps achieve what many experts on parenting call “attunement,” which describes the way a parent and child become connected through a common experience, like singing or swaying together. Attunement lets babies know they are safe and loved, and thus helps babies calm down and drift off to sleep. Listen to the way the words rhyme in “Moon, Moon, Moon,” which is a lullaby by Laurie Berkner that uses many traditional features. The rhymes (“night” and “light” as well as “see” and “me”) combined with the soothing, regular falling melody set up a sleepy-time atmosphere

perfectly, and they also give children some of the most common English rhymes that they will take great pleasure in singing. For a lullaby sung in real time, [listen to singer Vera Hall](#) sing the song “Come Up Horsey” as she sings and rocks a baby to sleep and tiptoes out of the room.

Lullabies allow us to take a deep breath.

A good lullaby gives the parent a chance to breathe—both by having short, comfortable, singable phrases, and by being soothing enough to let the parent calm down and take a breath at the end of the day. When the parent can relax, the child can, too! This “respiratory” quality is one of the most beautiful things about lullabies from around the world, and you can hear it both in the music itself and in the way people sing lullabies in a crooning, breathy style. Even a lullaby that starts with a lot of energy can have a part where it slows down, so that the parent can help the baby transition from conversation to sleep. Many lullabies around the world use a falling interval of a major or minor third to suggest the sound of a sigh, or of someone coming to rest. Listen to the opening of “Duerme, Negrita” to hear an example of this, then try singing it yourself to see how peaceful it can be. Another lovely common trait among lullabies around the world is the use of a series of three phrases that follow the pattern short-short-long, with the first phrase often being a repetition. For example, in “Didn’t Leave Nobody but the Baby” the first two phrases are “Go to sleep you little baby” with a breath in between, and then the third phrase is longer. This is thought to enhance the sighing, respiratory aspect of lullabies, and—again—this repetition and lulling quality is soothing, calming, and leads to sleep.

Lullabies tell us who we are.

As we look at the lyrics of lullabies around the world, many common themes come up, and one of these is a sense of identity. Lullabies from different cultures make an invitation to a child

by telling him or her something about their world: members of their family (often naming various people), special things about their cultural traditions (like a favorite food, a special word in another language, or a holiday they will celebrate), or something about their culture as a whole (such as a family in a faraway country expressing a love for their homeland). These lullabies soothe children by telling them that they have a place in this world and are welcome. A very concrete way lullabies can tell children about their world is by describing where everyone in the family is while they are sleeping, as in “Fais dodo, Colas mon p’tit frere” (France). In this lullaby, the mother is upstairs making cakes, and the father is downstairs making hot chocolate. The implication is that everyone who loves you is around you, and everything is in its place, so you can sleep peacefully.

Lullabies make us feel safe.

It is worth remembering that it can be fundamentally disconcerting for children to go to sleep because of one thing: darkness. Even with a night light, the fact that the world is dark can be alarming to children because it is different from daytime and takes away sight, our most active sense. Darkness conjures a sense of absence, no-thingness, and for a child it can be linked to fear. Around the world, lullabies directly speak to this fear, either by directly telling a child not to be afraid of the dark, by describing the beauties of nighttime such as the moon and stars, or by offering protection from God, magical beings (e. g., fairies), or the parents themselves. Some lullabies go as far as to say that the nighttime is scary, but that you can avoid it by drifting off to sleep, otherwise a crab, a wolf, or a monster will get you! “Baju, bajuschki, baju!” is an example of this. Even in these lullabies, children are often soothed, because the lullaby implies that the parent will protect them from whatever creature might try to hurt them.

Lullabies take us to dreamland.

One thing to look forward to about going to sleep is that it gives you the chance to dream, and many lullabies around the world speak to this. Many traditional lullabies offer the promises of sweets and treats in your dreams, saying that when you go to sleep you will be in a lovely dreamland. “Morningtown Ride” is an example of this, in which the child is invited to imagine the “rockin’, rollin’, riding” of a beautiful ride on a nighttime train. “Hush Little Baby” offers you treats when you wake up, such as a mockingbird or a diamond ring, giving a child something to dream about for tomorrow. (In Bobby McFerrin’s version, papa also promises a chocolate cake, picking up on a widespread lullaby practice of personalizing a lullaby to a child’s request!) Lullabies can promise bigger things also, such as the dreams and wishes that we often sing about in our Carnegie Hall lullabies.

Lullabies can express frustration or sorrow.

Not all lullabies are positive, and many historical lullabies speak directly to the frustrations and stresses of parenting. Sometimes a lullaby can be a coping tool to deal with the difficulties of new parenting, or an outlet for a parent to sing her real thoughts and feelings to a child, especially when the child is too young to understand the words. Many older lullabies capture a picture of a mother describing some of the sorrows of womanhood in her culture and time, or of the experience of parenting in adverse conditions, such as slavery (for example, [some versions](#) of “All the Pretty Little Horses”). Often these sad lyrics are sung to plaintive, beautiful melodies that are thought to have been very cathartic to sing. Singing complex, true feelings can be a sign of intimacy, trust, and attunement with a preverbal child, giving the child the soothing music needed, but also giving the parent artistic and emotional space for personal expression. Lullabies are also often a dialogue a mother is having with herself about her increasing separation from her child as the baby gets older and more independent, which helps account for a large number of those sad, wistful

lullabies out there. When children are older, and bedtime is often a verbal negotiation, we find lullabies that (often playfully) express irritation with a sleepless child and work through a parent’s frayed nerves. A modern take on this theme is the delightful “I Can’t Sleep.”

Lullabies are about love.

If there is anything close to universal when it comes to lullabies, it is that they express love. Parents lovingly describe a child’s beautiful, special traits, such as the tiny hands of a baby in “Que Linda la Manita.” Parents use a child’s name or nickname in lullabies, and many lullabies have an easy space in which to “zip out” a general term of affection and put in their child’s own, such as in “Sleep Eye,” where “my little sugar” can become any nickname that a parent knows will make a child smile. Sometimes lullabies operate on a grand scale, speaking to the magical, life-changing event of a new baby who brings love into the world; in fact, many of the songs we now sing as Christmas carols derived from the impulse to sing of the specialness of baby Jesus, and were also used to celebrate the uniqueness of a new baby in general, as parents reworked them for personal use. Similarly, lullabies from Sephardic, Scottish, and many other traditions tell of a time in history when a small baby gave hope for the world, and these lullabies can be, and are, personalized to be sung to many new babies in turn. In little and big ways, lullabies praise each child for the unique person they are, and for bringing joy into the world. The very fact that lullabies are ever-changing speaks to the fact that parenting calls upon us to do what anthropologists call “making special,” something people are inspired to do in every art form to show affection, delight, and an intimate, irreplaceable connection. We see these special expressions of parent-child love in painting, quilting, cooking, storytelling, and, of course, music making. No two lullabies are alike because every baby is wondrous and unique, and every parent-child connection is worth celebrating in song.

Resources

- [“Lullaby, Op Docs,”](#) *The New York Times*, October 14, 2015
- [“Musical Connections Lullaby Project,”](#) Carnegie Hall, October 26, 2015 (Overview)
- [“The Lullaby Project,”](#) Carnegie Hall, Storify
- Emily Eagen, [“How to Write a Lullaby,”](#) Carnegie Hall, November 21, 2015

Partner Videos

- [“Sing Me A Lullaby,”](#) *Arts in Context*, KLRU-TV, November 24, 2016 (Austin Classical Guitar)
- [“Lullaby Project and Beyond,”](#) *Frontiers*, KTVA News, December 25, 2016 (Keys to Life—Alaska)
- [2015 Lullaby Project of the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra](#) (Chicago, Illinois)
- [Lullaby Project Hawaii](#) (Pearl City, Hawaii)
- Jenna Ross, [“Baby, This One’s for You: Teen Moms Write Lullabies with the Help from Mpls. Choral Group,”](#) *Star Tribune*, January 25, 2017 (Minneapolis, Minnesota)
- [The Portland Lullaby Project](#) (Portland, Oregon)
- [Seattle Symphony: Lullaby Project](#) (Seattle, Washington)
- [VCUarts Lullaby Project](#) (Richmond, Virginia)
- [“‘Lullaby Project’ Helps Mothers-To-Be Bond with Their Babies,”](#) WBUR, February 8, 2018 (Palaver Strings)



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