Traditional folk music has been defined in several ways: as music passed along orally, music with unknown composers, music that is played on traditional instruments, music about cultural or national identity, music that changes between generations (folk process), music associated with a people's folklore or music performed by custom over a long period of time.

• Given this definition, can you think of any music or songs that would be considered traditional folk music in your culture? Does this expand your thinking of what folk music is or could be?

• How and why might have music and sounds of other cultures traveled in the past to create something new?

Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn excel at embracing the history of banjo music while still pushing the boundaries of new, innovative art. "Some of the most interesting things in the world come together in strange and unique ways and show our diversity. The banjo is just one of those things. It's a great example of how the world can combine things and create surprising hybrids," says Béla Fleck referencing the ancestral African roots of the banjo combining with Scotch-Irish music in Appalachia.

• Can you think of examples of other things from different cultures that have come together to create something surprising and new? (Dance, songs, movies, food etc.)

• What is the difference between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation? Why is it important to know the difference? How about inspiration vs imitation?

When Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn recorded their album Echo in the Valley they created strict rules around recording and composing the songs: the only instruments used could be banjos, all sounds created had to be by only the two of them and they must be able to perform every recorded song live.

• How might these restrictions lead them to be more creative in their musicianship? Why might it be important to them to be able to perform each of the songs live?

• When you hear the music and see them play, how are they using the banjo in new or unique ways? Did anything stand out or surprise you?