



Live the Legacy Podcast

Live the Legacy podcast captures bold conversations between civil rights icons and today's student activists. These conversations bridge the past and the present in order to move forward together. Listen today on our [website](#) or your favorite podcast app.

Season 3- Bonus Episode | Music & Movements

In this Bonus Episode of The Live The Legacy Podcast, Mo Banks introduces new co-host Mia Matthews and the two discuss a recent blog post about the power of music as it relates to social movements in our country's history.

Transcript

Mo: Welcome back, everybody to the Live the Legacy podcast, a project from the Andrew Goodman Foundation. As always, this is your host, Mo Banks, and today is a special bonus episode featuring the Program and Communications Manager at the Andrew Goodman Foundation, [Mia Matthews](#). This episode is an accompanying piece to her blog that she wrote on our website, [AndrewGoodman.org](#). It's called [Civics for Change: Music & Movements](#). If you would like to read the full blog piece, you can find it by going to the [news section](#) of our website. Without further ado, let's get into today's episode.

Welcome back to the podcast everybody. We've had a couple of bonus episodes in between our seasons, and I have an exciting announcement to make. On today's episode. I'm joined by Mia Matthews, who is the Program and Communications Manager here at AGF. In addition to her being what I would assume is going to be a lovely guest to have on the podcast, we're actually dropping a surprise announcement today, and we'll make the announcement again at the beginning of Season Four, but Mia is joining as the official co-host of the Live the Legacy podcast, and I'm so excited to have her on. I think she brings such a unique perspective. I think that she has a lovely NPR voice. I think it's just ready for podcasting in general, and probably everyone's probably tired of hearing me, so I'm excited to have a new voice on the pod. So Mia, let's hear it. How are you feeling about being on the podcast today?

Mia: Well, thank you for such a wonderful introduction. The main emotion I can say I'm feeling is excitement. I'm so excited to talk about music and movements and everything else this season.

Mo: Yeah, how do you feel about joining as a co-host? Are you excited?

Mia: I'm honored! I love listening to the podcast and all the seasons you've made. I've learned so much already and I cannot believe I get to be one of the voices on a more consistent basis from here on out.

Mo: What was it about the podcast, or maybe audio editing, or just the thrill of working on a new project, or what inspired you to want to be a co-host for this upcoming season?

Mia: Well, I was very lucky to get to transcribe the podcast episodes of the previous seasons, and in that process, got a really good chance to listen to so many great voices and to hear and to see the process of how an idea becomes a conversation, and I really loved how that seemed to be a great experience to be a part of. So I wanted to do that myself, and share my ideas with the world the way that they've been shared with me!

Mo: Yeah, nice. I love that. How an idea becomes a conversation. That's really cool. I've never thought about it that way. So already dropping some nuggets of knowledge here. Look at you. Well, before we jump in, and again, we'll reintroduce you at the beginning of Season Four, but for the lucky folks who decide to listen to our bonus episodes in between seasons, they could sneak peek into who you are, but just let our audience know what does a program and communications manager do at AGF? And then follow up question, what kind of sparked your interest to want to work at an organization like the Andrew Goodman Foundation?

Mia: So yeah, I'm the program and communications manager at the Andrew Gman Foundation. I work in communications storytelling and with the students on the ground, Ambassadors who are registering folks to vote and educating on campus on all things civic engagement. I studied civic engagement at Syracuse University and have always felt very strongly tied to social movements, and my whole life just wanted to make the world a better place. So AGF was a natural landing place for me once I finished undergrad and a couple nonprofit positions in different places. I felt like AGF was a perfect place for me, aligned with my beliefs and what I want to see the world and nation, the direction I want to see the nation going.

Mo: Yeah, absolutely. And I think that it's a kind of great segue to talk about what you're joining the podcast for today because you've shared you've been interested in social movements for a while, and there's even, we're here to talk about this blog piece that you wrote, which is called Music and Movements, and there's a picture of you as a young person participating in a social movement. We'll get to that a little bit as we work our way through your blog piece, but just really excited to have somebody who is so committed to making the world a better place. Obviously, we love having you as a team member at AGF, but we also love just getting to know you

personally and what motivates you and drives you to change the world and to make a positive impact for it. So thanks for sharing with our audience a little bit about yourself, and I'm excited this is going to be a good episode. It's going to be a good season. Look at this!

Mia: I have to agree! I'm very excited.

Mo: Okay. Well, I have mentioned the blog. So for those who have not already read, this is an accompanying deeper dive conversation around this blog piece that you wrote for our Civics for Change series on our website, andrewgoodman.org/news, you can find all of our blogs pieces that we've written, and this is one of the more recent ones, and it's called Music and Movements, and it's making that connection between how music is and has been for a very long time to social movements, particularly the impact that it's had on young people and in garnering momentum for certain moments in history where some actions needed to take place and how music has helped and enhanced those. So I guess before we get started, if folks have not already read that blog piece, go ahead and do it again. It's on the website, but this is just a deeper dive and almost like a behind the scenes peek into the process of it as well. I'm excited for that. But what inspired you? I think that's where I want to start the conversation, is what inspired you in particular to write a blog post about music movements? I have to say it's a little bit different than the blog pieces that we've done in the past at AGF. And so what inspired you in the first place to write about it?

Mia: Sure! I've always felt the most alive when either part of a cause, movement, or, while listening to or making music. So where and when they intersect is my happy place. And I also have found music as a means of understanding what's going on around us. It's a way for us to keep a pulse on American culture and see the ways in which artists are creating music to serve as points of reflection for the listeners to contemplate both the world and their place in it. So I feel a lot of the pieces we write are to educate folks and what's going on in the world, and I feel like music is, for me, a big part of how I understand the world, so it felt like a natural thing to write about.

Mo: Yeah, I think so. And I think it totally shows in the piece itself. I bet it was really difficult to try to choose just a few songs to highlight. So how did you choose which ones you included? I mean, in the blog piece itself, we've covered the decades from the sixties all the way up until very recently in 2020 with the anthem that you chose to highlight that time period that we all just collectively lived through with the pandemic, with the social racial reckoning that the country was going through. So how was that process? And also, were there any that you didn't include that you just kind of want to mention now?

Mia: Yes, to that last part and also, yes, it was very difficult to make those decisions. I definitely relied on folks around me too, to help me weigh what they stood out, what stood out to them, as being representative of each era, if you will. So I looked for songs that encapsulated the popular culture of each era in respect to the movements that were taking shape at the time. And the songs that I didn't include, but would, I think I have one for almost each of the eras, or decades.

First, “Only a Pawn in Their Game” by Bob Dylan from the sixties, really encapsulates the racial tension and violence occurring at that time.

And the Negro's name

Is used, it is plain

For the politician's gain

For the seventies, “What's Going On?” by Marvin Gaye. You probably have heard it, it's a classic that is still relevant to this day and how people are looked at due to and what they believe.

Oh, but who are they to judge us?

Simply 'cause our hair is long

A third one by my favorite band, the Grateful Dead, from the eighties, which you will very rarely hear me recommend anything from the eighties from that band, but, “Throwing Stones” is one of their studio songs that has a lot of political references and I think is a good encapsulation of what people were feeling or observing in the eighties.

And the politicians throwing stones

So the kids, they dance and shake their bones

'Cause it's all too clear, we're on our own

Singing ashes, ashes, all fall down

And then the final two, this first one is a great all-encompassing song called “Nina Cried Power” featuring Mavis Staples, the legendary gospel singer, by Hozier. And it references so many icons like Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Curtis Mayfield, Patti Smith, James Brown, John Lennon, BB King, Pete Seeger, Marvin Gaye, Bob Dylan, many others, just an ultimate tribute song to the many greats who have championed the movements for equality and civil rights that was written in March, 2019

Power has been cried, by those stronger than me

Straight into the face that tells you to rattle your chains if you love being free

And then in August, 2019, another one of my favorite artists, Taylor Swift, released a song on her album *Lover* called “You Need to Calm Down”, and the song references the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, or [GLAAD](#):

You just need to take several seats and try to restore the peace and control your urges to scream about all the people you hate, 'cause shade never made anybody less gay!

And so the donations greatly rose after that song was released in \$13 or \$13,000 in honor of that song. So I feel like those are some of the songs I would've included for those reasons. There are so, so many more, but all of those are on the playlist for folks to check out!

Mo: Wow, great reference to that Taylor Swift song. I got to say, I kind of forgot about it, not that it wasn't great, but just how from 2019 to 2022, everyone's like, what happened because of everything that we went through. So now I'm like, oh, wow, I got to go listen to that because I remember watching the music video and it was so colorful and there was so many funny parts in it, and it was so relevant, and it made me feel so happy almost as a queer person to see so much movement around pushing back against so many of the hateful things that were happening from such a huge icon like Taylor and the impact that she has and the reach that she has. It was really cool. It was a really cool moment. So thanks for bringing me back to that moment in 2019 when that was released.

And I think that's kind of speaks to what I'm sure a lot of people who maybe are interacting with the blog piece or maybe now listening to this when they're thinking of songs, the power that music has to bring you back to a moment of what you're experiencing is invaluable. I mean, there's no way to put a number on or a value on the feelings that arise when you listen to certain songs. You listen to certain movements or certain songs about movements or these moments in history. I think that's a powerful connection, and I think that there's a reason why in particular young people really connect with certain music and certain moments in history. What do you see as the role as, and you can speak to this as a young person, obviously you're not speaking for all young people, but you are part of generation, Gen Z and I'm a millennial and we're talking about music, and I think that that's this really cool connection that we share. We talk about regularly just as coworkers and appreciators of music in general, but how do you see music playing a role in the lives of young people today? Obviously because of the context of which we're talking about. How do you specifically see that in movements or in particular moments of history?

Mia: For sure. I feel, like I said earlier, music and art are a great way of keeping a pulse on what's happening. And I feel like in order to process, we must create. So whatever's happening in the world gets reflected as we discussed, and that can be really cathartic for folks who are struggling to keep up with what's going on. I know personally, I'm still processing 2020, I'm sure a lot of us are. So being able to listen to music from that time that helped us get through difficult times is all a part of that collective healing and processing. So I also see people supporting organizations who see the passion that young people have for making the world a better place and see how that passion is present at live music concerts and events, and events, or excuse me, organizations like [Headcount](#) and [REVERB](#) are often at lots of different live music events.

They were even at the show where Willie Nelson performed on Saturday, I went and saw them registering folks to vote right ahead of [National Voter Registration Day](#), which is the day that we're recording this. So get out there and register to vote! But they are there for people who are engaged but don't necessarily don't seek out organizations on their own accord, but they're already at the event. They care about the world, they know that voting is one way to have a say in almost everything that goes on around us. So that is one intersection I see Headcount and REVERB, which is an organization that helps with some environmental action at concerts as well. And on top of all of that, I see young people become very inspired by the artists. They love calling out legislation that has been passed or proposed that they agree or don't agree with, and calling out elected officials for things that maybe shouldn't have happened. And I feel like it propels young people to feel even more confident in having a say and to use their voice as much as they can.

Mo: Yeah, I think what you had said about it being this cathartic process of whether you're making music or you're listening to music, being able to have that outlet because young people hold so much. I mean, you mentioned the environment and the climate crisis, that's something that young people care about because it's literally like if we don't do something, their future is not there. So being able to utilize some of that momentum, some of that justifiable and righteous anger around the inaction around certain things like gun reform and gun control. It's young people who are in schools who are affected by the mass shootings. There are these things that I think are parallel even to what we were seeing in the sixties, and that was such a huge burst of music that was happening during the sixties and seventies because of the social conditions, because of the wars, because of the racial inequalities and the things that people really cared about.

You can kind of see it reflected in this bursting forth of new music and especially music that means something to people that's going to activate people to do something to make a difference. And I think what you said really touched and kind of hit it on the head of it's happening now today. There's so much that people are experiencing, and for you personally, and this is how you've seen it show up in these different venues and these different organizations who are working with young people and with music and with registering to vote, because that's how young people are able to make a difference. It's by registering to vote, it's showing up at the polls, and sure, that's just one step in the process that's a really important step in the process. But there's that cathartic release of creating and listening to music that really brings people together, and that does kind of cement those memories that bring you back to a time where you were really riled up about something, or this was the playlist you listened to on the way to the rally, those things that kind of will unite folks across generations. But I think that young people in particular are always at the forefront of our movements because of the issues that it affects them and it affects their future, and it just makes sense. So I appreciate the personal insight into that question. I know that if we had all the time in the world, we could talk about this forever, but obviously we're on limited time.

Mia: We could talk about it for hours for sure.

Mo: Yeah, I think so too. And it's like, I kind of forgot we were recording. It feels like we're just chatting about things we like, so I'm really, really loving this. So if anyone's listened to the podcast, we all know that I love to end things after talking about things that are real that do have kind of some heaviness to 'em, to end conversations rooted in hope, rooted in something that's giving us life lately. So since we've been talking about music and since we have covered stuff from the sixties to the eighties to now, what are some things that you are personally listening to as Mia Matthews, the human being, not just like Mia Matthews, the comms. and programs professional, but what are your personal recommendations for our audience? Is there anything, any songs, any artists over the last several decades or recently or whatever that have really spoken to you personally? Anything that's caused you to want to take action or be civically engaged, however that shows up for you in your own personal life. But yeah, any personal recommendations for the audience?

Mia: There is so much good new music out there, but one band that I feel like captures the revolutionary spirit very well is boygenius, an indie rock band composed of three proudly queer artists, Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers, and Lucy Dacus, all whose solo work I would also highly recommend for the same reasons, the band actually has named Bikini Kill, the band deeply intertwined with the Riot Grrrl movement of the nineties as one of their inspirations in making music together, and I'm actually seeing them a week from today, so I'm very excited. But yeah, definitely would get them a listen, one of their songs, a couple of their songs have lyrics that kind of tie into exploring the ideas of anarchy, satanism and nihilism, and just the idea of thinking about the world and where we're going. With everything going on, it can be scary, and these artists keep me grounded in the best way, so I would definitely recommend them.

Mo: Yay. I love that. I think we'd be remiss if we didn't allow people to listen to some of the things that we're listening to. So we're going to make a plug now, Mia, tell us where the audience can be listening to some of the music we've talked about today.

Mia: You can find the playlist on both [YouTube](#) and [Spotify](#). There is one called Music and Movements, so you can read the blog and listen along at the same time.

Mo: Yes, and then we also have some [playlists on there from our past leadership summits](#). So if you find us on Spotify, obviously we have our podcast on Spotify, but we also have some public playlists that we've put together for different training events, different leadership summits. So we've got, and those are always kind of related to movements into things that relate to social justice and civil rights and things like that. So there's lots of good music. And then Mia and I are going to be building some playlists together just on our AGF Spotify account that is just going to be music that we're listening to. If you are interested in that, we can just, we'll kind of keep auto-populating that with songs that are really speaking to us personally. So if you're interested in that, always join in and follow us along on there.

But yeah, I'm excited. I think that music is such a cool way to connect with people. I think it's a way to cross so many different barriers that normally people would have a hard time maybe bridging those gaps. So we're excited for folks to join us in our little music journey. But yeah, I

want to end it with that. Let's just have them join us, the audience, if you're listening, join us in creating some of these playlists and listening together along with us. So thank you Mia, for all these extra insights and this blog piece that you wrote. I think it was really amazing to be able to chat with you and pick your brain just a little bit more because this was such a cool piece. I'm so glad that you wrote it.

Mia: Thank you, Mo. I'm so glad you liked the piece, and thank you for having this great conversation with me. I cannot wait for every episode to come. And yes, if you got anything from this, let us know what your political anthems are, and make sure you're registered to vote!

Mo: Yes. Yes, register to vote. You can do that on our website at andrewgoman.org. We've got a portal online that takes less than two minutes to check your registration status as well as register to vote. So if you haven't done so, do that. And if you liked this episode, if you like listening to Mia and I talk about things, you're really in for a great ride because Season Four is going to become available at the beginning of 2024, which is obviously a very crucial election year. There's going to be a lot of different election cycles that we're going to be helping folks know all the different ways to get vote ready for those elections. And so we're going to have some incredible guests this season that's going to walk our audience through how to vote, how to check your voter ID, different things around voting at home and absentee ballots, everything that you're going to need for voter education, you're going to want to listen to this next season of the podcast. We're going to have some incredible guests this season, and so we don't want you to miss it. Go ahead and subscribe to this podcast so you don't miss a single episode. And if you like this podcast and you want other people to be able to find it quickly and easily, go ahead and leave a review or rate us, and that just helps when people type in Andrew Goodman Foundation or Live The Legacy, it pops up even sooner. So we appreciate everyone listening today, and we will see you next season. Thanks so much.

This concludes this week's episode of the Live Legacy Podcast. Thanks so much for listening to this special bonus episode. The intro music that you heard during today's episode was from TabEEK Music. The rest of today's episode contained music from various artists and producers. To see the full credit for each artist and producer, please see today's show notes. Until next time, this has been your host Mo Banks. Thanks so much for listening.

Song Credits

“Only a Pawn in Their Game” - Written and performed by Bob Dylan, produced by Tom Wilson

“What's Going On?” - Written, performed, and produced by Marvin Gaye

“Throwing Stones” - Written by Bob Weir and John Perry Barlow, performed by Grateful Dead, produced by Jerry Garcia and John Cutler

“Nina Cried Power” - Written and performed by Andrew Hozier-Byrne, produced by Andrew Hozier-Byrne and Markus Dravs

“You Need To Calm Down” - Performed by Taylor Swift, written and produced by Taylor Swift and Joel Little