



November 12, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information, Please Contact:

Ezechial Thurman, Hill-Freedman World Academy: ethurman@philasd.org

David Bradley, World Cafe Live: bradleydt@gmail.com

**Hill-Freedman Records of Hill-Freedman World Academy
Releases Original Album**

THINGS THAT MATTER

Collection of Original Student Songs Created in Partnership with World Cafe Live

(LISTEN: hillfreedmanmusicgroup.com

PHOTOS: available by request)

(Philadelphia)--Hill-Freedman Records, the record label of Philadelphia public high school Hill-Freedman World Academy of the School District of Philadelphia, announces the release of THINGS THAT MATTER, an album of 20 original student songs co-produced by Philadelphia music nonprofit World Cafe Live. Begun in the fall of 2019 as an in-school project of Hill-Freedman's IB Design/Music Technology curriculum in the school's International Baccalaureate Programme, the collaboration was completed online once schools shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hill-Freedman Records is led by Music Technology teacher Ezechial Thurman. THINGS THAT MATTER is the label's fourth album, all of which have been made in partnership with World Cafe Live, one of the region's leading independent music venues. A trio of World Cafe Live teaching artists—composer/songwriter/producer Andrew Lipke, hip hop artist Chill Moody and Grammy-nominated songwriter Kristal "Tytewriter" Oliver—all acclaimed for their performing and recording, joined Thurman, ArtistYear fellow Justin Jaramillo and marketing and promotion teaching artist Ikeya Sade in the collaboration.

Hailed by *The Philadelphia Citizen* as "a poignant soundtrack to 2020," and by WXPN-FM's midday and XPN Local host Helen Leicht as "a really wonderful album," the record calls for speaking up, standing up and needing to move from cynicism to action. The title track, written, produced and performed by 9th grader Jehmir Nixon, takes its name from Martin Luther King Jr's declaration, "Our lives begin to end the

day that we become silent about things that matter.” The lead-off track, “Show Me,” written, produced and performed by 11th grader Samuel Smith, begins with the question, “Don’t you think we’re tired of this,” and moves on to proclaim, “We use our voices to create a solution.”

“The murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the need to confront systemic racism and injustice in society challenged, outraged, and inspired the student artists,” said Thurman. “This album stands as a testament to the creativity and voices of young people speaking up during a turbulent moment in our country,” said Thurman.

In the fall and winter of 2019-20, Thurman, the teaching artists and the students explored the origins of hip-hop, creating samples, original beats and digital tracks and composing poetry and lyrics. When the pandemic struck, students and adults committed to making the album virtually. Though it was not a required activity, the project became a passion for a core group of students. The result was a process of Zoom meetings and home production, online recording sessions and collaboration-by-text.

“I hope that it helps people see what we see,” 12th grader Camya Bradley said of the album, “and that if they were asleep to the things in the world, I hope it wakes them up.”

David Bradley, Producing Director of Arts & Learning for World Cafe Live, noted that the collaboration with Hill-Freedman represents a core part of the organization’s mission. “We’re committed to be a place where artistry meets social impact,” Bradley commented. “At a time when we can’t gather in person to share live music, it is really important to encourage these student artists. Their work pulls us together across the distance we’re experiencing.”

Direct support for this project has been provided by Philadelphia City Council member Chelle L. Parker (9th District), Spring Point Partners, the Wyncote Foundation and the School District of Philadelphia, as well as additional foundations and individuals. World Cafe Live is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support for World Cafe Live is provided in part by the Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

THINGS THAT MATTER Artistic Team

Director, Hill-Freedman Records: Ezechial Thurman

Songwriting, Music Composition & Production Teaching Artists : Andrew Lipke; Chill Moody; Kristal Oliver; Ezechial Thurman

Marketing & Promotion Teaching Artist: Ikeya Sade

ArtistYear Fellow: Justin Jaramillo

Poetry Teaching Artists: Jasmine Combs; Trapeta Mayson

Producing Director of Arts & Learning, World Cafe Live: David Bradley

Vocal producing by Kristal Oliver. Album engineered & mixed by Andrew Lipke, Kristal Oliver & Ezechial Thurman. Mastered by Andrew Lipke.

About Hill-Freedman World Academy

Hill-Freedman World Academy is a special admission middle and high school in Northwest Philadelphia under the umbrella of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years and Diploma Programme. We proudly serve students with a variety of backgrounds, talents, and needs. Hill-Freedman World Academy provides a rigorous academic environment that inspires individuality and fosters lifelong learners who

are committed to being knowledgeable, caring, internationally-minded global citizens. Hill-Freedman is a school where “All Means All” and where students are challenged and encouraged to develop their talents, even those yet to be discovered.

About World Cafe Live

World Cafe Live’s mission is to open doors to shared experiences that create connections, inspire learning and celebrate who we all are. Since 2004, we have been a vibrant hub for live music in Philadelphia. Each year, we serve 150,000 people through free and ticketed concerts, education programs and private events. By supporting emerging and established artists, creating educational programs for youth, and welcoming audiences of all ages, we have built a continuum of arts access and opportunity. At World Cafe Live, we fuse artistry with social impact—from the state-of-the-art design of our music venue (presenting 800 artists annually) to our long-time investment in education and accessibility (serving 50,000 participants since 2008). We create opportunities for Philly youth, people with disabilities, and other traditionally underserved audiences to experience the people-connecting power of music.