

## ROOM AT THE TABLE:

*Globalization, Economic Justice and Human Dignity*

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Summit Playlist

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Music is universal; put simply, there is no culture on this earth that is without its own form, and as the world's cultures have mixed and meshed due to globalization, so has its music. Whether colonial ties have created a bond of language between musicians separated by entire hemispheres (as in the case of Portuguese/Angolan kuduro group Buraka Som Sistema), or people have been united in a cause by a song that embodies their ideals ("We Shall Overcome"- Pete Seeger), or a group of college kids care to experiment with the sound of another culture (Vampire Weekend), music is omnipresent in human society. Below is a list of twenty-one songs that embody modern society's mix of cultures, the struggles that people face, or even both at once. Each of these songs addresses at least one of the following themes: globalization, poverty, economic inequality, or social justice.

### 1. When the Levee Breaks- Led Zeppelin

Led Zeppelin give their own take on an old folk song about holding back the literal and metaphorical tide in New Orleans.

### 2. Maggie's Farm- Rage Against the Machine

Originally sung by Bob Dylan, singer Zach de la Rocha injects a bit more venom (aided by the powerful guitar of Tom Morello) into the speaker's narrative about perceived injustices of working on Maggie's farm.

### 3. Johnny Appleseed- Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros

Joe Strummer, the always political frontman of The Clash, stays true to form by using the story of Johnny Appleseed as an allegory for workers' rights. Strummer states bluntly, "Hey, if you're after getting the honey/ then you don't go killing all the bees."

### 4. The Ghost of Tom Joad- Bruce Springsteen

Although the title is a reference to the legendary protagonist of *The Grapes of Wrath*, the song is more than an ode to American literature; it is both an allusion to the migrant workers of Steinbeck's novel as well as a scathing criticism of government programs such as George H.W. Bush's "New World Order" program and the economic disparity they cause.

### 5. I Ain't Got No Home In This World Anymore- Woody Guthrie

The "Dust Bowl Troubadour" offers a simple, yet timeless reflection on the hardships of a migrant worker. Guthrie was known for his attacks on class inequality.

### 6. Like A Rolling Stone- Bob Dylan

In Dylan's 1965 classic, he sings in a rather cynical tone to someone who has seemingly fallen from grace rather hard, repeatedly asking, "How does it feel?" The song serves as a reminder that nobody is invulnerable to the changing winds of fate, something everyone should keep in mind as they consider the less fortunate.

### 7. Strangers- The Kinks

A song about an all too familiar world in which greed and a host of other issues have led to people becoming alienated from each other; the Kinks remind us that although we are strangers on the road, "we are not two, we are one."

### 8. I Shall Not Walk Alone- Ben Harper

Beaten, bruised, and battered, Ben Harper sings a plea to an unnamed listener: "Friend of mine/ what can't you spare?"

### 9. Haiti- The Arcade Fire

Written years before the recent earthquake, the song serves as a reminder of the problems that have plagued Haiti for decades due to its unfavorable stature in the global economy. Regine Chassagne, one

of the band's members, is of Haitian descent, and the song (sung half in French) is an appeal to the indomitable spirit of Haiti's people to persevere.

10. Five Years- Seu Jorge

Brazilian singer Seu Jorge (roughly) translates David Bowie's song "Five Years" into Portuguese, in which it is revealed to him that the world will end in five years. Bowie/Jorge observes the outcome of this revelation on the people around him.

11. Ojalá Que Llueva Café- Juan Luis Guerra

Juan Luis Guerra sings of his hope that one day the children of his native Dominican Republic will have all that they need and more.

12. The Man's Machine- Jamie T

"Stone, grass, concrete and gravel/ All we've got to keep us together"- Jamie T gives his sometimes bleak take on the "Man's Machine", presumably the industrial and economic cycle that takes the harshest toll on the people who work in and depend on it for survival in the modern world.

13. Dinosaur on the Ark- The Very Best

The Very Best is the epitome of a globalized band; Singer Esau Mwamwaya (born and raised in Malawi) sings both in English and his native Chichewa over tracks produced by Etienne Tron (a Frenchman) and Johan Karlberg (a Swede).

14. Biko- Peter Gabriel

This song tells the story of Steve Biko, an anti-apartheid activist who was killed by his own government in 1977. Gabriel would close many of his concerts during the reign of South Africa's apartheid government with this song.

15. Tengazako (Take What's Yours)- Esau Mwamwaya feat. M.I.A.

British colonialism comes full circle: In this remix of Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A.'s "Paper Planes" (which takes its guitar samples from a song by an English punk band), Malawian musician Esau Mwamwaya sings in Chichewa about his native land.

16. Notre Devoir- Intik

Intik, a collective of Algerian rappers with the stated common goal of achieving peace, was formed after its members were witnesses to government violence against its own people in 1988. "Notre Devoir", translated "Our Duty" in French, is a call for people to hold their governments responsible for their actions.

17. No Woman, No Cry- The Fugees

Bob Marley's classic about the Kingston ghetto is covered and given a New York twist by the Fugees, a New Jersey based band whose name is derived from a slang term for refugees (two of the members, Wyclef Jean and Pras Michel, are Haitian immigrants).

18. Respiration- Black Star

As the song begins, one hears a woman's voice cooing in Spanish, "escuchela... la ciudad respirando"- that is, in English, "listen to the city breathing." Rappers Mos Def, Talib Kweli, and Common reflect upon the realities of life in the Big Apple.

19. Poems 4 Post Modern Decay- Zion I & Aesop Rock

The title says it all; Bay-area rap group Zion I and New York rapper Aesop Rock effectively capture the frustration of people caught in an unforgiving economic cycle, but the end of the song is more hopeful. The final lines of the poem in the latter part of song read, "my history ain't start on no boat, chained and bound/but the beauty is found in that we fall, trip, but never hit the ground."

20. Get By- Talib Kweli

Rapper Talib Kweli reflects (with the odd Norman Mailer reference) on the lengths to which people will go just to get by.

21. Flower- Moby

The American producer samples an old slave working song and lays it over his own beat.