

Music is Medicine was conceived when two streams of my life came to a convergence. I've been working in music with bands but the time came for me to pursue a solo career that was buoyant and moving forward. I also longed to become more connected with my relatives up north in Michigan and Canada because the Great Lakes are my Anishnabe ancestors' home. I wanted to reconnect my past and future generations, learn about what was so I can direct what is to come, and share my journey through the music.

I was awarded a grant from First People's Fund through an Artist in Business Leadership Fellowship to complete the project.

Nahko has been a huge influence on me in the last few years. I think that's where I first heard the phrase "Music is Medicine". So I hope he doesn't mind if I took that little nugget and really focused on it for this project. Medicine is needed at this time. On a personal level, I needed medicine to heal that trauma that has been passed to me from the past seven generations so I did not burden my next seven generations. I used this project as a way to heal my personal wounds and I hope it will be useful in that way to many.

Initially, I thought that I would be writing semi-historical songs, or at least songs that were a little bit more informative than what they turned out to be. Turns out, my biggest concern is, was and always will be relationship. As I was writing these songs this year, that theme has circumferenced everything that I've done. Relationships are the way that we learn and grow. When we are in good relationship with ourselves, and we have done the work to heal ourselves of trauma and emotional wounds, then we can begin to be in really good relationships with the humans and non-human persons around us.

The Circle Song - This song came to me in the van after a trip to Pokagon Band Potawatomi territory in Dowagiac, Michigan where I attended the Indigenous Foods Summit. It was a four day stay with people that I really had only met once or twice before. I was nervous about finding a way to fit into an existing tight-knit circle of people who are doing this really good work to revive indigenous foods and life ways. I was feeling a little self-conscious. As I left that place, I was overwhelmed with gratitude at how welcomed I had been made to feel. It hit me that no good relationship is a threat to another. Everyone can belong in the circle because the circles just keep widening and overlapping and this is how this good work is going to get done.

I think the meaning of this song really speaks for itself. I'm very glad that we got the male voices of Peter Oviatt and Kelby Kimberlin on that first song.

His Name - This was written early in the year when I began doing research on my genealogy through my Potawatomi ancestors. A common theme of French men and native women runs through by earliest recorded history and fairly recent history as well. Anishnabe people were trading with French fur traders since the 1500s. Although I was intending to write this album purely from an Anishnabe perspective, I learned a lot about my maternal grandmother's great-grandmother. Her name was Rosa and she is believed to be Cherokee, although her

husband, who was French, would not allow her to keep her Indian identity. It also relates to the tension that still exists in a settler colonial relationship where one person loses her name and sometimes identity and is absorbed into the estate of another person. I've been in relationships where the woman just serves as an accessory in the man's legacy and I think that's a really sad feeling that a lot of us maybe don't confront. Confronting this feeling will hopefully bring some clarity and healing to those feeling it.

Changed - This one has a questionable placement on this album, because it isn't directly related to what I thought the project concept was going to be at the beginning, but since it did turn more toward a conversation about relationships I decided to include it. It's a hopeful lament about how quickly my life was changing at that time and my perspective was shifting so quickly that I just felt like I was barely hanging on to the timeline with my toe tips. It's also about learning and growing and the trauma that you must go through in order to grow and change. Once you change, you can never go back to who you were before. You will always be a little bit smarter and a little bit braver and a little bit more grown.

I See Me - Music is Medicine is almost entirely being funded by a grant from First Peoples Fund that I was awarded as a part of their fellowship for 2019. There was a convening held for Fellows in Phoenix this March and I was able to attend and meet some of the Fellows and the song really came from that experience. It's about emotional commonality and understanding that our emotions are coming from a similar uprising and desire to heal ourselves. Tears are healing in the Anishnabe tradition. They clean the world. When one cries in ceremony, water is offered, not to stop the crying but to make sure you don't stop before you're finished.

High Place - This song was partially written for over a year and finally came together in the studio. There are some heavy influences from Making Movies in this one. "You are another me and I am another you" comes directly from their albums. There's also a heavy influence from the Mishomis Book by Edward Benton Banai. I was listening to a lot of Nahko when I wrote this one.

Glad We Came - This one came after Heyleon completed our first round of recording together in Taos. I wrote it on the way home in Brody's back seat while we were driving through the Carson National Forest. I feel so blessed to be on this Earth at the same time as so many brilliant and talented friends and feel like we're all put in this place for a really good reason, to heal the world through music. This is about being lucky enough to be existing beside each other in this reality. It was also recorded on the Heyleon "Friends and Family" album.

The Sparrow Healing Song - This is a song I wrote for a friend who was beginning a new venture as a parish nurse. She asked me to sing at her commissioning. I asked for her song to come and this is what came. It is a healing song. It is a prayer song. It is musical medicine.