

'Music inspiring change, change inspiring music'

Big Notes



Years 9 – 12
Written by Colin McGain

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Communication: Standards - Listening, viewing and responding

Students identify the ways in which complex messages in songs are conveyed and consider alternative views and interpretations. Students work both individually and in pairs to be able to present their work for feedback and reflection.

The Arts: Exploring and Responding

There will be an opportunity to increase their understanding of the context that musicians wrote and performed their songs. Music is a powerful force within every society and students will be able to examine its impact within particular eras.

The Arts: Creating and Making

There will be a focus to increase their competency and skill levels by developing their own style in the written word. They will use this poem in preparation to add music at a later stage.

Classroom Activities

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Activity One: Singing from the Heart

Purpose: to raise the confidence of students to be able to validate their life experiences and the things they are passionate about.

In the first session we looked at what we need as individuals and communities and what it is like when those things are taken away. Whenever there is a situation that is unfair or unjust there will always be strong emotion.

Class Discussion about Style of Language

Whenever there is a situation that is unfair or unjust there will always be strong emotion.

- a) How many songs do you think are written during times of intense feelings and can you tell the difference?
- b) Compare the times when you have felt passionate about something and wrote an email or text to a friend. Do you think your friend picked the difference straight away? If so what was the contrasting language used?

Play PEZ – ‘Speak Out’ (moderate language warning) then open it up to discussion about the themes he is singing about

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-ifBEoQdCo&feature=related>

(Choose a different Pez song if swearing is inappropriate)

- a) Why do artists want to write songs like this?
- b) Do you feel his passion in the story and in the way he uses the music?

Activity Two: Looking at Current Issues through Songs

Purpose: preparing students to find a cause they most identify with.

Class Discussion with Written Notes

- a) Individually think of an issue that you feel passionate about.
- b) Write down what it is and why you feel so strongly.
- c) Is it something done to you or to other people?
- d) Share this with a partner.
- e) Come back and share these thoughts with the class.
- f) Have a look at some of the issues artists sing about and see if your issue is there.
- g) Have a look on the Internet and try and find a musician/group who sings about the same theme. Write it down then come back and share it with the class

Some Issues Artists have Sung About

Age	Indigenous Issues
Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigrants	Justice
Anorexia	Media / Entertainment
Beauty / Respect	Missing Persons
Caring For Those In Need	Law / Injustice
Climate Change	Murders, Violence Against Women, Violence Against Humanity
Community Spirit	Substance Abuse (Drinking/Drugs)
Children's Abuse –Protection	Suicide
Capital Punishment	Personal Morality
Disappeared / Missing	Personal Response / Responsibility
Education	Rich and Famous
Environment	Prisons
Gambling / Pokies/ Aiming At Low Income	Race/ Equality
Family Relationships	Religion
Farmers	School
Fundraisers	Traditional Voices
Gender Equality	Torture
Hard Luck Personal Endurance	Women's Identity
Homelessness	War

Using a video camera or phone, get students to interview each other about the artist and the song they feel has most influenced them and why. They might also like to answer the question whether this song has influenced other people in different countries.

Activity Three: Write Away

Purpose: Students will find their own words to describe how they feel about a particular issue in the form of a poem.

Quote of the day. Get a student to write this on the board and lead discussion about it.

'While I just sit back, grab a pen and estimate it. When it's right then I write, everything I'm feeling inside. Let it all pour out till it's down and then it is time to move on'.

Pez from 'These Days'

It is your chance to write down the issue you have just discussed in a form of a poem. Refer to this wiki page if you need some guidance: <http://www.wikihow.com/write-a-poem>

- a) Plan - write down everything that comes to mind before you start the final piece.
- b) What do you want to achieve
- c) Work out your style of poetry; find your inspiration then build the rest of the poem around it - don't be afraid to voice your exact feelings!
- d) Choose the right words
- e) Use concrete imagery and vivid descriptions
- f) Save your most powerful message or insight for the end of your poem
- g) Edit your poem until you are happy with it
- h) Seek other students' opinions

"While many people today have been exposed to poetry only in written form, poetry was predominantly an aural art for thousands of years, and the sound of a poem is still important. As you write and edit your poem, read it aloud and listen to how it sounds".

"This is where poems can become songs. It is easier to find a tune for regular meter, so maybe you want to cut words out or put some in to get the same number of syllables in each line. Memorize it. If you believe it, then maybe someone else will learn it and love it before it is a song". (Wikihow, 'Write a poem')

You may like to refer to these two articles on Australian hip-hop as political poetry:

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/01/02/1072908895037.html>

<http://www.localnoise.net.au/site-directory/press/the-rappers-are-revolting-mixing-folk-hip-hop-and-politics/>

Also look at 'Recipes for Rappers' <http://edgeql.org.au/tag/candy-bowers/>

Reading Your Poem

Pretend you are the main speaker for a large public protest rally at the steps of parliament house. You have your poem in hand, waiting to be called onto the back of an open truck with a single mic stand.

Your name is called out amidst wild cheers and chanting. As you walk onto the stage the first thing you notice is the amount of protesters, the colour of the flags and the posters held high. The rest is up to you. Go for it!

Activity Four: You're the Voice

Purpose: give students a chance to write their own music.

Write Your Own Song

- a) Use the poem from Activity Three and put it to music.
- b) Some themes lend themselves to a heavier beat while other themes would be better with a softer choice.

Choose the style of music (genre) and experiment with matching the song to the words. Don't be afraid to scrap words that don't fit in or rearrange structure of the poem completely. The most important thing is to have fun.

Video it and Post it on the Arts Centre 'Big Notes' Blog

For technical support, contact dan.west@theartscentre.com.au

Additional Resources Online

Land Rights– From Little Things, Big Things Grow

John Zakharov – unsung political activist involved in the Gurindji strike and land rights campaign at Wattie Creek. - brought the tribal leader Vincent Lingiari to Melbourne to campaign. Paul Kelly wrote *'From Little Things, Big Things Grow'* about this issue.

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/sparkie-lit-up-asio-files-in-the-dark-50s-20090825-ey5i.html>

The

Stolen

Generations

Visit the Creative Spirits website for Aboriginal Culture

<http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/stolen-generations.html>

Wikipedia, Definitions of Music and Politics

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_and_politics

Wikipedia, 'Topical Song'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topical_song

Wikipedia, 'Protest Song'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protest_song

Wikipedia, 'Revolutionary Song'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_songs

Wikipedia, 'Protest'

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protest>

Wikipedia, 'Political Hip Hop'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_hip_hop

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_hip_hop_artists

Wikipedia, 'Anti-War'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_anti-war_songs

Wikipedia, 'Peace Train – Songs of Protest'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_Train

Download a beat to use in class from James Aron Gray

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oocLnqbZNpw>

The Artists performing on the day

Pez

Shine video-clip	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJR4qSo3oR0&feature=related
'The Way It Should Be' -clip	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLIXhcDN780&feature=related
Triple J Interview	http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/events/ausmusicmonth_08/next_crop/pez.htm
The making of 'These Days'	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vxN5OGyH0w
Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pez_(musician)

Diafrix

My Space	http://www.myspace.com/diafrix
'Concrete Jungle' video-clip	http://www.myspace.com/diafrix/videos
Interview on ABC Local	http://www.abc.net.au/speakingout/stories/s2651155.htm
'Hold On' video-clip	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQ2BfV/Lz7i8&feature=related

Hailey Cramer

Australian Idol	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHlbiCZPOis
Live at Prince Of Wales	http://vimeo.com/groups/7076/videos/13672041 (language warning)

Candy Bowers

Who's That Chik?	http://whosthatchik.com/cast-and-crew-biographies/candy-bowers/
Articles	http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s2655310.htm
Radio National interview	http://www.abc.net.au/rn/saturdayextra/stories/2009/2608673.htm
Recipes for Rappers	http://edgeqlld.org.au/tag/candy-bowers/
Sustained theatre UK	http://sustainedtheatre.org.uk/?location_id=47

Banawurun

My Space & three songs	http://www.myspace.com/banawurun
Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banawurun
Live session	http://vimeo.com/1735718
TripleJ unearthed	http://www.triplejunearthed.com/Banawurun

Kutcha Edwards

Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kutcha_Edwards
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Home page	http://www.kutch-edwards.com/
Rockwiz	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKBsWhdpx1Q
Performs	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLiOMmnbHI
Anthem with Judith	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZrvnrplZgQ
Durham	

Videos to Play about Australian Politics

Social Justice Good People

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FG4oD2aQg6U>

Rudd V Howard Election Rap Axis of Awesome

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ND4bjDqE45k>

Kevin Rudd skit (The Chaser)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eXKZQzM46A&feature=related>

The Chaser Decides - Labor/Liberal "Get a Mac" Parody

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opY-bywBLwE&feature=related>

John Howard's Ultimate Gift to Tony Abbott

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px2o86w_P_A

Kevin Rudd Vs John Howard

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmlSlaltse0&feature=related>

Funny Kevin Rudd

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmtLSanmX-E&feature=related>

Top 10 Moments In Australian Politics

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMq0tzfmc3Y&feature=related>

Glossary of Terms

Anthems	songs identified with a particular group
Bias	prejudice in favour of one person over another
Catalyst	something that comes before or causes an event
Compassion	concern for the sufferings of those less fortunate
Contemporary	current, present day
Contempt	considering something is worthless looking at it with scorn
Corruption	dishonest, fraudulent
Cruelty	callous causing pain and suffering
Culture	expressions of customs, attitudes, behaviour also seen in art,movies and public addresses
Discrimination	preferential treatment from one to the exclusion of another
Equality status	equal opportunity, even-handedness
Exploitation	to benefit from someone’s misfortune or lack of power
Grace	undeserved favour when you really shouldn’t get it
Indignation	anger or annoyance because of perceived unfair treatment,distain,
Innocuous	not offensive, unexceptional, soft-focus
Intolerance	unable to accept someone’s opinions views or beliefs
Inequity	lack of fairness or justice
Justice	fair, equity, just desserts
Laden	load or full
Legacy	handed down by a predecessor
Mercy	compassion leniency, kindness when you don’t deserve it
Peace	freedom from war, disputes
Prejudice	dislike, hostility, preconceived opinions
Profound	insight and knowledge
Progressive	progressing gradually or in stages, increasing in severity or extent, favouring change
Repression	restrain and subdue someone by force, brutality
Resonates	strongly agreeing
Sentiment	attitude or opinion towards something, often with feelings and emotion
Social value	community’s principles and standards, behaviour judgement, what the majority of people believe at one time
Sphere	an area of activity or interest, influence
Tyranny	cruel and oppressive government rule
Vacuous	having or showing a lack of thought or intelligence, mindless