

Protest Songs as Activism

Music is another forum for speaking out against all forms of injustice. American musicians have a long tradition of speaking out through song. From Billie Holiday's first performance of *Strange Fruit* in 1939, to the songs against the VietNam War and in support of the Civil Rights movement, feminism, Black Lives Matter, and up through *I Can't Keep Quiet* from the 2017 Women's March, protest music has been the soundtrack of resistance and activism. A soulful protest song captures the heart of the movement, engages people on an emotional level. Music empowers people to take action. The middle school teachers have compiled an incomplete list of protest songs for your consideration. It's important to remember that each of these songs should be viewed in the wider context of the social moment from which they emerged. Also, art is colorful. Be advised that there might be profanity in the songs and some of the YouTube videos contain disturbing images of war and violence.

Here is a [link to our Protest Songs Playlist](#).

We can't play a song on paper but we wanted to give you a sense of the depth and breadth of the playlist in this packet. Here are 10 songs from the Protest Songs Playlist.

1. "Blowin' In The Wind" by Bob Dylan
2. "Same Love" by Macklemore + Ryan Lewis feat. Mary Lambert
3. "Rise Up" by Andra Day
4. "Born This Way" Lady Gaga
5. "Not Ready to Make Nice" by the Dixie Chicks
6. "Strange Fruit" by Billie Holiday
7. "Fortunate Son" by Creedence Clearwater Revival
8. "To the Teeth" by Ani DiFranco
9. "I Can't Keep Quiet" by American Women
10. "Birmingham Sunday" by Joan Baez

We encourage you to take a listen. Be open to the voices who have raised song in resistance in the past. What song would you add to the list? What song would you write about the protest you want to make? If not now, when?