



VH1

25 Greatest Protest Songs
VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 9-12

Lesson 2

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the eras portrayed, to substance abuse, violent acts, and topics of a sexual and/or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom

Objectives

- Students will understand the potential consequences of protest.
- Students will discuss selected historical conflicts.
- Students will examine the role of the individual in protest.

National Standards:

4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- VH1's *25 Greatest Protest Songs* (Cable in the Classroom edited version)
- Web-based lesson materials
- Chalkboard or overhead projector (optional)
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Copies of "Protest Ballad" discussion and worksheet (included with lesson)
- Overhead transparency of "BIKO" lyric sheet or student copies (included with lesson)
- Song title strips
- Audio recording of Peter Gabriel's "BIKO" (optional)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have completed lesson one of this series, or have viewed segment one of VH1's *25 Greatest Protest Songs*

Procedures

1. As students enter the classroom, hand each of them a song title strip with the name of one of the songs featured in the segment of the program to be studied during this lesson. (Please do not include Peter Gabriel's "BIKO" as one of the titles.) Ask students to find the other students in the class with the same song title, and have them sit together for the activity. List all of the song titles on the board, including "BIKO," for reference.
2. Lead students in a brief review of "protest," and the many ways in which an individual or group can make their opinion known, whether it be through poetry, protest marches, music, etc. Remind them that they have been thinking about protest as it relates to living in the United States. Is it as easy to protest something in other countries? Do citizens in other countries enjoy the same rights of freedom of speech and expression?
3. Tell students that they are about to watch another segment of the VH1 program. Have them consider the following questions as they watch the program:
 - a. What role does the individual play in protest?
 - b. What are the potential consequences of protest?
 - c. What are the opposing viewpoints of the songs featured?

4. Show VH1's *25 Greatest Protest Songs*, segment 2. Have students continue completing their "Protest Song Reference Sheet" while watching.
5. Pause the program after Patty Smith. Check for understanding by asking the students what Smith proposes they do. Remind students that protest songs come in all genres, and the next song should be listened to in the same manner as the previous ones for content (the images and content are vastly different from the previous songs). Continue showing the program with "The Message."
6. Have students work with their song groups to discuss the song within the context of the three questions listed above. Have them be prepared to share their responses with the class.
7. Distribute copies of the lyrics for "BIKO," or display them on the overhead projector. Read the lyrics as a group and play the audio recording, if desired.
8. Lead students in discussing the song "BIKO." Explain that Steven Biko was a South African Freedom Fighter who was jailed because of his work and died there under "mysterious circumstances." Use the biographical information as needed to supplement the discussion.
9. Distribute copies of the "Protest Ballad" discussion and worksheet (or display the discussion page on an overhead projector). Lead students in discussing the concept of a "ballad," or "protest ballad." Assist them in brainstorming a list of individuals, present or past, who were involved in protest, social uprising, etc. (Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, etc.), being sure to cite multi-cultural examples such as Cesar Chavez, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, etc. Create a list on the board or overhead from which students can choose a person for the assignment. (This may be a good opportunity to create an interdisciplinary activity with the social studies or history teacher.)

Extensions:

- Have students construct a timeline that highlights major protests that have occurred within the past fifty years in a specific country, as well as any corresponding protest songs.
- Have students write a one-page reaction paper to one of the other songs included in the program segment.
- Have students create a poster in support or opposition of the issue discussed in one of the songs in the program segment.

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

"BIKO"
Peter Gabriel

September '77
Port Elizabeth weather fine
It was business as usual
In police room 619
Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko
Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko
Yihla Moja, Yihla Moja
-The man is dead

When I try to sleep at night
I can only dream in red
The outside world is black and white
With only one colour dead
Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko
Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko
Yihla Moja, Yihla Moja
-The man is dead

You can blow out a candle
But you can't blow out a fire
Once the flames begin to catch
The wind will blow it higher
Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko
Yihla Moja, Yihla Moja
-The man is dead

And the eyes of the world are
watching now
watching now

Lyrics courtesy of: www.lyricsondemand.com/p/petergabriellyrics/bikolyrics.html

Biography: Stephen Bantu (Steve) Biko

Founder and martyr of the Black Consciousness movement in
South Africa

Date of birth: 18 December 1946, King William's Town, Eastern Cape, South Africa

Date of death: 12 September 1977, Pretoria prison cell, South Africa

From an early age Steve Biko showed an interest in anti-Apartheid politics. After being expelled from his first school, Lovedale, in the Eastern Cape for 'anti-establishment' behaviour, he was transferred to a Roman Catholic boarding school in Natal. From there he enrolled as a student at the University of Natal Medical School (Black Section). Whilst at medical school Biko became involved with the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). But the union was dominated by white liberals and failed to represent the needs of black students, so Biko resigned in 1969 and founded the South African Students' Organisation (SASO). SASO was involved in providing legal aid and medical clinics, as well as helping to develop cottage industries for disadvantaged black communities.

In 1972 Biko was one of the founders of the Black Peoples Convention (BPC) working on social upliftment projects around Durban. The BPC effectively brought together roughly 70 different black consciousness groups and associations, such as the South African Student's Movement (SASM), which played a significant role in the 1976 uprisings, the National Association of Youth Organisations (NAYO), and the Black Workers Project (BWP) which supported black workers whose unions were not recognised under the Apartheid regime. Biko was elected as the first president of the BPC and was promptly expelled from medical school. He started working full time for the Black Community Programme (BCP) in Durban which he also helped found.

In 1973 Steve Biko was 'banned' by the Apartheid government. Under the 'ban' Biko was restricted to his home town of Kings William's Town in the Eastern Cape – he could no longer support the BCP in Durban, but was able to continue working for the BPC – he helped set up the Zimele Trust Fund which assisted political prisoners and their families. (Biko was elected Honorary President of the BPC in January 1977.)

Biko was detained and interrogated four times between August 1975 and September 1977 under Apartheid era anti-terrorism legislation. On 21 August 1977 Biko was detained by the Eastern Cape security police and held in Port Elizabeth. From the Walmer police cells he was taken for interrogation at the security police headquarters. On 7 September *"Biko sustained a head injury during interrogation, after which he acted strangely and was uncooperative. The doctors who examined him (naked, lying on a mat and manacled to a metal grille) initially disregarded overt signs of neurological injury."**

By 11 September Biko had slipped into a continual, semi-conscious state and the police physician recommended a transfer to hospital. Biko was, however, transported 1,200 km to Pretoria – a 12-hour journey which he made lying naked in the back of a Land Rover. A few hours later, on 12 September, alone and still naked, lying on the floor of a cell in the Pretoria Central Prison, Biko died from brain damage.

The South African Minister of Justice, James (Jimmy) Kruger initially suggested Biko had died of a hunger-strike and said that his death *"left him cold"*. The hunger strike story was dropped after local and international media pressure, especially from Donald Woods, the editor of the East London Daily Dispatch. It was revealed in the inquest that Biko had died of brain damage, but the magistrate failed to find anyone responsible, ruling that Biko had died as a result of injuries sustained during a scuffle with security police whilst in detention.

The brutal circumstances of Biko's death caused a worldwide outcry and he became a martyr and symbol of black resistance to the oppressive Apartheid regime. As a result, the South African government banned a number of individuals (including Donald Woods) and organisations, especially those Black Consciousness groups closely associated with Biko. The United Nations Security Council responded by finally imposing an arms embargo against South Africa.

Biko's family sued the state for damages in 1979 and settled out of court for R65,000 (then equivalent to \$25,000).

The three doctors connected with Biko's case were initially exonerated by the South African Medical Disciplinary Committee. It was not until a second enquiry in 1985, eight years after Biko's death, that any action was taken against them. The police officers responsible for Biko's death applied for amnesty during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings which sat in Port Elizabeth in 1997. The Biko family did not ask the Commission to make a finding on his death.

*"The Commission finds that the death in detention of Mr Stephen Bantu Biko on 12 September 1977 was a gross human rights violation. Magistrate Marthinus Prins found that the members of the SAP were not implicated in his death. The magistrate's finding contributed to the creation of a culture of impunity in the SAP. Despite the inquest finding no person responsible for his death, the Commission finds that, in view of the fact that Biko died in the custody of law enforcement officials, the probabilities are that he died as a result of injuries sustained during his detention."**

*. From the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa report, published by Macmillan, March 1999.

Courtesy of: <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-stevebiko.htm>

Protest Ballad Discussion

Steven Biko was a Black South African writer who sought to expose the truth about South African justice and punishment during the 1970s and 80s. For this he was labeled a “banned” person by the government. This meant that he was not allowed to gather with more than a few people at a time, speak to groups of people, or write about the situation in any way. Biko continued to fight against apartheid, and he was eventually jailed and died under mysterious circumstances while in custody.

A Ballad is a song that tells a story, usually about people, animals, events, etc. The song “BIKO,” by Peter Gabriel, can be considered a ballad since it tells the story of South African Freedom Fighter Steven Biko.

Think of a person who has fought for a particular cause, and complete the following activities (see worksheet):

- Collect facts about this person.
- Write a ballad, at least 10 lines long, about this person.
- Proofread and edit your ballad.

Submit completed project by _____.

Protest Ballad Worksheet

Choose and research a person who you feel has been imprisoned or accused of a crime unjustly because of their protest. They may be a historical figure, or living today. Take notes using the worksheet below and use them to create a ballad based on the situation of this person.

Subject's name: _____

Their reason for protest: _____

Type of protest (march, sing, publish materials, make speeches, etc.): _____

Where did the protest occur (in a factory, in the street, etc.)? _____

What was the outcome of the protest (imprisonment, death, etc.)? _____

Write a ballad about this person using the following format as a guide. Remember to proofread and edit!

The Ballad of (*name of person*)

(*Name*) fought for justice

(*Name*) fought for right

(*Name*) (*type of protest [i.e. marched, sang, wrote, etc.]*)

with all of (*his/her*) might.

(*He/She*) fought in the (*place*)

(*He/She*) fought night and day,

'Til finally (*solution*) came

And it ended that way.

Now create a ballad using these facts, but in your own format.



These standards-based materials are provided through a partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education. This lesson plan was created by MENC member Anne Smith, Music Educator, Arlington, VA