



storytellers

## VH1 Storytellers: The Dixie Chicks

VH1 Music Studio  
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12  
Lesson 4

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 explore an important moment in the course of American history through critical listening and a lyrical analysis of one work by the Dixie Chicks.
- Students will better understand the way in which music can mirror social events and become a storytelling device commenting on and in response to current events.

#### National Standards for music education:

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.

## Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- VH1 *Storytellers: The Dixie Chicks*
- Pencils and paper
- Copies of the lyric sheet to “Not Ready to Make Nice” (provided below)
- Possible timeline (provided below)

### **Prior Knowledge:**

- A brief knowledge of the Dixie Chicks political controversy (2005)
- Students will have watched VH1 *Storytellers: The Dixie Chicks* in its entirety and completed one of the lessons 1, 2 or 3.

## Procedures

1. Cue the second segment of VH1 *Storytellers: The Dixie Chicks* beginning at 5:41.
2. In 2003 Natalie Maines, lead singer of the Dixie Chicks, made a comment about the American president and her opinion on the war in Iraq. What do you think specifically was it that prompted her comments? Other music artists, such as Madonna and Bruce Springsteen, initially supported Maines’s comments and the band. Do you think they were right to do so?
3. The Dixie Chicks lost a lot of respect and fans due to their comments. The group broke back on the music scene with the album *Taking the Long Way*, which included the track “Not Ready to Make Nice.” Distribute the lyric sheet (below) and have students read them and discuss the following questions:
  - How would you interpret the line, “I’ve paid a price, and i’ll keep paying”? Why are the Dixie Chicks still “not ready to make nice”?
  - Is this a protest song? Give specific details from the lyrics.
  - What is the form of the song? Relate this to the line, “And I don’t have time to go round and round and round.” Are there any other references in the song which we can associate with the form?
  - Was this a good song for the band’s career?
  - Discuss the impact the large orchestration and various instrumentation and texture creates in this song, mood, etc.
  - Discuss the use of dynamics at the start and end of the song, and changes within, what does this express to the listener?
4. Musicians have historically been the voices of society. What is the importance of this, explain? State examples in history where music and other arts disciplines have been used as an important historical reference point.

## **Extensions**

- Students should research the role of protest songs throughout history. When, where, and who wrote them as well as what they were protesting. Create a timeline of historical events and music or other arts disciplines that reflected them (see suggested timeline below).
- Students should be encouraged to bring in recordings of current material that reflect some aspect of society, not necessarily protesting.
- Students could research the role of music therapy.

## **Supplemental Resources:**

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dixie\\_Chicks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dixie_Chicks)
- [www.dixiechicks.com](http://www.dixiechicks.com)

## **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.

**Possible timeline idea:**

Union movement in Britain 1899

Great Depression 1929-1939

Civil Rights movement 1954-1980

Vietnam War 1946-1954

September 11th terrorist attack 9/11/2001

War in Iraq 2003 to present

**“Not Ready To Make Nice”**

**Lyrics for Album: *Taking The Long Way***

**Copyright The Dixie Chicks**

Forgive, sounds good.  
Forget, I'm not sure I could.  
They say time heals everything,  
But I'm still waiting  
I'm through, with doubt,  
There's nothing left for me to figure out,  
I've paid a price, and i'll keep paying

I'm not ready to make nice,  
I'm not ready to back down,  
I'm still mad as hell  
And I don't have time  
To go round and round and round  
It's too late to make it right  
I probably wouldn't if I could  
Cause I'm mad as hell  
Can't bring myself to do what it is  
You think I should

I know you said  
Why can't you just get over it,  
It turned my whole world around  
and i kind of like it  
I made by bed, and I sleep like a baby,  
With no regrets and I don't mind saying,  
It's a sad sad story  
That a mother will teach her daughter  
that she ought to hate a perfect stranger.  
And how in the world  
Can the words that I said  
Send somebody so over the edge  
That they'd write me a letter  
Saying that I better shut up and sing  
Or my life will be over

I'm not ready to make nice,  
I'm not ready to back down,  
I'm still mad as hell  
And I don't have time  
To go round and round and round  
It's too late to make it right  
I probably wouldn't if I could

Cause I'm mad as hell  
Can't bring myself to do what it is  
You think I should

I'm not ready to make nice,  
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Can't bring myself to do what it is  
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Forgive, sounds good.  
Forget, I'm not sure I could.  
They say time heals everything,  
But I'm still waiting



*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 Helen A. Krofchick, Music Educator, Doby's Mill School, Elgin, South Carolina.*