Lesson 1: Critical Listening: What is A Protest Song?

Empire State Creates: Teaching Artist-Led Activities for Everyone

Project Title: The Classroom Album: Fostering Collaborative Behavior through Group Composition

Age(s): 13-17

Time: 30-50 minutes  Arts Discipline: Music Composition/Songwriting/Music History

### ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

**Goal(s):**

Students will be able to analyze music and lyrics using historical/biographical context and critical listening techniques.

**Materials:** playlist, lyrics document

**New Word(s)** protest song

**NYS Arts Learning Standards (select no more than 2 - student audiences only)**

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

- MU:Pr4.2.7
  a. Explain and demonstrate the structure of contrasting pieces of music selected for performance and how elements of music are used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step #1</td>
<td>Students have access to a playlist containing protest songs of different musical styles (from 20th century to the present) written by musicians of disparate backgrounds.</td>
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<td>Step #2</td>
<td>Each group or individual is assigned a specific song (from the playlist) to listen to critically. Everyone in the group should listen to the song twice: the first time, they’re encouraged to follow along with the lyrics and not make any notes.</td>
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<td>Step #3</td>
<td>During the second listen, they take notes using the “Thinking Notes” technique. The “Thinking Notes” technique is an inclusion-building literacy experience helping students thoughtfully engage with the text (lyrics). (See attached materials)</td>
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<td>Step #4</td>
<td>Whole class or small group discussion and reflection on the assignment.</td>
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**Activity Modifications (as needed):** Students can be part of a small group (virtually or in-person) or they can work individually.