

## Social Justice

### The Basics

#### **Subject**

General Music

#### **Targeted Grade Level**

7<sup>th</sup>

#### **Standards:**

IL Fine Arts Standard 25A, Stage F.8- Compare and contrast the use of expressive qualities in two performance of the same musical example.

IL Fine Arts Standard 25B, Stage H.1- Compare and contrast works of art in two or more art forms that share similar artistic components, themes or subject matter (self-portrait to monologue or solo) using the appropriate artistic component (i.e. elements, principles, expressive ideas; tools, processes, technologies; creative processes) vocabulary.

#### **Introductory Narrative to Lesson:**

*This lesson will provide students with an entry point into the Civil Rights movement through songs that will hopefully ease their transition into thinking about the problems faced by African-Americans during the Civil Rights movement. Through “Esta Tierra Es Tuyo” and “No Nos Moverán,” discussions about rights vs. privileges, use of land, and fairness, will set the stage for a greater understanding of this part of American history. “Strange Fruit” is included as a part of the unit; resources for “We Shall Overcome” are also included. Many different songs could be chosen to supplement this study. I chose to focus on songs that might help middle school Hispanic students connect on an empathetic level with events leading up to the Civil Rights movement.*

*In February, I use Black History month to study important Black musicians in jazz, reggae, and bebop. By studying these musicians and their music, students gain an understanding of American music history, develop listening skills for various genres, and experience a specific time period through a musical lens.*

#### **Objectives:**

Students will:

- Understand the issues facing African-Americans during the Civil Rights movement in the United States
- Compare/contrast these issues to struggles faced by other minority groups
- Determine the tone/mood of a song and describe how an artist (writer, musician, composer, multi-media artist) achieves that tone

#### **Resources/Materials:**

### “Esta Tierra Es Tuyo”

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1R4xFrQQNE>
  - *Sones de Mexico’s version of Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land.” Most of the song is in Spanish, but the ending uses Guthrie’s original words in English. The video uses an immigration march filmed in Chicago in 2007 and concert footage of Sones de Mexico in Glen Ellyn, IL.*
- <http://network.hispanicpro.com/forum/topics/esta-tierra-es-tuya?commentId=2221997%3AComment%3A9470>
  - *This site contains the Spanish lyrics of “Esta Tierra es Tuyo.”*
- <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
  - *The United Nations’ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”*

### “Esta Tierra es Tuyo” Lyrics & Translation:

Esta tierra es tuya, esta tierra es mia	This land is yours, this land is mine
Desde el horizonte, hasta la otra orilla	From the horizon, to the other shore
Desde las montañas,	From the mountains
Costas, rios y valles	Coasts, rivers and valleys
La tierra es para ti y para mi.	The land is for you and for me.

En el mundo vive, una genta pobre	In the world there live poor people
Y en el mundo vive	And in the other world there live
Otra gente rica,	Other people (who are) rich
Y luego tenemos	And later we have
A muchos viajeros	Many travelers (immigrants?)
En busca de una oportunidad.	Who are looking for opportunity.

Cuando caminaba	When I went walking
Llegue a una frontera	I got to the border
Donde habia un letrero	where there was a sign (notice)
Pa’ que no pasara.	So that I wouldn’t pass
Y del otro lado	And on the other side
No decia nada.	It didn’t say anything
La tierra es para ti y para mi.	The land is for you and for me.

Y en la carretera	And on the road
En la que voy viajando	On which I am travelling
Se abre mi destino	Opens my destiny
Como una alborada	Like a sunrise
Asi debe ser,	That is the way it should be
“....de quien la trabaja.”	“for those who work”
La tierra es para ti y para mi.	The land is for you and for me.

Esta tierra es tuya	(same as verse 1)
Estatierra es mia	

Desde el horizonte  
Hasta la otra orilla  
Desde las montañas,  
Costas, rios y valles  
La tierra es para ti y para mi.

#### “No Nos Moverán”

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKopB66ujuQ>
  - *Joan Baez singing “No Nos Moverán” in front of a live audience.*
- [http://lyrics.wikia.com/Joan\\_Baez:No\\_Nos\\_Mover%C3%A1n](http://lyrics.wikia.com/Joan_Baez:No_Nos_Mover%C3%A1n)
  - *Lyrics to the Joan Baez version of “No Nos Moverán.” (The studio recording of Baez’s version includes a reading of Pablo Neruda’s “The Heights of Macchu Picchu;” the poem is included at the beginning of this set of lyrics.*
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l\\_jnOXhDF6c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_jnOXhDF6c)
  - *“No Nos Moverán” sung at the Wisconsin union rallies in 2011 by a group of people from Spain.*
- Fowke, Edith & Glazer, Joe. *Songs of Work and Protest*. Pg. 38-39.
  - *Sheet music and English verses*

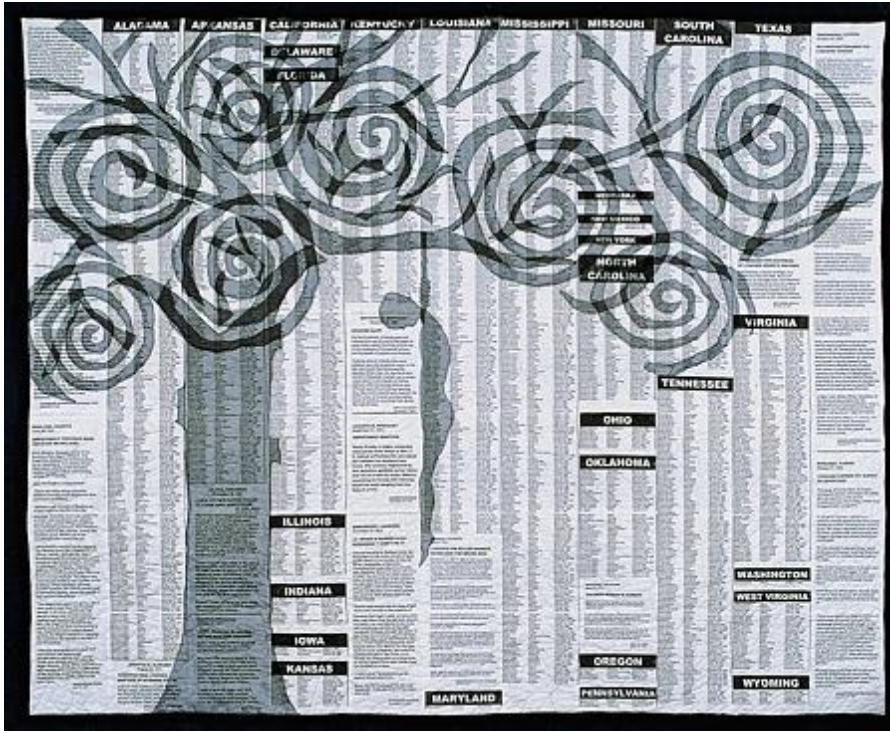
#### “We Shall Overcome”

Stotts, Stuart. (2010). *We Shall Overcome: A song that changed the world*. New York, NY: Clarion Books.

- *A short book on the history and origins of the song with a brief forward by Pete Seeger. The book includes a CD, sheet music for the song, and excellent photographs from the Civil Rights movement.*

#### “Strange Fruit”

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4ZyuULy9zs>
  - *A live vocal-piano recording of Billie Holiday singing the song; sparse, effective accompaniment and very emotional singing and acting from Holiday.*
- <http://www.gwenmagee.com/slaughtered1.html>
  - *A quilt entitled “Blood of the Slaughtered” in the series “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by the famous artist Gwendolyn Magee. It depicts a lynching scene with the names of lynching victims behind the scene. The artist includes a moving description of her artistic process.*



- <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1979/2/79.02.04.x.html>
  - *A brief summary of statistics related to lynching in the United States.*

**List of discussion questions and vocabulary:**

“Esta Tierra Es Tuyo”

- Are there rights that should be granted to all people, regardless of where they live? If yes, what would those rights be?
- Do you have a right to do what you want with the land on which you live?
- To whom does the land belong?
- What do you think of the person who sees the “No Trespassing” sign and pays attention to the side that is blank?

“Strange Fruit”

Song Activity Questions:

- Who is singing the song? What is that person thinking/feeling? Where are they?
- Put yourself in the picture: Are you indoors or outdoors? What do you see in the distance? What is the weather like? What do you smell? What other sounds do you hear?
- Now that the song is over, what is about to happen next? What happened right before the song began?

Focus question:

- How do artists in different mediums create a mood for the listener/viewer?

**Procedures:**

Week 1:

1. Opening Activity: Students will make a T-chart with the words “Right” and “Privilege” and make a list of things that fall into each category (see below, with examples). After about 5-10 minutes, have students share their answers with the class and discuss them.

Rights	Privileges
Freedom of religion (being able to practice one’s religion without harassment by others)	Having a driver’s license (passing a test and following the rules of the road; this privilege is revoked with DUIs, etc.)

2. Introduce the lyrics to the song “This Land is Your Land” by Woody Guthrie. Have students read through them and make comments about the structure. Have them list words that describe the tone of the lyrics. (write these on the board).
3. Listen to “Esta Tierra es Tuyo” with the English lyrics in front of them. Have them list words that describe the tone of the music and compare these with the words they placed on the board before they heard the song.

Tone/Mood of the Lyrics	Tone/Mood of the Music
Possessive; adulation; peaceful (natural beauty); inclusive?	Upbeat, celebratory, dance-like, inclusive?

4. Give students roles (home/landowner, sharecropper, hobo) to discuss the following questions as a class (focus questions from above) Let them have a minute with a partner or to brainstorm on paper.
  - a. Do you have a right to do what you want with the land on which you live?
  - b. Are there rights that should be granted to all people, regardless of where they live? If yes, what would those rights be?
  - c. To whom does the land belong?
  - d. What do you think of the person who see the “No Trespassing” sign and pays attention to the side that is blank?
5. Debrief with students and discuss how the different roles should/did change responses to these questions.

6. Closure, Week 1 (Ticket out the door): What do you think the original version of this song sounds like? What genre do you think it falls in, based on the lyrics?

### Week 2:

1. Revisit last week's discussion about "rights" vs. "privileges." Give students examples of civil rights that were not afforded to African-Americans in many states (especially Southern states). For example, the right to choose their seat on the bus, to attend the same movie theatres, schools, etc., as whites, the right to a trial.
2. Give students a short background on lynching. A link to a thorough but brief background can be found in the resources section above.
3. Students will listen to "Strange Fruit" without the lyrics, with their eyes closed.
4. Have students listen a second time. Before the song, ask students to think about the following (from VAT, "I Can Hear it Now):
  - a. Who is singing the song? What is that person thinking/feeling? Where are they?
  - b. Put yourself in the picture: Are you indoors or outdoors? What do you see in the distance? What is the weather like? What do you smell? What other sounds do you hear?
  - c. Now that the song is over, what is about to happen next? What happened right before the song began?
5. After the song is finished playing, have students write a first person paragraph describing their experience as if they were singing or listening to the song. After a few minutes, have students share their scenarios (who they were, where they were, etc.) and write these on the board.
6. Show the quilt "Blood of the Slaughtered." Have students get into groups to complete the compare/contrast graphic organizer (see page 5 for a sample).
7. Give students 15-20 minutes and then come back together as a class to share answers.

### Week 3:

1. Revisit "Esta Tierra Es Tuyo;" listen to the beginning of the song to remind students of the mood. Pass out the lyrics and read a few predictions from Week 1's Ticket out the Door.
2. Teach students the melody of "This Land is Your Land" with sheet music. Have students sing along with the Woody Guthrie version.
3. Have students track the melody line on the song sheet. They should notice the song stays in a comfortable range, is repetitive, and is easy to sing. (Thus it is accessible to a wide audience).
4. Ask students which version of the song they prefer. Discuss the differences between the two versions (genre, vocal style, mood, lyrics).
5. Have students watch the video of "Esta Tierra es Tuyo" and inform them of what the video footage entails (immigrant marches in 2007). Discussion questions:

- Why did the band choose this video footage to include in the video of their song?
  - How effectively do the two mediums (music and film) come together to convey a message?
  - Why do you think the arranger included the last verse in the original English? Why do you think the band included the Woody Guthrie version at the end of the video?
6. Give students either the option of illustrating one of the verses, writing their own verse (in Spanish or in English), or writing a first-person paragraph in the style of the “I Can Hear it Now” for “Esta Tierra es Tuyo.”

#### Week 4: “No, Nos Moveran”

1. Have students listen to Joan Baez’s version of “No, Nos Moveran” with the Spanish lyrics (no translation) with their eyes closed. Give students the following discussion questions:
  - What is the texture of the song? (How many people are singing, is there harmony, what is the accompaniment like?)
  - What do you think the song is about? Do you think the song is for working, leisure, convincing, something else?
2. Hand out the translation of the lyrics, along with the English version, which is slightly different. Give students a brief history of the song as a labor song in English
3. Teach students the song in Spanish. Sing through the first verse several times until students are comfortable with the melody and lyrics. Have them read and/or sing through the other verses in small groups for the class.
4. Put students into pairs or allow them to work individually; they should create a verse that illustrates something they would fight for, someone who is their leader, or something they would “build” (either physically or metaphorically). Give them 5-7 minutes, then come back together and have students sing or rhythmically chant the verse they wrote.
5. Show students the video from Wisconsin and ask them to compare the setting, accompaniment, voice, and tone. Make a T-chart on the board to compare the two versions of the song.

#### **Evaluation**

As a culminating assignment, students will be given a list of songs written or used during the Civil Rights movement, find or draw a piece of artwork that mirrors the tone of one of the songs on the list, and then 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the tone of the painting/drawing matches the tone of the song. Students should use the graphic organizer from the “Strange Fruit” lesson to guide their listening and thinking for the paragraphs.

#### **Reflection**

*I believe it is of great importance that students not only understand the history of the Civil Rights movement, but that they connect with it on a personal level. I found that*

*my efforts to make this connection happen this year failed because although they knew a lot about the history, they could not relate as individuals. My hope is that through providing Spanish-language versions of easy to sing but important songs, students will make that personal connection to the struggles.*

*“Strange Fruit” was a song I taught this year and want to continue to teach because it has an enormously powerful message. It is a very difficult song for middle school students with regard to vocal style and tone, but is very thought provoking and worth the preparation.*

*“No, Nos Moveran” truly moved me as a listener, despite the fact that the first version I listened to was very simple and singable. It is a song that was important to the labor movement in its original English and continues to hold meaning for many different groups.*

*“Esta Tierra es Tuyo” was chosen because of its upbeat tempo, language accessibility to my Mexican students, and of course its roots in the folk music of the United States. Because it almost a direct translation from the English, it is a useful arrangement that allows students to focus solely on the music when doing their comparison, rather than fixating on the words.*

*Because this lesson is meant to serve as an entry point for the students in my community, it is not an exhaustive list of resources meant to teach the Civil Rights movement in its entirety. Many more songs should be included to do this era of music history justice, for example, “A Change is Gonna Come,” “We Shall Overcome,” and “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”*

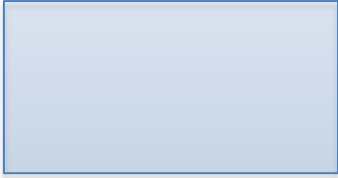
*Trained musical listening is one of the most important concepts to me as a music teacher. I want my students to learn to listen to music with an open mind and a critical ear. However, I also want them to sing and play instruments whenever possible. I tried to achieve a balance between listening activities, composition/arranging activities, and performing activities as much as possible.*



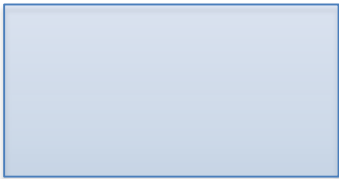
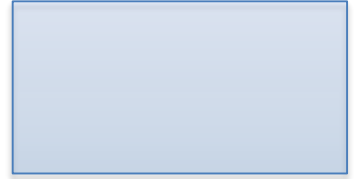
Title #1:  
"Strange Fruit"

With regard to:

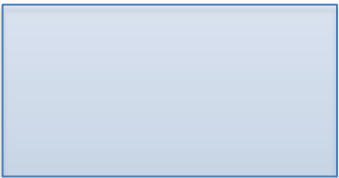
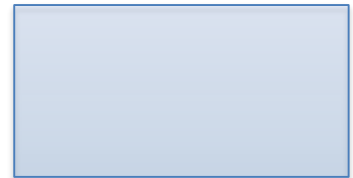
Title#2:  
"Evil #1"



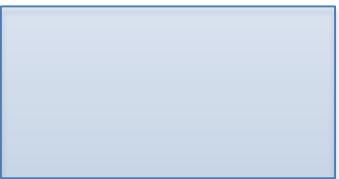
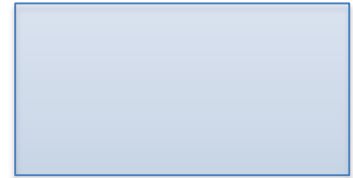
Subject Matter



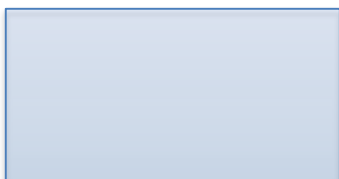
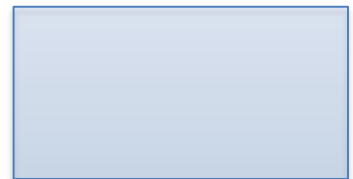
Mood



Speaker



Listener



Color/Timbre

