

## NTI MUSIC BASED PROJECT #2

### PROJECT: Political & Social Commentary in Music

To successfully complete this project you will *identify and discuss* popular songs that fulfill the purpose of political and social commentary. To complete the project, choose **five (5)** popular songs, from any era, that touch on subject matter that is reflective of the current climate, and discuss what the artist is trying to communicate through song. Part of that discussion should be a brief discussion about *why* the song is important to the current social commentary. Of course, songs during war-time (including both patriotic and protest songs) are acceptable choices, but there are many others. See examples!

For each of your **five** songs, you should list the **title** of the song, the **artist**, the **year** (or the general time period), and discuss in **a minimum of one paragraph** (using more if necessary) the political or social climate in which the song was relevant to the climate of the time.

*Please note that examples below do not fully discuss these items, as would be expected. They are just starting points to show the direction of the project!*

### EXAMPLES:

**“Abraham, Martin, and John” written by Dick Hollar and originally recorded by Dion in 1968.** This song commemorates the assassinations of President Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy. The four of these men were instrumental in promoting social changes. All four were also highly visible public figures who were assassinated violently. President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all American slaves, and led the country during the civil war which followed. The mid-to late 1960’s were significant to the desegregation movement in America, and included momentous events such as the Brown v. Board of Education decision, Rosa Parks, sit-ins, and the civil rights act of 1964. Although Lincoln was assassinated in the late 1860’s, JFK was assassinated in 1963, and the two others within two months of each other in 1968. . . . .

**“Ohio” written by Neil Young and performed by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young in 1971.** This song was written by Neil Young after he viewed pictures in a magazine of the 1970 incident at Kent State University (located in Ohio) where National Guardsmen opened fire on students protesting the bombing of Cambodia by the United States Armed forces. . . . .

**“Strange Fruit” poem written by Abel Meeropol and originally performed by Billie Holiday in 1939.** The poem that this song is based on was inspired by a photograph from 1930 which showed the gruesome lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith in Marion, Indiana. This song was released during the height of the jazz era, and while highly skilled, the black performers in the jazz idiom were not exempt from the segregation and racial discrimination that was still very much a part of American culture, especially in the south. . . . .

*Note that all three of these songs are dated, but are very well known. There are plenty of songs from both of these eras that would qualify, and there are many modern songs as well. This project would be appropriate to be completed multiple times. Complete on different NTI days, or in consecutive years. YOUR RESPONSES; HOWEVER, MUST BE DIFFERENT. Your responses will be kept on file until you graduate for comparison.*