



CLIMATE CHANGE AND MUSIC EXTRA MATERIAL

Last updated: May 2023

Environmental Protest Music

As with all movements for change music has always played an important part in environmental protests. In 1970, the Canadian singer Joni Mitchell released her famous song 'Big yellow taxi' with lyrics about concerns for the environment: <https://youtu.be/2595abcvh2M>

'They paved paradise and put up a parking lot'

*'They took all the trees, and put em in a tree museum
And then charged the people a dollar and a half to see them'*

*'Hey farmer, farmer put away your DDT
I don't care about spots on my apples
Leave me the birds and bees'*

[Verse 3]
F Hey farmer, farmer, put away the **C** DDT now
F Give me spots on my apples
G But leave me the birds and the **C** bees, please

[Chorus]
C Don't it always seem to go
F That you don't know what you've got 'til it's **C** gone?
F They paved paradise, **G** put up a parking **C** lot
C (Shoo-bop-bop-bop-bop)
 Shoo-bop-bop-bop-bop)

[Verse 4]
F Late last night, I heard the screen **C** door slam
F And a big yellow taxi took away my **C** old man

[Chorus]
C Don't it always seem to go
F That you don't know what you've got 'til it's **C** gone?
F They paved paradise, **G** put up a parking **C** lot
C (Shoo-bop-bop-bop-bop)
C I said, don't it always seem to go
F That you don't know what you've got 'til it's **C** gone?
F They paved paradise, **G** put up a parking **C** lot
C (Shoo-bop-bop-bop-bop)
F They paved paradise, **G** put up a parking **C** lot
C (Shoo-bop-bop-bop-bop)
F They paved paradise, **G** put up a parking **C** lot

Also in 1970 another Canadian musician Neil Young released 'After the Goldrush' with the lyric:

'Look at mother nature on the run in the 1970s'.

Lyrics and chords available at: https://youtu.be/vmKlUhref_0

Colours of the wind from the Disney film Pochahantas is one of the most successful Disney songs and described by many as a classic. The song represents the Native American viewpoint that the earth is a living entity where humans are connected to everything in nature. The lyrics also urge all humans to accept those who are different in appearance and culture and to learn from them.

Lyrics:

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/vanessawilliams/colorsofthewind.html>

Sing-a long: <https://youtu.be/O9MvdMqKvpU>

In recent years there have been several songs used to speak out environmental issues:

Japan - On March 11, 2011 there was a nuclear accident in the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan caused by the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Japan. The earthquake led to a tsunami which damaged the nuclear plant causing the most severe nuclear accident since Chernobyl. The disaster left 20,000 people dead or missing and released radioactive materials over large areas. The accident eventually led to the shutdown of all nuclear power plants in Japan. Music played a key role in the anti-nuclear movement. Many protests were held in the aftermath of the accident attracting people of all ages organised over social media. They also popularized the musical practices that encourage the Japanese to participate in protests, in particular the drum corps that accompany every demonstration and the call and response style in which rappers and protestors exchange slogans over R & B and hip-hop beats. One of the most popular songs was 'It was always a lie' by Sait Kazuyoshi which called out Tokyo Electric Power by name and expresses worry about radiation in the air, water and food.

<https://youtu.be/5ekCVV4tlrE>

Africa

- A group of African musicians came together in 2010 to produce the song Save our land (<https://youtu.be/YguuxR5inVO>) for a conference on sustainable development in Ethiopia. The performers were Ras Kimono (Nigeria), Betty Bruktawit Getahun (Ethiopia) and Johnny Ragga (Ethiopia).
- Samaliliani is a song by the Zambian singer Lilanda about the pressing environmental issues of deforestation and charcoal burning.
<https://youtu.be/q9F9LEEoUGE>
- Also from Zambia is the song Sons of October by the reggae group Yes Rasta!. While calling for action on climate change it references the movement for Zambian independence in 1964 suggesting Zambians get together in the same way to save their natural resources.
<https://youtu.be/7OW78p35wHo>
- Angelique Kidjo's 2021 album 'Mother Nature' includes collaborations with several other artists and is warning to people about the climate crisis. The title track is a collaboration with the British artist Sting:
<https://youtu.be/a14aOMHKQaU>

Latin America

In 2010 a group of 25 Jamaican musicians called 'Voices for climate change' produced this song Climate change is happening now

<https://youtu.be/k4uRQvrOMBE>

Europe

In 2015 Paul McCartney and other well-known musicians recorded 'Love song to the earth' <https://youtu.be/ZSnOXbaXzfm> It was recorded in advance of the Paris Climate Conference and the singers hoped to promote action on climate change: “

Paul McCartney:

“I’m glad to be a part of ‘Love Song to the Earth,’ aiming to inspire people across the world to urge their leaders to act on climate change. We need to be fast and efficient, switching to renewable energy and eating less meat, for example. Big decisions will be made this week, so I am doing everything I can to make sure governments sign up to an agreement, which can protect our planet. Now is the time to act. So please spread the woe and help keep our planet safe!”

<http://lovesongtotheearth.org/>

This is an open letter
From you and me together
Tomorrow's in our hands now

Find the words that matter
Say them out loud
And make it better somehow

Looking down from up on the moon
It's a tiny blue marble
Who'd have thought the ground we stand on
Could be so fragile

Chorus (1st)
This is a lovesong to the Earth
You're no ordinary world
A diamond in the universe
Heaven's poetry to us
Keep it safe, keep it safe, keep it safe
cause it's our world

It's not about possessions, money, or religion
How many years we might live ?
When the only real question that matters is still
A matter of perspective
Looking down from up on the moon
You're a tiny blue marble
Who'd have thought the ground we stand on
Could be so fragile

Chorus (2nd)
This is a lovesong to the Earth
You're no ordinary world
A diamond in the universe
Heaven's poetry to us
Keep it safe, keep it safe, keep it safe
cause it's our world

[BRIDGE Sean Paul Rap]
Bang Bang Bang
See Mama earth is in a crazy mess
It's time for us to do our best
From deep sea straight up to Everest
She under crazy stress
unless you wanna be motherless
Clean heart, Green Heart
is the way,
is stress
Speedniess and too much Greediness
Six billion people all want plentiness
Some people think this is harmless
(It's our world, It's our world)
But if we continue their'll
only be emptiness

Chorus (3rd)
This is a lovesong to the Earth
You're no ordinary world
A diamond in the universe
Heaven's poetry to us
Keep it safe, keep it safe, keep it safe

Chorus (4th)
This is a lovesong to the Earth
You're no ordinary world
A diamond in the universe
Heaven's poetry to us

Keep it safe, keep it safe, keep it safe
"Everybody keep it safe now"
"keep it safe"
It's our world, it's our world
it's our world, it's our world

Mother Nature

Angélique Kidjo

Don't ever let them hurt you in any way
Oh, never let them steal and take the best of you
Keep building cities from the ground
We're rising with the waves
Don't ever let them hurt you in any way
Oh, never let them steal and take the best of you
Keep building cities from the ground
We're rising with the waves
Mother Nature has a way of warning us
A time bomb set on a lost countdown
Do you hear it?
Will you stop it?
Won't you listen?
Aminssiamin nin va mian lébé nin hihé a min
Aminssiamin ké lé ayin gban ya djia edo la noussi lo
Each one of us each one of us
We need each other
We need each other
We need each other now
Each one of us each one of us
We need each other

Don't ever let them hurt you in any way
Oh, never let them steal and take the best of you
Keep building cities from the ground
We're rising with the waves
Mother Nature has a way of warning us
A time bomb set on a lost countdown
Will you find it?
Will you stop it?
Won't you listen?

We need each other now
We need each other now
Each one of us each one of us
We need each other

Aminssiamin nin va mian lébé nin hihé a min
Aminssiamin ké lé ayin gban ya djia edo la noussi lo
I know we are humain
But why can't we use gifts she's given us

Mother Nature has a way of warning us
A time bomb set on a lost countdown
Do you hear it?
Will you stop it?
Won't you listen?

Oh-h-h-h-h, ye ye ye ye ye ah

Suggested Activities:

- *Compare the featured songs of environmental protest*
- *Choose one of the featured songs and prepare your own class performance*
- *Highlight key words in the lyrics and make your own musical response based on these keywords*

Mission to Earth: This is a music film produced by NYADO which is a collective of 100 artists from around the world. The artists are using their skills to provide positive reinforcement for solution makers working to take care of and heal our planet

Filmed across Kenya and Italy and supported by many positive people, this music film is telling the story of three astronauts, rethinking the meaning of their exploration and coming back to spread the ancient curing love between

mankind and mother earth. (<https://youtu.be/cMsDhn1OoxM>) one of the artists involved was Phy a Kenyan Afropop singer: (<https://musicspots.de/en/phy-new-sound-from-kenya/>)

Suggested Activities:

- *Review the video using worksheet 4*
- *Research some of the artists involved in this production*

Film Composer Hans Zimmer has composed a work called 'Earth' which he describes as a personal celebration of the planet we live on. Zimmer has composed soundtracks for films such as The Dark Knight, Pirates of the Caribbean and The Lion King. He has also composed music for the documentaries Planet Earth and Blue Planet. Working with David Attenborough inspired him to compose the work Earth. The work is written for children's choir and comes with resources for 10 lesson plans:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces/classical-music-hans-zimmer-earth/zh4k382>

Note - while some videos in this resource are inaccessible all other materials are available

A Global Concert for change In January 2021 there was a concert held to mark the opening of the World Economic Forum called 'See Me':

<https://youtu.be/fD5B9XXi4s>

Due to the pandemic it was a virtual concert and included orchestras and choirs from Afghanistan, Austria, Brazil, Italy and China. The programme began with the cellist YoYo Ma performing the prelude to Bach's cello suite no. 2 and excerpts from Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. It also featured the world premiere of a new work called by the Indian-American composer Reena Esmail called 'See me' (<https://www.reenaesmail.com/bio/>)

YoYoMa is a a.UN Messenger for Peace. Here he is speaking about the power of music in the context of climate action:

<https://youtu.be/adWkC6M3tww>. He is also involved in a project called the Sea Change Project which is a community of scientists, storytellers, journalists, and filmmakers who are dedicated to raising awareness of the beauty and ecological importance of South Africa's kelp forest.

<https://seachangeproject.com/> With excerpts from Bach's cello suite no 1 he speaks about the project:

<https://www.facebook.com/theseachangeproject/videos/966422907188276/>