



MUSICUNITESUS

Lesson Plan Overview: Nettle 9th grade Social Studies

Context:

This is an overview of the 9th grade lesson that will precede and accompany the March 20th performance of Nettle, a Barcelona-based but “geography defying” group founded by DJ/Rupture and comprised of artists from three continents. This lesson is much shorter than the mini-units often planned for younger grades but could certainly be extended per the teacher’s discretion.

Objectives:

- To prepare students for the Nettle performance by providing them with some context for Nettle’s work
- To supplement extant World History curriculum (9th graders are currently studying WWI and focusing especially on nationalism as one the causes of the war)
- To help teachers by reinforcing the vocabulary and concepts already in use

Overview:

Students will investigate examples of British and American music from WWI and describe their purpose, etc. Then students will participate in a “First Encounter” with two pieces of Nettle’s music. Students will attempt to describe the differences between the two, working their way to an understanding of the messages of music that can range from nationalistic or patriotic to those that either ignore national boundaries or encourage the crossing of them.

Special Notes:

****Technology:** This lesson requires a reasonably functional connection to the Internet in order to play audio from a website. Speakers are probably important, too. If there are multiple computers available, or if class can be run in a computer lab, then students will have more opportunity to browse songs and choose their own “encounters:

****Grouping:** Depending on the number of computers available in the classroom, this exercise can be done either as a whole class or as a small group project. (Small groups are preferable if several computers can be procured).

Agenda:

1. Pick a Song

There are dozens of songs, arranged by date, available on the wonderful website <http://www.firstworldwar.com/audio/> in its “vintage media” section. Just click on “songs” and then scroll through the possibilities. Below are three songs recommended on the basis of their lyrics and general representation of the genre. If it is possible to project the website on the LCD, then students can read the lyrics as they listen to the music (though perhaps they should concentrate just on listening to the sounds the first time, then reading the words the second time).

“When I Get Back to the U.S.A, US, 1917

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/audio/whenigetbacktotheusa.htm>

“Keep the Trench Fires Going for the Boys Out There,” US, 1918

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/audio/keepthetrenchfires.htm>

“La Canzone del Grappa,” Italy, 1918

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/audio/canzonedelgrappa.htm>

2. First Encounter Activity: See attached worksheet

Listen to the song at least twice, while recording responses in a notebook or journal. See attached “First Encounter” worksheet for specific guiding questions.

3. Share

Classmates share responses to the song, while teacher records those responses on the board or chart-paper.

4. Repeat

There should be time to analyze at least two songs; three would be ideal.

5. Discussion

Prompt: During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said to the composer of a famous patriotic song: ““You have done more than a hundred generals and a thousand orators.”

Why are songs so powerful? Why are songs used in times of war? What is the difference between patriotism and nationalism? Are the songs you’ve heard today, in your opinion, patriotic? Nationalistic? Neither? What is the purpose of these songs?

6. Repeat First Encounter activity with Nettle

Do not bias the students by giving them too much information on Nettle. Let them listen to each of the following linked short clips (both “Verde” and “Radio Flower” at least once, while journaling their responses.

<http://www.musicunitesus.info/listen.html#Nettle>

8. Discussion

Prompt: Read Bio of group at <http://www.musicunitesus.info/residency.html>

How is this group’s relationship to nations and national feelings different? (Vocab: “border-crossing”). What is the purpose of this music? (Is there one?) What is the message of this music? How is this message similar or different to the message of the overtly patriotic music of the WWI era? What does

this say about this moment in history? What is the function of a nettle? (To irritate!) Do you think music without words can 'say' something? What are some things this music said to you?

9. HW/Extension

Create piece of art that crosses boundaries. Ideas: poetry that uses multiple languages; visual art that uses multi-media; rap that incorporates another genre. What is the message of your art?

First Encounters Worksheet

Directions: For each of the pieces of music that you “encounter” today, please answer the following questions in your notebook. There are no “right” answers to these questions. These questions are designed to help you listen closely and to identify as much about the music as you can.

Questions:

1. What sounds do you hear? What instruments can you identify?
2. What is the mood of the piece?
3. Do you think this music is more consonant (the sounds ‘get along with each other’), or dissonant (the sounds conflict with each other)?
4. What pictures do you imagine in your head as this piece is playing?
5. What country/region/continent does this piece sound like?
6. What else do you notice?
7. If this piece has words, what is their general message?
8. Do the words identify the nation of the song’s origin?
9. Do the words mention other nations or peoples from other places? How?
10. If the music does not have words, do you still think it “said” something? What are some things this music said to you?