



Story behind the Protest Song: A Reference Guide to the 50 Songs That Changed the 20th Century

By Hardeep Phull

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Protest songs are united by the fact they all have something to say, something to dispute, or something to rile against, whether it be political, social, or personal.

Story Behind the Protest Song features 50 of the most influential musical protests and statements recorded to date, providing pop-culture viewpoints on some of the most tumultuous times in modern history. Among the featured: songs about the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the most recent upheaval over policy in the Middle East, as well as teenage rebellion, animal rights, criticisms of mass media, and even protest songs that lambaste other protest songs.

This indispensable guide tackles it all: the behind-the-scenes stories of the most influential protest songs in American popular culture, examining the subjects they address, the legacy they left, and the fabric of the songs themselves. Chronically arranged entries cover nearly 70 years of music and offer an expansive range of genres, including rock, punk, pop, soul, hip-hop, country, folk, indie, heavy metal, and more.

Each entry discusses the songwriter(s); the inspiration behind the song; and the social, cultural, and political context in which the song was released. Following a detailed musical and lyrical analysis, the entries explain the songs' impact and relevance today. Among the featured:

- The Unknown Soldier (The Doors)
- Masters of War (Bob Dylan)
- Say It Loud-I'm Black and I'm Proud (James Brown)
- Get Up, Stand Up (The Wailers)
- Big Yellow Taxi (Joni Mitchell)

- Their Law (Prodigy)
- American Idiot (Green Day)
- Sweet Home Alabama (Lynyrd Skynyrd)
- Born in the USA (Bruce Springsteen)
- Southern Man (Neil Young)

Entries are accompanied by further readings and a select discographies as well as a comprehensive resource guide at the end of the book. A must-read for students of music, history, and politics, this volume offers a unique reflection on the most significant and moving protest songs in American history.

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This indispensable guide tackles it all: the behind-the-scenes stories of the most influential protest songs in American popular culture, examining the subjects they address, the legacy they left, and the fabric of the songs themselves. Chronically arranged entries cover nearly 70 years of music and offer an expansive range of genres, including rock, punk, pop, soul, hip-hop, country, folk, indie, heavy metal, and more.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An invaluable resource, this intimately researched series of pop culture essays makes for explosive reading." - **rocksound.tv**

"Story Behind the Protest Song covers everything from Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit' through Joni Mitchell's 'Big Yellow Taxi' right up to Pulp's 'Common People'. Don't read it too closely though, or you'll become that guy in the pub who thinks he knows everything. And no-one likes that guy." - **NME**

"Phull (music journalist) has pulled together the stories of 50 protest songs, broadly defined, that changed the 20th century,' and he discusses many other songs as well. Beginning with 'We Shall Overcome,' Joe Hill's 'The Preacher and the Slave' and 'Strange Fruit,' he offers extensive background information on the composers and musicians, discusses the historical context of the song, and analyzes the lyrics. The notes and illustrations of this fascinating study are helpful...Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates and above; general readers." - **Choice**

"This title might serve as a reference book particularly for teens. . ." - **VOYA**

"British music journalist Hardeep Phull has created a very readable volume that is part music history and part social history. . . . Phull writes in an engaging style that logically relates world events (particularly U.S. events) to the contemporary popular music that comments on these events, and he discusses how each work came to be written and performed. . . . Well-researched and enjoyable to read, I recommend this book for all libraries." - **Reference & User Services Quarterly**

"Entries are accompanied by further readings and a select discographies as well as a comprehensive resource guide at the end of the book. Enjoyable to read as well as easy to search for reference purposes, this handbook to music's role in American social history is highly recommended." - **ARBAonline**

"With references in every chapter and a comprehensive index this book is an absolute must for music-loving activists...this guide is truly bible-esque in stature." - **Peace News**

About the Author

Hardeep Phull is Hardeep Phull is a music journalist who writes for such publications as *NME*, *Rock Sound*, *The Independent*, *Metro*, *Record Collector*, *Hip-Hop Connection*, and *Dazed And Confused*.

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