

## For Teachers: Additional Song Information

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**Practice Song:** “*Dựng lại người dựng lại nhà*” [Rebuild People, Rebuild Home], a song by Trinh Cong Son, performed by Khanh Ly.

Trinh Cong Son was a famous singer and songwriter living in South Vietnam during the U.S. war. Son’s music was extremely popular, and often reflected his sadness about the suffering the war brought to the people of Vietnam. This song begins with a muted trumpet, guitars, piano, and vocals. A flute enters soon after the vocals and is the least constrained of all of the instruments throughout the song, joyfully embellishing and improvising around the melody. Son rejected writing nationalist or militaristic songs, perhaps hinted at by the short muted solo trumpet—an instrument sometimes associated with martial music. The trumpet fades away quickly and is followed by the return of the flute. The persistent use of the pronoun “we,” the word “our” and the phrase “let us” suggest Trinh Cong Son’s vision of a shared journey for the people of Vietnam. The lyrics emphasize the beauty of Vietnam and the love the people will develop for each other through the shared process of rebuilding their country.

**Song 1:** “*Opinião*,” [Opinion] a song by Zélia Barbosa.

Zelia Barbosa’s song “*Opinião*” was one of twelve songs on her album *Brazil: Songs of Protest*. The songs focused on the hardships of ordinary people in Brazil and covered the extreme economic challenges faced by people in Brazil’s deeply unequal society and repressive political environment. In “*Opinião*,” she uses only percussion and guitars, instruments that ordinary Brazilian people might have and play at home and in their neighborhood. The song reflects the rhythm and traditions of a form of Brazilian music known as samba that emphasizes percussion. Samba has its origins in African musical traditions that came to Brazil along with millions of enslaved people during the transatlantic slave trade (which lasted from the sixteenth through mid-nineteenth century). Throughout Brazilian history people have used music and religion as powerful tools for resistance. The minor key of the song reflects sadness and even weariness, but the lyrics reflect determination to prevail through self-reliance and persistence.

**Song 2:** “*Rusové jdete domu!*” [Russians, Go Home!], a song by Milan Knížák.

Musician and performance artist Milan Knížák helped bring the counterculture that was sweeping the United States and Europe to Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. Knížák wrote the song, “*Russians, Go Home!*” on August 21, 1968, the day the Soviet Union led an invasion of Czechoslovakia. Knížák played it on the streets of the city of Marienbad that same day. Knížák uses simple guitar chords, percussion, and bass guitar and medium tempo. The rhythm is steady, simple, yet determined. His vocals are uncomplicated, but are occasionally punctuated by a growl conveying a sense of fierceness or anger. He is joined on the chorus by other voices telling the Russians to go home: “*Rusové jdete domu!*” This chorus of multiple voices implies wider opposition to the Russian invasion and can be seen as a call for collective protest throughout Czechoslovakia.

**Song 3:** “*La tragedia de la Plaza de las Tres Culturas*” [The Tragedy of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas], a song by Judith Reyes.

Judith Reyes uses a traditional form of Mexican music known as *corrido* [narrative ballad] in this song. *Corrido* can be traced to the nineteenth century and is associated with the Mexican Revolution. Reyes’ choice to use the *corrido* form likely sought to connect the song’s message back to this revolutionary tradition. Traditionally, *corrido* was sung on streets and in public and served almost as a newspaper for people who had little education or could not read. Reyes uses only guitars in addition to her vocals to tell the story of the massacre. The tempo is slow and steady and, like traditional *corrido*, uses the rhythm of a waltz (a form of dance). The vocals are dramatic and at times her voice sounds like she is tempted to shout her lyrics, conveying urgency, sadness, and anger.

**Song 4: “*Dziwny jest ten świat*” [*This World is Strange*], a song by Czesław Niemen.**

This song by Czesław Niemen remains well known and popular in Poland to this day. “*Dziwny jest ten świat*” was the first 1960s-era protest song in Poland to follow the style of the American singer Bob Dylan and other “counterculture” music artists. Niemen uses electronic keyboards, piano, guitars, drums and brass instruments. The song builds in complexity and volume and includes rhythms and a guitar solo that reflects the influences of the Chicago blues style—a style originally developed by African Americans from the Mississippi River delta. The song is played in a minor key, which suggests unhappiness or sorrow, and Niemen’s vocals are urgent, calling attention to things that are wrong in the world. In 2022, the song re-emerged as a protest song in Ukraine and Poland against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**Song 5: “*Senzeni Na?*” [*What Have We Done?*], a song performed by the Harmonius Serenade Choir & Vusi Mahlesela.**

“*Senzeni Na?*” is a South African folk song that has commonly been sung in churches and at protest demonstrations. It played an important role in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa that lasted between 1948 and 1990. The instrumentation includes only vocals—a chorus that begins and then a single voice that both leads and follows the other voices, suggesting a shared community of experience. The song is slow throughout, yet it does not feel bound to a steady rhythm or tempo. Rather, priority is given to the expressiveness of the vocals, which communicate distress and despair by using voices that sound ready to break from grief and sadness. Minor harmonies, suggesting sadness, are present throughout, but consistently seem to be resolving toward major harmonies that suggest hope and possibility.

**Song 6: “*Revolution*,” a song by The Beatles.**

The influence of The Beatles stretched across the globe in 1968. In addition to their celebrated music, they were increasingly known for their stances on political issues. There are several versions of The Beatles’ song “*Revolution*.” This version begins with a distorted electric guitar repeating a dissonant chord repeatedly. The guitar is joined by bass guitar, keyboard drums, and a vocal. The lyrics have a repeating structure, where the singer repeats revolutionary demands that he has heard from others. (“You say you want a revolution...”) The lyrics include a repeated response (“Well, you know...”) that suggests that the singer has a slightly different view of the situation. A third repeated pattern is marked by clear disagreement (“But when you talk about destruction...”). In this pattern, the drums dominate in a simple, insistent rhythm as if to underline the points made in the lyrics. The song’s conclusion begins with lyrics (“Don’t you know it’s going to be all right”) that suggest hope, but the repetition of the phrase “all right” grows more desperate and uncertain. The final “all right” is delivered with a finality that suggests the vocalist is angry and exhausted from singing about “revolution.”

**Song 7: “*This Is My Country*,” a song by Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions.**

Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions were one of many important rhythm and blues groups from the United States during the late 1960s. All of its members were African American. This song begins with trumpets, drums, orchestra and bass repeating a simple melody. A chorus of voices enter in harmony and repeat. The tempo is medium and the rhythm remains steady, with little sense of urgency. At three points in the song the rhythm becomes syncopated and instruments begin a descending minor chord progression as a way of calling attention to the lyrics. (Musicians sometimes use minor chords to indicate tension, sadness, or a lack of resolution.) Using this progression, the song poses the question, “Shall we perish unjust or live equal as a nation?” Twice, the answer comes without hesitation in a major key: “This is my country,” suggesting willingness to continue to struggle for racial justice in the United States.