

# Free social movement music essay sample

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Aristotle once said that when the modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state change with it. He believed strongly in the power of music to not just convey a message, but to energize people to act on their values. He believed this so strongly that he proposed passing laws that would restrict certain types of music for their ability to cause rebellion or dissent within the populace. The music of the sixties is, and seventies are inextricably linked to the social revolutions that were underway. Such influence is a two-way street. The social change influences the modes of music and those influenced songs further energize people to fight for a certain societal goal. This essay looks at the place of songs in social movements and specifically analyzes David Rovics song titled “ Occupy Wall Street.” Many of the iconic songs of the sixties, such as Bob Dylan’s “ The Times Are Changing,” encapsulate the great change that was happening at the time that this song was written. Listening to the popular music from the sixties to the present day, there is a definite waning of socially themed and conscious songwriting. But recent events that have shook the foundations of our society have led to the re-emergence of socially themed songwriting. Most notably, The Occupy Wall Street movement led to songs being written about the disparity between the rich and the poor in the United States. The Washington post ran a headline that supports this idea, “ Occupy Wall Street inspires a new generation of songs. The election of Barack Obama led many to believe that things in the financial industry would be markedly different than the way they had before. When little change, this inspired a new generation of protest and songs that encapsulated the heart of the protest. David Montgomery in the Washington Post article writes, “ disenchantment

with President Obama are among the themes that have inspired multiple songs by various artists in recent months” (Montgomery, n. p.). The songs encapsulate the social movement of the time and also add to its effectiveness. Music reaches a primal part of the brain. Research has documented the influence of music and behavior. This research is beyond the scope of this essay to further explore. The Occupy Wall Street Movement was the result of a growing frustration with the greed of the people running the financial markets and the government’s ineffectiveness in doing anything about it. More than just ignoring the problem, many politicians had special interests, which led them only to perpetuate the problem. David Rovic’s lyrics in his song Occupy Wall Street are the bullet points of frustrations that led people to mobilizing and protesting. He sings, “ Because this is where they buy the politicians ” as a nod to the biases that emerge when big banking give big donations to the political candidates that will support their interests. He sings, “ Because 99 percent of us are suffering” and that the 1% of the wealthy elite is “ Leaving us without the means to pay the rent.” Rovic’s music and a lot of music on the time captured the sentiment of the protest. Music can be a course of inspiration and encouragement, and the movement not only inspired music, but was also inspired by the music it inspired.

## **Works Cited**

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