**INTRO:**

Brecker Brothers – Dig a little Deeper
ALBUM: Back to Back, 1976
edited intro track

Hey thanks for joining us at Big E Radio.com. Welcome to open mic. My name is Michel Kryton, your curator for the next hour or so. The subtitle of this episode of open mic is called “Musically Correct.”. It is a spin off the context of “politically correct”; in other words, songs that connected to politics from the 60s to today. I thought I might call it “Musically Incorrect”, but the songs reveal the political reality of the time, regardless of what the varied opinions.
So sit back with your favorite snack and beverage, and let’s get a little intellectual while we get musical.

**PLAYLIST:**

Sam Cooke – A Change is Gonna Come
ALBUM: Ain’t That Good News, 1964
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4>

In the 60s, Sam Cooke was known for civil rights awareness. It was personal for him. The song, A Change is Gonna Come, was released in 1964 on the album “Ain’t that Good news”. It's Cooke's response, reportedly, to a moment of segregation in Louisiana, where he was unable to stay at a motel that was only taken business from white people. It's a poignant musical example of the struggle of Cooke and other Afro Americans dealt with then. This song has been covered by Aretha Franklin, Jennifer Hudson, Fantasia, and Al Green. This is Sam Cooke and “A Change is Gonna Come”
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Bob Dylan – The Times They Are a’ Changin
ALBUM: The Times They Are A-Changin’ 1964
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90WD_ats6eE>

A Change is Gonna Come. That’s Sam Cooke. So, this next song was an easy segue for me. The Times They Are a Changin was Dylan’s third studio album released in 1964 and was produced by Tom Wilson who produced Simon and Garfunkel, The Mothers of Invention and Eric Burdon and the Animals. The title song by the same name is considered one of the great songs off all time. It's also one of the most covered - thanks to the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Joan Baez and Tracy Chapman. Dylan wanted to create an anthem of sorts, and he did at the time. The world, specifically in America, was changing as people, especially young people, were voicing their displeasure on topics such as war and racism. Dylan explains.
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Country Jo and the Fish – I feel Like I’m Fixing to Die Rag.
ALBUM: First released as the opening track on the extended play Rag Baby Talking Issue No. 1, 1965
I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die, 1967.
Woodstock Album – Disc 1 Cut 7 1970
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZzAhUkrjWc

Thank you Mr. Dylan. “I feel Like I’m Fixing to Die Rag” --- I want to put that on a T-shirt --- it’s a song by Country Jo McDonald, who in the latter 60s, had one of the more memorable sing-a-long, overly blatant protest songs of the 1960s. The Vietnam War was the target of Country Joe McDonald’s wrath.

"I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag" saw a more commercial release on the group's second album, *I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die*, which was distributed in 1967. The song was a favorite among the hippie culture, and was featured in McDonald's set list at the Woodstock Festival in 1969. It was included as the 7th cut on Disc 1 of the Woodstock Album released in 1970.

The song was usually preceded by "**The Fish Cheer**", a cheer spelling out "F-I-S-H". It evolved into "The F-bomb Cheer", which resulted in a television ban for Country Joe and the Fish in 1968, for the vulgarity, but was applauded by concertgoers. They certainly liked it at Woodstock one year later in 1969. However, this is the **studio** version, perhaps less listened to than the Woodstock track. And it’one-two-three …

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Plastic Ono Band, John Lennon and Yoko Ono – Give Peace a Chance
ALBUM: Remember Love – 1969
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0WwjWdzV\_I

Country Jo Macdonald. Welcome to Big E Radio.com. I’m Michael Kryton, one of several curators and this is my thing called ‘open mic’. The subject: Musically Correct” songs, meaning songs that connect to politics. Here’s another in a long line of anti-war songs. And one that had a resurgence during the Gulf War in the early 1990s. I’m talking about “Give Peace A Chance” John and Yoko’s thing in 1969. It was on their album Remember Love. Give Peace a Chance remains one of those tracks that stands the test of time, no matter what the level of war or unrest. It's one of John Lennon's most recognizable songs, and the writing credit is actually shared with Paul McCartney, at the beginning of a post-Beatles world.

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Creedence Clearwater Revival – Fortunate Son
ALBUM: Willie and the poor Boys, 1969
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec0XKhAHR5I

That’s John and Yoko with Give Peace a Chance. A short sidebar. I was a teenager in Montreal in the late 60s and listened to Chuck Chandler on CKGM, which was THE Top 40 radio station in Montreal. I worked with Chuck years later here in Edmonton. Unfortunately, he passed on a few years ago. Anyway, Chuck made it into the hotel room to do an interview with John at the time that this song happened. So here’s to you Chuck … and John.

Getting back to it. Anti-Vietnam songs, as we've already heard, were a staple of the 60s and into the '70s. However, this Creedance Clearwater Revival classic was one of the more mainstream anthems that continues to resonate to this day. That's because it enjoyed prominence in pop culture, like the film, *Forrest Gump*. Here is CCR’s Fortunate Son from the album Willie and the Poor Boys in 1969.

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Marvin Gaye – What’s Going on
ALBUM: What’s Going On, 1971
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-kA3UtBj4M

CCR and Fortunate Son. So, let’s jump into the early 70s. Arguably, the song, What’s Going on’ released in 1971, is what made Marvin Gaye's album by the same name, legendary. The song tackles the subject of police brutality. But it’s mood and style almost seems to be diametrically opposed. It was also a song that enjoyed tremendous success on the both the soul and pop charts - a huge milestone at the time. So, here’s What’s going On’ with Marvin Gaye.

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Bob Marley (and the Wailers) – Get Up, Stand Up
ALBUM: Burnin’, 1973
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeCHP-4iRbM

Marvin Gaye and What’s Going On, here on open mic, part of the Big E Radio.com experience. I’m Michael Kryton. Let’s move on. ‘Get Up Stand Up’ by Bob Marley and the Wailers is simply a stellar collaboration between the great Bob Marley and bandmate Peter Tosh. The song was inspired, reportedly, when Marley was on tour in Haiti. He was taken aback by the country's high level of poverty, as well the class system that spread all socio-economical factors. It was a long-time favorite of the band's and Marley's live shows. Feel free to get up and stand up while you’re listening. This is Bob Marley and the Wailers.

Neil Young - Alabama
ALBUM: Harvest, 1972 (remastered in 2009)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVG7U9UDi2E>

So while Bob Marley was focusing his musical thoughts on oppression, Neil Young was doing the same. Neil Young has been known for his opinions over the course of his career. Back in the 70s, he took on issues in the south. "**Southern Man**", a song he is well known for from his album *After the Gold Rush* released in 1970 features lyrics that describe the racism towards blacks in the American South. But that’s not the song we’re going to listen to.

A lesser known song is “Alabama” from the 1972 album “Harvest”, which also featured “Heart of Gold” a classic hit for Young and his only #1 hit in his career.

In Young’s 2012 autobiography *Waging Heavy Peace*, here’s what Neil Young said of Alabama, "I don't like my words when I listen to it today. They are accusatory and condescending, not fully thought out, and too easy to misconstrue." He said that "Alabama" was never meant to be specific to the state, he simply wanted a Southern state that seemed to fit what he had to say. Actually, the song is more about a personal thing than it is about a state," Was he back pedalling? Who knows.

The reality is, both songs raised the ire of Lynrd Skynrd and they had a musical response for him 2 years later. And I’ll dive into that story after we take a listen to a 2009 remastered edition of the song from Young’s 1972 Harvest album. This is “Alabama”.

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Lynrd Skynyrd – Sweet Home Alabama
ALBUM: Second Helping, 1974
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ye5BuYf8q4o

Neil Young and Alabama. And now, how Lynrd Skyrd felt about that. "Sweet Home Alabama" was written as Lynrd Skynrd’s answer to the song we just heard as well as Young’s "Southern Man" recorded 2 years earlier.

It is interesting to note that none of the three Skynrd writers of Sweet Home Alabama were from Alabama; Ronnie Van Zant and Gary Rossington were both born in Jacksonville, Florida, while Ed King was from Glendale, California. The song reached number 8 on the US chart in 1974 and was the band's second hit single. So, from the 1974 album Second Helping here’s Lynrd Skynard taking a shot at Neil Young with Sweet Home Alabama.

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Bruce Cockburn – If I had a Rocket Launcher
ALBUM: Stealing Fire, 1984
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JfkomGV0-A

It is still one of my favorite songs to listen to and to play with a band. Sweet Home Alabama. Tragically, three years after this song came out, on October 20, 1977, a Convair CV-240 passenger aircraft the band was travelling on ran out of fuel and crashed in a wooded area near Gillsburg, Mississippi …

… taking the lives of Ronnie Van Zant, vocalist Steve Gaines, backing vocalist Cassie Gaines , Steve's older sister, assistant road manager Dean Kilpatrick, pilot Walter McCreary and co-pilot William Gray The tragedy abruptly halted Lynyrd Skynyrd's career until Van Zant's brother, Johnny, reformed the band ten years later.

Switching gears now. Besides Neil Young, another Canadian who had a thing or two to say about social and political issues was Bruce Cockburn. If I Had Rocket Launcher was inspired by Cockburn's visit, sponsored by Oxfam, to Guatemalan refugee camps in Mexico following the counterinsurgency campaign of dictator Efraín Ríos Montt.

Although Cockburn had occasionally touched on political themes in his earlier songs, "If I Had a Rocket Launcher" was his first explicitly political song to be released as a single, and earned him a new reputation as an outspoken musical activist. In the song, Cockburn despairs of waiting for a political solution to the crisis, and expresses the desire to take matters into his own hands.

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Pearl Jam – Bushleaguer
ALBUM: Riot Act 2002
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6y5AVeRqSU4

Apparently, after Cockburn performed that song for the Canadian Military somewhere, they let him borrow an actual rocket launcher for a while. I assume without the rockets. Thank you for joining me on open mic. I’m Michael Kryton and please tell your music listening friends about Big E Radio.com. Lots of great curators and shows, check out the schedule on our site. Please tip your toe in the water. There’s lots of passion among those of us sharing the Big E Radio experience. Kudos to Todd Crawshaw our Executive Producer and Mike Braniff, our Technical Harry Potter, who have put this platform together.

This next song and band did not win any love from many in the US. Seattle’s Pearl Jam were not reluctant to speak their minds about Presidents. Certainly Bush was a target. In this next song, Bushleaguer, which is not really one of Pearl Jam's most popular songs, they arguably created one of their most controversial tunes.

Its frontman, Eddie Vedder took a shot at former president George W. Bush, specifically insinuating that he's a warmonger and not the diplomatic figure those on the right portray him to be. The band took some heat for the tune, but it did not stop them from continuing to attack other republican presidents. So hang on to your ears for something quite different from them, from the 2002 Riot Act Album, Pearl Jam and Bushleaguer.

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Bruce Springsteen – Death to My Hometown
ALBUM: Wrecking Ball, 2012
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPP2hZMkQ8I

I admit that the first time I heard Bushleaguer, I wasn’t all that engaged. But somehow I found it interesting the more I listened to it.

So, from Pearl Jam in Seattle we go to the Jersey Shore and Mr. Springsteen. Bruce Springsteen is well known for his political anthem, Born In The USA, released in 1984. But eight years later he released a song that is not only one of his most experimental tracks --- he tries out a celtic vibe ---- it is perhaps his most obvious protest song. Death to My Hometown takes aim at failed government policy that Springsteen believed was directly responsible for the economic fallout and recession from 2007 and 2008. Of course, imagine this song coming out on the Wrecking Ball Album in 2012 --- on the republicans' watch no less, and coming through the mouth of a staunch liberal, also known as the Boss. This is Death to My Hometown.

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John Legend and Common – Glory
ALBUM; Selma Soundtrack, 2014
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6BuXRTk5D4

Well, we have roamed the political landscape in musical fashion and it’s time to leave you with one more. Before that, just want to say thank you for joining me on open mic streaming from Big E Radio.com. Feel free to share comments --- and certainly share our link. Together we can build an audience and we certainly we strive to please.

This last song won an Oscar in 2014. It was written for the movie *Selma*, the story of the 1965 civil-rights marches in Alabama. There’s that state again. However, it's a powerful piece nonetheless, especially when performed by two very accomplished artists, Common and John Legend. From the Selma soundtrack, this is Glory. I’m Michael Kryton. Thanks for sharing your time with me. Be sure to stick around for the Don Bemer Show coming up next on the BigEradio.com. Stay safe everyone. And just as important, be kind to each other.