

BRITFILMS #10 – Accompanying material for media education

SING STREET

Ireland/Great Britain/USA 2016, 106 min

FSK rating: 6

age recommendation: 13+

Language: English/English with subtitles in German

Director	John Carney
Script	John Carney
Cinematography	Yaron Orbach
Editing	Andrew Marcus, Julian Ulrichs
Cast	Ferdia Walsh-Peelo, Lucy Boynton, Jack Reynor, Aidan Gillen, Maria Doyle Kennedy and others

About SING STREET

15-year-old Conor is drawn to the mysterious Raphina and asks her if she would like to star in his band's music video. To his surprise, she says yes – and now Conor has a problem. He doesn't have a band. Now he needs to get one and soon. Together with friends from his strict Catholic school, Conor sets off on an adventure. He learns everything he needs to know about rock 'n' roll from his older brother Brendan, who is perceived as the family loser, and how, thanks to New Wave, to still be happy while in turmoil. While his parents are announcing their plan to divorce, it looks like Raphina is falling for Conor. But she knows that she won't stay in Dublin; she dreams of a career as a model in London.

John Carney's coming-of-age period piece is set against the social and pop-culture background of the 1980s and combines musical romance with teenage upheaval and a hint of social realism. In a charming manner, Carney skilfully shows the influence of a variety of artists and musical genres on his protagonist and how through music and fashion experimentation he gains self-confidence and finds his place in life.

The following worksheets will address

- the influence of the bands mentioned in the film have on Conor's development and how this stands out
- how Conor's attitude to music changes and how he uses music to comment on his life
- how Brendan as Conor's role model is visually depicted

Publishing information

Publisher:

AG Kino – Gilde deutscher Filmkunsttheater

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Photo credits: Lionsgate

(All stills are from the DVD of SING STREET, published in Great Britain by Lionsgate. They serve as image quotations, to enable study of the film's content, and not as illustrations.)

1980s Music

The music typical of 1980s bands has an important function in SING STREET. In small groups, choose one of the following bands whose music appears in the film and prepare a small presentation about the band. Be sure to address the band's significance and style to the film's period, Dublin in the mid-1980s.

Spandau Ballet	The Cure	Motörhead
a-ha	Genesis	Duran Duran

Conor changing

The more Conor learns from his brother about music and the more music video and performances he sees on "Top of the Pops", the more he experiments with his fashion. Describe what you think Conor hopes to express with his style, which music genre is inspiring his style (for example Synthpop, Glam Rock or New Wave/Dark Wave), and the consequences his fashion statement has for him.



1



2



3



4

Music videos

It's art. [...] This last forever. It's the perfect mixture of music and visuals.

Brendan on music videos in SING STREET

After the first songs are written, the band "Sing Street" starts producing its music videos.

Look up on YouTube the music videos of the bands whose music is featured in SING STREET, for example Duran Duran's "Rio", a-ha's "Take On Me" or The Cure's "In Between Days".

In small groups, choose one of the music videos and answer the following questions:

- What makes the video special?
- Which images stay with you?
- How are the artists portrayed?
- What significance does the music video have today?
- Which stylistic elements in these music videos do Conor and his friends in SING STREET try and imitate?

Discuss together in the classroom:

- What meaning do music videos have for Conor in SING STREET?
- What status did music videos have in the 1980s? Who was their target? Be sure to also address what you learned about this from SING STREET.
- What do music videos look like today and what significance do they have for bands?

That's Rock 'n' Roll

BRENDAN

The girl? It's all about the girl, isn't it?

CONOR

Yeah. The girl, yeah.

BRENDAN

And you're going to use somebody else's art to get her? Are you kidding?

CONOR

We're just starting. Like we need to learn how to play.

BRENDAN

Did the Sex Pistols know how to play?
You don't need to know how to play.
Who are you? Steely Dan? You need to learn how not to play, Conor. That's the

trick. That's rock 'n' roll. And that takes practice.

Dialogue excerpt from SING STREET

- What does the band's music initially mean to Conor? What does he want to achieve with his music?
-
-

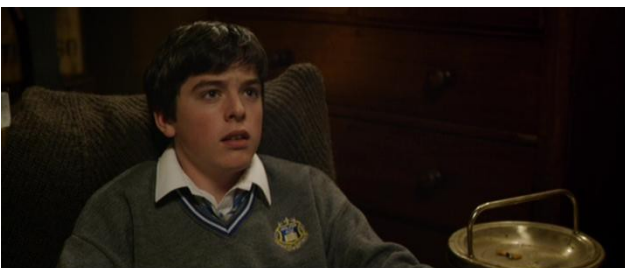
- What distinguishes rock 'n' roll for Brendan?
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- Together in the classroom, collect some names of present-day bands. Make two categories. Which bands correspond to Conor's perspective and which to Brendan's?
 - How does Conor's music relate later to his life and his experiences?
-
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Brendan and Conor

The quoted dialogue between Brendan and Conor is primarily filmed using a shot reverse shot montage.

- From what perspective do we see each figure?



1



2

Perspective: _____

Perspective: _____

- What does this say about the relationship between Conor and his brother?

- Name another scene in the film where this relationship is clearly shown.
