

Hands, Feet, Heart

Listen and Appraise Step 2

The Click Song by Miriam Makeba

Listening

Play the song, find and move to the pulse. Use the on-screen questions (see below) as a focus. Scroll through the questions when you are listening to the song, talk about them after listening. The answers are below.

- Do you like the song?
- What can you hear?
- What is the style of this music?
- How is the song put together?

Some extra listening ideas:

- Perhaps watch a clip of the original on YouTube?
- Listen to 'Hands, Feet, Heart' again
- Look for similarities and differences between the songs

Appraising

After listening to the song, answer the on-screen questions, discuss the song and what you can hear in it. Encourage the use of correct musical language when responding.

The detailed answers below will provide you (the teacher) with more than enough information to use flexibly with children of all abilities. You may not use all the information given but it will equip you with the necessary musical knowledge and understanding.

The Click Song by Miriam Makeba

Information about the Song

Miriam Makeba (4 March 1932 – 10 November 2008), nicknamed Mama Africa, was an award winning South African singer and civil rights activist.

In the 1960s she was the first artist from Africa to popularise African music in America and around the world. She recorded and toured with many popular artists such as Harry Belafonte, Paul Simon and her former husband Hugh Masekela.

She actively campaigned against the South African system of apartheid. As a result, the South African government revoked her citizenship and right of return. After the end of apartheid she returned home. She died on 10 November 2008 after performing in a concert in Italy.

The Click Song or Qongqothwane is a traditional song of the Xhosa people of South Africa. It is sung at weddings to bring good luck. In the western world it is mainly known as The Click Song, a nickname given to the song by European colonials who could not pronounce its Xhosa title, which has many click consonants in it. The Xhosa title literally means "knock-knock beetle", which is a popular name for various species of beetles that make a distinctive knocking sound by tapping their tummies on the ground. These beetles are believed by Xhosa people to bring good luck and rain.

The song is known worldwide thanks to the interpretation of South African singer Miriam Makeba (herself a Xhosa).

Do You Like the Song?

It doesn't matter if you like or don't like a song or a piece of music. Think about the reasons why you do or don't.

What Can You Hear?

Ideas for listening include:

- The vocal line: how many singers? Male/female? *Female vocals with some male backing vocals, singing in one of the South African languages: Xhosa.*
- The backing/accompaniment: how many instruments? Which ones? *Drums and guitar.*
- Which instruments plays the solo? *No solos, focus on the voice and the click sounds of the language.*
- Is there a hook? *Yes: the chorus "Qongqothwane" which when pronounced correctly makes a clicking sound.*
- The texture: is it thick, thin or inbetween? Are there many layers of sound, or just one/two? Are there many voices singing/instruments playing, or just one/two? *The texture stays the same throughout, thick.*
- The tempo: is it fast, slow or inbetween? *Quite slow.*
- The dynamics: is the music loud, quiet or inbetween? Is it the same throughout or does it vary? *The dynamics stay the same.*

What is the Style of this Music?

1. Is it Pop/Rock/Blues/Gospel/Ballad/R&B/Rap/Soul? *A traditional South African song.*
2. What are the style indicators of South African music? *This is a difficult question as there have been many styles through the years.*
 - *Traditional South African music generally uses voices only or voices and drums. This is sung in a language such as Zulu or Xhosa.*
 - *Choral music is similar but can have a religious meaning.*
 - *Singing will consist of call and response, call by one singer and response by lots.*

- *Afropop has changed over the years but generally uses electric guitars that weave in and out of each other plus some traditional instruments such as the penny whistle, keyboards, bass and drums. It has a strong dance or swing beat.*
- *Generally South African music has a strong dance beat.*
- *Often only three chords are used as a basis for songs.*
- *South African jazz uses the above instruments but may also use a sax or trumpet.*
- *South African music is full of energy.*
- *The most up-to-date pop style is called Kwaito and is influenced by Hip Hop.*

3. What are the style indicators in this song, ie how do I know this is a traditional South African song.

- *The song is sung in a South African language Xhosa, using lots of clicking sounds.*
- *There are some drums and guitars accompanying the vocals.*

How is the Song Put Together?

What is the structure/form/shape of the song?

The structure of the song is:

- *Verse*
- *Chorus*
- *The song continues to repeat in this way. In the middle the time changes from 4 beats in a bar to 3 beats in a bar.*