Map Skills

On a map of the eastern North America, locate the nations discussed in this chapter. Refer to such resources as *Atlas of the North American Indian* by Carl Waldman (Checkmark Books, 2000) and web pages managed by specific Nations.

On a map of Canada and the eastern United States, label home areas of singers, groups, from Nations discussed in this chapter.

Vocabulary

qilaut, aqausit, pisiit/pisiq, ajaja, katajjaq/katajjait, pirkusirtuk, nipaquhiit, Qiarvaaqtuq, sanguagusiit, naujaq

“The Inuit of Alaska, northern Canada, and Greenland have used songs, dances, games, and legends as forms of traditional knowledge that mediate their encounters with the land they occupy and the people who have come to it, both historically and in the present day. While Alaskan towns have a longer history, northern Canadian communities were in many cases quite isolated and ways of life changed rapidly only in the late twentieth century when government housing, schools, and Western medical services were introduced. More recently still, global communications media in the north have been significant influences enabling Inuit modernity to develop in new ways. Music plays a role in bridging older nomadic hunting cultures and Inuit modernity” (page 35).

After reading pages 35-37, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Identify the three Aboriginal groups defined in the 1982 Canadian constitution.
2. On a map of Canada, locate and identify the four regions in Canada with a majority Inuit population.
3. How do Inuit create localized names to indicate that they are people of a specific place? Give examples of such names along with their translation.
4. Explain the regional names used by some anthropologists.
5. What language groups are spoken in Alaska? Which are spoken in the four Inuit majority regions of Canada?
6. Explain how colonization experiences differed between western and eastern communities and how this influenced the musical cultures. Consider fusion of styles, popular dances, instruments, and the like.
Traditional Genres of Song

After reading pages 37-38, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Provide an overview of regional distinctions between the precontact song and dance traditions of western and eastern communities. Use Chart 2.1 to record answers. Rows may be added to incorporate additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thin-framed drum beaten with long willowy sticks</td>
<td>Larger heavy-framed drum with handle (qilaut) used in Nunavut and Nunatsiavut. The qilaut is played solo and is struck only on the frame with a thick drumstick wielded by a solo drum dancer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimetic stories performed by dancers wearing decorative gloves; masks may be essential dramatic regalia.</td>
<td>Solo drum dancer accompanied by singing of a chorus (often women). Story danced is typically a personal narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2.1 Regional Distinctions

2. Identify and define, using information in this chapter and materials discovered in Internet and print media research, other genres of Inuit songs that are usually shorter than the drum dancing narratives.
   a. Songs to accompany juggling
   b. Throat singing
   c. aquasit
   d. Songs from legends

Inuit Music as Historical Record and Judicial System

After reading pages 39-40, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. In what ways do drum dance narrative songs preserve traditional knowledge? How do they serve to mediate disagreements?
2. Although, in Nunavut, songs are usually carefully composed and rehearsed prior to performance, there is not a rigid line between “composition”, “song reception”, and “improvisation”. Give examples of ways in which songs may be received, how they may be expanded, and so on.
3. What are typical topics for drum dance songs (pisitt)?
4. The Netsilingmiut have elaborate song narratives. How are lyrics treated in other regions? Give examples of songs with abbreviated texts or where vocables may be the sole text.
5. Explain the concept of a “silent text” underlying the surface text or vocables.
6. In traditional practices, where did drum dances take place? What structures serve this role in contemporary communities?
7. In traditional practices, drum dances were held to welcome hunters home or celebrate visitors arriving. Give examples of new events at which drum dance are performed in contemporary communities.
8. Describe the format of a typical drum dance including tuning, playing techniques, movements. Why is considerable strength needed to perform a solo drum dance?
9. Discuss gendering of drum dancing in Inuit communities.
10. Describe the structure of a drum dance song:
   10a. What are the two names used for the drum dance song?
   10b. How is the number of “notes” in a phrase determined?
   10c. What structure frames each strophe in a drum dance song? What is the text for this structure?

After reading pages 40-45, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

1. How do pisiit seem like a “geography lesson”?
   1a. What is the deeper meaning of the naming of specific places?
   1b. How have such pisiit been used in land occupancy studies?
   1c. Advanced students may wish to compare this aspect of pisiit with Australian Aboriginal song lines and Native American traveling songs.
2. In which ways do drum dance songs reveal the personality of the composer and his/her relationships within the community?
3. Identify and discuss ways in which pisiit may convey strong emotion. Give examples.
4. Discuss the use of song to settle a dispute, as described in the scene from the feature film Atanarjuat (page 44)
5. Describe the solo drum dance performance including rhythmic accompaniment, movements by the dancer, etc.
6. How has the rhythmic synchronization between song beat and drummer in contemporary staged performances?
7. List the differences in solo drum dance as performed among Alaskan and Western Canadian Artic communities.

Inuit Music as Play

“While Drum dance songs enable people to remember the vast land, to recall specific places and the events and emotions that give meaning to those places, other repertoires are associated with indoor spaces. Women and children in particular have created games that bring joy and laughter to those spaces” (page 46).

After reading pages 45-48, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Discuss why indoor spaces might be more amenable to games than outdoor spaces.
2. Invite class discussion on why women and children have created the games.
3. How do word groups create a sense of changing meter in a juggling game song such as heard on CD track 4?
4. How do the interactions of juggling and singing create a type of counterpoint in juggling game songs?
5. How does the text shown in Figure 2.4 illustrate that songs can be “bits of this and that”?

**Listening:** “Juggling Game Song,” CD track 4

**Chart 2.2 CD track 4: “Juggling Game Song”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Description/Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0:09</td>
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<td>0:13</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>0:17</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0:25</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>0:35</td>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Listen to CD track 4 to establish a “pulse” for juggling, then try to juggle in a duple pattern while listening to the song.

7. Listen to CD track 4. Try tapping your foot at the beginning of each word group using the text transcription in the last paragraph of page 46. Identify timing of specific events within this song. The time indications in Chart 2.2 are arbitrarily placed near pauses in patterns. Are they correct? How does your list of timings differ? Why?

After reading pages 49-52, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

**AA**

1. In addition to juggling games, what types of game songs exist?
2. List regional names for the women’s vocal game called “throat singing”.
3. What are typical sound sources for vocal games?
4. Briefly differentiate between throat singing styles from Nunavut and Nunavik.
5. Listen to CD track 5 “Qiarvaaq” and CD track 6 “Qimmiruluapik” and use Chart 2.3 to identify differences between these regional styles.
6. Why is it important to respect that a story or song is from a specific region or community?

**Listening:** “Qiarvaaqtuq”, CD track 5, and “Qimmiruluapik”, CD Track 6
Chart 2.3 CD tracks 5 and 6: “Qiarvaaq” and “Qimmiruluapik”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“Qiarvaaq”</th>
<th>“Qimmiruluapik”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Lyrics: juxtaposition of images</td>
<td>Vocables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal timbre</td>
<td>Breathy</td>
<td>Throaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>Nunavik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Describe how a pair of singers perform traditional throat singing.
   7a. What position is used?
   7b. What purpose is served by a bread pan, metal bucket, or parka hood?
   7c. What types of sounds are used in throat singing?
   7d. Why do singing games end early?

8. How does Karin Kettler define a good throat singer?

9. Why do singers have special partners with whom they prefer to sing?

After reading pages 52-54, the following questions and activities may serve to stimulate class discussion.

AA

1. Give examples of the “soundscape of northern life” that most game songs imitate.
2. Listen to “Naujaq” CD track 7 and identify what part of this soundscape is mimicked in “Naujaq”? Remember, throat song games are used to stimulate imagination. Discuss different possible answers before making a group decision. After the discussion and vote, reveal that “naujaq” means “seagull.”

**Listening: “Naujaq” CD track 7**

S,CU

3. Listen to “Naujaq” a second time. Identify the types of sounds which are voiced and which are unvoiced (whispered).
4. During a third listening, create a graphic representation of the sounds you hear. This may be a line showing a melodic contour or any other means to visually represent the song.
5. Explain why the Native American student mentioned on page 52 chose to sew a beadwork image of a bird to represent “Naujaq”.
6. What elements of music do ethnomusicologists focus upon when creating a visual representation of a song? What are the limitations of this technique?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using digital audio software to create a representation of a song?
8. Look at the notation in Figure 2.8.
   8a. How does it represent the canonic qualities of throat singing?
   8b. At approximately what time interval does the second voice enter?
   8c. Listen to CD track 7 and try to follow the performance using this representation. To what extent were you able to successfully follow the song? Are there suggestions for changes in the notation that may help you follow more accurately?
New Throat Singing Encounters: Local-Global Tensions

After reading pages 55-59, use the following questions and activities to stimulate class discussion.

1. Discuss the rise in popularity of Inuit throat singing during recent decades. What facets of this genre have drawn the most attention?
2. List at least two factors that have led to the wider circulation of local meanings and that have influenced the popularity of certain types of games.
3. In what ways has throat singing been enhanced by the incorporation of other media and musical styles?
4. List several of the non-Inuit styles and/or genres with which throat singing has been fused in recent performances and recordings. Advanced students may wish to listen to an example of Tuvan overtone singing and Tibetan Buddhist chanting and prepare a chart and/or discussion comparing and contrasting these techniques with Inuit throat singing. Examples of each may be legally downloaded from Smithsonianglobalsound.org.
5. List several of the concerns expressed by Inuit women concerning the outside interest in throat singing.
6. In what way have these women proposed to protect the “ownership” and use of throat songs?
7. List and discuss ways in which traditional throat singing has been changed to accommodate staged performances.
8. Which Western composers have incorporated vocal sounds similar to throat singing in their works? Have any students performed these works or other works incorporating throat singing and/or overtone singing?
9. Discuss how expectations of listeners impact which music remains local and which circulates transnationally.

Listening: “E5=770, My Mother’s Name” CD track 8

1. Explain the significance of the title of this song.
2. Compare the practice of assigning numbers for names in Canada to the similar process in the United States. Why was/is this considered dehumanizing?
3. How has the singer’s mother been made a part of this performance?
4. Listen to CD track 8 and describe how throat singing and other media have been utilized. Note the time markings when samples of Lucie Idlout’s mother occur.
5. Using Chart 2.4, indicate times of major events in “E5=770, My Mother’s Name”. Remember, time markings may differ from playback device to playback device.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Description/Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:00</td>
<td>Introduction—drum roll—sample of mother speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:16</td>
<td>Steady tempo; instrumental intro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:23</td>
<td>Voice: Melody A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:34</td>
<td>Voice: Melody A—sample of mother’s throat singing in background.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:56</td>
<td>Voice: Melody B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:14</td>
<td>Transition: instrumental sounds and sampling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:24</td>
<td>Voice: Melody A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:41</td>
<td>Voice: Melody A—higher pitch level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:56</td>
<td>Voice: Melody B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:14</td>
<td>Transition: sampling plus instruments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:23</td>
<td>Voice: Melody A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30</td>
<td>Voice: Melody A—higher pitch level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:53</td>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Listening: “Ancestors”, from Medulla iMix #1

1. Identify and discuss some of Tanya Tagak Gillis’s collaboration with non-Inuit performers.
2. Throat singing is traditionally performed in a duet setting. How has Gillis adapted the genre for performance as a soloist? Allow students to debate the authenticity of this approach.
3. Listen to “Ancestors” from Bjork’s album Medulla. (Gillis improvises an extended performance on this track.) This song may be accessed as iMix # 1 or legally downloaded from iTunes.
   3a. Describe the way in which Gillis’s performance is incorporated in the recording.
   3b. Discuss the effectiveness with which throat singing is fused with Bjork’s performance.
   3c. Organize a class debate on whether Gillis’s performance retains a significant degree of authenticity.