

# TONGO

Traditional Polynesian



## ABOUT THIS SONG

This traditional echo song from the Solomon Islands, Polynesia, depicts people in different long boats communicating over the water. 'Tongo' means 'mangrove' in Polynesian.

## THEMES/SUBJECTS

Polynesia/travelling/geography

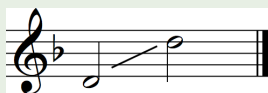
## CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Languages, Literacy & Communication  
Humanities

## DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

### Vocal range

An 8th



### Vocal format

Echo song

### Musical elements

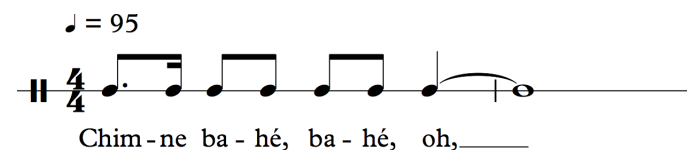
Dynamics and pitch

### Musical characteristics

Use of echoing phrases, simple rhythm patterns

## Warm-up Exercises

- Ask learners to stand with their back straight, and their feet slightly apart, facing 'five minutes to one'. They should blow out for four beats, then slowly breathe in to a silent count of four, and out to a count of eight, concentrating on producing an even flow of air. Repeat the exercise, this time asking learners to blow out and breathe back in through their nose.
- Learners should rotate their shoulders backwards, forwards, together and individually, in extreme and subtle movements. (Remind them about good posture when singing, whether they are standing or sitting.)
- Start with a simple activity of 'repeat after me...'. Say or sing the different words in the song - 'tongo', 'Oo', 'Chimné' and 'bahé'.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song:



- Ask learners to clap or say this rhythm.

## Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- This is a song from the Polynesian Solomon Islands - discover where in the world this is.
- Research more about modes of communication on board floating vessels e.g. semaphore, the role of the crow's nest, the meaning of PORT and STARBOARD and where the word POSH originates.
- Learn more songs from around the world involving boats such as: 'Canoe Song' and 'Land of the Silver Birch'.

GRADING: EASY

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## Teaching and learning

- 1 Play a recording of this echo song, and encourage learners to listen out for any interesting features. For example, both parts need to hold their last note while the next phrase is sung.
- 2 Decide if you are going to sing the call or if you will use the recording provided.
- 3 Begin with the first phrase 'Tongo'. Ask learners to echo back and to hold their last note while the next phrase is sung.
- 4 Consider slowing the pace down to ensure accuracy.
- 5 When learners are confident with the melody and rhythm of the first phrase, gradually work through the song. Continue to remind learners to hold their last note.
- 6 Return to the beginning, this time encouraging learners to concentrate on producing warm vowel sounds and articulating words clearly when echoing the call.
- 7 Remind learners of the first exercise, that is to prepare their breathing by exhaling out and in before they respond.
- 8 When learners are confident with every echo, aim for a performance. Sing the call yourself or use the recording – 'Full track – call only'.
- 9 Using your own voice, vary the dynamics by singing the whole song louder or more quietly. Develop this further by changing the dynamics from one phrase to another.

## Integral Skills

- This song calls for smooth (legato) singing, so encourage learners to breathe two phrases at a time.
- Encourage learners to sing through the long vowel sounds to develop a consistent sound in all phrases.
- Ask individuals or small groups to lead by singing the call unaccompanied. Singing the call as a solo provides a good opportunity to experiment with different pitch, dynamics and pace. The caller can change how they sing the call and the group will copy. This is a good activity for developing listening skills.
- Ask learners to think of work-related actions to go with the song, as this may help with keeping the pulse.

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## Statements of what matters:

- *Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individual*
  - *Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination*
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- After experimenting with changes in pitch, dynamics and pace, ask learners to think about, and discuss with a partner, how the three musical elements have been used. If necessary, remind learners of the correct vocabulary and encourage them to appraise the performance.
- In pairs, learners could compose their own melody to the given rhythm and lyrics of this echo song. Use the pentatonic scale (GABDE) to compose a melody for all four phrases. Encourage learners to start and end with the home note G, and use their voices or tuned instruments.
- Ask all pairs to perform to the group and appraise each other's work.

## Assessment for Learning:

- *Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts*
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## Questioning

### Tool: Think-pair-share

- Sing or name a phrase that uses only two different pitches.
  - What are the similarities and differences between all the phrases?
  - Is this a happy or sad song? Explain your answer.
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## Feedback

### Tool: How to improve

Show learners through target setting how to improve. A suitable target for some learners might be to come in quickly and confidently on the responses. For others, it might be to focus on accuracy of pitch when responding. Demonstrate yourself or play the recording. After giving time to improve, check that targets have been reached.

## Self- and peer assessment

### Tool: Talking partners

- Ask learners to share with a partner three new things they have learnt. For example:
- what they found easy or difficult
  - what they need to improve
  - something they would like to learn next.
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