

“New Day Song” by Oshkii Giizhik Singers

Name _____

This assignment is due _____

Context

Musician and cultural educator, Lyz Jaakola, also known as Nitaa-Nagamokwe, is an enrolled tribal member of Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior. In her words,

The “New Day Song” was made as our namesake song. Oshkii Giizhik means “it is a new day” in our language, Ojibwemowin (also known as Anishinaabemowin). The song is an extension of our group’s identity. As individuals, when we receive our Indian name there is often a song and colors that accompany the name. It is how the Spirits know us, by our name, our sound.



I made “New Day Song” for us, since the group’s name came as an extension of the dream I had for making the group. It would be common practice for the namer to pass the song to the named. This song is for the group, “New Day Song,” for their spiritual identity. It is sung at the beginning of things to start in a good way. It is also to signify that there is a change in things. Women are reclaiming their roles as leaders in Native communities and some of us are doing so by using our voices to bring back the women’s music that was lost due to the forced assimilative policies of the U.S. government and religious societies.

I can listen to and describe an Anishinaabe song

Listen to “New Day Song” five times. Each time focus on one element and add your observations to the description.

New Day Song
<https://www.reverbnation.com/oshkiigiizhiksingers/song/25969260-new-day-song>

Vocables – This is what we call a **straight song**. The song comes straight from our spirit, it isn’t hampered by words that may interfere with the spiritual intent. The syllables are called **vocables** by ethnomusicologists... we just say it’s a straight song.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Basic form – The basic form is 4 times through the song. Each repetition is called a **push-up**. The introductory solo is called a **lead** and starts each push-up. After the lead, the group responds by singing the lead exactly, then singing additional phrases in what I call approximately unison.

0:00	Drum	_____
0:05	Push-up 1	_____
0:43	Push-up 2	_____
1:21	Push-up 3	_____
2:00	Push-up 4	_____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Melodic contour – Note the lyrical quality of the song. Overall, the melodic contour of each push-up is descending.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Beat – Integral to the form is the placement of drum beats. Throughout, the drum beats are intended for the off-beat or back-beat. In this recording, the 2nd push-up begins on the beat, the group brings the tune back to resting on the off-beat. *Note: “Off-beat” or “back-beat” are not part of the drum group’s common dialogue about beat. It is common that pulses in the songs do not coincide with pulses of the Drum so that voices are not competing with the Drum beat for sonic-space. In traditional Native music dialogue, “on the beat” can mean on the main pulse or syncopated, as long as the song rests comfortably and regularly with the drum beat.*

- _____
- _____
- _____

Timbre – This overall timbre is not only accepted in Anishinaabe music practice but preferred, depending on the function or intent of the song. It represents individual autonomy, a cherished value in Anishinaabe culture. In the 4th push-up, the beat stays the same but the timbre changes by replacing the drum strike with the click on the side of the drum frame. These changes in timbre or accent are considered an equally important part of the song’s character as the melody since the Drum isn’t considered accompaniment but equal in importance with the singers.

- _____
- _____
- _____

I can explain how music is influenced by the context in which it was created

How have—or how do—individuals or groups of people use music to express who they are and what they value?

- For Lyz Jaakola: “Women are reclaiming their roles as leaders in Native communities and some of us are doing so by using our voices to bring back the women’s music that was lost due to the forced assimilative policies of the U.S. government and religious societies.”
- Write about one more individual or group using music to express who they are and what they value.

