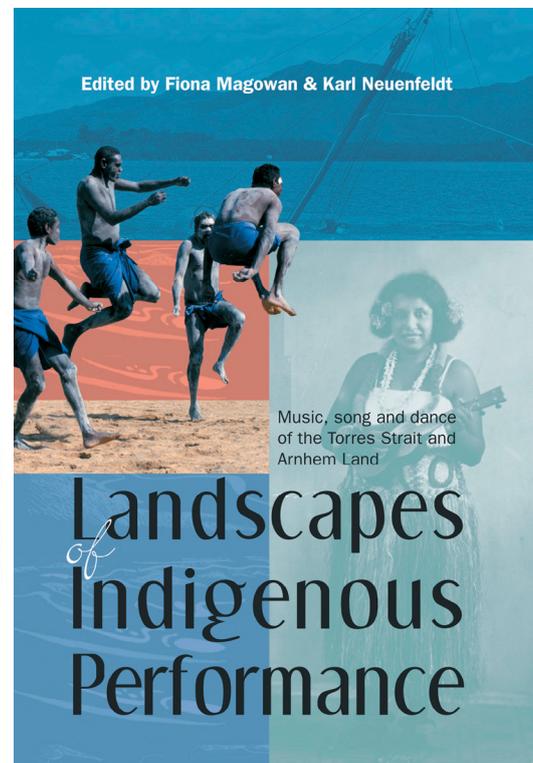
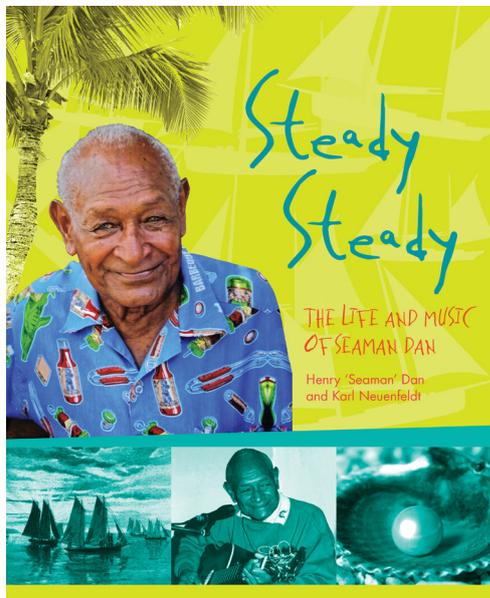


Teachers' notes

Transcending place and time through music:
Torres Strait Islander ethnomusicology



Aboriginal
Studies
Press

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TO TEACHERS

How to use these notes

These teachers' notes have been designed to accompany two books from Aboriginal Studies Press, *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance* and *Steady, Steady: The life and music of Seaman Dan*. This program of study guides students through a thematic study designed to fulfil the Australian Curriculum's Stage 5 English syllabus outcomes. The program could also be a useful study in Music for Stage 5, specifically Year 9.

A range of activities for completion in lessons is presented in these notes. Students are guided through the reading of the texts by a wide range of activities that engage the Receptive and Productive modes. Some activities are suitable for homework. The activities may be approached on a 'dip-in' basis, and need not be used consecutively. Each text may also be studied independently, at the discretion of teachers seeking an alternative to the full program of study.

Curriculum links

Specific syllabus links are provided for all activities. For each text study, summary tables list the relevant Australian Curriculum codes for the Language, Literature and Literacy strands. Teachers may also consider the potential for a joint study of these texts to contribute to a holistic learning program through which students will learn more about Aboriginal cultures and develop intercultural understanding. The cross-curriculum priority that focuses on teaching and learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture is a compulsory requirement of the Australian Curriculum that can also be facilitated through the use of this program.

Intertextual links

The texts selected for inclusion in this program link in various ways that students and teachers will find stimulating. The unifying theme of music as a vehicle for expressing cultural identity gives rise to a number of sub-themes that are explored intertextually. Three key ideas are explored through the activities:

- How music establishes and perpetuates a sense of place
- How music transcends boundaries in time and space
- How music helps people to chronicle their life experience

Implicit in analysing these three broad ideas is a study of the mechanics and features of written language that enable the authors to convey these themes to readers. Further, the function of language techniques in song writing is explored through the content of both books.

Special provisions

Extension work

To supplement this program, suggestions are provided for extension tasks that will challenge students with advanced skills in English. Another useful strategy for extending the more capable students is to convert group-assigned activities to individual tasks.

Learning difficulties

The reading questions and essay scaffold activities are ideal for teaching students with learning difficulties, as they offer concrete guidance through the tasks. Students with special learning needs may be assigned more time to make written or oral responses. They may elect to work in partnerships with peers or a learning support teacher. The more challenging tasks can be broken down into simpler steps, and can be refocused on the development of oral responses rather than formal writing tasks. This will help enable students with learning difficulties to achieve the desired learning outcomes. During teaching sessions, encourage students with learning difficulties to:

- take time to discuss their personal response to ideas presented in the text
- note unfamiliar words and find out their meanings by consulting a dictionary (with help from an adult)

Trans-cultural considerations

Indigenous Australians prefer to be identified by a language label. For example, using the expression 'Yorta Yorta woman' makes it clear to which specific language group the person belongs. The terms 'Aboriginal people' and 'Indigenous people' have passed into accepted usage despite their originally generic meanings. To distinguish these terms as proper nouns naming cultural groups, it is important that they are capitalised when they appear in written language. It is appropriate to seek to properly define distinct and individual nations and peoples when making reference to Indigenous Australians.

When consulting other resource material, it's important to keep in mind that natural variance between spoken and written Aboriginal languages. Variance also exists within the written forms of some languages. The difficulties presented by these idiosyncrasies can be streamlined with the help of Aboriginal language specialists. Teachers are encouraged, wherever practicable, to engage the assistance of such people.

It is important that teachers deal authentically with topics relying on the life experiences of Indigenous Australians. The intensely personal and emotive topics that dominate Aboriginal literature call for sensitivity and cross-cultural empathy. Subconscious deference to stereotypes and misconceptions can be avoided through proper listening to and contextualising of Aboriginal writing and storytelling.

Assessment provisions

Teachers are invited to use the assessment tasks selectively, attributing weightings to the activities as they deem appropriate. However, it is important to note that complete fulfilment of Australian Curriculum requirements is achieved only when the activities are undertaken as a whole program. Australian Curriculum codes exist for all activities to assist teachers in their planning.

The table below summarises the provisions in the program for the evaluating of achievement standards in line with the Australian Curriculum for Stage 5 English, Year 9 course.

Australian Curriculum Achievement Standard

<i>Receptive Modes</i>		
Reading	Listening	Viewing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Landscapes of Indigenous Performance</i>• <i>Steady, Steady: The life and music of seaman dan</i>• related media texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to recordings of songs referenced in the texts• to background information about texts• to recordings of Seaman Dan's oral narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• related audio-visual texts
<i>Productive Modes</i>		
Writing	Speaking	Creating
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reviewing biographical information• analysing song lyrics• persuasive writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participating in discussion• presenting an opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• multi-media texts• visual presentations• song lyrics

Australian Curriculum Outcomes for the Year 9 English Syllabus

This table provides a handy reference for teachers, showing the Australian Curriculum's outcomes for Year 9 English facilitated by this study. The cross curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture is also specifically addressed in this program.

<i>Language</i>	<i>Literature</i>	<i>Literacy</i>
<p>Language variation and change Understand that Standard Australian English is a living language within which the creation and loss of words and the evolution of usage is ongoing (ACELA1550)</p> <p>Language for interaction Understand that roles and relationships are developed and challenged through language and interpersonal skills (ACELA1551)</p> <p>Text structure and organisation Understand that authors innovate with text structures and language for specific purposes and effects (ACELA1553)</p> <p>Expressing and developing ideas Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness (ACELA1561)</p> <p>Understand how spelling is used creatively in texts for particular effects, for example characterisation and humour and to represent accents and styles of speech (ACELA1562)</p>	<p>Responding to literature Present an argument about a literary text based on initial impressions and subsequent analysis of the whole text (ACELT1771)</p> <p>Explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts (ACELT1635)</p> <p>Examining literature Analyse texts from familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and discuss and evaluate their content and the appeal of an individual author's literary style (ACELT1636)</p> <p>Investigate and experiment with the use and effect of extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, icons, myths and symbolism in texts, for example poetry, short films, graphic novels, and plays on similar themes (ACELT1637)</p> <p>Analyse text structures and language features of literary texts, and make relevant comparisons with other texts (ACELT1772)</p> <p>Creating literature Create literary texts, including hybrid texts, that innovate on aspects of other texts, for example by using parody, allusion and appropriation (ACELT1773)</p>	<p>Texts in context Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts (ACELY1739)</p> <p>Interpreting, analysing, evaluating Apply an expanding vocabulary to read increasingly complex texts with fluency and comprehension (ACELY1743)</p> <p>Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse texts, comparing and evaluating representations of an event, issue, situation or character in different texts (ACELY1744)</p> <p>Creating texts Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features (ACELY1746)</p> <p>Review and edit students' own and others' texts to improve clarity and control over content, organisation, paragraphing, sentence structure, vocabulary and audio/visual features (ACELY1747)</p>

Introduction (for students)

In this study, we will read two texts about the importance of music in Indigenous Australian cultures. The book, *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance* explores the changing roles of music and dance in Australia's Top End – the Torres Strait Islands, Far North Queensland and the tropical regions of the Northern Territory. The biography, *Steady Steady: The Life and Music of Seaman Dan* chronicles the development of Henry 'Seaman' Dan, one of Australia's foremost storytellers-in-song. Dan's childhood memories and adult life experiences are presented, along with the music they have inspired. The authors of these books explore the ways in which music has become a vehicle for expressing cultural identity, particularly among Torres Strait Islander people.

Exploring intertextual themes

Three themes have been selected for study in this unit. The activities you will encounter are designed to help you investigate the themes. As you read and discuss your ideas, think about the language forms and features used by the authors that enable them to convey these key themes to readers.

- 01 How music establishes and perpetuates a sense of place
- 02 How music transcends boundaries in time and space
- 03 How music helps people to chronicle their life experience

Studying the two books together enables us to understand how music and dance have responded to external controlling forces in the past and present. We will explore the relationships between musical pasts and present, cultural performance as a contested domain and the power of music and performance to transcend national and cultural boundaries.

The approach taken in the structuring of the activities is to guide students through a reading of *Steady Steady* as the principal text, and to analyse its contents in the light of the three themes. These key ideas are presented in *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance* and their truth is illustrated in the life and music of Seaman Dan.

LANDSCAPES OF INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE

In *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance*, the writers document the ways in which the distinctive articulations of music and dance have responded to colonial control in Australia's past. These arts have evolved in interesting ways, shaped by the musical past and present of many players, singers, storytellers and dancers. Contemporary external forces continue to affect the music and dance created and handed down by people whose origins are to be found in the islands of the Torres Strait.

Pre-reading activities

- 01 Examine a map of the Torres Strait Islands. Discuss with a partner the geographical features of the islands, and the likely influence their isolation from mainland Australia might have on inhabitants from the past and present.
- 02 Use online resources to write a definition of 'ethnomusicology'.

- 03 Use the index of the book *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance* to locate information about the following pieces of music:

Song title	Origins	Lyrics of first verse
Navajo		
Home Among the Gum Trees		

STEADY STEADY: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF SEAMAN DAN

- 01 Conduct an internet search for 'Seaman Dan'. Use the 'au' suffix to locate your search in Australia. What information is available about him?
- 02 Use the index of the book *Steady Steady* to locate information about the following pieces of music. Then complete the table using the information you have found. Write the page references in the table:

Song title	Origins	Lyrics of first verse
Old TI		
<i>Little Pony</i>		

Song title	Origins	Lyrics of first verse
<i>Forty Fathoms</i>		
<i>Sayonara Nakamura</i>		
<i>Ailan Kwiktaim</i>		

Steady Steady: The Life and Music of Seaman Dan

Test your comprehension by completing the activities headed **Understanding the text**. Then, work through the tasks headed **Responding to the text**. These activities provide opportunities to work in receptive and productive modes beyond reading and writing. Teachers may elect to use these tasks in a variety of settings, including class group work, independent learning or homework settings. They are also able to be used as formal assessment activities. The tasks requiring analysis of the language forms and features of the texts are explicitly linked to the Australian Curriculum's outcomes for Stage 5 (Year 9) English.

To complete the following activities, you will need to read *Part I: The Life of Henry 'Seaman' Dan* (the Preface and chapters 1 to 6).

Chapters One to Three

In Chapter One, we find out that music has moved from European and North American popular culture into isolated areas of Australia, including the Torres Strait islands.

Understanding the text

Read the chapters and then answer these questions, using full sentences.

- 01 Which song had its first incarnation as a racially stereotyped song from the ragtime tradition in 1903?
- 02 How has the North American song referenced in the previous question been 'indigenised' to suit the purposes of the Torres Strait Islander people who adapted it?
- 03 What were the names of the musician and lyricist responsible for the creation of the initial version of this song?
- 04 In which country is there a 'coon song' tradition?
- 05 Which of the arguments presented in the chapter do you feel provides the best explanation for the source of the song, *Taba Naba*? Write a paragraph in response.

Responding to the text

- 06 Describe the ancestral origins of Seaman Dan (Chapter One). What effect has this multicultural background had upon Dan's music?
- 07 Locate a quotation from Chapter Two that details some early musical influences on young Henry.
- 08 Write a point form list of childhood experiences that would become the inspiration for his song writing in his later life. Refer to events listed in Chapters One, Two and Three.

Analysing language forms and features

- 09 What can be said about the evolution of language from past influences upon Torres Strait Islander culture? How does this contribute to **creating a sense of place** through music? (ACELA1551)
- 10 In what ways has Seaman Dan's choice of themes for his songs been innovative, allowing his music to **transcend the boundaries of time and space**? (ACELA1553)
- 11 Pronounce the word 'ailan'. What English word is this? What other expressions have altered spelling to represent accents as Dan **chronicles his life experience**? (ACELA1562)
- 12 Comment on the stylistic effectiveness of Dan's vocabulary choices in one song of your choice. (ACELA1561)

Chapters Four to Six

Understanding the text

Read the chapters and then discuss the ideas prompted by these questions. Make point form notes if you wish.

- 13 Summarise Seaman Dan's experience with racism in Cairns during the Second World War.
- 14 Discuss the impact of Dan's social life, detailed in Chapter 5, upon his later ability to make a living from music.
- 15 Predict the reason why Dan would eventually give up pearl diving?

Responding to the text

- 16 Retell one pearl diving story from this section of the book. How do your language choices differ from Dan's when you retell the details?
- 17 What type of venues did Dan perform in throughout the 1960s to the 1990s? List those mentioned.

Analysing literature

- 18 How has Dan's music been influenced by his appreciation of songs from other cultures, demonstrating the ability of music to transcend time and space? (ACELY1739)
- 19 Reflect on your own understanding of Torres Strait Islander culture. What previous ideas or impressions about music and dance from this region have been altered through reading about Seaman Dan? Discuss. (ACELT 1635; ACELT 1771)
- 20 Try writing a song lyric that refers to the past and the present, using a metaphor that transcends time and place. (ACELT1773)

To complete the following activities, you will need to read *Part II: The Music and Recordings of Henry 'Seaman' Dan* (chapters 7 to 13 and the *Epilogue*).

Chapters Seven to Ten

Understanding the text

Read the chapters and then discuss your thoughts about these questions.

- 21 Imagine you are present when Dan receives his first opportunity to record his music. What are your

impressions of the scene? Write two paragraphs.

- 22 List the features mentioned in Chapter 8 that would support the argument that Seaman Dan should be classified as a folk artist.
- 23 From which language does Murray Island get the name *Mer*?
- 24 Trace the cultural origins of the song 'Old TI', referring back to your previous work.
- 25 What does 'Steady, steady' mean?

Responding to the text

- 26 Imagine you are present when Dan receives his first opportunity to record his music. What are your impressions of the scene? Write two paragraphs, employing metaphors and symbolism to bring your account to life. (ACELT1637)
- 27 Write a personal response to ONE song from this section of the book. Then exchange your response with a partner and write a critique of theirs, using detachable sticky notes to make your comments. (ACELY1747)
- 28 Create a collage using photos, pictures and mixed media to be used as an album cover for a Seaman Dan album. Use your creativity to develop an appropriate style, colour scheme and image selection that conveys Dan's life work and its significance. (ACELY1746)

Analysing language forms and features

- 29 Make a copy of the 'TI Blues' lyrics and annotate the text (make brief notes labelling and explaining the language techniques denoted in specific words and phrases). (ACELT1636; ACELT1772)
- 30 How does the lyrics of 'Forty Fathoms' establish a sense of place and help Dan to chronicle his (and others') life experiences? Discuss your ideas with a partner. (ACELY1811)

Chapters Eleven to Thirteen and the Epilogue

Understanding the text

Read the chapters and then discuss your thoughts about these questions.

- 31 From which culture is the ukulele?
- 32 Which Seaman Dan tells of a fantasy about a sailor who meets someone special in Fiji?
- 33 Seaman Dan is very attuned to the seasons and rhythms of the natural world. Select one of the songs described in Chapter 12 and write point form notes that specifically relate to aspects of the natural world.

Responding to the text

- 34 Hip-hop artist, Patrick Mau, is Seaman Dan's grandson. Use an online search engine to research Patrick's career and find out about any links between his work and the music of Seaman Dan.
- 35 The modernising of the song 'Dock of the Bay' is an example of intertextuality at work. Compile a list of three songs that you believe would make good adaptations for a Seaman Dan album. Explain your selection to a partner and ask them to evaluate your choices.
- 36 From your memory, compile a list of social and cultural influences that have affected Seaman Dan's musical stylings. Which of these rank as the most significant?

Analysing language forms and features

- 37 Explain the emotional significance of the song 'Full Fathom Five'. List all the examples of emotive language contained in the song lyric. (ACELT1637)

Intertextual activities

Reading and Writing

38 Draw comparisons between ONE song modernised by Seaman Dan and the reworking of *Home Among the Gum Trees*, detailed in *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance*. Present your work in table format, using point form notes that are shown side-by-side:

- The artist
- The original meaning of the song
- The new inferred meaning of the song
- The culture or social group from which the song came
- The success of the new song

Reading and responding

39 Write a summary of the way in which a North American song, 'Navajo', was 'indigenised' ('*Taba Naba*') in order to suit the cultural purposes of Torres Strait Islander artists. What links can be made with this account and Seaman Dan's music?

Writing

40 Draw a mind map of the language groupings shown on page 46 of *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance*. Comment on the geographical and cultural spread of the 'Segur Kaba Wed' tradition described on page 48. How does this compare with the music that influenced Seaman Dan in the crossing of geographical boundaries?

Speaking and Listening

41 Develop and present a list of key events in the life of Eddie Mabo (Chapter 4). Record the facts in the form of an interview with Eddie Mabo, writing a sequence of five questions and answers. With a partner playing the role of Mabo, present the interview to your classmates through a live role play.

Note to teachers: This activity could be used as a dual assessment task, where a percentage of the marks are awarded for the written sequence and a percentage is awarded for participation in listening and/or responding to the interview as an audience member.

Viewing and Speaking

42 Watch a recording of a live performance by Seaman Dan. What additional information is presented that help you to understand more about the man and his music? Discuss your observations in light of Mullins' and Neuenfeldt's observations of musical culture on Thursday Island in Chapter 7.

Note: For all tasks, the marks allocation and/or assessment weighting should be determined by teachers.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1 Definitions

Use a search engine to find definitions and information to complete this table. First, find out the key locations and historical periods associated with each style. Then try to find the name of a performer associated with the style and one or more song titles or names of dances in each genre.

STYLE	LOCATION	PERIOD	ARTIST	TITLE
ragtime				
coon songs				
STYLE	LOCATION	PERIOD	ARTIST	TITLE
folk music				

2 Research report

Conduct your own research to write a report on one of the following topics:

- Essential features of an effective music learning environment
- Ritual music and social identity
- Community-based music
- Gender roles in music performance

Elements of the report

- 01 Write a paragraph-length introduction to the topic, providing a definition where necessary.
- 02 Present an overview of the key points made about the topic in the chapter.
- 03 Describe current research or other work being done on this topic in Australia. If no such work is being done, identify at least one research question or area of investigation that arises from this topic.

Steps:

- Read the relevant chapter in *Landscapes of Indigenous Performance*.
- Build your research on the questions or ideas raised by the writer in the chapter.
- Generate a list of key words from the chapter.
- Use the key words to conduct an internet search.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Children's songs of the Torres Strait Islands,

collected, transcribed and edited by Frank A. York. [music], Bateman's Bay, NSW: Owen Martin Publication, 1990.

Discography of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers,

by Peter Dunbar-Hall: The Rocks, NSW: Australian Music Centre, trading as Sounds Australian, 1995.

Torres Strait Islander music and dance in informal and formal educational contexts in Australia,

by Lyn Costigan and Karl Neuenfeldt, Torres Strait Islanders (Journal), Crawley, WA: Callaway International, 2002.

Additional online resources

Australia Council for the Arts

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/artforms/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-arts>

Creative Spirits

<http://www.creativespirits.info/resources/music/henry-seaman-dan>

Down to the sea with Torres Strait singer-songwriter Seaman Dan

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/down-to-the-sea-with-torres-strait-singer-songwriter-seaman-dan/story-fn9n8gph-1226681368962>

Facebook - Australian-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Music-Musicians

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Australian-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Music-Muscians/126662002883>

Henry 'Seaman' Dan sings live in the 702 Sessions

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2013/07/10/3800097.htm>

In search of Coon Songs

<http://parlorsongs.com/insearch/coonsongs/coonsongs.php>

Listen up — Music of Black Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/indigenous/mba/>

Our Pacific Ocean

http://www.ourpacificocean.com/torres_strait_music/

Seaman Dan (YouTube)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rKjvOM07I>

Interview with Seaman Dan and Karl Neuenfeldt

<http://player.vimeo.com/video/60518759>



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