

Semester 1: Units 1–3

Unit 1: Rhythms in Syrian Music

Find Our First Neighborhood (5 minutes)

The Conductor now takes us on a journey to Morningside Heights, Manhattan, to meet our first singer, Gaida. Have students turn to SG5, and help them do the following:

- Locate your borough and/or neighborhood.
- Locate Gaida on the map in Morningside Heights.
- Complete the activity.

Find Gaida's Neighborhood

It's time for us to begin our musical trip! Find Morningside Heights, Manhattan, where Gaida lives, on the map below. Then, complete the activity to start our journey. Let's go!

BRONX

MORNINGSIDE
HEIGHTS



Gaida

QUEENS

B	M	A	I	V	Z	V	X	B	V
P	D	D	S	I	V	V	C	T	X
D	Q	X	N	B	J	Y	H	H	S
P	V	M	I	R	R	S	U	Z	R
U	X	A	H	A	L	M	S	F	E
L	A	F	D	T	M	K	J	C	Y
S	M	I	F	I	Y	U	F	Z	A
E	A	Z	N	O	P	H	S	S	L
G	R	G	K	N	S	Y	R	I	A
Y	A	X	N	S	P	N	O	J	C

Gaida

Humming

Layers

Music

Pulse

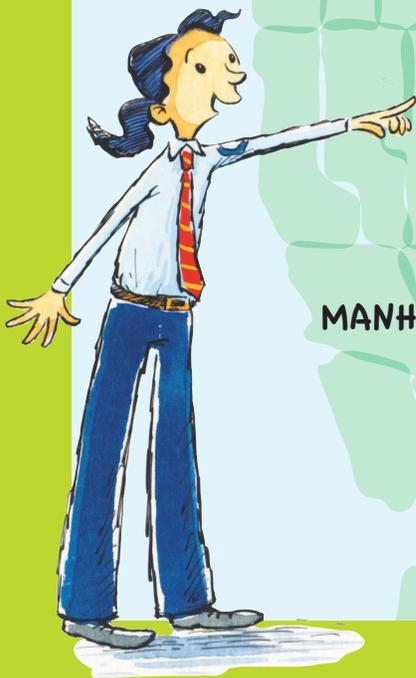
Rhythm

Syria

Vibrations

MANHATTAN

BROOKLYN



Lesson 1: Learning “Almaya”

AIM: What are the rhythm and lyrics of “Almaya”?

SUMMARY: Students meet the artist, sing, and drum rhythms for a traditional Syrian song.

MATERIALS: chart paper, markers, crayons

TIME REQUIRED: 40 minutes

STANDARDS: US 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; NYC 1, 2

VOCABULARY: lyrics, derbakeh, pattern

WARM-UP (10 minutes)

- Warm up the students’ breathing and bodies by performing the “Warm-Up Rhyme,”  Track 2.
- Warm up the students’ singing voices with the “Sirens,” “Yawning Kittens,” or “Floating Balloon” exercises,  Tracks 3, 4, and 5.
- Vocal tip: Encourage students to take deep “belly breaths,” where the belly is filled up like a balloon. Encourage students not to raise their shoulders when they take their “belly breaths.”
- Sing the “Carnegie Hall Musical Explorers Song,”  Track 1.

MEET GAIDA (10 minutes)

- Meet Gaida on SG6.

EXPLORE THE “ALMAYA” LYRICS (10 minutes)

- Gaida is from the city of Damascus, in a country called Syria. Let’s learn the traditional Syrian song “Almaya” (which means “to the water”).
- Read the translated lyrics aloud.

Almaya (traditional Syrian song)

To the spring for the water where she is going to fill—I’m thirsty says he, give me water to drink
Oh her eyes are so beautiful, when she bats her eyelashes, she covers me with beauty
To the spring for the water where she is going to fill—I’m thirsty says he, give me water to drink
Oh she’s gracefully tall like a magical sword; Oh, she will be mine forever
To the spring for the water where she is going to fill—I’m thirsty says he, give me water to drink
Oh I’m distracted by her charm and spell; I will follow her footsteps, no matter what happens
To the spring for the water where she is going to fill—I’m thirsty says he, give me water to drink

- Lyrics are the words of a song. What story do these lyrics tell us?
- What kind of pulse and rhythm would go well with this story?

- Listen to “Almaya,”  Track 6. 
- Sing along as the CD plays.

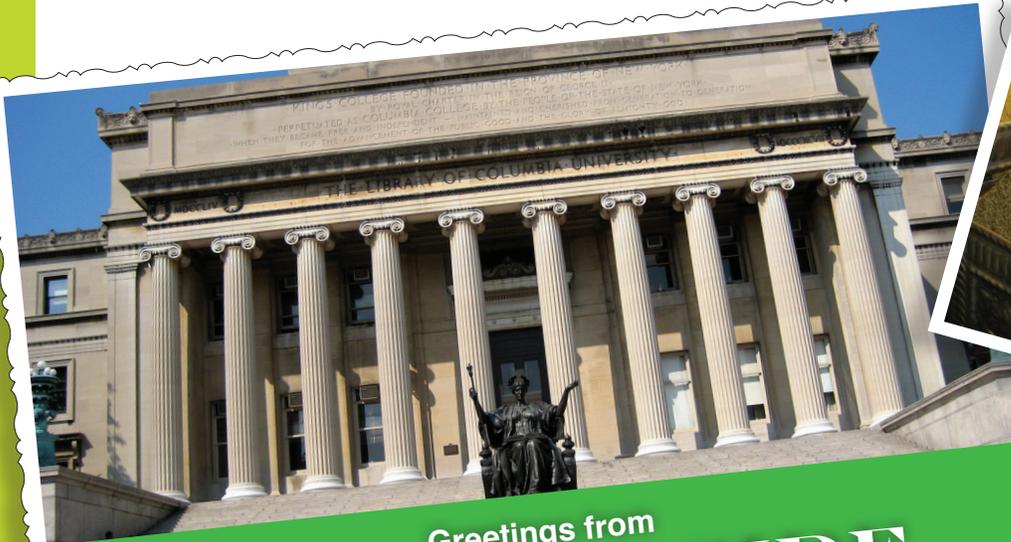
Al - mah - - ya Al - mah _____ ya, Al_ ain ya mel
lai _____ ya, Ya b - ney ya bul - lah s'ghee _____ ny, At shah - nen tee - ny_
1. mah _____ ya. A - - - mah _____ ya.
2.

CLAP ALONG WITH GAIDA DURING “ALMAYA” (10 minutes)

- Teach students the clapping pattern that Gaida performs during “Almaya.”
- Listen to  Track 7 and clap along with the dum tak rhythm.

Tak ka dum Tak ka dum Tak Tak ka dum Tak ka dum Tak ka dum Tak Tak ka dum

Meet Gaida!



Greetings from
**MORNINGSIDE
 HEIGHTS**



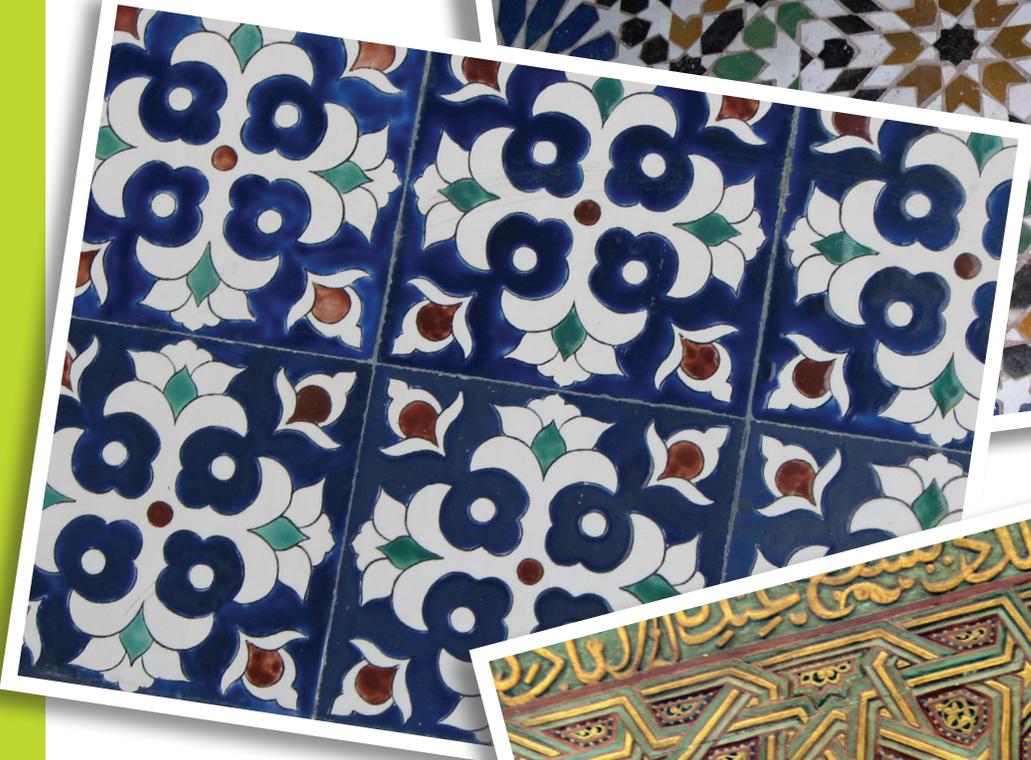
Dear Musical Explorers,
 Greetings from Morningside Heights!
 I'm a singer and songwriter. I grew
 up in Damascus, Syria, the oldest
 continuously inhabited city in the
 world. When I was a child, my
 mother sang beautiful lullabies to
 me. She taught me my first songs
 and encouraged me to sing at our
 family gatherings. Now, I live in
 New York City and play music with
 my band. If you happen to visit
 Damascus, make sure to listen to
 live music and taste the delicious
 and traditionally made sweets and
 ice cream. At our Carnegie Hall
 concert, you'll get to see and hear
 some of our traditional instruments!

Your friend, Gaida



Musical Explorers
 c/o Carnegie Hall
 881 Seventh Avenue
 New York, NY 10019

Traditional Syrian Patterns



Making Patterns with Traditional Syrian Shapes:

Choose a few shapes from the patterns on the previous page, draw them individually, then use them to create your own pattern.

My Syrian Shapes

My Syrian Pattern



Lesson 2: Exploring “El Hilwa Di”

AIM: What are the rhythm, dance, and story of “El Hilwa Di”?

SUMMARY: Students sing, drum, and dance to an Egyptian song.

MATERIALS: chart paper, markers

TIME REQUIRED: 40 minutes

STANDARDS: US 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9; NYC 1, 2, 3

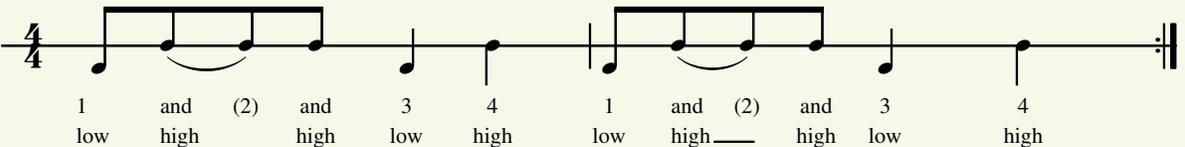
VOCABULARY: circle dance

WARM-UP (10 minutes)

- Perform the “Warm-Up Rhyme,”  Track 2.
- Warm up with the “Sirens,” “Yawning Kittens,” or “Floating Balloon” exercises,  Tracks 3, 4, and 5.
- Vocal tip: Remind students to take deep “belly breaths.”
- Sing the “Carnegie Hall Musical Explorers Song,”  Track 1.

EXPLORE “EL HILWA DI” (15 minutes)

- Listen to the slow version of the “El Hilwa Di” Derbakeh Rhythm,  Track 9.
- Practice tapping and clapping the rhythm below along with “El Hilwa Di” Derbakeh Rhythm,  Track 9 (tummy tap for the low sound, clap for the high sound).



1 and (2) and 3 4 1 and (2) and 3 4
low high high low high low high high low high

- Learn about “El Hilwa Di.”
 - Read the note from Gaida and the translated “El Hilwa Di” lyrics below to your students.

“El Hilwa Di” was one of the first songs that I learned and loved as a child. It was written by the legendary Egyptian singer-songwriter, Sayed Darwish. This song became famous among children and adults throughout the Arab world. In English, the song lyrics translate to:

Early in the morning / The beautiful girl wakes up to knead the bread / With the rooster crowing ku-ku ku-ku / Fellow farmers let us begin the day / And may you have a happy morning boss Atiah / Patience is a virtue / Things will change / If the rich have money / The poor have the Lord / In this glorious morning / Not a penny in our pockets / But we are healthy and in good cheer / The door of hope is your door, o merciful one

- What is the setting for the story in this lyric?
- What is life like for the people described in this song?
- Listen to and tap along with “El Hilwa Di,”  Track 10. 

CIRCLE DANCE (15 minutes)

- A circle dance, or dabkeh, is a traditional style of dance that Gaida learned growing up and usually performed at special occasions in Syria.
- Learn the circle dance and practice along with “El Hilwa Di,”  Track 10.



- Dancers form a circle, holding hands.



- The dance moves to the right and uses a six-beat pattern: **1 - and - 2 - and - 3 - 4.**



- Each count is one step: **L - R - L - R - L - L.**



- In the first four counts (**1 - and - 2 - and / L - R - L - R**), the left crosses in front of the right foot.

- In the last two counts (**3 - 4 / L - L**), the left foot crosses the right and taps, and then crosses back to tap in starting position.

- Repeat sequence.

MUSICAL EXTENSION (20 minutes)

SUMMARY: Students write a poem and perform it in rhythm.

- “El Hilwa Di” describes the sights and sounds and feelings of early morning in an Egyptian village.
- Create a class poem about how your day begins, using the sights and sounds and feelings that are familiar to your class.
- Say or sing your new poem in rhythm along with the “El Hilwa Di” Derbakeh Rhythm,  Track 9.

MUSICAL WORD WALL

Add the word *circle dance* to the Musical Word Wall.