

ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 4.5

MUSIC OF HEALING

title: Selk'nam Shaman Chant

performing forces: solo female voice (Lola Kiepja)

language: Selk'nam, some Spanish, vocables

form: free

function: to seek healing

source: *Selk'nam Chants of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina* (Smithsonian Folkways FE 4176 1972, 2007)

Listen for:

- short melodic fragments
- strong rhythmic emphasis in each fragment
- steady tempo, with little fluctuation
- fragments are repeated many times, with little variation
- vocables
- speech blending into song

Note: This guide corresponds to the music from 1:40 on.

Timing	What happens
1:40	spoken “sacarle para sangre todo eso” (Spanish for “take out all this through the blood”)
1:46	singing begins
1:50	singer introduces additional syllables and melodic fragments repetition of melodic fragments, each strongly accented brief interjection in higher register
2:19	return to initial fragments
2:20	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments
2:28	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments
2:36	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments
2:49	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments
3:02	unpitched, speech-like sounds
3:12	returns to repeating initial melodic fragments

3:26	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments
3:36	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments
3:42	brief interjection in higher register (as at 2:19), returns to repeating initial fragments

English translation (courtesy Smithsonian Folkways):

Power is short. I am seated beside one who was killed in a war, the one who departed.

Consider:

- What happens to the mind when one is hypnotized? What is the effect of the constantly repeated melodic fragments in this chant?
- Think of a song or piece you know in which the performer is asked to both sing and speak. What is the effect of the spoken word when it is declaimed against a musical background?