

REDISCOVERED COMPOSERS



Arts and
Humanities
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BBC
RADIO



KEY STAGE 3 LESSON PLAN

By Rachel Shapey

Troubled Water by **MARGARET BONDS**

Background information

Margaret Bonds (1913 - 1972) was born in Chicago, USA. Her mother taught her piano and Bonds wrote her first composition at the age of five. As a teenager Bonds studied composition with Florence Price and William Dawson before studying for her music degree at Northwestern University. She then went on to study piano and composition at the Juilliard School of Music.

As well as composing works for piano, Bonds also collaborated with African-American poet and writer, Langston Hughes. He encouraged Bonds and they enjoyed a close working relationship - she set many of his works to music.

Wade in the Water is an African American jubilee song or spiritual (a genre of music created by African Americans in slavery.) Many slave songs had hidden meanings. *Wade in the Water* was sung as a warning to escaping slaves that they should get into the water to put the slave catchers off their scent. To anyone who didn't know the code, they would just assume the slaves were singing to pass the time. It was first co-published in 1901 in the *New Jubilee Songs as Sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers* by Frederick J. Work and his brother, John Wesley Work Jr.

The song has since been performed and arranged by many choirs and solo artists.

Margaret Bonds wrote her piano piece, *Troubled Water*, based on this spiritual, in 1967.

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- **LISTEN** to a variety of interpretations of *Wade in the Water* and discuss the lyrics and their meaning.
- Compare different interpretations of *Wade in the Water* using level-appropriate technical vocabulary to describe different aspects of the music.
- **PERFORM** a choral version of *Wade in the Water*.
- Using the flexible arrangement pupils can learn four different parts of *Troubled Water* on keyboards / other instruments and work towards a small group performance.
- **COMPOSE** their own vocal and/or instrumental version of *Wade in the*

Key words

Spiritual
Improvisation
Syncopated
Riff
Bass
Melody
Minor key

LISTENING ACTIVITY

There are many interpretations of *Wade in the Water*. Play the original song first and discuss the lyrics and their meaning.

Listen to the suggested versions below (or choose your own) and ask pupils to compare the music. It might be helpful to provide prompts on the board.

Which version do students like best and why?

[PRINTABLE VERSION OF THIS TABLE ON PAGE 6 OF THIS DOCUMENT]

	Fisk Singers version *	Eva Cassidy version *	Graham Bond Quartet version *	Troubled Water by Bonds
Tempo				
Instruments				
Voices				
Special musical features				
My opinion				

* these versions of Wade in the Water can be found on YouTube with the exception of Margaret Bond's version which is available on the BBC Philharmonic website.

Singing

The following activities can be adapted and developed according to the singing culture and pupil confidence levels in your setting.

Prepare a class performance of Wade in the Water (lyrics at the end of this document). The whole class sings the chorus 'wade in the water' and a small group can sing the verses with whole class responding with the italicised lyrics. You could include a simple percussion accompaniment and improvised section.

Introduce some movement with pupils stepping from side to side in time to the pulse and clapping on beats 1 and 3.

Encourage pupils to improvise vocally, if appropriate.

Performing and arranging

1. In pairs pupils create their own vocal version of Wade in the Water.
2. Put two pupil pairs together. Groups develop what they have prepared in task 1 and create a small group performance of Wade in the Water. They could also add:
 - unpitched percussion
 - body percussion
 - improvised instrumental section
 - simple bass line
 - counter melody

Troubled Water: Listening

Listen again to Troubled Water by Margaret Bonds. Ask pupils to discuss how she has based her composition on the traditional spiritual.

The following prompts may be helpful:

- What is the time signature?
- What do you notice about the left-hand bass line?
- How would you describe the tempo?

Highlight the use of added-note chords, syncopation and virtuosic 'improvised' style.

Arranging & composing

1. Using the flexible arrangement pupils can learn four different parts of Troubled Water on keyboards / other instruments and work towards a small group performance. The parts are:
 - a. Melody
 - b. Inner Part 1 (provided in treble and bass clef)
 - c. Inner Part 2 (provided in treble and bass clef)
 - d. Bass line
2. Encourage pupils to put two parts together either with both hands at the keyboard or in pairs.
3. Using a DAW (digital audio workstation) pupils can create their own version of Troubled Water by following these steps:
 - Choose a simple drum beat from the loop library or create own beat.
 - Record the bass line (or own version of) into track 1
 - Choose a melody instrument for track 2.
 - Improvise using the A minor scale and the Wade in the Water melody as a starting point.
 - Record with the bass line playing.
 - Encourage pupils to develop this part through exploring different rhythm options and octaves.

Extension

- Compose own syncopated bass riff using 5 pitches.
- Improvise a melodic line using a wider range of pitches and more confident use of syncopation.
- Explore harmonic options through using inversions and extended chords.

Lyrics for Wade in the Water

NB: The lyrics for Wade in the Water vary according to different versions.

Chorus

Wade in the water
Wade in the water children
Wade in the water
God's a gonna trouble the water

Verse 1

See that host all dressed in white
God's a gonna trouble the water
The leader looks like the Israelite
God's a gonna trouble the water

Verse 2

See that band all dressed in red
God's a gonna trouble the water
Looks like the band that Moses led
God's a gonna trouble the water

Verse 3

Look over yonder, what do I see?
God's a gonna trouble the water
The Holy Ghost a-looking for me
God's a gonna trouble the water

Verse 4

If you don't believe I've been redeemed
God's a gonna trouble the water
Just follow me down to Jordan's stream
God's a gonna trouble the water

	Fisk Singers version	Eva Cassidy version	Graham Bond Quartet version	Troubled Water by Bonds
Tempo				
Instruments				
Voices				
Special musical features				
My opinion				

Troubled Water simple arrangement

MELODY

Melody



A musical staff in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It contains seven measures of music. The first measure has a dotted half note. The second measure has a quarter note. The third measure has a quarter note. The fourth measure has a quarter note. The fifth measure has a dotted half note. The sixth measure has a dotted half note. The seventh measure has a dotted half note with a slur over it.

M1

6



A musical staff in treble clef. It contains seven measures of music. The first measure has a quarter note with a sharp sign. The second measure has a quarter note. The third measure has a quarter note. The fourth measure has a quarter note. The fifth measure has a quarter note. The sixth measure has a dotted half note. The seventh measure has a quarter note.

M1

11



A musical staff in treble clef. It contains seven measures of music. The first measure has a dotted half note. The second measure has a dotted half note. The third measure has a quarter note. The fourth measure has a quarter note. The fifth measure has a quarter note. The sixth measure has a quarter note. The seventh measure has a dotted half note with a slur over it.

Troubled Water Simple Arrangement

INNER PART 1 - TREBLE CLEF

Inner Part 1

6

IP1

11

IP1

Detailed description: The image shows three staves of musical notation for the 'Inner Part 1' of a 'Troubled Water Simple Arrangement'. The music is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The first staff, labeled 'Inner Part 1', contains measures 1 through 5. It begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with beams, often beamed in pairs, and includes rests. The second staff, labeled 'IP1', starts at measure 6 and contains measures 6 through 10. It begins with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes, a dotted quarter note, and then beamed eighth notes. The third staff, also labeled 'IP1', starts at measure 11 and contains measures 11 through 15. It begins with beamed eighth notes, followed by quarter notes, a dotted quarter note, and ends with a half note. The notation uses various note values, rests, and beams to create a simple melodic line.

Troubled Water Simple Arrangement

INNER PART 1 - BASS CLEF

Inner Part 1



6



11



The image shows three staves of musical notation for the 'Inner Part 1' of a 'Troubled Water Simple Arrangement'. The music is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The first staff, labeled 'Inner Part 1', contains measures 1 through 5. The second staff, labeled 'IP1', contains measures 6 through 10. The third staff, also labeled 'IP1', contains measures 11 through 15. The notation includes eighth notes, quarter notes, and dotted notes, with some notes beamed together. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the third staff.

Troubled Water Simple Arrangement

INNER PART 2 - TREBLE CLEF

Inner Part 2



Musical staff for Inner Part 2, measures 1-5. The staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest in measure 1. Measures 2 and 4 contain a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4, all beamed together. Measure 3 contains a quarter rest. Measure 5 contains a whole rest.

6

IP2



Musical staff for Inner Part 2, measures 6-10. The staff is in treble clef. Measure 6 contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4, all beamed together. Measure 7 contains a quarter rest. Measures 8 and 9 contain whole rests. Measure 10 contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4, all beamed together.

11

IP2



Musical staff for Inner Part 2, measures 11-15. The staff is in treble clef. Measure 11 contains a whole rest. Measure 12 contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4, all beamed together. Measure 13 contains a quarter note D4. Measure 14 contains a quarter note C4. Measure 15 contains a half note B3.

Troubled Water Simple Arrangement

INNER PART 2 - BASS CLEF

Inner Part 2



Musical staff for Inner Part 2, measures 1-5. The staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. Measures 1 and 3 contain whole rests. Measures 2 and 4 contain eighth notes G2, A2, B2 beamed together, followed by a quarter rest. Measure 5 contains a whole rest.

6

IP2



Musical staff for Inner Part 2, measures 6-10. Measure 6 contains eighth notes G2, A2, B2 beamed together, followed by a quarter rest. Measures 7, 8, and 9 contain whole rests. Measure 10 contains eighth notes G2, A2, B2 beamed together, followed by a quarter rest.

11

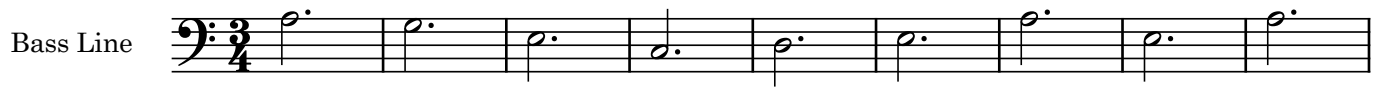
IP2



Musical staff for Inner Part 2, measures 11-15. Measure 11 contains a whole rest. Measure 12 contains eighth notes G2, A2, B2 beamed together, followed by a quarter rest. Measures 13 and 14 contain quarter notes C3, D3, E3, F3. Measure 15 contains a half note G2.

Troubled Water Simple Arrangement

BASS LINE



Troubled Water simple arrangement

SCORE

Arranged by Rachel Shapey

Melody 1

Inner Part 1

Inner Part 2

Bass Line

The first system of the score consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled 'Melody 1', is in treble clef and 3/4 time, featuring a half note followed by a quarter note, then a dotted half note. The second staff, 'Inner Part 1', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The third staff, 'Inner Part 2', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff, 'Bass Line', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a simple bass line of half notes.

M1

IP1

IP2

BL

5

The second system of the score consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled 'M1', is in treble clef and 3/4 time, starting with a measure rest followed by a melodic line with a sharp sign. The second staff, 'IP1', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The third staff, 'IP2', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff, 'BL', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a simple bass line of half notes. A measure rest is indicated above the first measure of the top staff.

M1

IP1

IP2

BL

11

The third system of the score consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled 'M1', is in treble clef and 3/4 time, with a melodic line. The second staff, 'IP1', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The third staff, 'IP2', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The bottom staff, 'BL', is in bass clef and 3/4 time, with a simple bass line of half notes. A measure rest is indicated above the first measure of the top staff.