

AN EDUCATORS GUIDE

FOR THE GIRL WHO HEARD THE MUSIC

by Marni Fogelson with Mahani Teave, Marta Álvarez Miguéns (Illustrator)

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE



About *The Girl Who Heard the Music*

The true story of award-winning pianist and environmental activist Mahani Teave and the beloved island she is helping to save.

Imagine living on a tiny island more than a thousand miles from any other inhabited place! That's where a girl named Mahani lived—on Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island. Mahani grew up taking music lessons on the island's only piano. She had the talent to become a great pianist, but pursuing that dream meant leaving the home she loved.

As Mahani toured the world as an acclaimed concert pianist, Rapa Nui stayed close to her heart. She knew the island struggled with problems like ocean trash and wondered how she could help. So she returned to Rapa Nui with a new dream—to build a music school! The unique building is constructed with recycled trash and has solar panels and a food garden. Now Mahani is helping build a more sustainable future for her island home—where the music continues.



About Marni Fogelson

Marni Fogelson is a children's book author, lifestyle writer, and nonprofit professional. She has an insatiable love for reading and believes that books have a tremendous power to make us better humans. Marni lives with her husband, two children, and a very loud and affectionate hound in Philadelphia.



About Mahani Teave

Mahani Teave is an award-winning concert pianist and environmental activist from Rapa Nui (Easter Island). She holds a master's degree from the prestigious Cleveland Institute of Music, has won numerous international music competitions, and her debut album, *Rapa Nui Odyssey*, launched as number one on the Billboard Classical charts. She is one of the founders of Toki Rapa Nui, a nonprofit dedicated to the island's ecological and cultural preservation. She lives with her family on Rapa Nui, where she leads the Rapa Nui School for Music and the Arts.

About Marta Álvarez Miguéns

Marta Álvarez Miguéns is a self-taught children's illustrator. She was born in a small town in Galicia, Spain, and currently lives in La Coruña, Spain. She is the illustrator of *Shark Lady* (written by Jess Keating), which was named a 2018 Best STEM Book by the Children's Book Council as well as a Best STEM Book by the National Science Teachers Association.



Pre-Reading Questions & Activities

Have you ever heard of the island Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island? Look at the endpapers of this book. It shows a map of the island. Find Rapa Nui on a world map. Where is it? What countries is it closest to? The island of Rapa Nui is sometimes called Easter Island. Look it up on the internet to get more information and see pictures of the island. Who named it Easter Island? Do you know what monuments the island is famous for?

In this book we meet Mahani, who loves music and hears it everywhere—from people singing to crickets chirping to the waves of the ocean. What things do you hear during your day that sound like music to your ears? Do you like music? How does it make you feel?

One of the themes of this book is helping the environment. What do you, your friends, and family do to help the environment? Does your school do anything? Do changes happen quickly, or do they take time? How does helping the environment make you feel?

Vocabulary

The Girl Who Heard the Music incorporates words from the language of Rapa Nui. As a class, review the following words as well as the Rapa Nui words that appear in the back matter of the book. Try to derive their meaning from context in the story. Then look up the word using the internet and practice pronouncing it. How does knowing the meaning help readers to understand the story?

- Rapa Nui
- ināŋa
- tipanie
- ukulele
- hibisco
- moai
- toki
- riu
- ori
- hoko

Post-Reading Discussion Questions and Activities

Things We Ask Ourselves When Reading

Break students into pairs to review the story and answer some basic questions about it. Have them retell the story to each other, identifying the beginning, the middle and the end. Then have students discuss the following questions:



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- Who is the main character?
- What is the setting of the story?
- What are the big issues or themes?
- What do the characters do in response to these issues?

Come together and have pairs share their insights with the class.

Music, Music Everywhere!

Mahani learns about music from different sources. Break students into three groups and have each one explore a different category of inspiration that led Mahani to become a concert pianist.

- Individuals who helped or taught her
- Things in nature that inspired her
- Things in her society that inspired her

Have each group present their findings to the class.

See the Music

We can't see music, we can only hear it. That means that a picture book about music is a tricky thing to create! Review the illustrations in the book as a class. Sometimes the pictures show things that aren't there to convey the idea of music playing—like musical notes, or the staff used in sheet music. Have students pick out which pictures use these abstract depictions of music, and how it helps set the scene for the reader. What are other ways the illustrations show the reader when music is playing and how it makes people feel?

Bonus Activity: Have students make a drawing of what they think music looks like.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for students to draw their interpretation of what music looks like.



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Picturesque Speech

The author uses figurative language to help the reader “feel” what is going on in the story. Read the book as a class and have students raise their hands when they hear an example of figurative language—like metaphors, similes, or imagery that appeals to the senses and emotions. Do these turns of phrase help students enjoy the story more and experience it more deeply? How would reading the book be different if there were no descriptions like this?

From Moai to Music School

Find the two page spread that shows Mahani at her piano and begins with the text “Mahani joined a group of islanders...” Examine these pages as a class. Have students identify what from the text each part of the spread is illustrating. How do these sections relate to each other? How do they relate to the text? How do the picture and words show the connection between carving the moai and building the school?

Sharing Big Ideas

Break students into groups and assign each a spread to present to the class. How does the illustration express the “Big Ideas” of this book, such as protecting the environment, Mahani’s love of music, or the hard work required to do great things? What details in the picture might readers not have noticed? For example, are those all rocks in the ocean, or is one a water bottle? Have each group walk the class through their illustrations and explain what they discovered.

Moai

The giant sculptures on the island of Rapa Nui are called moai. The back matter discusses them briefly. These sculptures have fired the imaginations of people all over the world since they were first discovered. Break students into groups and, working with an adult as necessary, have each group research these figures. What are the different theories about how these sculptures were made and moved? Come together and discuss what students have learned.

Bonus Exercise: Have students write their own story—serious or funny—of how the moai came to be.

Earthship

One of the themes of this book is the environment and the effort to get rid of the litter on Rapa Nui. To do this, the community built an “Earthship,” which recycles trash into building materials. As a class, research these buildings. What is an Earthship? How is one built? What do they look like? How did building an Earthship help the community start to address the problem of trash on the island? How much trash did the community use to build the Earthship?



Instruments Abound

As a class, find the different instruments that appear in the illustrations of this book. Assign each student or group of students one instrument as the subject of a presentation. With the help of a music teacher, if available, have them name the instrument, gather samples of music featuring it, and photos or other illustrations. Are there any famous musicians who specialized in their instrument? Where might students have heard their instrument?

How Did Mahani Do It?

Mahani is a very driven person. When she falls in love with the music she hears from the visitors to Rapa Nui, she makes up her mind to learn how to play it. As a class, identify how she takes the initiative to advance her education. What lessons can students learn from Mahani's enthusiasm and perseverance? Ask students to think about something they are excited about doing. What steps could they take to get better at it?

Internet Resources

Here are a few internet resources to get started on learning about Mahani Teave and Rapa Nui.

THE RAPA NUI SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND THE ARTS

<https://tokirapanui.org/en/school-of-music.html>

BRITANNICA KIDS

<https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Easter-Island/274109>

KIDDLE

https://kids.kiddle.co/Easter_Island

MAHANI TEAVE TINY DESK CONCERT ON NPR

<https://youtu.be/R9gdl7TbLY0>