Cuba At the Crossroads
Lesson 1
90 Miles: Eleguá

Essential Questions

- How do artists express their most important political views?
- How can we learn about the history and culture of a country through music?
- What are examples of the African influence in Cuban culture?
- What factors contributed to a break in Cuban-US relations?
- What are the push-pull factors for immigration?
- How do immigrants express patriotism?

The award winning Cuban-American singer and songwriter Gloria Estefan is famous as a crossover artist who combines Latin rhythms mixed with contemporary pop music. Her music reflects the sounds of Cuban culture as well as the nostalgic sentiments of Cuban-Americans.

What can we learn about Cuban history and culture by listening to Gloria Estefan’s music? Estefan’s song “90 Millas” from the album of the same name begins:

Echodara Agoile, Agó Echure Oh
Elegua, Elegua ele, Elegua Eleguara

Noventa Millas vienen, Noventa Millas faltan

Spanish speaking students will recognize the words 90 miles and the verbs venir and faltar but, Echodara Agoile, Agó Echure Oh Elegua, Elegua ele, Elegua Eleguara, what do they mean? What language is this? What does 90 miles represent to Gloria Estefan, a Cuban-American?

In Lesson 1 learn about Cuban music, Cuban emigration to the United States and how Cuban-American musicians express their patriotism through music. Discover why Estefan entitled one of her Spanish albums 90 Millas.

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