

### Assignment 3: Active Listening

Starting this week, we step into the world of music. Unlike how you listen to music daily, *active listening* is a technique required for this class.

*In music, active listening refers to the conscious choice to focus on a piece of music undisturbed by other stimuli. In daily life, you may use music as background texture, which is defined as passive listening, but when you eliminate distractions and focus your attention on the music, you shift into active listening. [SourceLinks to an external site.]*

Active listening allows you to process the compositional structure and nuances in a piece of music. Active listening helps you notice the different instruments within a piece and appreciate its complexity. For how to listen to Hip-Hop music, we will specify it in future lectures. The general principle is to listen to the song multiple times with different focuses every time (different layers, instruments, techniques, etc.). Your TA will probably give you more detailed guidance based on their training and music experience.

Listen to this example



"*Baby I Love You So*" and "*King Tubby Meets The Rockers Uptown*" are two separate "songs" written in 1975, but both use the "*King Tubby Meets The Rockers Uptown*" riddim. We studied Jamaican riddims and the dub technique they used to create songs.

*Dub has a close relationship to versions also known as instrumentals and commonly called B-Sides. What complicates their relationship is that dub recordings were not necessarily*

*instrumental versions of a song, but alternate versions that would have some variation, overemphasizing the bass. [\[Source\]](#)*

Apply active listening to the two songs on the A and B sides, and answer the questions:

- 1) What are the similarities of the two songs? What are the differences?
- 2) Can you tell what music techniques were used to produce the dub B-side? Describe what you heard.

Besides listening, it's also important to describe the music based on your listening and understanding, which could be further developed into beat/song/music analysis. Here is a reference for [words to describe music](#), but your TA may provide better resources and more details.

- 3) Write a song analysis for one of the two songs (which one you like more). Describe the sound and structure you heard, how they make you feel, and how you understand the music. Do it with your greatest ability, then see how you can improve it during the section discussions.