



SONG OF THE MONTH

“ISSUES” BY JULIA MICHAELS

Meets National Core Arts Standards 7-9

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work (Re7)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work (Re8)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (Re9)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (Vol.39 No.3)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

1. Ask students to read the text on pages 14-16 on their own
2. Have one of the students read aloud the text on page 16
3. ▶ **Play** Julia Michaels's “Issues” (*Hear the Music track 1 on musicalive.com*), while the students read through the notation on pages 17-18

DEVELOP

Ask students about the story:

- Which did Michaels do first: sing or write songs?**
- Who are some of the pop stars Michaels has written hits for?**
- What instrument did Michaels’ mother buy her when she was a young girl?**
- What did Michaels learn from her mentors Lindy Robbins and Beka Tischker?**
- Which major pop star (who is now her BFF) did Michaels do her first collaboration with?**
- Which major pop star asked Michaels to sing on a track she had written (“Trade Hearts”) for the first time?**
- What year was her debut single “Issues” released?**
- Why did she decide to keep “Issues” to sing herself rather than give it to another artist?**

2. Ask students questions about the song/notation:

- What is the key signature?**
- What instruments do you hear during the first verse?**
- Are most of the notes during the first verse long or short?**
- Which instruments enter during the chorus?**
- What story do the lyrics tell?**
- How many bars is the intro?**
- Do most of the notes sit below, above or in the middle of the staff?**
- Do you like this song? Why or why not?**

CLOSE

Michaels is first and foremost a songwriter. Listen to songs she wrote, “Miss Movin’ On” sung by Fifth Harmony, “Sorry” sung by Justin Bieber, and “Dive” sung by Ed Sheeran. Then ask the following questions for each:

- What is this song about?**
- Do you think the song is well-written?**
- Do you think the song would have the same impact if Michaels sang it herself? Why?**
- Are there any other artists you think could record this song and have it be successful?**

Then have a class discussion about the connection between songwriter and the song itself.

- Is it always better for a songwriter to sing their own songs? Why or why not?**
- In your opinion, what makes a song more suitable for one voice compared to another?**
- Can a song be just as meaningful when you know the singer didn’t write it themselves?**

ASSESS

- Did the students follow along with the song?**
- Did they answer the discussion questions?**
- Did they listen to each song and analyze the songwriting?**

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Crossword Puzzle can be found on page 7

