

THE MYSTICAL MUSICAL JUNGLE

(Pearl Nitsche)

Contact: pearl.nitsche@chello.at
01/408 41 84

Subject: Music

Grade: 5th grade

Contents: the first musical instruments

THE MYSTICAL, MUSICAL JUNGLE

(Pearl Nitsche)

Franz and Susie want to write a report for music class about the first musical instruments. They have met at Susie's house to plan their report.

Franz: The first musical instruments?

It's so strange -
I simply can't imagine
a world without music!

Susie: Neither can I.

And I have no idea
what to write in our report.
Where can we find the information?

Franz: Let's check it out in Internet.

Susie: That's a good idea!

She types „musical instruments“ in the search field.
And then she presses „Enter“.

One of the sites which appears is called:

„The Mystical, Musical Jungle.“

Susie: Hey, that sounds interesting.
Let's look at this one.

She clicks on the site.
Suddenly they see a green jungle on the monitor.
There are also many brilliantly colored flowers.
Monkeys are swinging on vines and chattering.
And the wind is whistling through the trees.

Riesenmuschel
Knochen
Kürbis
Bambus
Leder
Steine
Tongefäß

The trees part and a young boy appears.

Ur: Hi!
My name is Ur.
Welcome to the Mystical, Musical Jungle.

Franz: The Mystical, Musical Jungle?
Why do you call it that?

Ur: Because it was in a place like this that
the first musical instruments were made.

Come on in and I'll show you around.

Franz & Susie: Okay.
That sounds like fun!

They climb into the computer and feel the soft spongy ground of the jungle beneath their feet and the sun upon their shoulders. They breathe in the moist jungle air and listen to all the sounds around them.

Franz: Maybe you didn't have music in the beginning, but there are still many beautiful noises in the jungle.

Ur: That's true.
We heard the sound of the wind whistling through the bamboo groves, the birds, and the beat of the rain upon the leaves.

But at first, we didn't know how to create sounds ourselves.

Then we learned to make fire.
Once a fire was started,
it was important that it didn't go out.

So we blew gently on the fire through a hollow reed. This made sounds. And some people think these reeds were the first flutes.

Susie: Was the flute reed your only instrument?

Ur: Oh, no.
We used the natural materials around us, such as sea shells, bamboo, wood, bone, stones, clay, etc. to make other instruments.

We had music in our blood and we used our whole bodies as musical instruments: clapping our hands, shaking necklaces and bracelets made of bones, seeds or shells.

Franz: Did you have bullroarers too?

Susie: What's a bullroarer?

Ur: Oh, yes.
Bullroarers have existed since earliest times.

A bullroarer can be made of wood, bone or bark. And often they are beautifully painted and carved.

It is attached to a string or a rope and it is swung in a circle. This makes a noise.

The sound it makes depends on the shape of the bullroarer, what it is made of and

the speed and angle at which it is moving.

Small bullroarers are called whistlers.
They are made of shells or bones,
hollowed nuts or fruit stones.
They make a mysterious humming rumble.
Like the grumble of thunder.

North American Indians
whirl them to bring on rain.
And some Australian aborigines play whistlers
to communicate with their ancestors.

Franz: Wow!
You really found lots of ways to make music.
What happened next?

Ur: Just a moment.
Let's visit some of my friends.
They can tell you
how musical instruments
developed in other countries.

He pulls the branches of the trees apart
and they enter a clearing in the jungle.
Several children are sitting next to a brook,
which is dancing through the clearing.

Ur: Let me introduce you:
This is Susie and Franz.
They were surfing through Internet
and stopped to chat.

This is Lenox. She comes from Ancient Egypt.
This is Xeno from Ancient Greece.
And Mario, who lived in Rome, 2000 years ago.

Children: Hi!

Susie: What kind of musical instruments
did you have in Ancient Egypt, Lenox?

Lenox: Oh, we had lots of instruments:
harps, castanets, flutes and zithers.
We played them for dances
at banquets and family gatherings.

One of the most popular instruments
was the harp.

For thousands of years the musical bow was
very popular. It was a bow with a single string
on it.

Then, about 5,000 years ago, people had the
idea of fixing several strings to the same bow.

And the harp was born!

Xeno: We had harps in Ancient Greece about 2,500 years ago, too. And we also had other string instruments such as the lyre and the zither to accompany our songs and poetry.

And we had a special wind instrument too, the aulos -a kind of oboe.

Franz: Didn't Pan, the god of the shepherds in Greek mythology, play a flute?

Xeno: **(laughing)**
Yes, he did.
Pan was a very overly confident person!
He decided that his pipe-playing was better than Apollo, the god of music's.
Apollo punished Pan's pride by giving him donkey's ears!

Susie: I don't understand how wind instruments work?

Ur: Wind instruments have a mouthpiece and a pipe.
When you blow air in through the mouthpiece, it is trapped inside the pipe.
The air makes it vibrate or shake.
The vibrations make the sounds.

Lenox: The holes on the wind instrument correspond to the different notes.
If you cover all the holes with your fingers, the air vibrates along the entire length of the pipe. This makes the deepest note.

By covering holes or lifting your fingers, the column of air becomes longer or shorter - and the sound becomes lower or higher.

Franz: Why are there all those keys and rods and rings and pads along the outside of, for example, a clarinet?

Xeno: It's because we only have ten fingers and there are more holes than that.
With the keys attached to rods, we can open and close several holes at once.

Susie: So a horn player needs to have really supple fingers to be able to run up and down the length of a flute or a clarinet, doesn't he?

Mario: Yes, he does!
And the player also needs to learn to breathe

from the diaphragm, the muscle beneath the lungs.

He needs to develop strong lip and cheek muscles so he can blow just the right amount of air into the instrument.

Ur: The first wind instruments were made from animal horns or shells. Nowadays, most horns are made of metal. Some of them are nearly 7 meters long!

Mario: Horns have been used throughout history to call people to worship their gods or to go to war.

2,000 years ago in Rome we used music for rousing and entertaining crowds. We loved loud music. Our armies marched to deafening fanfares made by hundreds of trumpets!!

Actually we enjoyed music on every occasion: at parades, banquets, funerals, sacrifices to the gods, visits to the games and plays.

A lot of our instruments were percussion instruments: cymbals, castanets, gongs and tambourines. We also had a complicated instrument called the hydraulus or water organ, which added to the excitement at gladiator fights.

Franz: Drums were probably one of the first percussion instruments developed, weren't they?

Lenox: That's right.
Egyptian legends say that when time and the world began there was great chaos. The crocodile wanted to stop this chaos and beat loudly on its belly with its tail. We say this was the origin of the first drum.

Ur: In parts of India, they believe that the world was created by a drum.

So they worship the drum as a god. They wash it and perfume it and carry it along the streets on the back of an elephant.

Xeno: And in Africa there are some drum groups made of seven instruments. They are considered to be a family: a mother, four children and two fathers. People visit the drums and bring them precious presents. And if one of the drums has to leave the village,

the people cry as if they had lost a friend.

Susie: Bells are also percussion instruments, aren't they?

Ur: That's right.
And there are also many religious beliefs connected to bells. In parts of Africa, bells are rung to keep people and their livestock healthy and safe. And sometimes bells are rung to protect buildings from evil.

Susie: I hear a bell ringing right now.
Where is it coming from?

Franz: It's our alarm clock.
It's time for us to leave our new friends in Internet and write our report, Susie.

Thank you so much for your help!
We have to go now.

Ur, Lenox, You're welcome.

Xeno and

Mario: The next time you're surfing,
come and visit us again
in the Mystical, Musical Jungle!

Goodbye!