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Music from the Beginning

There was music before there were people to listen to it. Birds sang. Wind whistled, and ocean waves crashed in a steady rhythm.

People have probably made music since their earliest days on Earth too. Maybe the first human music imitated the sounds of nature. Humans may have created songs in imitation of the sounds of other creatures. Once people had words to speak, maybe they also had words for songs. Simple hunting tools might have served as early percussion instruments. Simple flutes made from hollowed bones have been found that date back to 10,000 BC.



Archaeologists have found evidence that music was played in ancient civilizations, including ancient Egypt and Babylonia. Since early music was not written down, the earliest evidence of music is in the form of pictures showing musicians and musical instruments. Evidence of written music from more than 2,000 years ago has also been found.

A little further along in history, music began to divide into different types. One type, known today as western music, developed in Europe. Western music is based on a scale of nine notes. Other types of music developed in Asia, in Africa, and in Native American cultures.

Western music eventually developed into classical music and all of the different styles of popular music we hear today. It spread from Europe to the Americas.

Classical music developed gradually over many, many years in Europe. It grew from everyday songs and from church music. During the Renaissance, it began to grow into the classical music that we are familiar with today. In the following years, from the 1600s through the early 1800s, many of the most famous classical works were written. Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart wrote classical pieces that many of us recognize today, even if we don't know their names.

Classical music was popular in the United States in the early years of our country, but music from other parts of the world also came to America. In the early 1900s, combinations of music from different traditions around the world began to combine to create new American music. Jazz, a combination of African and European music, suddenly began to appear in cities across the United States. Many people say that New Orleans was the city where it was heard first. Musicians like Louis Armstrong brought jazz music to the American public.

Soon, all over America, people were tuning their radios to music stations to hear jazz, blues, and ragtime. Before long, young people were putting their coins into a jukebox to hear their favorite big bands play the latest tunes.

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Radios, jukeboxes, and phonographs allowed a piece of music to be heard by many more people than in the past. Certain singers became "stars." Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra were big stars in the years after World War II.

In the 1950s, musical styles combined again to form something new. The era of rock music began with popular singers like Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry. In the 1960s, the Beatles became the most popular rock group ever, with a worldwide following. New styles of music are still appearing as musicians combine favorite parts from different types of music. That is how we got country-rock, rhythm and blues, and all of the other choices that are available in the music store today.

Music from the Beginning

Questions

- _____ 1. Music was invented in the year _____.
 - A. 1950
 - B. 1960
 - C. no one knows
 - D. 10,000 BC

- _____ 2. The earliest archaeological evidence of music comes from _____.
 - A. tape recordings
 - B. written music
 - C. CDs
 - D. pictures

- _____ 3. Classical music began in _____.
 - A. China
 - B. Egypt
 - C. the United States
 - D. Europe

- _____ 4. Jazz began in _____.
 - A. the United States
 - B. China
 - C. Egypt
 - D. Europe

- _____ 5. In the 1600s through the 1800s when classical music was very popular, people probably listened to _____.
 - A. recordings
 - B. live music
 - C. radio
 - D. all of the above

- _____ 6. The information in this article is given in which order?
 - A. size order
 - B. chronological order
 - C. spatial order
 - D. order of importance

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_____ 7. This article is mainly about _____.

- A. the history of music
- B. famous musicians
- C. country music
- D. classical music

_____ 8. Chuck Berry was a famous _____ musician.

- A. classical
- B. country
- C. rock
- D. jazz

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bridge to the sound box below the strings. In a piano, the strings transmit the sound through a bridge to a large, flat wooden soundboard behind the strings. The soundboard amplifies the sound.

There are other similarities between a piano and stringed instruments. For example, piano strings are tuned by turning tuning pegs to tighten or loosen the strings just like the tuning pegs on a guitar handle.

In addition to the eighty-eight keys, a person playing the piano also has foot pedals to control the sound. The right pedal, known as the damper pedal, is the one used most often. Using this pedal holds the dampers away from the strings. This allows each note to continue sounding and blend in with the other notes. The left pedal, known as the soft pedal, is used to play the piano quietly.

From the outside, a piano looks like a unique type of instrument, and it is unique in the way it works. But once you get past the whippens and the hammers and all of those other little parts, a piano is actually another stringed instrument similar to a violin or a guitar.

How Does a Piano Work?

Questions

_____ 1. Pianos have _____.

- A. strings
- B. whippens
- C. dampers
- D. all of the above

_____ 2. Pianos have _____.

- A. hammers
- B. spoons
- C. pedals
- D. all of the above

_____ 3. The shortest string in a piano produces _____.

- A. no sound
- B. the highest note
- C. the loudest note
- D. the lowest note

_____ 4. Tuning a piano is similar to tuning a _____.

- A. trumpet
- B. clarinet
- C. electronic keyboard
- D. guitar

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_____ 5. The sounds produced in a piano are amplified by the _____.

- A. strings
- B. soundboard
- C. amplifier
- D. speakers

_____ 6. How many keys does a piano have?

- A. seventy-seven
- B. one hundred
- C. eighty-seven
- D. eighty-eight

7. Why can a piano be considered a stringed instrument?

8. What are two uses of the foot pedals on a piano?

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Musical Instruments Word Search

Complete the activity.



I P P F Y Q V P V E V D Z W V B L W
B U G L E R B C I I H E A F L U T E
U S U K H G Z T H H M Q N N N S U H
N Y Y G X Z D U R F V A K H O M J R
B N H H U R C O I I G J A L A F C L
G T Q M U I R K J S A R L P X X Y P
V H A M I G T X X H P N G X A H M J
I E I H A I Z A M W J U G O W R B P
O S M N R Y X G R P R H M L N T A T
L I R S D V S H G D Y B O G E G L R
I Z M C A C L A R I N E T X L U S U
N E B T U X L U A Z T N E U Y N V M
X R J W U Y O M I G M I Z I J I Z P
N Q L C S B N P P H O M I X S P Z E
E J L I V R A B H B I T L F Q R E T
T R O M B O N E O O C E L L O V P P
J Q C O J B Z E V E N G R W T S A B
M Q H N T P I A N O B E L X C W Z W

Triangle	Saxophone	Gong	Harp	Tuba
Cymbals	Clarinet	Piano	Drum	Oboe
Bugle	Synthesizer	Trombone	Organ	Flute
Violin	Guitar	Cello	Trumpet	