Musical Journeys Around the Globe with Finn

Learning objective: To identify and describe the characteristics of music from different cultures, including instruments, rhythm, and purpose.

Finn the dolphin has travelled across the world's oceans to listen to music from different countries. Use your knowledge of world music and the word bank to answer the questions below.

Music is a universal language that reflects the traditions, history, and environment of people living in different parts of the world. From the complex drumming patterns of West Africa to the shimmering metallic sounds of Indonesian orchestras, every culture has its own unique musical fingerprint. By listening to the pitch, speed, and instrumentation of a piece, we can discover where in the world the music might have originated.

Word bank: Djembe · Gamelan · Polyrhythm · Pentatonic · Improvisation · Melody · Tempo

1. Finn is listening to a West African drum circle. Describe what a 'polyrhythm' is and why it is important to this style of music. (2 marks)

2. In Indonesia, a Gamelan orchestra uses bronze instruments to create a unique sound. Explain how a pentatonic scale, which uses only five notes, might make a piece of music sound different from a Western scale. (2 marks)

3. Identify one way in which the 'tempo' (speed) of a piece of music can change the way the listener feels while listening. (1 mark)

4. Many world music traditions rely on 'improvisation'. What does this mean, and why might a performer choose to improvise rather than follow a written score? (2 marks)

5. If you were to create a piece of 'fusion' music (combining two different world styles), which two instruments would you choose and why? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw an imaginary musical instrument that combines features from two different cultures you have studied. Label its parts and describe how you would play it.

Extension challenge: Research a traditional folk song from a country you have never visited. Write three sentences explaining the story behind the song and what instruments are typically used to accompany it.