**UNIT 31 Forms of Art. Musicof Ancient Greece**

**WARM-UP EXERCISE.** *Think and answer*.

* Name at least three musical instruments in English.
* Do you consider music as an important aspect of our lives?
* Do you listen to music? If so, how often?
* What is your favourite kind of music?
* Do you play a musical instrument?
* Do you think that music and dancing are crucial to our health?

**NOTES.**

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**NAVIGATION. KEY TERMS.** *Study the following words prior to reading the text*.

**patron goddess**: the protecting goddess

**aural**: relating to the sense of hearing; audial; auditory

**musical notation**: written or printed form of musical notes and symbols

**acoustics**: the effect of sound and how it is transmitted in a room or building or open-air theatre

**acoustical**: relating to sound, to the sense of hearing, or to the ears

**acoustic**: relating to sound or hearing

**integer**: a whole number

**ratio**: correlation, proportion

**monochord**: an instrument for comparing musical [*pitches*](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&sca_esv=578119922&q=pitches&si=ALGXSlZCBshTM3a3nPTSW0d1OmQeBOb9W7oGcuS58cd_Iwe18e4KSnfJMXpTVA6HZG0v13zPg7U9BexreKxP6GRMa_XidEIT4Q%3D%3D&expnd=1), using a [taut](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&sca_esv=578119922&q=taut&si=ALGXSlbay8QErRaW9ftxx-jGNHSqHlLO8lSu2E4tMuJpkXkJUo7UtnyA0Em-7zFfKMsf4LpZUUkIOVkSpNWJvMbSbFPp1VO1Ww%3D%3D&expnd=1) wire whose vibrating length can be adjusted with a [movable](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&sca_esv=578119922&q=movable&si=ALGXSlZCBshTM3a3nPTSW0d1OmQe3JI40lU6NZNsilJ9QSOlayXZVoRosD0ejXWY5TJ3h2cpiovPT7d0sWbuovxTXhEhnTjEXw%3D%3D&expnd=1) bridge

**pitch**: the degree of [highness](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&sca_esv=578119922&q=highness&si=ALGXSlaYxyllm14_NEvUA9w95SVcN9giqwb9rnQ7AJlIhl9smv5ez6LUroG7IyHH2ZFNZnFjBBneBe4Riepwz4bsthYC59S7w3dDV2OvM3Qwc2e6iGP0X20%3D&expnd=1) or lowness of a tone

**timbre**: sound quality

**bridge**: a device that supports the [strings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strings_%28music%29) on a [stringed musical instrument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stringed_instrument), such as a guitar or violin

**keep in time with one another**: keep time, synchronize, harmonize

**READING** **Music of Ancient Greece**

The word *music* (Gr., *μουσική*) comes from the [Muses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muses) (Gr., *Μούσες*), daughters of [Zeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeus) and patron goddesses of creative and intellectual endeavours - science, literature and the arts. According to [Greek mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_mythology), music, instruments, and the aural arts are attributed to divine origin, and the art of music was gift of the gods to men. The history of music in ancient Greece is closely interwoven with Greek mythology and legend, so that it is often difficult to conjecture what is historically true and what is myth.

Music was present in [ancient Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) society in various ways: during times of initiation, worship, [religious ceremonies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_ancient_Greece), festivals, symposia, dance, weddings, funerals, artistic activities, recitation of poetry. There are some fragments of actual Greek [musical notation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musical_notation), many literary references, [depictions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greek_vase_painting) on [ceramics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pottery_of_ancient_Greece) and relevant [archaeological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeology) remains, such that some things can be known, or reasonably surmised, about what the music sounded like.

Our understanding of ancient Greek music theory, musical systems, and musical ethos comes almost entirely from the surviving teachings of the [Pythagoreans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoreanism), [Ptolemy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy), [Philodemus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philodemus), [Aristoxenus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristoxenus), [Aristides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristides_Quintilianus), and [Plato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato). The Pythagoreans focused on the mathematics and the acoustical science of sound and music. They developed tuning systems and harmonic principles that focused on simple integers and ratios, laying a foundation for acoustic science. [Pythagoras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoras), in particular, believed that music was subject to the same mathematical laws of harmony as the mechanics of the cosmos, evolving into an idea known as *the* [*music of the spheres*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musica_universalis). After studying the sound hammers made in a blacksmith's forge, Pythagoras invented the [monochord](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monochord), which has a movable bridge along with a string stretched over a sounding board. Using the monochord, he found the association between the vibrations and the lengths of the strings.

According to Plato in the *Republic*, Pericles' teacher Damon said, "when fundamental modes of music change, the fundamental modes of the state change with them." Music and [gymnastics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gymnastics) comprised the main divisions in one's schooling. "The word 'music' expressed the entire education".

Instruments were also present in war time, though it may not have been considered music entirely. Specific notes of the trumpet were played to dictate commands to soldiers on the battlefield. The aulos and percussion instruments also accompanied the verbal commands given to oarsmen by the boatswain. The instruments were used mainly to help keep the oarsmen in time with one another.

**FURTHER READING**

In ancient Greece, music was held to have therapeutic effects on physical and mental ailments and illnesses, as well as “a moral and emotional effect on the listener and his or her soul; in short, that music has an ethical role in society.” Thus, later on, when different kinds of songs mixed, such as “dirges with hymns and paeans with dithyrambs” or “flute-tunes with harp-tunes,”Plato disapproved of these changes in music because they were considered morally dangerous in his ideal republic.”

In his *Laws*, Platocomplains about the dissonance and lack of harmony caused by and concerning not only the new music but also attitudes, behaviours and human affairs:

“Our music was once divided into its proper forms. ... It was not permitted to exchange the melodic styles of these established forms and others. Knowledgeand informed judgment penalized disobedience. There were no whistles, unmusical mob-noises, or clapping for applause. The rule was to listen silently and learn; boys, teachers, and the crowd were kept in order by threat of the stick. ... But later, an unmusical anarchy was led by poets who had natural talent, but were ignorant of the laws of music. ... Through foolishness they deceived themselves into thinking that there was no right or wrong way in music, that it was to be judged good or bad by the pleasure it gave. By their works and their theories, they infected the masses with the presumption to think themselves adequate judges. So our theatres, once silent, grew vocal, and aristocracy of music gave way to a pernicious [theatrocracy](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/theatrocracy) ... the criterion was not music, but a reputation for promiscuous cleverness and a spirit of law-breaking. … Thinking themselves knowing, men became fearless; and audacity begat effrontery. For to be fearless [701b] of the opinion of a better man, owing to self-confidence, is nothing else than base effrontery; and it is brought about by a liberty that is audacious to excess.”

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**TASKS.**

**Task 1.** *Multiple Choice*.

Circle the correct answers.

1. To the ancient Greeks, music was regarded as a way of:
2. healing physical illnesses
3. healing mental illnesses
4. healing both physical and mental illnesses
5. In ancient Greece, music affected the listener:
6. morally
7. emotionally
8. both morally and emotionally
9. When different kinds of songs started to mix, Plato …
10. welcomed these changes in music
11. disapproved of these changes in music
12. did not mind these changes in music
13. [Poets] “infected the masses” implies that they:

**(a)** destroyed people

**(b)** harmed people’s character

**(c)** infected people with a virus

1. A liberty that is “audacious to excess” means:
2. A liberty that shows extreme lack of respect towards others
3. A liberty that shows great respect for the community
4. A liberty that shows great indifference to others

**Task 2.** *Spot the words*.

In the sentences below, there are nine (9) words found in the above text, titled: FURTHER READING. The forms of the words may differ from the original ones. Can you spot them?

**1.** Nikos Kazantzakis is an established author, whose works are well-known around the world.

**2.** He greeted her warmly, with a lack of ceremony.

**3.** People’s moral values and behaviour are assets in a community.

**4.** Oftentimes, it is ignorance that leads people to becoming presumptuous.

**5.** John Keats, who wrote “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, is one of the best-known romantic poets.

**6.** Disobedience is a sign that someone is dissatisfied with the social norms imposed on him or her.

**7.** Freedom comes with self-knowledge, when the mind goes above and beyond the hindrances it has created for itself. [- Quote by: Jiddu Krishnamurti]

**Task 3.** *Team Work or Individual Work*.

1. Use the internet to find a short video on ancient music and/or ancient musical instruments. Remember to make a note of the wording as well as the link you will use, to find the video. In this way, you will know how to retrieve it next time.
2. Make a note of the words you wish to remember while listening.
3. Make an oral or a written summary of the video for later reference.

**Task 4.** *Writing*.

* Describe your personal experience with music, whether it is a music concert you once attended or if you play an instrument solo, or in a band, etc.

**Task 5.** *Food for thought*.

* Can you imagine a world without music and what it would be like?
* How much does music influence your emotions, your disposition, your thoughts or your creativity?