



# MUSIC THROUGH HISTORY



**3° ESO**

**ESTER LÓPEZ CARRICHES**

**JORGE BENAYAS AYUSO**



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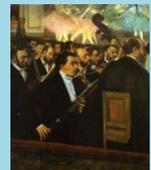
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# LESSON 1.- ANCIENT GREEK MUSIC

## THE BEGINNING OF OUR MUSIC HISTORY



## 1.- INTRODUCTION: ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANCIENT GREECE

### **About politics and society:**

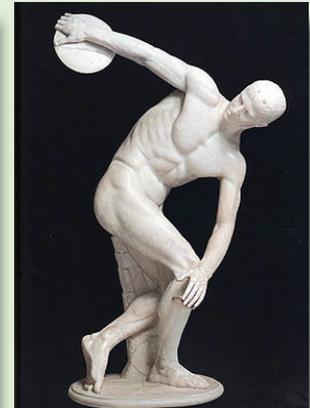
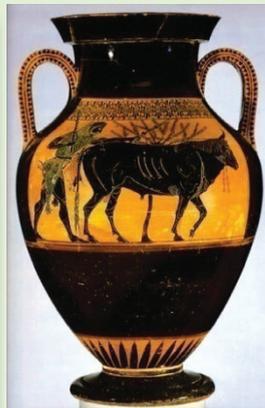
The origin of many words that we still use nowadays such as politics, democracy, forum...

### **About science and knowledge:**

The beginning of philosophy (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle) of science (Pythagoras, Archimedes, Euclid) of History, Medicine...

### **About arts:**

The beginning of European literature, great achievements in architecture, sculpture, ceramics.



### **About leisure time and sports:**

The first Olympic games, the origin of sports such as athletics or gymnastics; the first theatre, with both tragedies and comedies.



### **About music:**

The words muse and music, the beginning of music theory, the invention of musical instruments, the first musical notation (with letters), the use of music in the theatre....

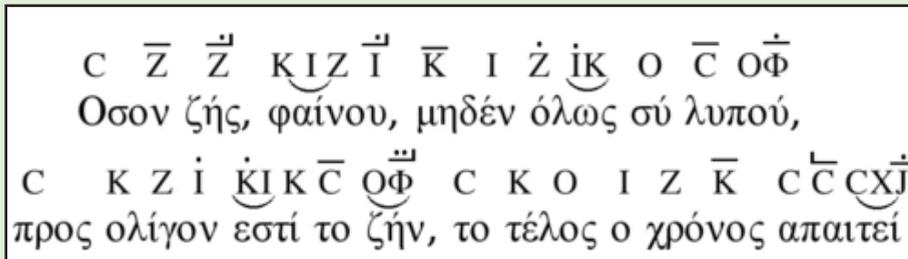


## 2.- MUSIC SOURCES OF THIS PERIOD

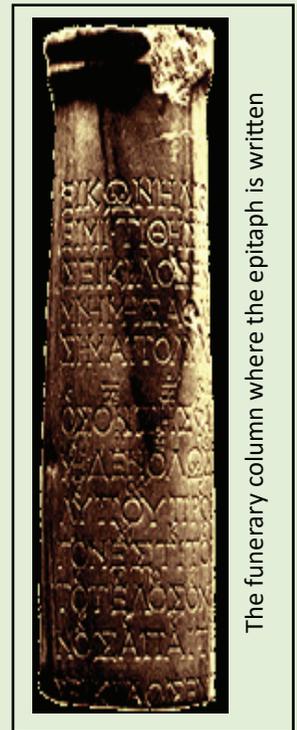
A) **Surviving music:** we have several pieces of Greek music, carved on stone or written on papyrus.

The first complete surviving song of the history is the **Seikilos Epitaph**, a song carved on a grave the 2nd century B.C. in Turkey (it was part of the Greek empire) that says:

*'Be happy while you are alive, don't worry about anything,  
life is too short and in the end time demands its toll.'*



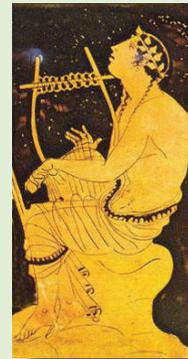
The lyrics of the epitaph with the alphabetic notation with the rhythmic patterns above.



The funerary column where the epitaph is written

B) **Archaeological remains:** sculptures and decorated ceramics.

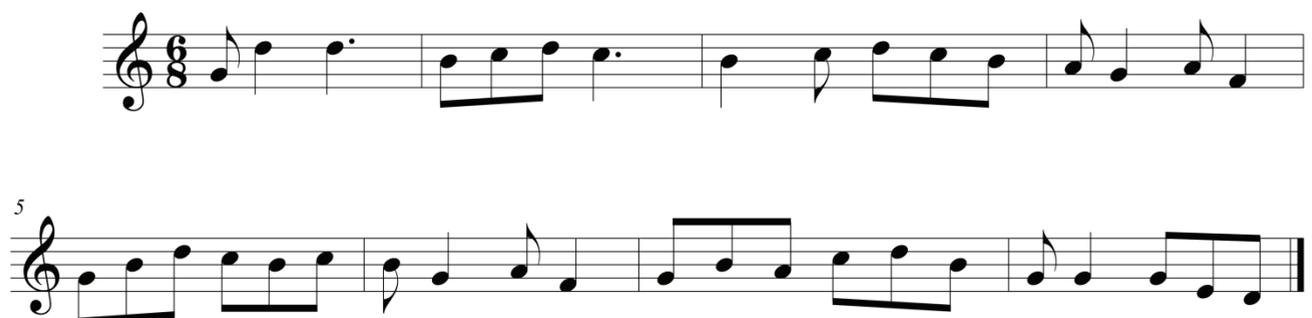
C) **Texts about music** in literature, myths, philosophy and music theory.



**Activity 1.- Plato said:** "Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything."

Do you agree with him?

**Activity 2.- Play this modern transcription of the Seikilos Epitaph:**



### 3.- MUSICAL SYSTEM

- ✓ The word **Music** comes from the nine **muses** (goddesses of the arts).
- ✓ The concept of “Music” involves the music itself but also **poetry** and **dancing**.
- ✓ **Music and Physical Education** were the most important subjects in Ancient Greece.
- ✓ The **notation system was alphabetic**. (the sounds were written with letters).
- ✓ There were several **rhythmic patterns**, based on the combination of short and long sounds: LS, SL, LSS, etc. Every pattern had a name.
- ✓ **The voices were accompanied** by instruments, which played almost the same melody.
- ✓ The melodies were based on **4 modes**: four descending scales based on 4 notes.
- ✓ They were called Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian and Mixolydian. Every mode was associated to a particular *ethos* or feeling.
- ✓ **Plato and Aristotle** thought that music had a great influence on the character of the people and the feelings. In their opinion music should be **controlled** by the political powers and educators.
- ✓ **Pythagoras** found out how to get the **main intervals** with a **monochord** (a musical instrument with just one string):

$\frac{1}{2}$  of the string produces the octave (from do: do’).

$\frac{2}{3}$  of the string produces the fifth (from do: sol).

$\frac{3}{4}$  of the string produces the fourth (from do: fa).

These intervals were the base of the harmony, the sounds that they considered as consonants (nice sounding).

He thought that the planets produced these intervals when turning. As we are used to them, we don’t realize it. That was the “**music of the spheres**”.

**Activity 3.- Fill in the chart with the information above.**

About the pitch (notes, scales, intervals, etc)	
About the duration (rhythm)	
About the timbre (instruments and voices)	
About the origin of music and its meaning	
About the importance of music	

## 4.- GREEK MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

### 4.1.- Wind instruments

**Lyre:** It was a string instrument with four, seven or ten strings made of gut. The resonator was made of a turtle shell at first. It had two curved arms connected by a crossbar. The strings were stretched between the crossbar and the resonator. The lyre was played with a plectrum. It accompanied the recitation of poetry.



### 4.2.- String instruments

**Aulos:** It was a double reed instrument with two pipes. It was like an ancient oboe. It was used for martial music, sports, sacrifices and dramas. Sometimes a leather stripe was worn to avoid excessive strain on the lips and cheeks.

**Pan pipes:** It had several pipes made of reeds of different lengths. The longer the pipe, the lower the pitch and the shorter the pipe the higher the pitch.



**Activity 4.- Find other images of Ancient Greek instruments. Stick the images here.**

## 5.- MYTHS ABOUT MUSIC AND THE ORIGIN OF SOME INSTRUMENTS

Work with your partner. Listen to the myth that your partner is going to explain and then answer the questions.

**1. Marsyas** was a satyr who challenged Apollo to a contest of music. He had found an aulos on the ground, tossed away after being invented by Athena because it made her cheeks puffy. The contest was judged by the Muses. After they each performed, both were deemed equal until Apollo decreed they play and sing at the same time. As Apollo played the lyre, this was easy to do. Apollo was declared the winner because of this. He then hung Marsyas from a tree and flayed him alive.

- Who was Marsyas?
- Why did Athena throw the aulos away after having invented it?
- Why did Apollo win the contest?
- What did Apollo do with Marsyas after winning the contest?

**2. Eurydice** was a nymph. She was the wife of **Orpheus**, who loved her dearly. One day, a satyr saw and pursued Eurydice, who stepped on a venomous snake, dying instantly. Distraught, Orpheus played and sang so mournfully that all the nymphs and gods wept and told him to travel to the Underworld and retrieve her. After his music softened the hearts of **Hades** and **Persephone**, he was allowed to take her back to the world of the living. In another version, Orpheus played his lyre to put **Cerberus**, the guardian of Hades, to sleep, after which Eurydice was allowed to return with Orpheus. Either way, the condition was attached to that he must walk in front of her and not look back until both had reached the upper world. However, soon he began to doubt that she was there and that Hades had deceived him. He turned around to look at her and Eurydice vanished back into the Underworld.

- Who was Eurydice and who was her husband?
- Why did Eurydice die?
- Where did Orpheus go and what did he do to retrieve his wife?
- Which was the condition to allow Eurydice come back to the upper world?

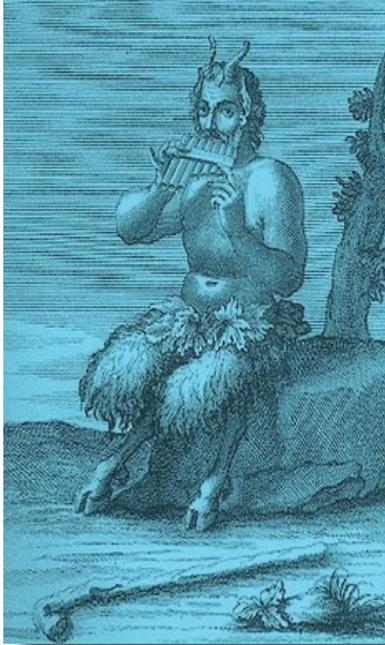
3. The god **Hermes** stole some of **Apollo's** cows. While he was running away he found a turtle and killed it. He used the shell to make the first **lyre**, with strings made of intestines from one of the cows. When Apollo found out that Hermes was the thief, he was angry but Hermes began to play the lyre. Apollo loved it and made a deal with Hermes: he could keep the cattle in exchange for the lyre.

- How did Hermes do the first lyre?
  
- Why Apollo was angry at Hermes?
  
- What deal did Hermes and Apollo make?

4. **Pan** was the god of the wild, shepherds and flocks, nature, mountain wilds, hunting and rustic music. He has the legs and horns of a goat, the same as a faun or satyr. **Syrinx** was a lovely water-nymph. As she was returning from the hunt one day, Pan met her. The nymph ran away and didn't stop to hear his compliments. He followed her until she came to her sisters who immediately changed her into a reed. When the air blew through the reeds, it produced a melody. The god took some of the reeds and cut seven pieces, joined them side by side in gradually decreasing lengths, and formed the musical instrument that was called **Syrinx**.

- Who was Pan?
  
- Who was Syrinx?
  
- What did Syrinx's sisters change her into?
  
- What did Pan do with the reeds?

Activity 5.- Label these images with the myths that they depict: Orpheus and Eurydice, Apollo and Marsyas, Pan and Syrinx and Apollo's lyre.



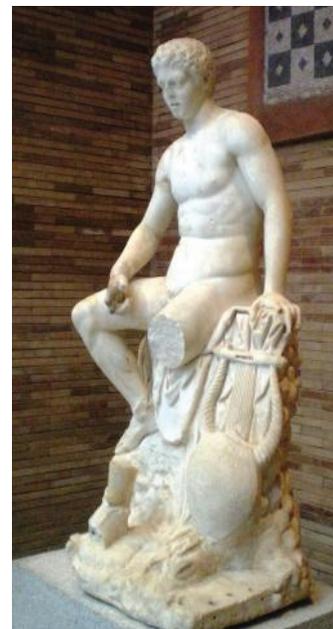
1.



2.



3.



4.

## KEY VOCABULARY

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANCIENT GREEK CULTURE

SOURCES

MUSICAL SYSTEM

INSTRUMENTS

MYTHS

