

RCM Sparks Explorers

Singing the RCM Museum to Life Project

Sensational Music-making, Storytelling and Theatricality

The inspiration for this activity pack is an item from the RCM Museum.

The Peaceful Pigeon

RCM Sparks is the Royal College of Music's learning and participation programme.
To find out more and get involved visit www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks

These beautiful instruments from the RCM Museum make us think of animals! The rattle makes us think of a snake, slithering through the grass. The drum makes us think of a gorilla beating its chest. The trumpet makes us think of an elephant trumpeting its trunk!



Side-blown trumpet made from varnished wood



West-African Rattle



West-African Hourglass Drum

Activity 1: Watch the attached film: 'The Peaceful Pigeon'.

Activity 2: Now write out the story of 'The Peaceful Pigeon' in your own words using Anna the Storyteller's story structure below:

MAIN CHARACTER: Describe the main character of the story and where we find her at the start of the story.

AIM OF THE MAIN CHARACTER: What does she want more than anything?

PROBLEMS: What difficulties does the main character experience as she tries to achieve her aim?

HELPERS: Who does the main character meet on the way to help her achieve her aim?

RESOLUTION: How is the story resolved in the end?

MESSAGE: What do you think is the main message of this story for us today?

Activity 3:

The Pigeon story is inspired by beautiful bird whistles that are in the RCM Museum. These whistles would have been tied to the tail feathers of birds like pigeons, and make a wonderful sound as the air passes through them when they fly.

Here is a picture that shows a whistle on a pigeon:



The story in the video is about a pigeon who flies to different countries and then visits Nigeria - she meets a Viper, Gorilla and an Elephant - animals that make music with their bodies and realise that they are musicians, just like the Pigeon.

Here is an example of a Pigeon puppet that you can make at home:



Your Pigeon could fly around and then talk to the different animals in the story! Why not blow across the top of a bottle, or a whistle, or use a recorder or other instrument to make the sound of the bird whistle. You could play your whistle sound as a rhythm, like the words, 'Pig-eon of Peace, fly over land'.

Activity 4: Animal Composing Challenge

Can you make the sounds of a Viper, a Gorilla and an Elephant on your voice or on instruments? Can you insert the animal sounds into your story?

If you have a rattle at home, you could use it to pretend to be a Viper moving through the grass or over some bark on a tree. Or you could use a keyboard or piano, and use very close black and white notes to play a snaky tune! Or you could hiss and make snaky sounds with your mouth!

If you have a drum, or a pan and spoon at home, you could beat it near your chest, just like the Gorilla in the film - can you make up a Gorilla rhythm on your drum? You could also use low notes on a keyboard or other instrument.

If you have a recorder, or other instrument you can blow down, you could pretend to be the Elephant! Use it like the trumpet player in the video - he is pretending his trumpet is the Elephant's trunk! You can also make Elephant sounds with your mouth and use your arm like a trunk!

Put your sounds into your story about the Peaceful Pigeon visiting the animals!