

Music Activity set by Duncan Chave, the Composer of our production of Gulliver's Travels

The composition for Gulliver's Travels draws upon music from around the world. Gulliver travels to different places that look, feel and sound strangely different to Gulliver and are also uniquely different from each other. To achieve this the music uses a variety of sounds and textures but also alternating musical modes and scales.

About the Gamelan

The music of Lilliput is based on the sound of the Gamelan. A Gamelan is an Indonesian ensemble set of instruments using metallophones, xylophones, gongs, and drums which are made together and meant to stay together. Balinese gamelan instruments are commonly played in pairs that are tuned slightly apart to produce interference beats, which help create a shimmering meditative sound. Although all Gamelans are tuned differently and sound unique a commonly used Gamelan scale roughly approximates to that of the phrygian mode of the Western major scale (E-E on the white keys of the piano), with the notes EFGBC forming a five note "slendro" scale. In Indonesia, Gamelans often accompany dance, "wayang" puppet performances, or rituals and ceremonies and are often accompanied by bamboo flutes, stringed instruments and singers.

Activity: Do-it-yourself Gamelan

A simple Gamelan orchestra can be made using chimes, xylophones, drums and percussion. Using a five note scale, like the one above, and short repeating phrases a piece can be built up from cyclic patterns.

Here's an example:-

<http://vimeo.com/37577737>

Sea Shanty

A shanty is a work song played and sung aboard a ship to keep everyone working in time. On a large sailing ship, pulling ropes to raise and lower sails and turning the capstan to raise and lower the anchor, required many hands working together and the songs helped everyone synchronise their movements. Often the shanty would have a call and response with a soloist, the shantyman, leading and the other workers providing the chorus.

The shanty in Gulliver's Travels uses a five note, pentatonic, scale GBbCDF. This type of scale is common around the world and is found in folk and children's songs like Amazing Grace, Auld Lang Syne and Old MacDonald, as well as music from Japan and Debussy.

Activity:

Listen to and learn a song from the show, so you can sing along when you come to see Gulliver's Travels.

You can find the Sea Shanty song on our blog <http://gulliverstravels-curve.tumblr.com/> here you can also ask questions to characters from the show.

