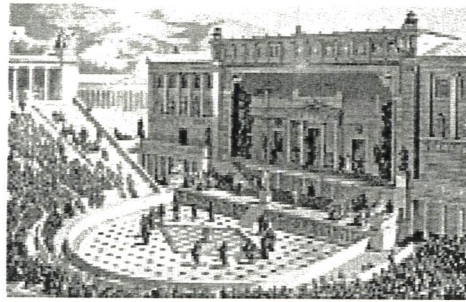


## Greek Theatre



Greek theatre began over 2,500 years ago. It began in the religious festivals that honored Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and the harvest. The festivals grew in popularity and importance until, at its peak, the great theatre festival in Athens lasted six days. Over 15,000 people attended the festival each year.

The earliest plays were stories told by a chorus of men and boys. According to legend, one day a man named Thespis stepped out of the chorus and spoke alone. The chorus then responded to his speeches. Thespis was the first actor. Today we call actors *Thespians* in his honor. Later, the number of actors increased to three in addition to the chorus. Each actor in the Greek theatre played more than one role. To portray different roles, the actor wore different masks. The masks of comedy and tragedy have become symbols of the theatre.

Greek authors entered their plays in contests for the festival. The winning playwright won a prize of money and an ivy wreath to wear as a symbol of victory. Greek theatre had many important playwrights. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote *tragedies* (drama in which the main character suffers a disastrous end). Aristophanes and Menander wrote *comedies* (light, humorous dramas with a happy ending). A special type of play called the *satyr play* made fun of the Greek legends. We get our word *satire* from this. Some of the most famous Greek plays were *Oedipus*, *Antigone*, *Electra*, *Medea*, *The Birds*, and *The Frogs*. The great Greek philosopher and teacher, Aristotle, wrote *The Poetics*. In this book he discussed the theater of his time. Aristotle discussed important topics of the theater including *plot* (what happens), *theme* (the idea or message), *character*, *music*, *diction* (speech), and *spectacle* (what was seen). Aristotle became the first literary critic.

The Greeks built their theatres on hillsides. They used the natural slope of the hill for seating the audience. A large circular area called the *orchestra* was located at the foot of the hill. It was here that the members of the chorus moved as they chanted their lines. Behind the orchestra was a raised platform on which the actors performed. A small building named the *skene* was built in the back of the acting platform. The skene was where the actors changed masks. The Greeks used the front wall of the skene to represent the location of the play. Our word *scene* comes from skene.

The Greek theatre also had special machinery including platforms on wheels and a device to lower an actor from the top of the skene house onto the stage. They used this device to show a god coming down to earth. The Greeks also used scenery to help give locations for the action of the play.

Most historians agree that the Greek era is one of the most important times in theatre history.

# Chinese Music 音樂

Traditional music in China is played on solo instruments or in small ensembles. Ensembles usually consist of plucked and bowed stringed instruments, flutes, and various cymbals, gongs, and drums.

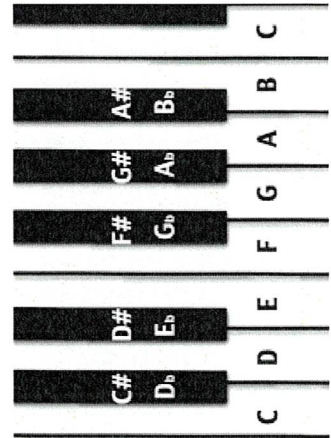
The Chinese scale is pentatonic (five notes).

Bamboo pipes are among the oldest known musical instruments from China.

Since the end of the 20th century pop music in mainland China has experienced a rise in popularity. The beginning of the 21st century has seen mainland Chinese artists producing a wide range of Mandarin pop songs and the release of many new albums.

**Key words:**

- Solo** - one instrument/voice playing on it's own
- Ensemble** - a group of instruments/voices playing together
- Plucked** - where the strings are 'plucked' with the fingers
- Bowed** - where the strings are played with a bow
- Scale** - a series of notes going up (ascending) and down (descending)
- Pentatonic** - a set of 5 notes (*pent* means 5)



The black notes on the keyboard are called **sharps** and **flats**.  
**Sharps** are on the right of the white notes  
 - the symbol is **#**  
**Flats** are on the left of the white notes  
 - the symbol is **b**

**Home Learning** - Read and use the information on the left side of the sheet to answer the questions. **You will be tested on this next lesson.**

1	What does the word 'solo' mean?	
2	What does the word 'ensemble' mean?	
3	What does the word 'plucked' mean?	
4	What does the word 'bowed' mean?	
5	What is a scale?	
6	Which instruments are among the oldest from China?	
7	What is the symbol for sharps?	
8	What is the symbol for flats?	

Name the black keys, making sure you give both names for each note (number 1 is done for you):

1 = <u>C#</u> or <u>D<sub>b</sub></u>	
2 = _____ or _____	
3 = _____ or _____	
4 = _____ or _____	
5 = _____ or _____	