



KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: WORLD MUSIC 1



Ritual music A ceremony that involves a series of actions performed according to a set order. Today, birthdays, weddings, funerals and other traditional and religious ceremonies in all cultures follow some kind of ritual. Music plays a huge part in rituals.

- *The Maya of Mexico and Central America have performed music for over 2000years
- *No written music has survived but we know lots about Mayan Music through art and archaeology
- *Music was a major factor in Mayan society. Music would accompany funerals, celebrations and other rituals. Music had an important role in warfare as well as communicating with the gods

*The Mayans played trumpets, flutes, whistles and drums. Instruments were often buried with the dead to help with their passing into the 'next world.' Trumpets could be made from wood or clay. Conch shells were also used to make musical



instruments. Flutes were carved from clay and tortoise shells made fantastic drums. A rasp drum had an unusual sound. It had a drum head and a bowed string—see pic. A string was stretched between a drum head and a stick while another stick was pulled across the stretched string. The trumpets and the rasp drums would have created eerily low sounds



*The unusual sounds may have been used to surprise and provoke fear in others. Music would have been played to intimidate the opposition as well as to excite the warriors in battle

*Music played a similar role in animal and human sacrifice. Musicians followed processions, exciting the spectators and putting the participants into a trance-like state



*Musical instruments were frequently buried in tombs suggesting that music accompanied funerals to ease the passage to the spirit world

*Music was an essential means of communicating with the gods and other spiritual beings

Xtoles

- *This is probably the oldest Mayan melody.
- *It is a Warrior Dance Song dedicated to the Sun God.
- *Xtoles is pronounced 'chi-tol-les.'
- *It is like a prayer to the sun reminding it to come back in the spring.



Here is the opening phrase—have a go at playing it

Melody—(DBBABG, DBBABG, DDAAAAAAAAAEEG)

Rhythm—(spider, ladybird, bee, spider, ladybird, bee, spider, bee, bee, ladybird, ladybird, spider, worm)

Mayan Gods and Sacrifice

The Maya worshipped many gods. Mayan gods could change themselves into human and animal shapes. Priests performed ceremonies to keep the gods happy. The Sun God was one of the most important gods of the Maya. They believed in making blood sacrifices to keep him happy.

