

Mole Music

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ABOUT THE STORY

When Mole hears the beautiful music a violin makes, he decides to get one for himself. He practices every day and learns to make beautiful music, too. Alone in his hole, Mole imagines the effect his music might have on the world. As he plays, his music has an effect even more wonderful than he could imagine.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

David McPhail trained as an illustrator at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts. He now lives in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He has written and illustrated over 70 books for children. His unusual view of animals and their behavior has its roots in a cat he once had that performed dog tricks.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to describe the most beautiful music they have ever heard. Have them explain how the music made them feel. Tell them that the book they will read is about the effect of beautiful music on the world.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “Where does Mole first hear the violin music?”
- “How does Mole become a fine violinist?”
- “Who are some of the people Mole imagines playing for?”
- “What effect does Mole’s music have on people’s hearts?” (*Draw conclusions*)
- “How does Mole’s music change the world?” (*Draw conclusions*)
- “Do you think music can change people’s hearts?” Explain your answer (*Express opinions*)

Vocabulary

Have children match the words from the story with their suffixes. Then ask them to use each word in a sentence.

beauty	ness
horrible	ful
sad	ful
peace	ly

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Music: Listen to Violins

Play some violin music for the children by artists such as Itzhak Perlman and Isaac Stern. Have children write down descriptions of what the music makes them think of and how it makes them feel.

Social Studies: History of the Violin

Have children work in small groups to look in encyclopedias and other reference nooks to find out about the history of the violin. Groups can write brief reports about the violin’s role in history.

Music: String Instruments

Have violins, violas, cellos, guitars, banjos, or other stringed instruments available for children to try. Encourage them to pluck and play the instruments. Discuss with them the difference among the sounds the instruments create.

Health: Effects of Music

Point out to children that scientists have found that music can affect people’s moods and behavior – and even their health. Play various types of music for children: dramatic classical music, funny folk songs, loud dance music, and so on. Have children describe how each piece of music affects their moods.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Famous Violinists

Have children go online to research famous violinists. Some keywords to try are Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, and Pinchas Zuckerman. Children can write brief biographical sketches of the artist they choose.