Chaami Buddu and Music from Nature

Deep in the jungle as Chaami, Buddu and their friends moved, they heard a chorus! A chorus of trees rubbing each other... karak, karak...kiri...karak...karak..... kar...They all halted to listen to a voice that was coming from all over...chi...chi...chi...chi...Their teacher Julia informed them that it was the music of cricket insects. As they walked through the bushes slowly, they heard the ruffling of leaves- parak...parak...parak...... Chaami said, “this sound is so soothing.” They moved quietly towards the river side, where the bamboo clumps greeted them with their cacophonous sound.... katak...katak...kiri karak...katak.... Buddu smiled and said, “I heard few birds chit chatting with each other...chit...chit...chit...chit... Heard a barbet call which echoed the forest...” Like this each child shared their experience. They got so involved with nature by just listening, that they almost forgot their lunch time. Soon, Rakshit, said, I can hear my stomach growling. They all had their packed boxes, which was quite sumptuous. Few of them burped too. They all laughed and carried on observing nature.

Then their teacher invited them to the forest nursery nearby to explore making musical instruments using plants. As they walked, Chaami found gigantic Akash malligae tree. They have just begun blooming. Their white flowers looked like a long tube. She picked up a few fallen flowers on the ground and started making a weird sound out of the flower. All the kids were tempted with the strange musical instrument, and walked behind their Bagpiper, Chaami. They sang in chorus, pi pi... pipi...puii...Hi...ha....

Julia said, “Now kids stop! We will make a whistle, out of Hongae leaves. Hongae is a beautiful evergreen tree”. Chandana said, “my mother says, shade of this tree is considered to be mother’s womb. I know this tree”. She ran towards the tree with the drooping branches, decked with light green leaves and small flowers in bunches. She felt few tender leaves and plucked few of them. She gave it to Julia to show kids how to make a whistle. She then rolled the leaf like a beedi roll, held in gently and made a weird shrill sound.... pi......pi....

By now, the sun seemed to be hitting them all. Most of the kids were tired. They just ran towards shade and drank fresh tender coconut water. Rakshit, then sprang up and ran towards the dwarf coconut trees. He plucked a coconut leaflet, removed the middle vein and made a ribbon like structure. He rolled it carefully and then made a sound like pur...pi...pi...pi

As they walked through the nursery, Chaami found some unusual bunches of fruits on a dried herb. She just moved it once and then continued doing it for a while like a rattle. She just enjoyed playing with it. “Look we can use this during our annual day chorus”. Um... such a pleasant background note. This was backed up by cuckoo call... kuoooo kuoooo... all of them nodded

As they walked and got into the bus, Julia told them about some interesting musical instruments from plants.
Making Music

Music is always Soothing! More so when the instruments are made from the plants!!

A vast array of folk musical instruments is made ingeniously from a variety of plant materials. Shells of dried gourds of all shapes and sizes are used for some instruments, bamboo segments for flutes and the resulting resonating sounds and jingles create rasping rhythms and melodious music. Come children! Soak yourself into the world of Natural Music!!

Ektara bole.....Tun...Tun...Tun...

The Ektara or Gopiyantha is a popular one stringed musical instrument played by folk singers and fakirs in Bengal. It is made from a bottle gourd, wood apple or coconut shell. Music from this rhythmic instrument can simply be soul-stirring.

Teak from Timberland goes to Music land

Sitar, Rudra veena, Vichitra veena and Saraswati veenas are made of a hollow tube of teak wood on which strings are attached.

Hinnari

Hinnari is a musical instrument with a pair of gourds (Lagenaria siceraria) belonging to pumpkin family. The sounding portion of Hinnari is made from two hollowed-out gourds. Gourds have been used by many societies for making musical instruments because of their ability to produce a resonating sound when hollow.

Snake Charmer's 'Been' or 'Pungi'

The pungi is typically one to two feet in length. It consists of two reeds or bamboo tubes. One of which is for the melody and the other is for the drone. These are attached to a larger cavity made of gourd or coconut, inside of which are two reeds. These reeds vibrate when air is passed over them.
Ravanhatta

The ravanhatta is a two-string stick fiddle from Northwest India used by religious singers called bhopa to accompany the epic tales of Pabuji, a fourteenth century hero. It is has a wooden body and a small coconut resonator covered in skin. There is one melody string made from horsehair, a single metal drone string and a number of sympathetic strings. The bow has a number of small bells attached to provide rhythmic accompaniment.

Khomok or Anandalahari

The khomok is a tension drum of the Baul people of Bengal, also known as gubgubi. It has a skin head pierced by a string, which passes through the wooden drum-shaped body to attach to a small brass handle. The khomok is played by placing the drum body under the arm and plucking the string while pulling on the brass handle, which applies tension to the string and drum head. Variations of tension on the string produce a surprising vocal-like sound.

Kartal or Wooden Clappers

Kartal are a pair of wooden blocks or frames with small metal jingles mounted in them. They are simply beaten together to provide a rhythmic support to bhajan, kirtan, folk and other light music.

Bansuri and Venu

Bansuri and Venu are common Indian flutes. They are typically made of bamboo or reed.

Shehnai

No Indian marriage ceremony can be considered complete without a Shehnai rendition. The shehnai is a member of the conical double reed family although it actually has a multiple reed that can embody four or six reeds. The reeds are made from folding a leaf and cutting it so that when it is bound to the mouthpiece, the reed spreads with an equal amount of tongues on both sides. In the hands of a great player the shehnai creates a fluid tone rich in subtleties and expression.
BOTANICAL ORCHESTRA

Shake, Rattle and Blow

Children! Are you all interested in Music? Now, here is your chance to become music directors and orchestrate a symphony using the botanical music instruments. The instruments can be as simple as using the plant leaves and, dried flowers and twigs.

Number of Children required - the more the merrier

Arrange the group into a circle; the leader starts off by using his/her hands to create a sound followed by each child playing his botanical music instrument one by one. In between the instrument sound, you may have sounds of shuffling and tapping feet, rubbing hands together and silence too.

Feel the mud between your toes and can create your own funny lyrics such as:
First verse: I’d rather walk in wiggly mud than smell a yellow rose.
Second verse: I really don’t like wiggly mud. I’d rather smell a rose.

Those children singing the first verse can be those who like the feel of the mud, and those children singing the second verse can be those who would rather smell a rose. The endless fun continues...

The child who comes up with the most innovative instrument and melody deserves a big cheer. Enjoy the music!!

QUOTE GARDEN

- A painter paints pictures on canvas. But musicians paint their pictures on silence.
- Without music life would be a mistake.
- Take a music bath once or twice a week for a few seasons. You will find it is to the soul what a water bath is to the body.
- There’s music in the sighing of a reed; There’s music in the gushing of a rill; There’s music in all things, if men had ears: Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.
- Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.
- The discovery of song and the creation of musical instruments both owed their origin to a human impulse which lies much deeper than conscious intention: the need for rhythm in life... the need is a deep one, transcending thought, and disregarded at our peril.

PLANT FUN FACTS

- A notch in a tree will remain the same distance from the ground as the tree grows.
- No species of wild plant produces a flower or blossom that is absolutely black, and so far, none has been developed artificially.
- Nutmeg is extremely poisonous if injected intravenously.
- Peanuts are beans.
- Asparagus is a member of the lily family, which also includes onions, leeks, and garlic.
- The bright orange colour of carrots tell you they are an excellent source of Vitamin A which is important for good eyesight, especially at night. Vitamin A helps your body fight infection, and keeps your skin and hair healthy.
- Onions contain a mild antibiotic that fights infections, soothes burns, tames bee stings and relieves the itch of athlete’s foot.
- 84% of a raw apple and 96% of a raw cucumber is water.