



**SUNDERLAND  
CULTURE**



Lesson plan created by Alex Beeching  
on behalf of Sunderland Culture

# The Monster Orchestra or Band

A classroom resource inspired by monsters and music

Arts  
Centre  
Washington



Northern Gallery for  
Contemporary Art



**SUNDERLAND**  
MUSEUM & WINTER GARDENS



**Target key stage:** 7-11 year olds /KS1 to KS2

**Recommended duration:** About 90 mins to 2 hours

**Key themes:** art, shapes, monsters through the ages such as the chimera, the notion of hybrids, debate, definitions, musical instruments



**Resource Aim:** To encourage pupils to use their imaginations to create a monster orchestra.

**What you will need:** (pens, pencils, pencil crayons, crayons, paper)

This fun and accessible activity sees children and parents create a monster band or orchestra in paint or felt tip pen.

To better help them visualise their creations, here are three mini activities to get you started:

## a) Monster Consequences

Each participant is given a sheet of paper and asked to draw an animal, part of an animal (e.g. a horn, a trunk a crest etc.) or indeed an inanimate object.

Each player then folds the paper over so as to hide the most recent drawing, after which he or she hands it to the next person. At the end of the game, the resulting creatures are shown and discussed.

## b) “Mermouse”

Starting with the suffix ‘mer,’ participants are invited to think something other than mermaid. Thus: mermouse, merhawk, mermonkey etc...

## c) Mix and match

Using the illustrations provided, participants first print out a series of illustrations of fantastic beasts. Having done so, they cut along the dotted lines and begin creating hybrid creatures by mixing and matching various heads and bodies.

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## Notes

Do use the templates provided both the monster bodies and musical instruments. Or better still have a go at creating your own. As well as your monster, try designing a new instrument. What might it look like? How would you play it? Would it play itself? Perhaps you could combine monster and instrument and so what happens. **Remember: the rule is there are no rules!**

**There are countless ways of creating monsters. Here are just a few:**

by adding (eyes, limbs, heads etc...)

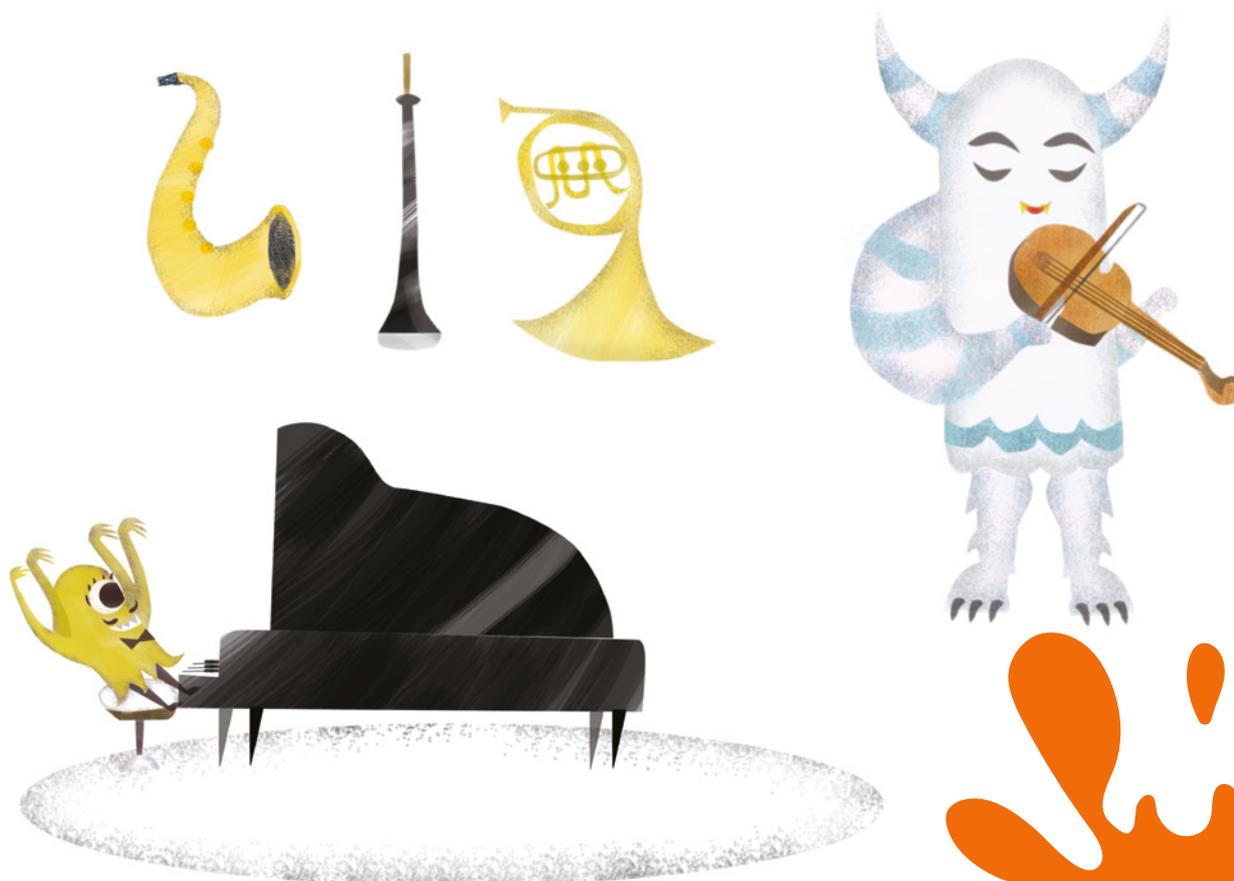
by subtracting (eyes, limbs etc...)

by combining one thing with another: animate with animate, animate with inanimate or inanimate with animate (e.g. toaster with shark, bus with kraken)

by making something ordinary vast (a kitten the size of the Empire State building)

by taking something looked upon as harmless and cute ferocious (e.g. feisty pets toys.)

In creating your monster orchestra, try and think outside the box. How might you visualise an invisible monster playing a piano? Or a monster made of words?



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## Talking Points

What is a monster?

Would we humans be regarded as monsters to monsters?

How have people conceived of monsters through the ages?

Consider the following examples:

### The Anthrophagi

From the Greek for 'man-eater', the Anthrophagi were a tribe of African cannibals who fed exclusively on the flesh of men.

Their neighbours included the Agriophagoi who ate the flesh of lions and leopards and the Pamphagoi who devoured everything!

### The Manticore

The Manticore was a man-eating, Persian monster with the body of a lion, the face of a man, and a spike-tipped, arrow-shooting tail. The name Manticore derives from the Farsi for "man-eater."

The Manticore also occurs in Mediaeval bestiaries inspired by the works of ancient Greek and Roman writers.

### The Sirens

They were three monstrous sea-nymphs who lured sailors to their death with a bewitching song. Famously Odysseus (Ulysses to the Romans) later sailed by, bound tightly to the mast, while his men blocked their ears with wax.

### The Harpies

The Harpies were the spirits of sudden, sharp gusts of wind. They were known as the hounds of Zeus and were despatched by the god to snatch away people and things from the earth.

Harpies were typically depicted as winged women, sometimes with ugly faces, or with the lower bodies of birds.

### The Chimera

A three-headed monster which ravaged the countryside of Lycia in Anatolia, the Chimera was a fire-breathing creature with the body and head of a lion, a goat's head rising from its back, the udders of a goat, and a serpent for a tail.

King Iobates commanded the Greek hero Bellerophon to slay it. He rode into battle on the back of the winged horse Pegasus and drove a lead-tipped lance into its flaming throat, choking the beast on molten metal.

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## The Hydra

The Hydra was a vast, nine-headed water-serpent, which haunted the swamps of Lerna. Hercules (Heracles to the Greeks) was sent to slay her as one of his twelve labours, but for each of her heads that he decapitated, two more sprang forth.

So with the help of Iolaus, he applied burning brands to the severed stumps, cauterising the wounds, thereby preventing them from growing back.

## Polyphemus

Polyphemus was a man-eating Cyclops, a giant with a single eye in the middle of his forehead.

Odysseus encountered him on his return from Troy and became trapped in the giant's cave. To escape he plied him with wine and as he slept plunged a burning stake into his eye. The blinded giant tried to prevent Odysseus' flight by hurling boulders at his ship.

## The Centaurs

Centaur were a tribe of half-man, half-horse savages who inhabited the mountains and forests of Thessalian Magnesia.



### Ideas that may be relevant to other parts of the curriculum

Vocabulary-Chimera, siren, satyr, hybrid etc...

Definitions. How the way in which you define a word colours how you see it, e.g. calling something a monster can be a matter of perspective

Literature: 'The Odyssey'. Homer's great poem is a landmark in Western, indeed world literature and is full of all manner of monsters. See above

Creative thinking-how combining unlike things can spark ideas, a technique one can use for the rest of your life.

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Want to know more about the artist that designed this resource? Contact us and we'll happily introduce you!

[www.sunderlandculture.org.uk](http://www.sunderlandculture.org.uk)

[info@sunderlandculture.org.uk](mailto:info@sunderlandculture.org.uk)

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