

## Music and Dance Echoes from Ancient Greece

Music and dance had a significant role in ancient Greek society as well as for people in prehistoric times. It was an integral part of religious and funerary rites, sacrifices and processions, it accompanied soldiers on the battlefield (paeans), students in education and people in their various aspects of private life: marriage, royal feasts, farming activities and daily chores. In fact, music was considered to be a gift from the Muses and Apollo, and both the gods and ordinary people took great pleasure in it. Three of the Muses were associated with Dance: Urania (muse of astronomy), Polyhymnia and Terpsichore (fun in dance) were considered the protectors of Dance.



Apollo is often an emblem on coins. Silver stater of the Amphictyion Union (346 BC, Museum of Coins)

Three Ancient Greek myths echo music and dance to the present day. They associate the birth of Dancing with

- the Curetes, people who nursed young Zeus on the island of Crete,
- the Nymphs, caretakers of Zeus in a cave at Mount Ida in Crete,
- the Nereids, the sea nymphs, who sang, danced and played music while gliding on the waves on dolphins or while resting on beaches.



Curetes dancing while young Zeus is nursing on the milk of the goat Amalthea. The woman seated to the left is probably Nemesis or Crete (Marble relief, base part, around 160 AD, Rome Museo Capitolino)



Mythological scene depicting Zeus in the centre and the Curetes sounding their drums on the sides (Bronze drum from the Ideon Cave in Crete, late 8th century BC, Heraklion Archaeological Museum)

Evidence about music and dance comes from figurines, paintings and reliefs on vases depicting musical and dance performances, as well as the musical instruments that have been preserved.

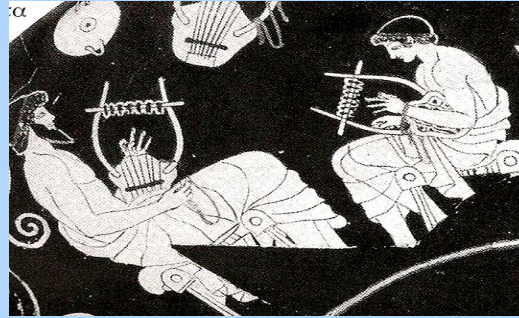


Clay figurine depicting a female figure dancing (mid 4th century BC, National Archaeological Museum of Athens)





Sacrifice scene: Two young musicians, one playing a double flute and the other the lyre. (540-530 BC, Athens Archaeological Museum)



Music class at school : The bearded teacher and the student are clearly visible each holding a lyre. Detail from a red figure vase (485-480 BC, Berlin)



Funerary scene: A woman with her hair loose is in mourning. Detail from red figure vase dating back to the 5th century BC. (National Archaeological Museum of Athens)



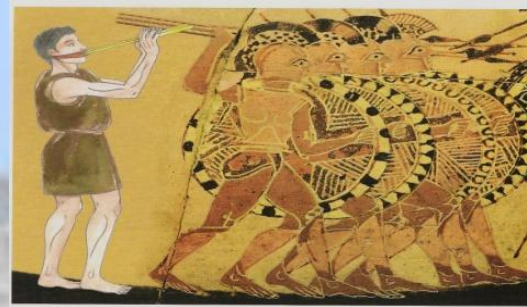
Young women dancing the "virginal" (calyx-shaped red figure crater from Attica, 5th century BC, National Museum of Rome)



A group of women preparing the dough for bread to the sounds of flute playing. Figurines (late 6th century BC, Paris, Louvre Museum)



Scene depicting a Symposium from a red figure vase (515-510 BC, Brussels, Museum of Art and History)



Phalanx of soldiers marching into battle to the sound of flutes playing. Scene from a Corinthian vase. (650-640 BC, Rome)



Bronze regiment of seven dancers from Olympia (9th century BC, National Archaeological Museum of Athens)



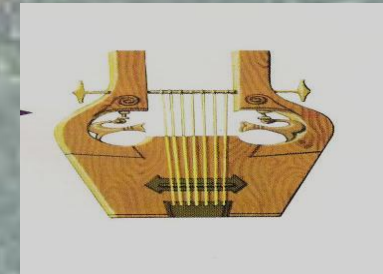
## *Musical Instruments in Ancient Greece*

Songs in ancient Greece were usually accompanied by a musical instrument. The Greeks were not particularly fond of using too many musical instruments in a song because they thought it obscured the human voice. So musical instruments, when not used to perform instrumental music, were used in order to accompany the singer. Ancient musical instruments were divided into three main categories: string, wind and percussion.

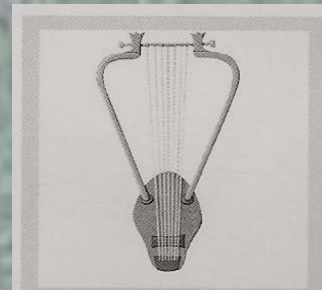
### **STRING**



Harp or Triangle



Guitar



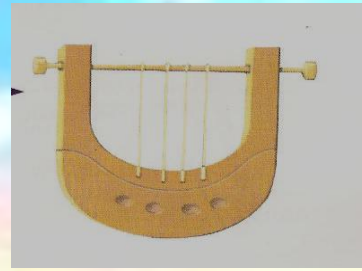
Barbitos



Lyre



**Pandura**

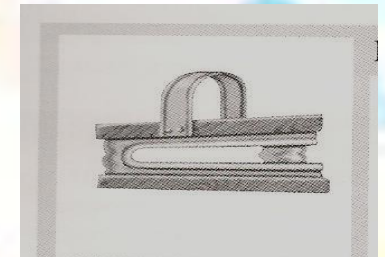


**Phorminx**

***PERCUSSION***

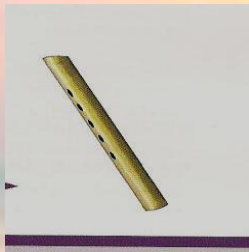


**Crotalum**



**Kroupezion**

***WIND***



**Aulos or Flute**



**Diaulos or Double Flute**



**Cymbals**



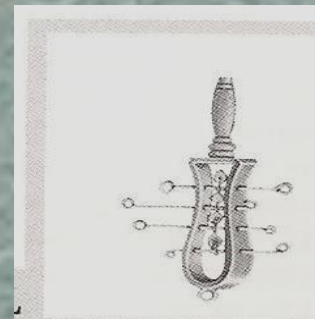
**Bells**



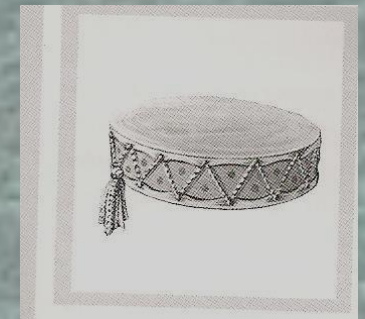
**Salpinx or Trumpet**



**Pan Flute**



**Seistrion**



**Tympanum or Hand Drum**

