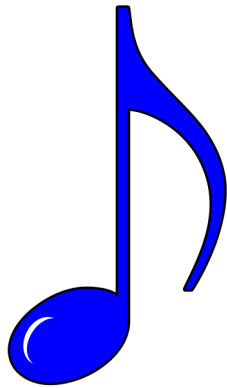


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Carnival of Animals

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Credits

Text by Tonya Dirksen of the [Strings, Keys, and Melodies Blog](#)

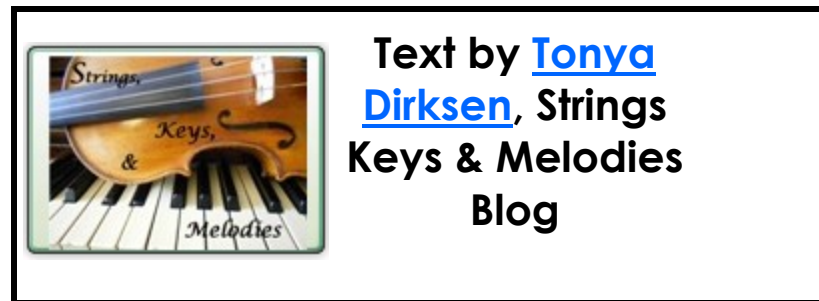
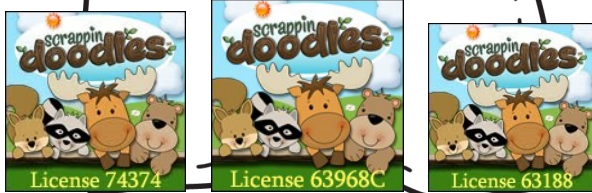
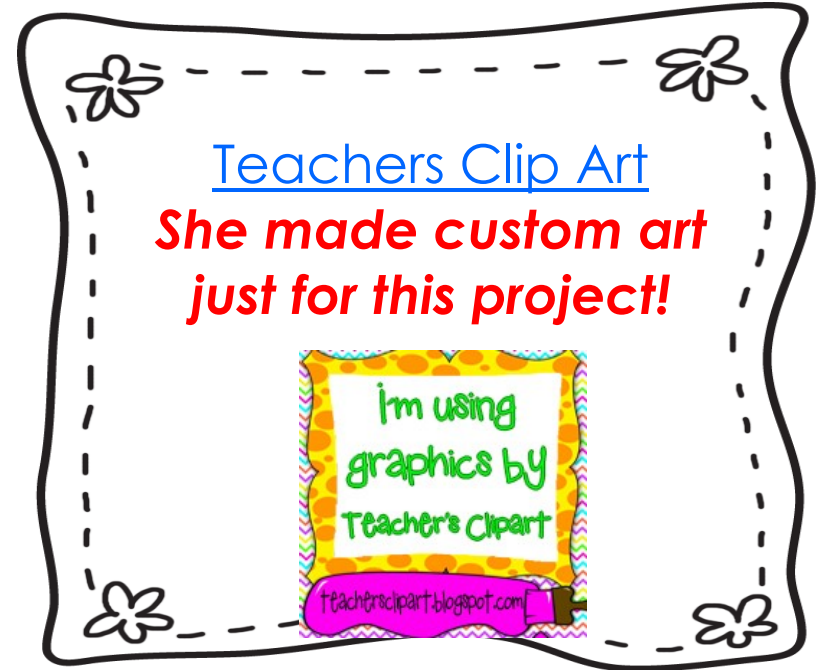
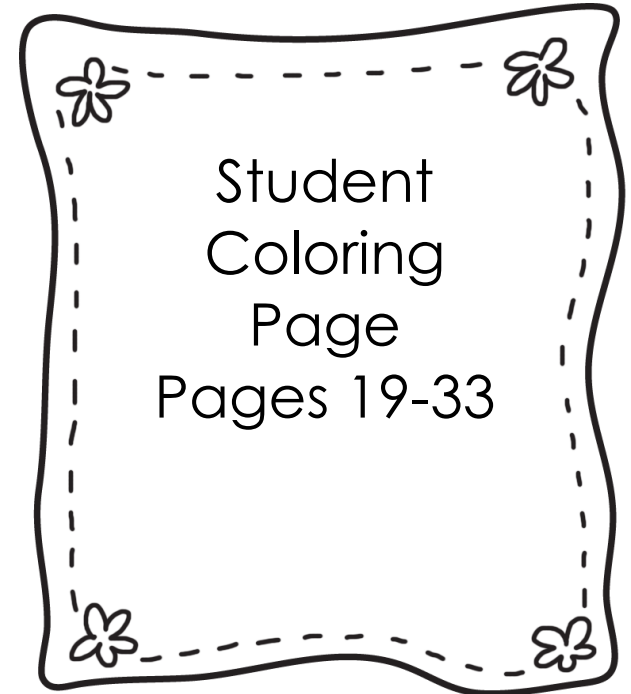
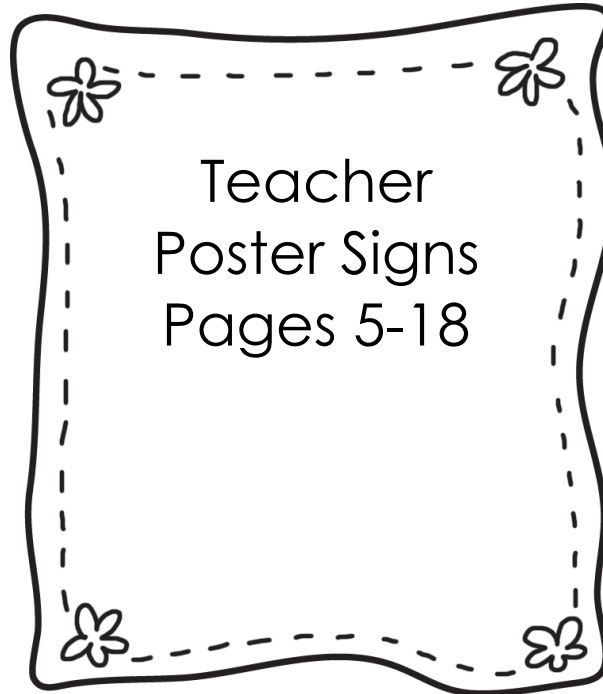
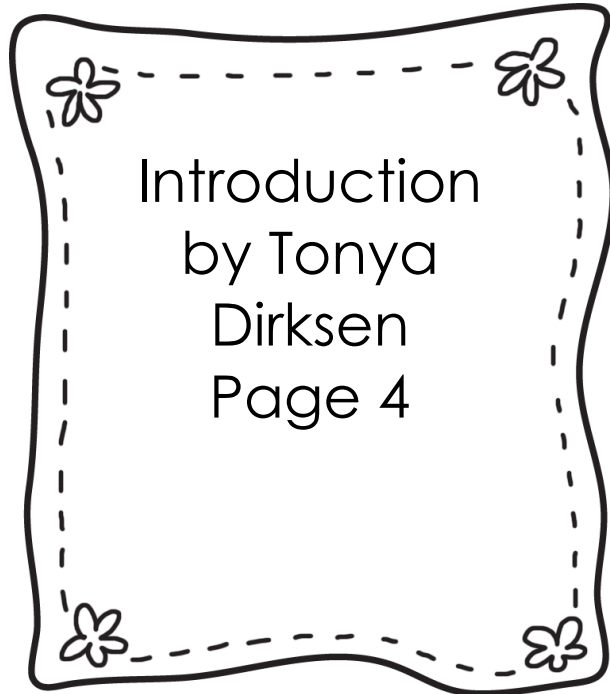
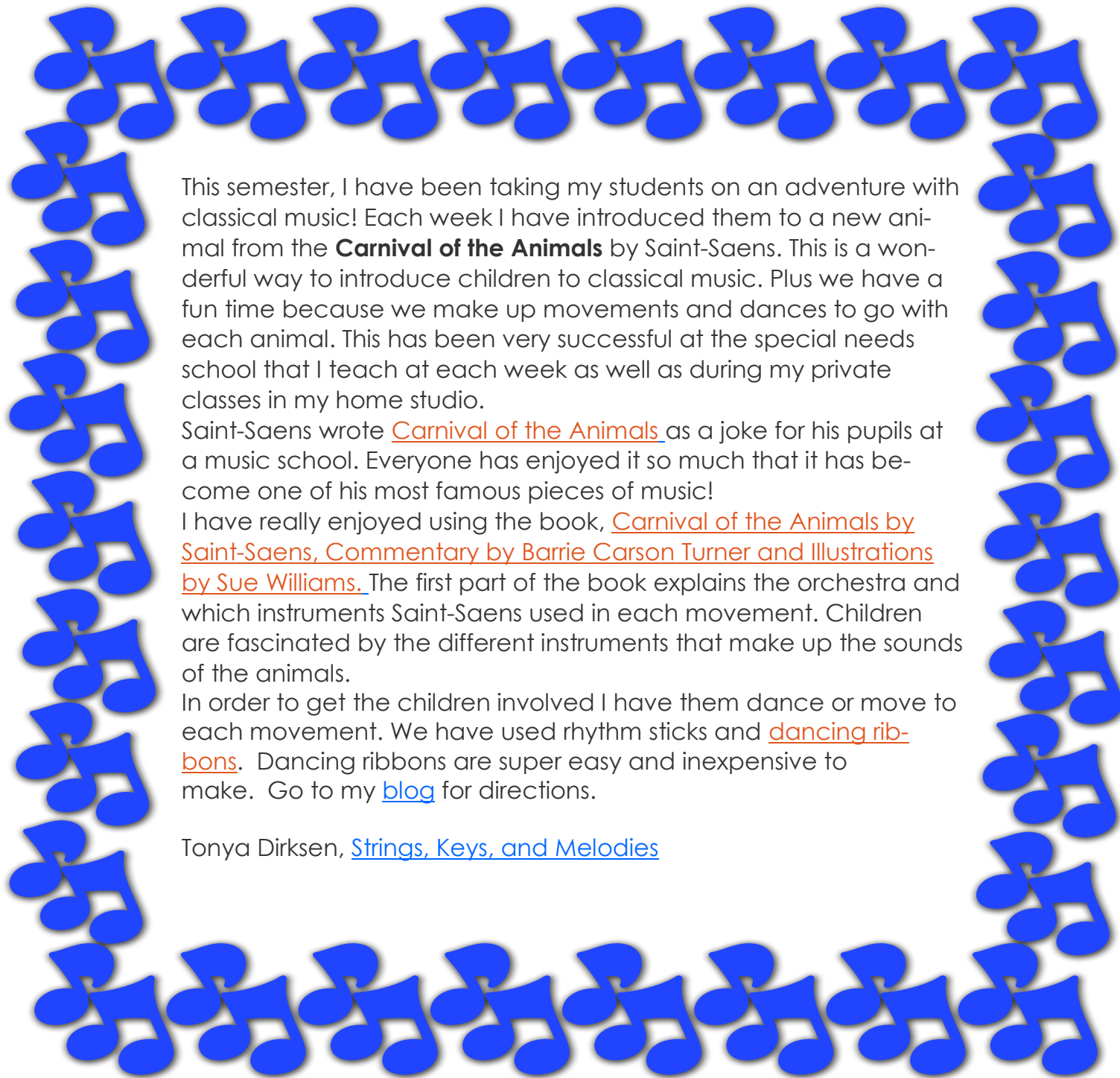


Table of Contents





This semester, I have been taking my students on an adventure with classical music! Each week I have introduced them to a new animal from the **Carnival of the Animals** by Saint-Saens. This is a wonderful way to introduce children to classical music. Plus we have a fun time because we make up movements and dances to go with each animal. This has been very successful at the special needs school that I teach at each week as well as during my private classes in my home studio.

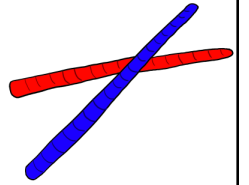
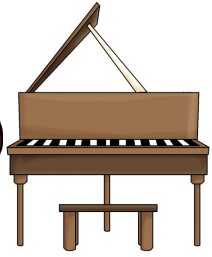
Saint-Saens wrote [Carnival of the Animals](#) as a joke for his pupils at a music school. Everyone has enjoyed it so much that it has become one of his most famous pieces of music!

I have really enjoyed using the book, [Carnival of the Animals by Saint-Saens, Commentary by Barrie Carson Turner and Illustrations by Sue Williams](#). The first part of the book explains the orchestra and which instruments Saint-Saens used in each movement. Children are fascinated by the different instruments that make up the sounds of the animals.

In order to get the children involved I have them dance or move to each movement. We have used rhythm sticks and [dancing ribbons](#). Dancing ribbons are super easy and inexpensive to make. Go to my [blog](#) for directions.

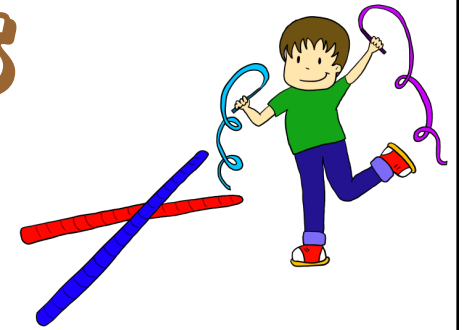
Tonya Dirksen, [Strings, Keys, and Melodies](#)

ROYAL MARCH OF THE LION

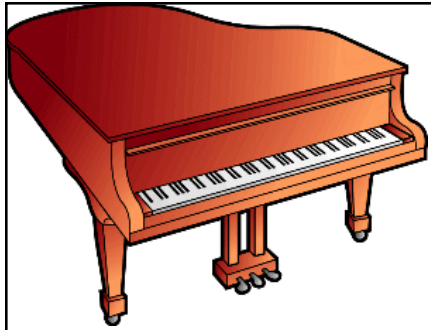


The first movement is the **Royal March of the Lion**. The strings and pianos play this march. The piano creates the lion's roar. Use **rhythm sticks** to march around and listen carefully for the lions roar.

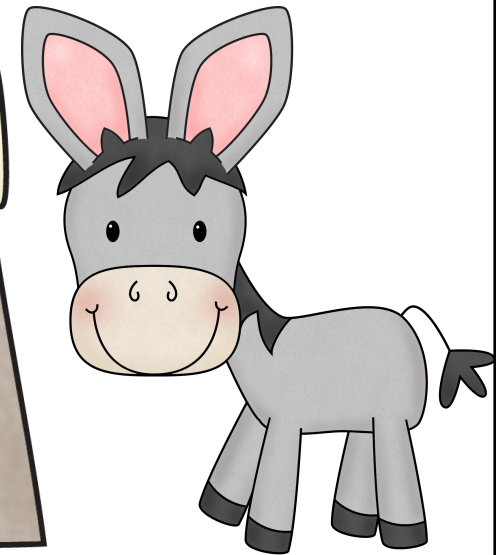
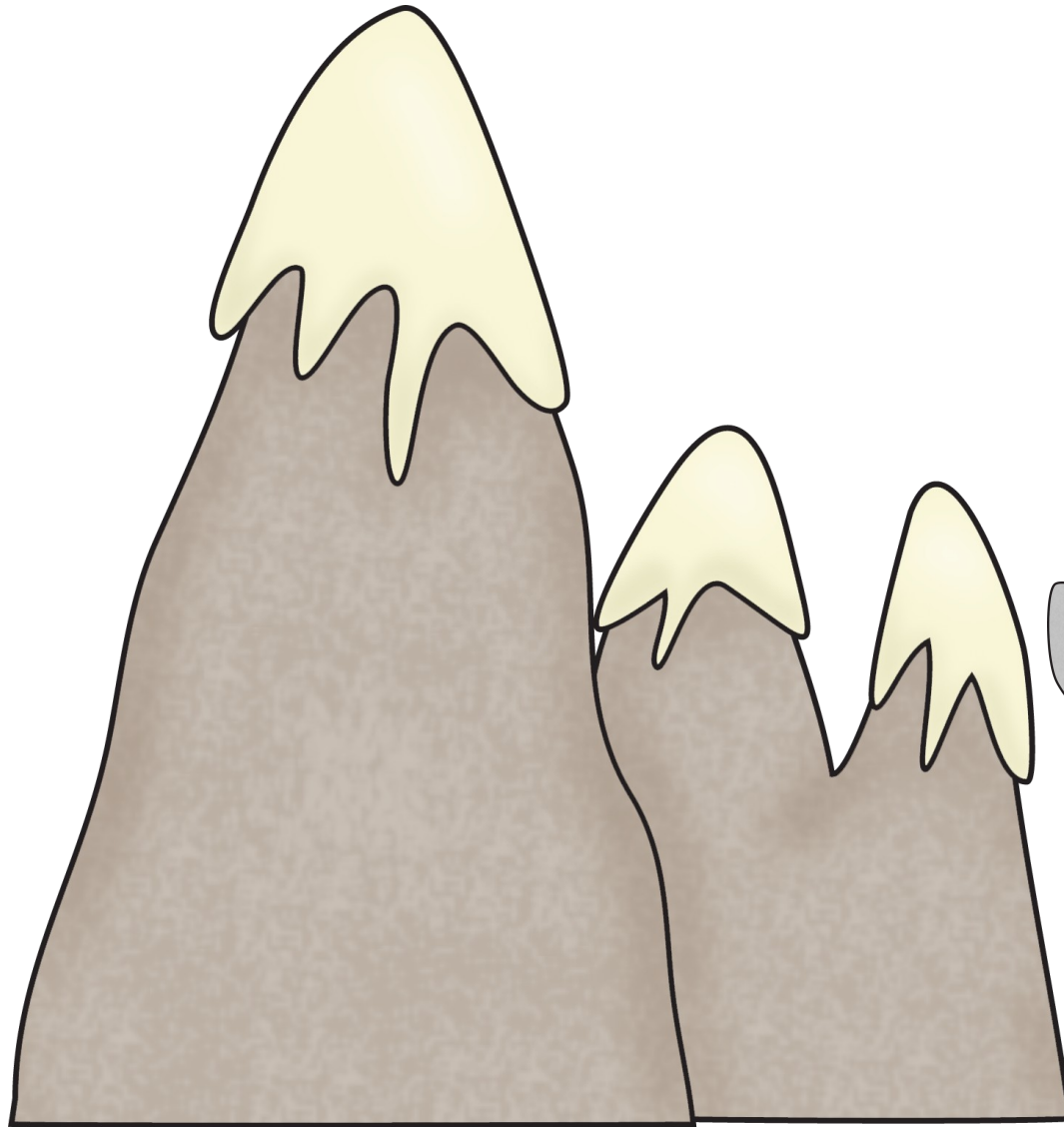
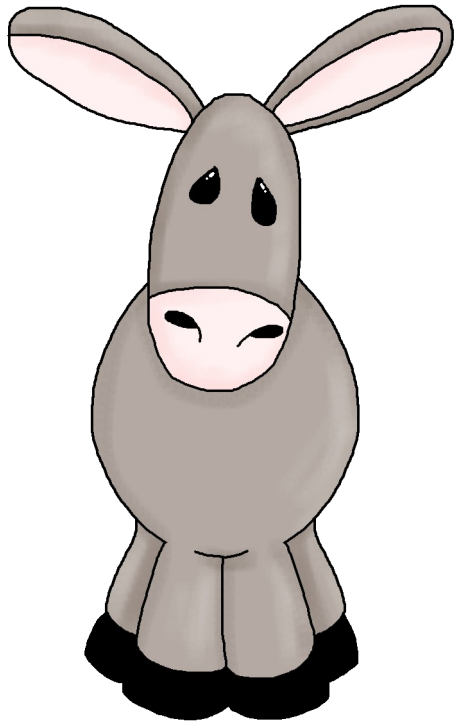
HENS AND ROOSTERS



The **Hens and Roosters** is created with the violin and viola playing sounds like hens clucking and squawking. The piano and clarinet play the part of the rooster. Use rhythm sticks but be careful to not be louder than the music. Switch to **dancing ribbons** and make motions like hens pecking the ground.

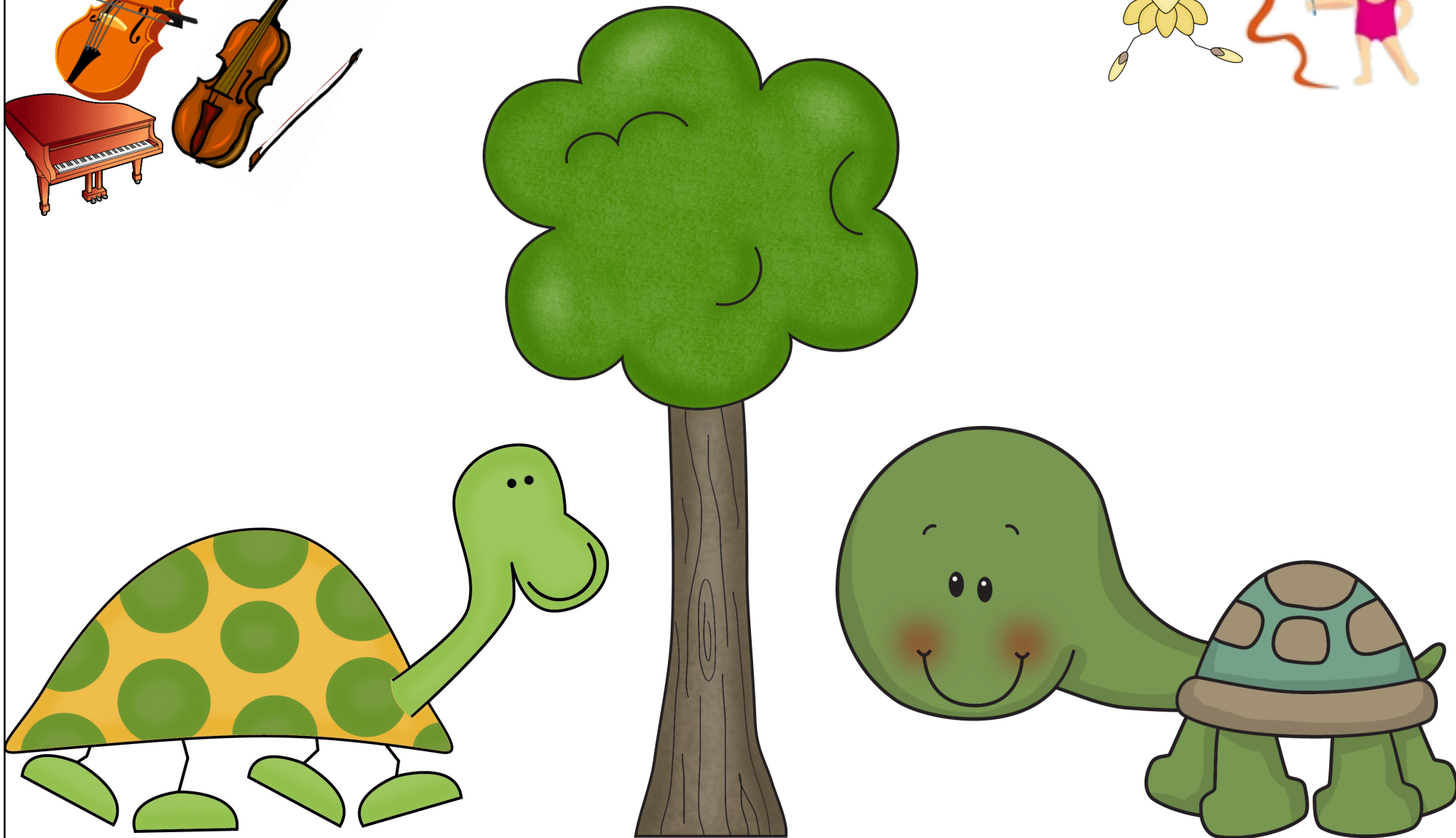
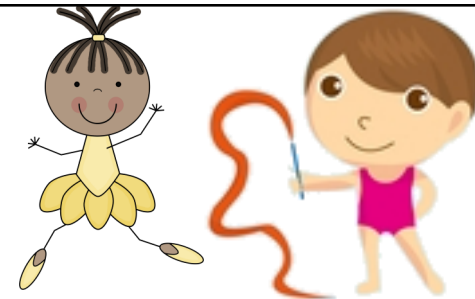


THE MULES



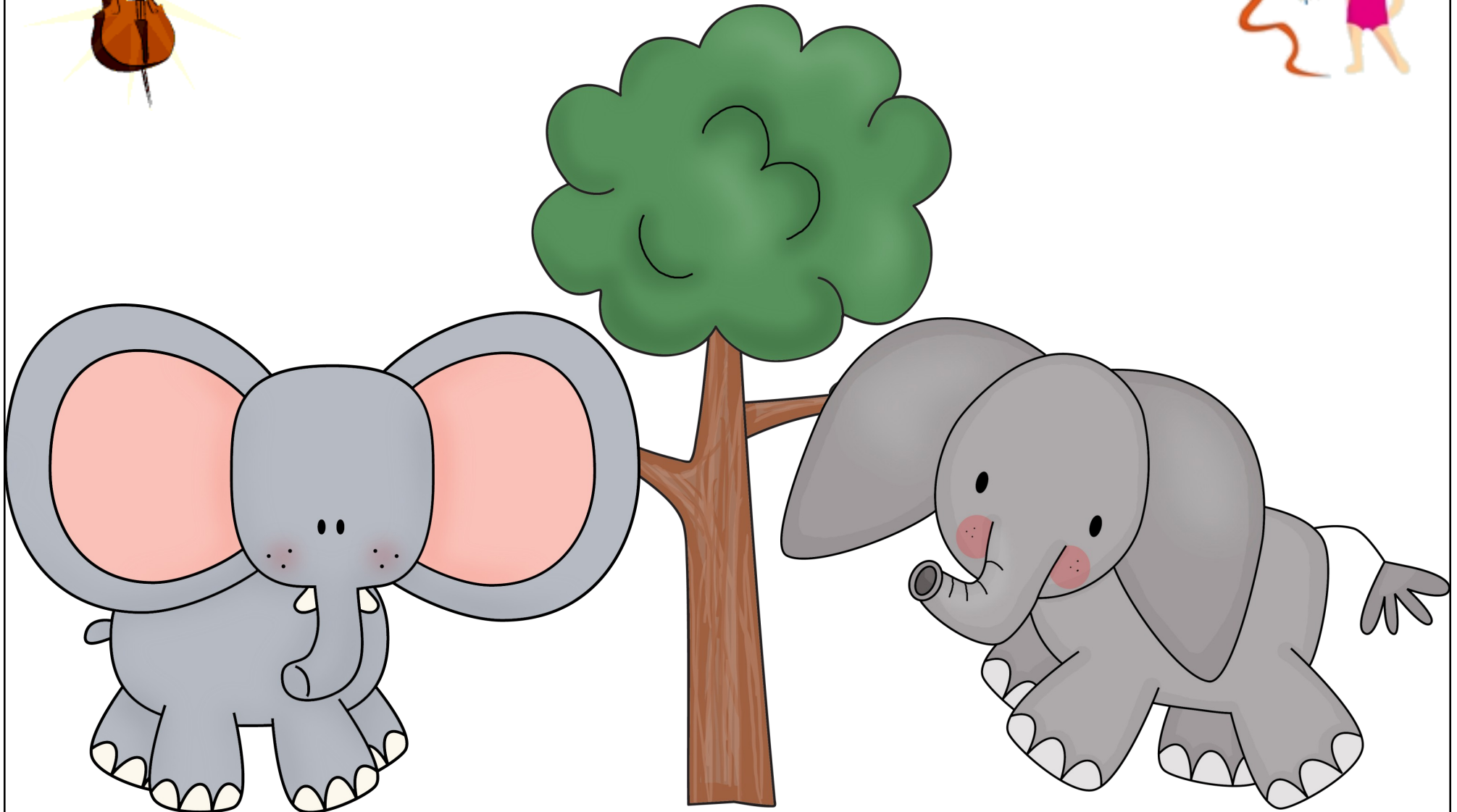
The Mules is played by the piano. The music rushes up and down the keyboard as if the mules are chasing each other up and down the mountain. This is a very fast piece and the children have a fun time making their **dancing ribbons** dance up and down the mountain/keyboard.

TORTOISES



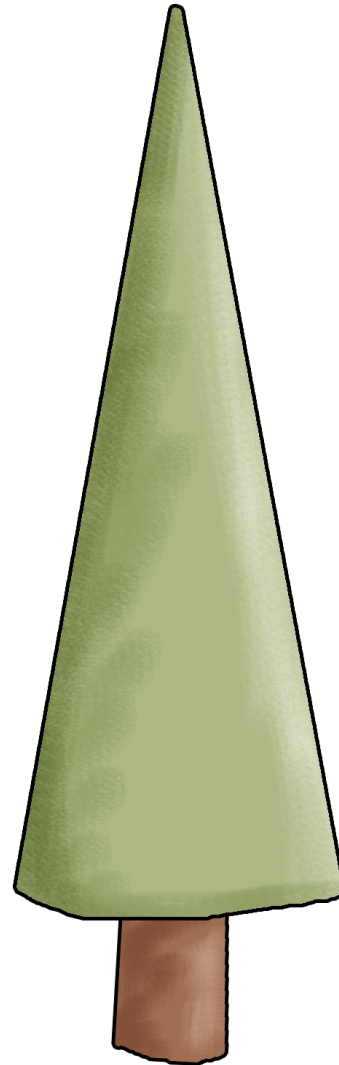
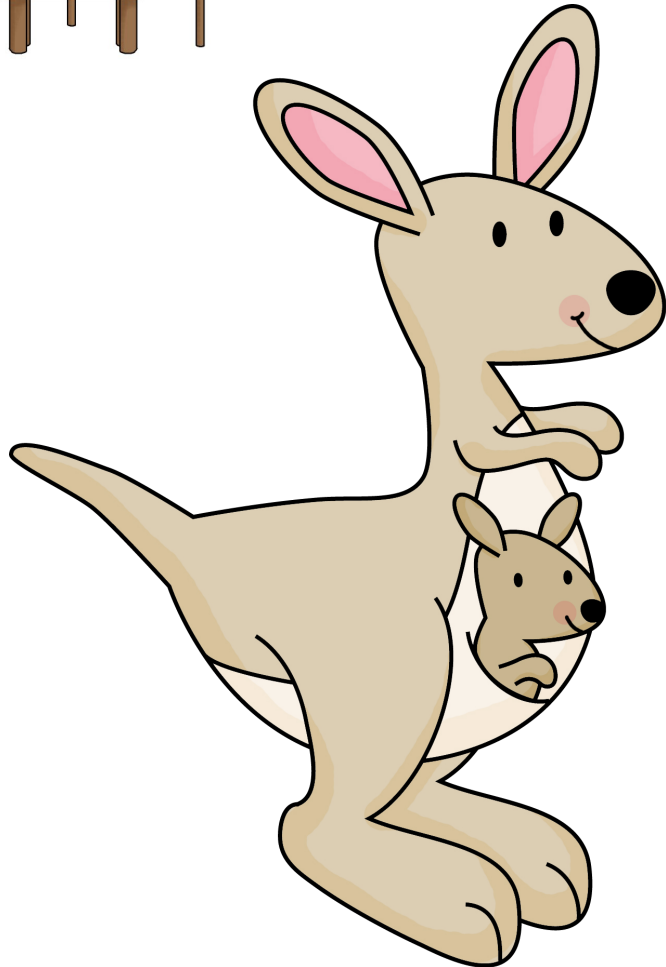
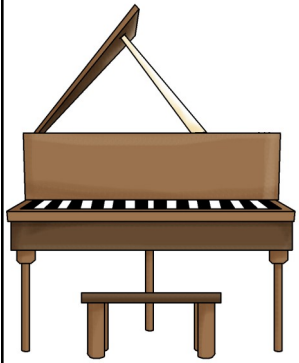
Tortoises move very slowly and this is a great piece to teach the children to slow down and match the tempo of the music. The strings play the slow dance tune with the piano accompanying them. Use **dancing ribbons** to help dance ballet like a tortoise!

ELEPHANTS



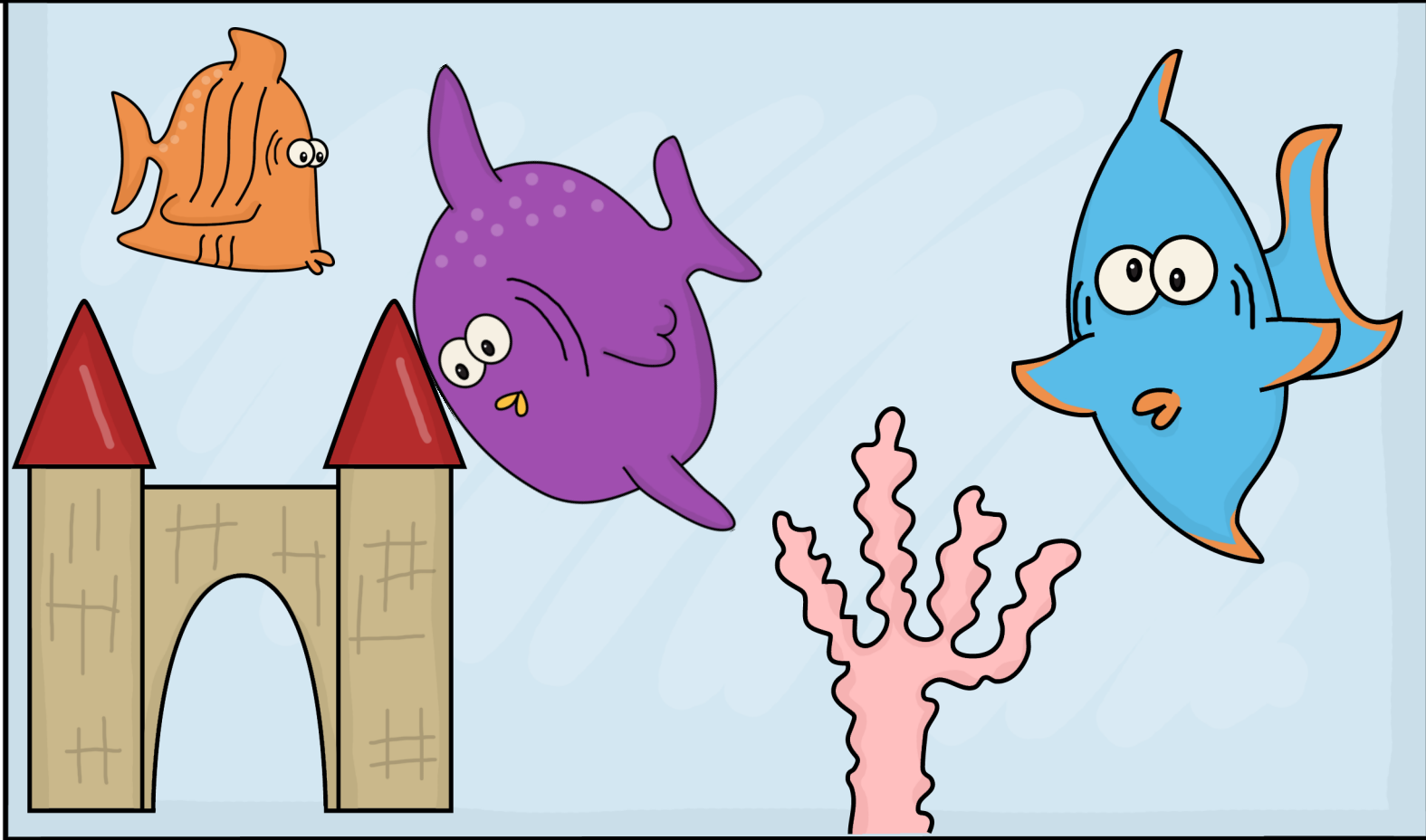
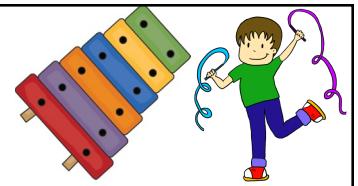
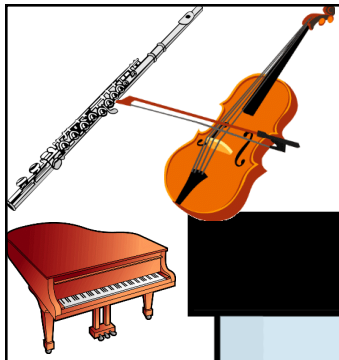
The **Elephant** dances the waltz in the next piece. The double bass plays the deep plodding steps of an elephant trying to dance! The children love to use the **dance ribbons** as the elephant's trunk as they stomp to the waltz.

KANGAROOS



Next comes the bouncy music of the **Kangaroos** hopping up and down the piano. Children love to hop and so they **hop** as much as they can during this piece. Pass out **dancing ribbons** for those who prefer to make their ribbons hop.

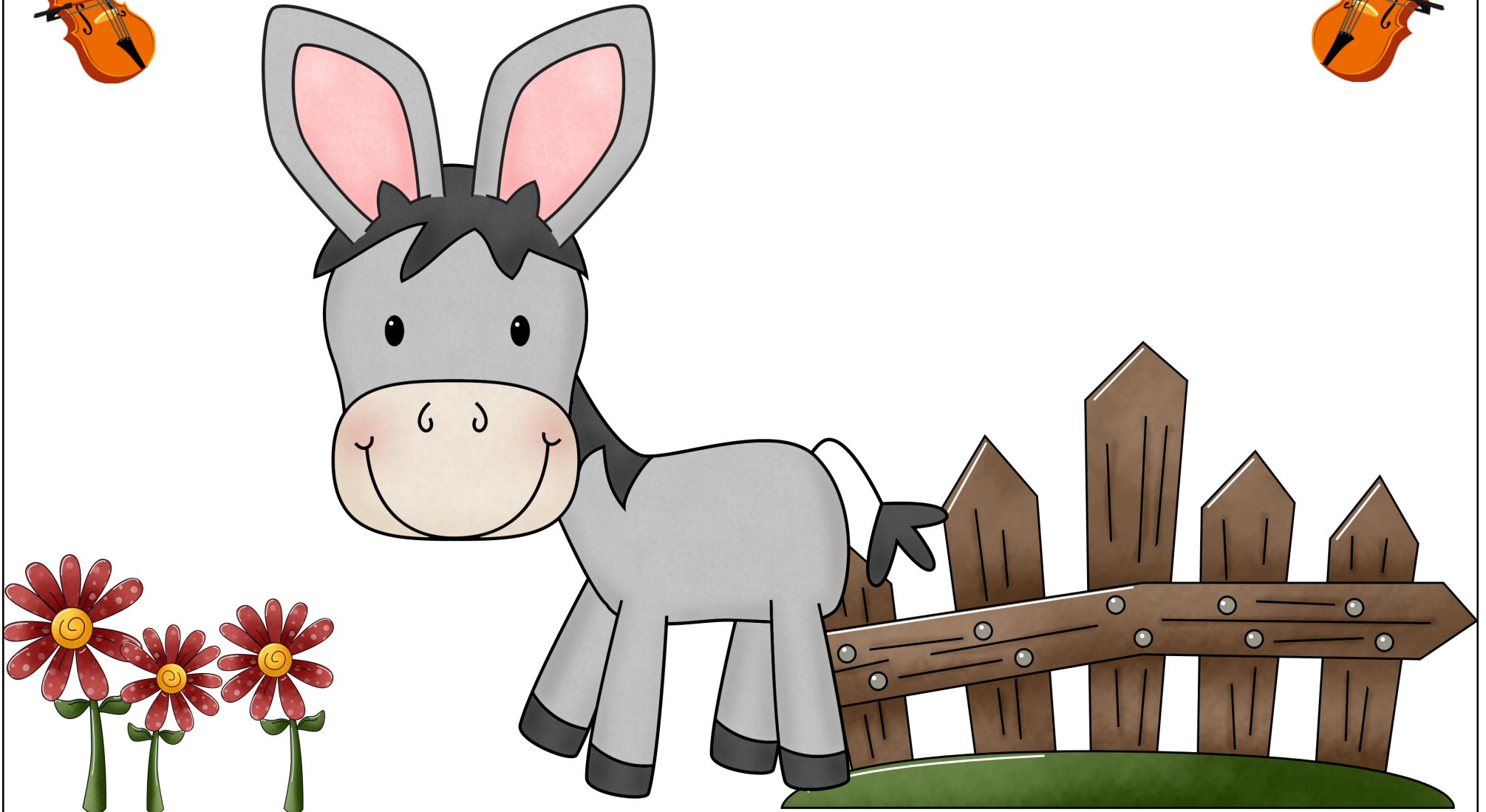
THE AQUARIUM



The Aquarium sounds just like you would imagine music should sound under the sea. The flute and string instruments play a tune for the fish while the piano plays the gentle waves. If you listen carefully you can hear the tinkle of the glockenspiel. This is a fun one to go dancing and swimming around with **dancing ribbons** that double as fish fins or mermaid tales!

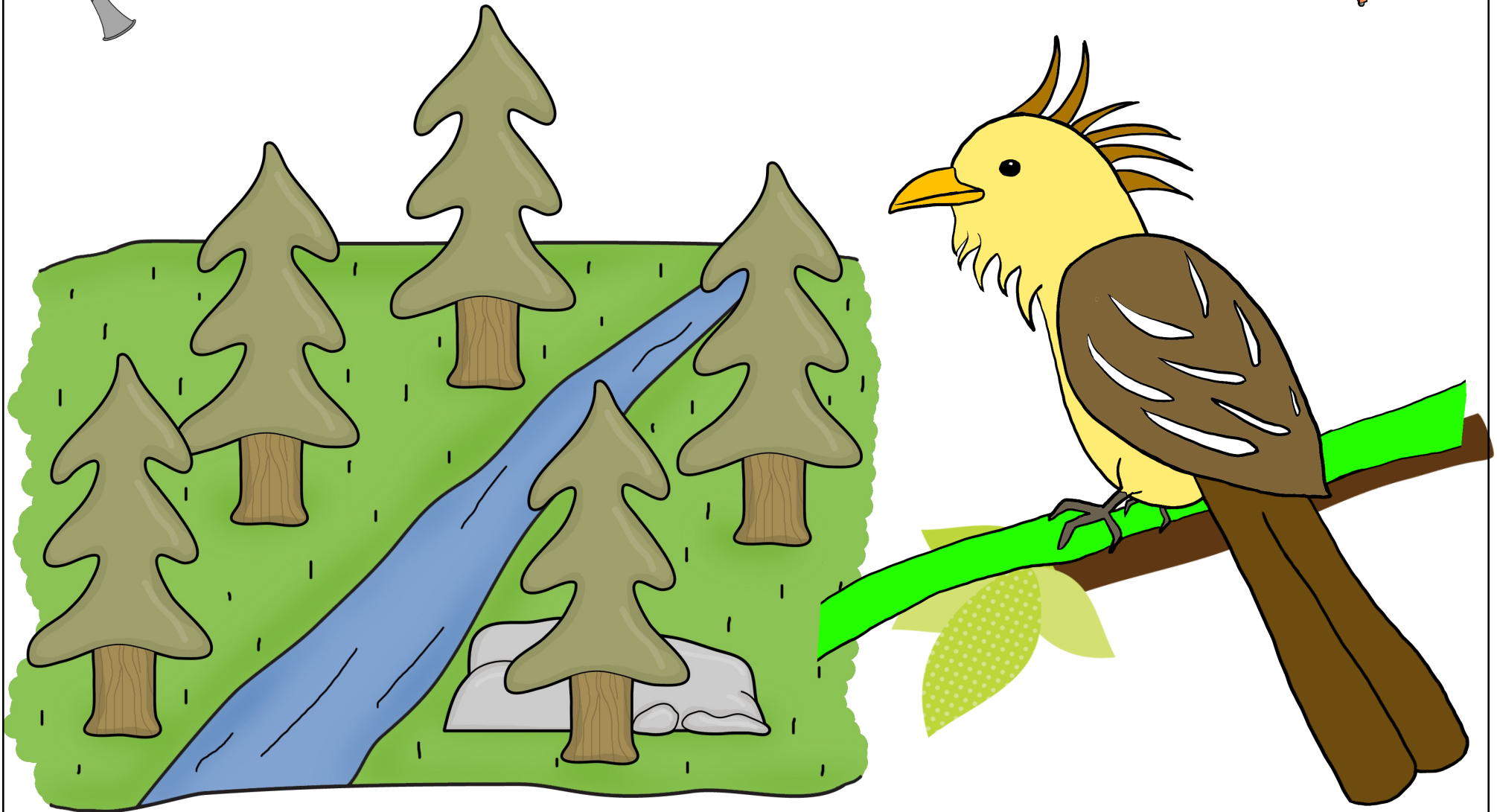
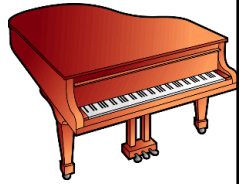
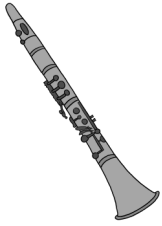


ANIMALS WITH LONG EARS

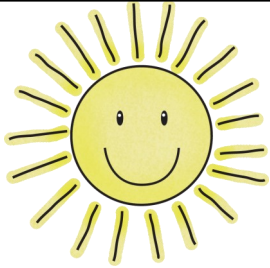
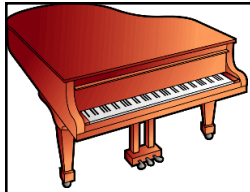


The violin plays the hee-haws for the **Animals with Long Ears** piece. The hee-haws get louder and faster. Very noisy – just what children love! The children like to just **listen** to this intriguing piece as well as pretend to hee-haw like a donkey.

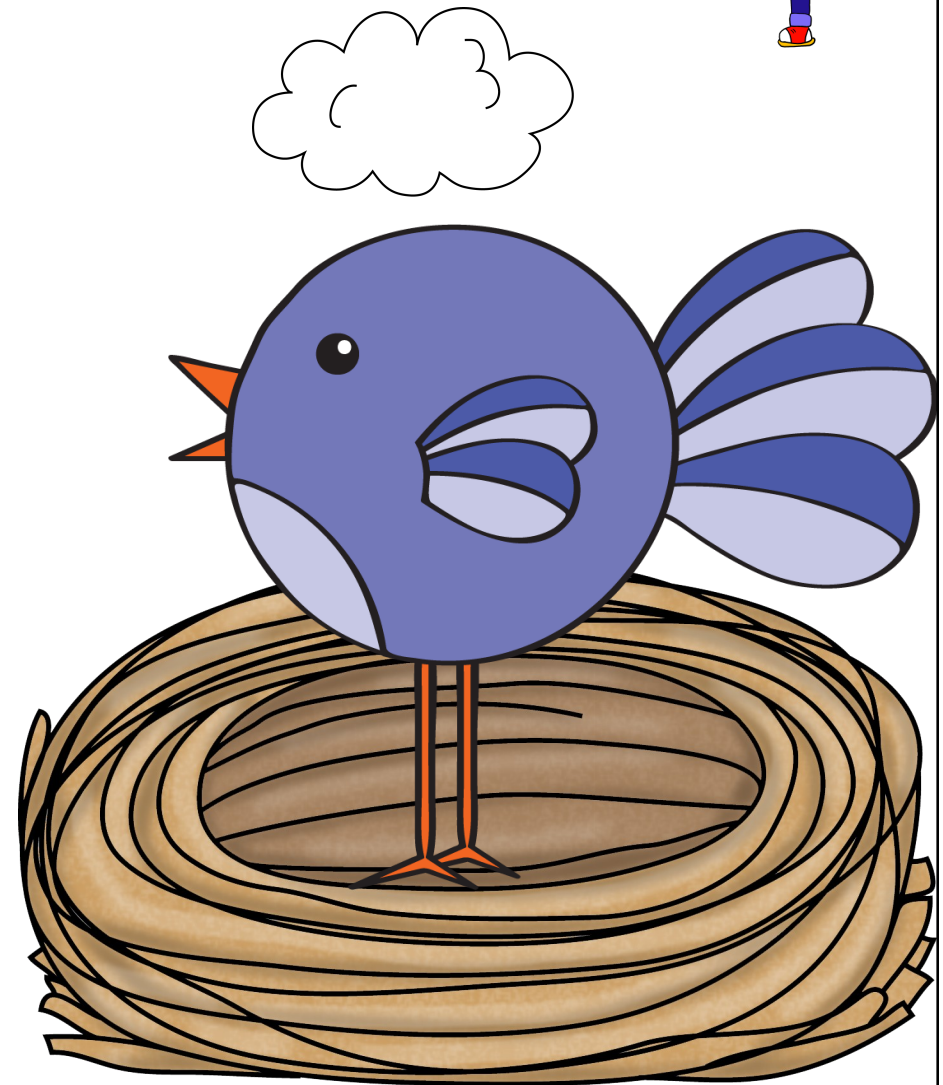
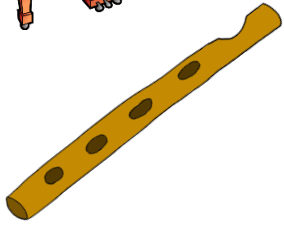
CUCKOO IN THE WOODS



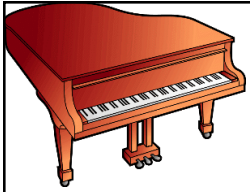
Cuckoo in the Woods is a nice, gentle piece. The cuckoo's call is played by the sweet sound of the clarinet. You can follow the cuckoo all through the piece. The piano sounds like footsteps walking into the woods. Pretend to be **tiptoeing** through the woods and carefully listen for the call of the cuckoo bird.



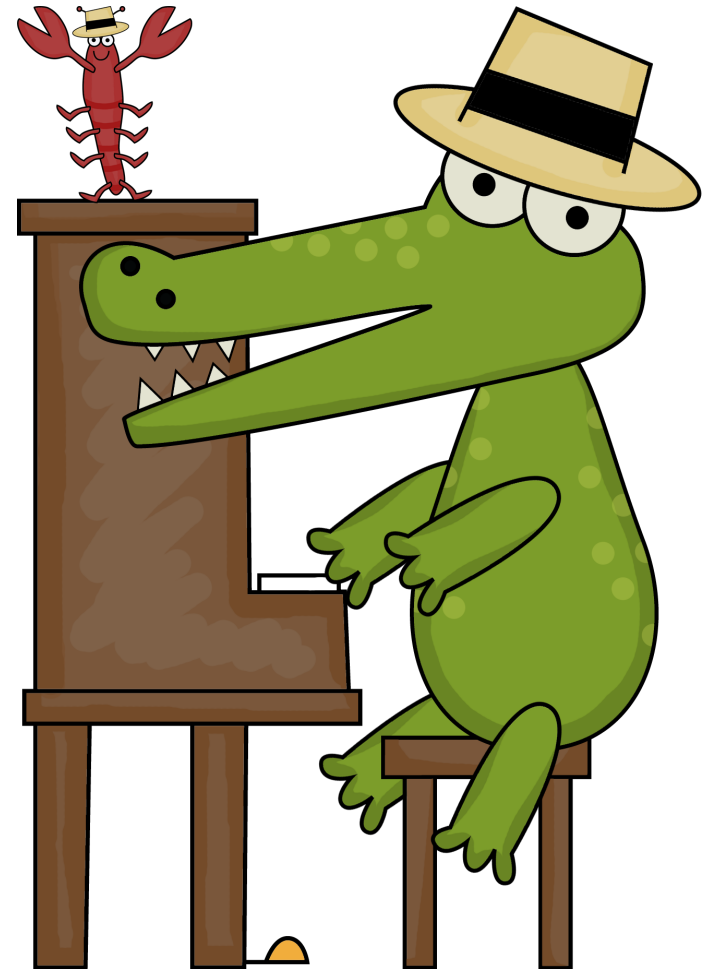
BIRDS



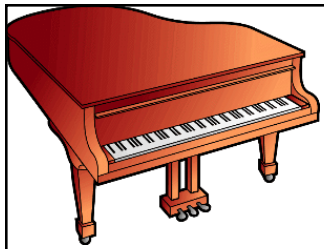
The **dancing ribbons** are a must for the **Birds**. Everyone needs two ribbons for wings and then they are off flying around the room to this piece played by the flute making light and bouncy music and the violins hovering in the background. The piano plays chirps and trills.



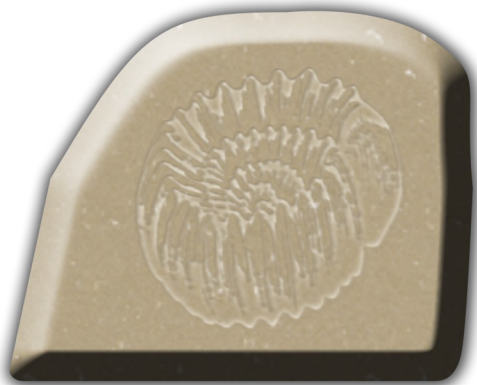
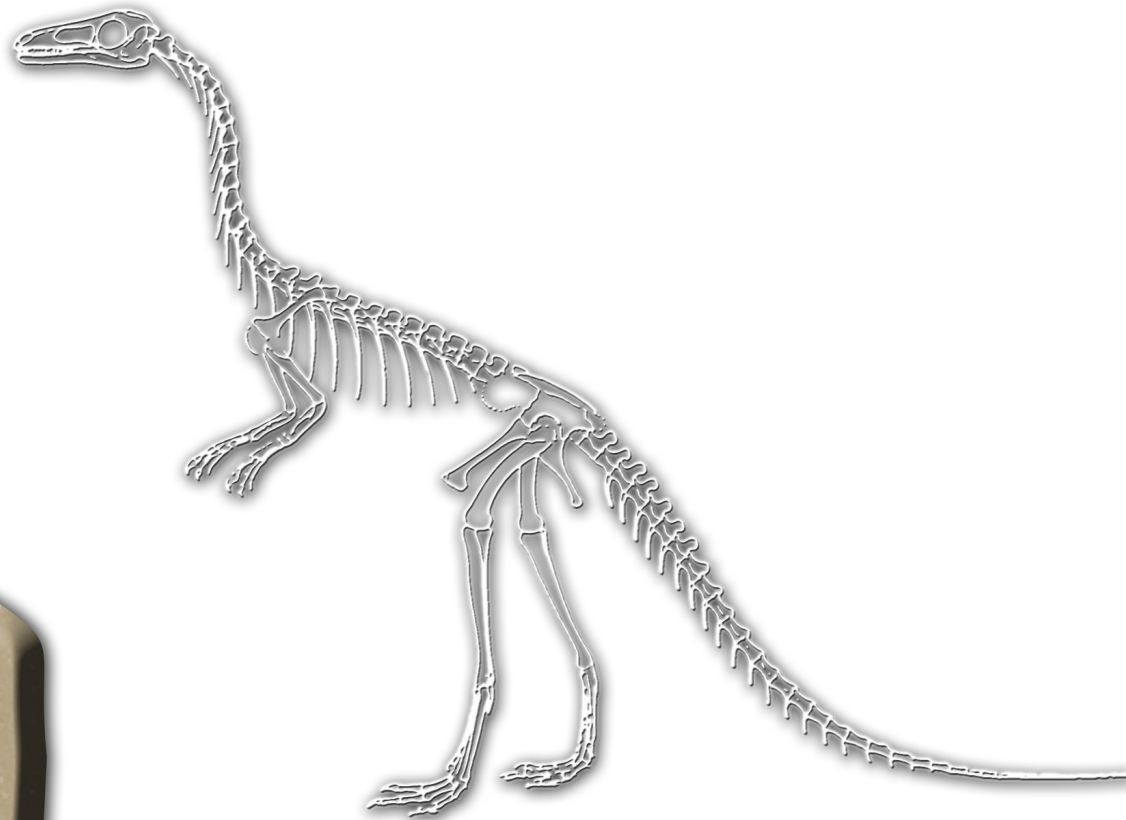
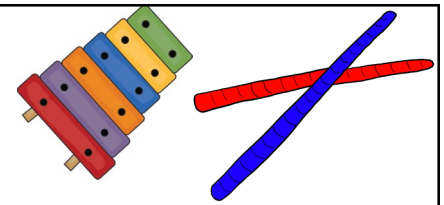
THE PIANISTS



The Pianists is a fun piece with the pianists practicing the same exercises over and over again. The string instruments join in to tell the pianists to hurry up and finish. Use **ribbons or just our hands** to pretend to play the piano, up and down the keyboard playing music scales.



FOSSILS



Fossils is played by the xylophone and piano. They play a fast paced beat for the dancing bones. Then the whole orchestra joins in, after the piano plays a bit of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Use **rhythm sticks** to keep the beat to this fast paced song with a rattling sound.

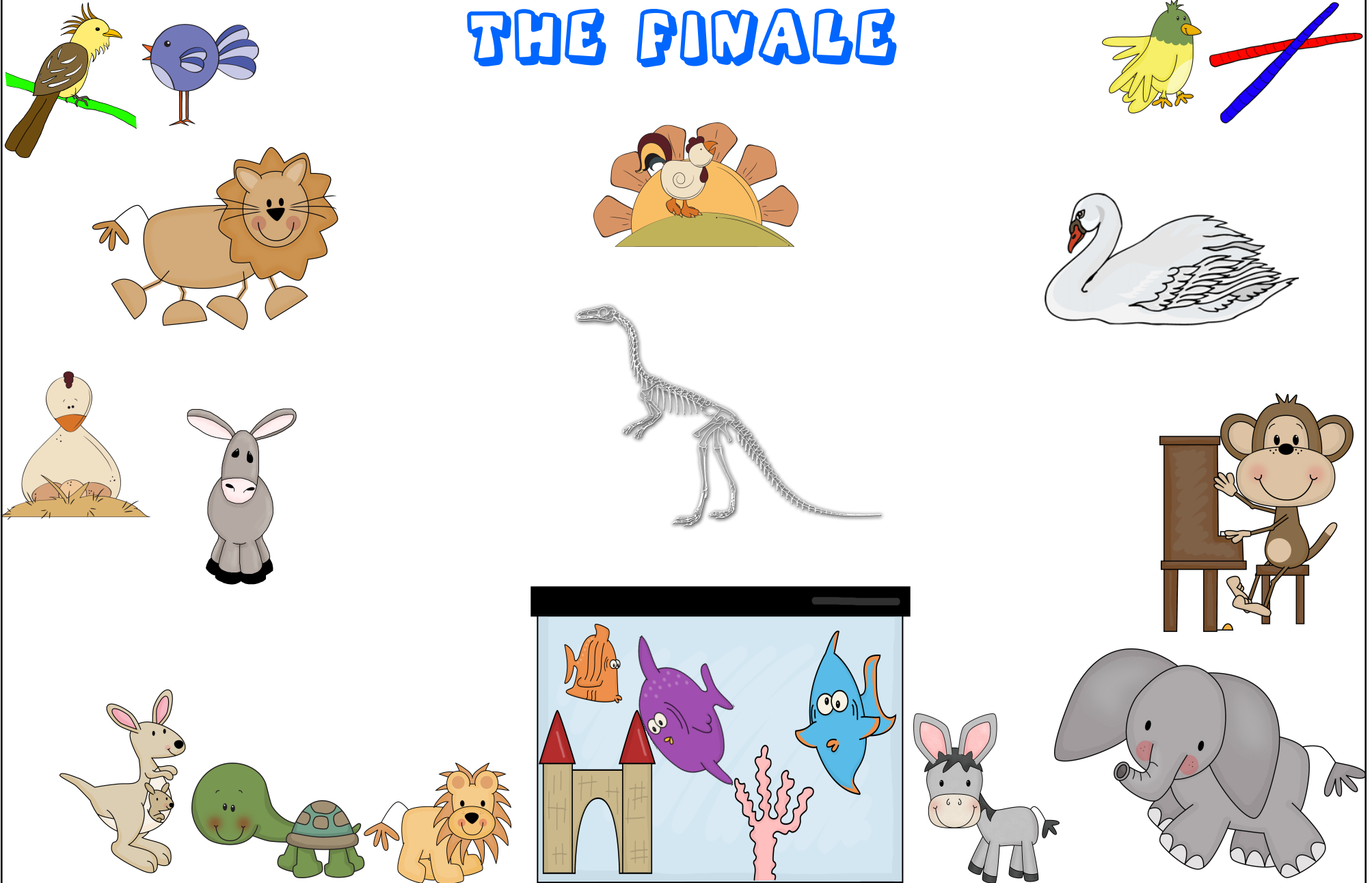


THE SWAN



The Swan is a beautiful slow and gentle song. The cello plays the main tune with the piano in the background. **Dancing ribbons and dancing in a graceful ballet** dance is the perfect movement for this piece.

THE FINALE

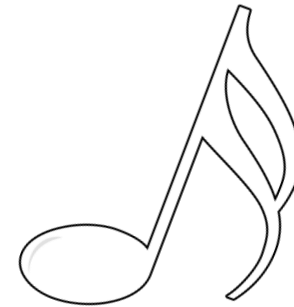
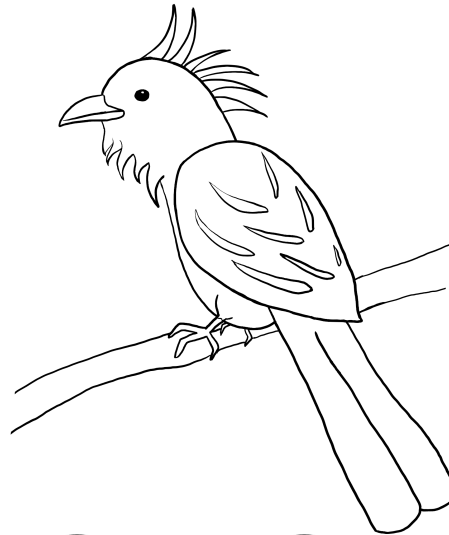


All of the animals come back for the **Finale**. The orchestra plays a special parade tune. You will hear the hooves of the mules, the spike music of the hens and roosters, the kangaroos bouncing and the hee-haws of the donkeys. It is time for **rhythm sticks** and another parade around the room! This happy Finale tune is sure to bring smiles to everyone's face!

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

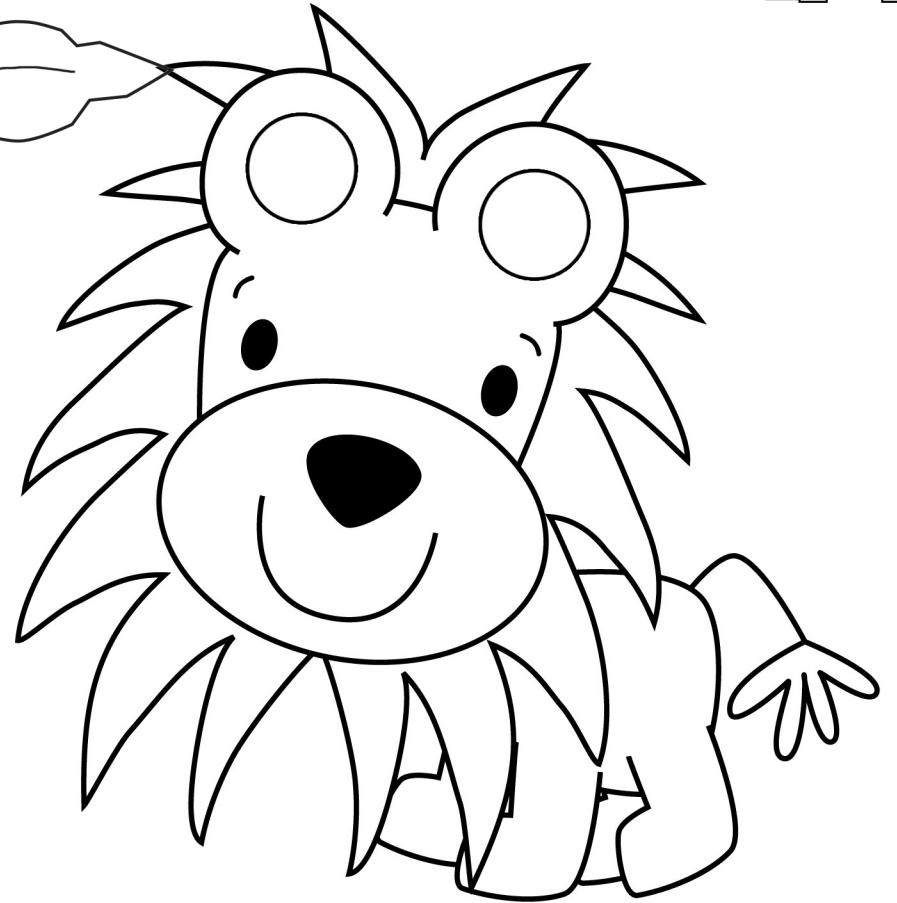
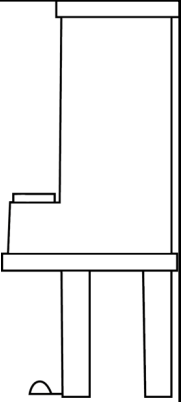
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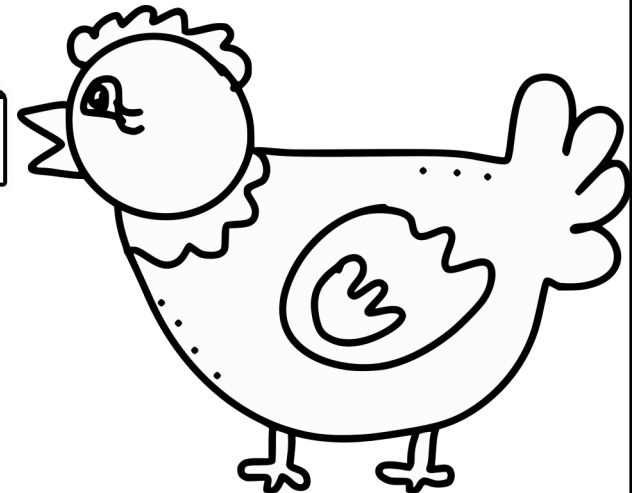
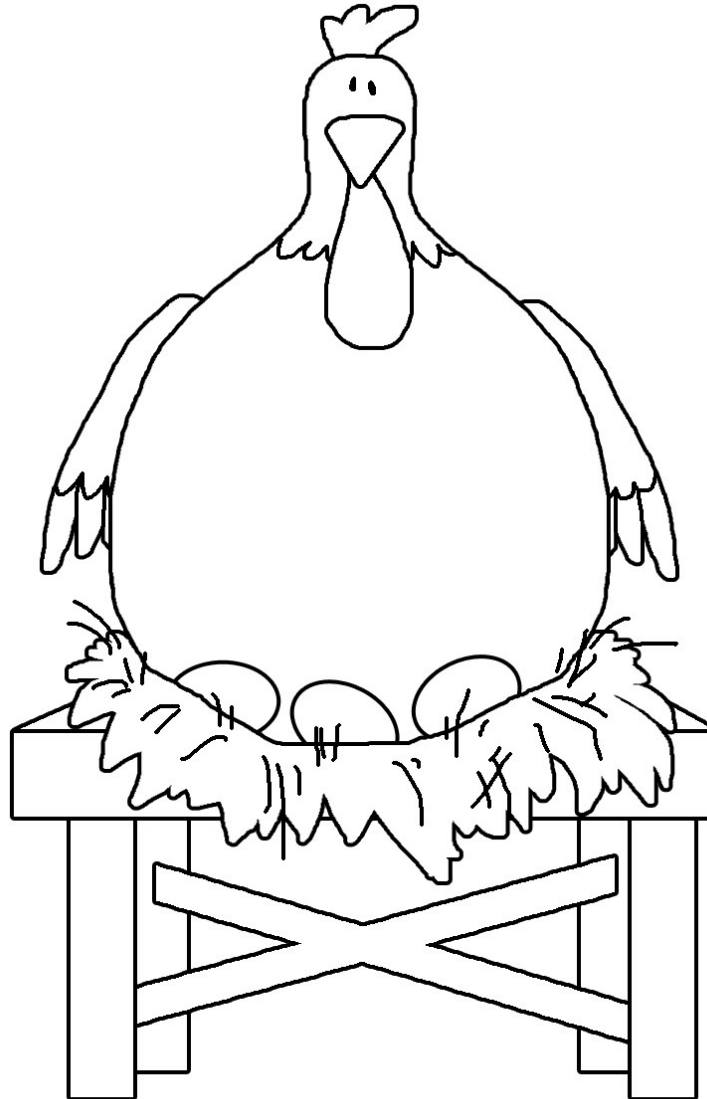
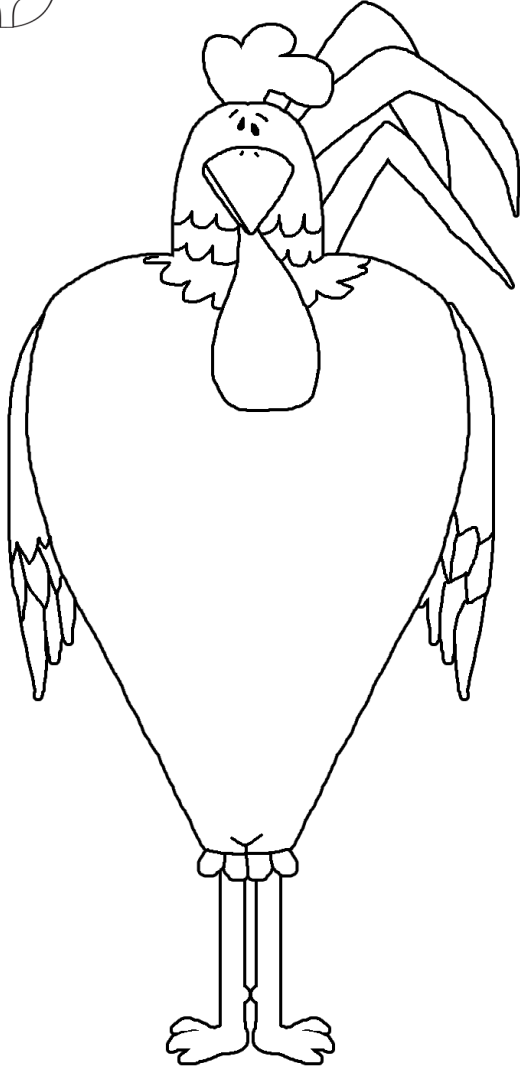
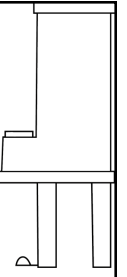


ROYAL MARCH OF THE LION



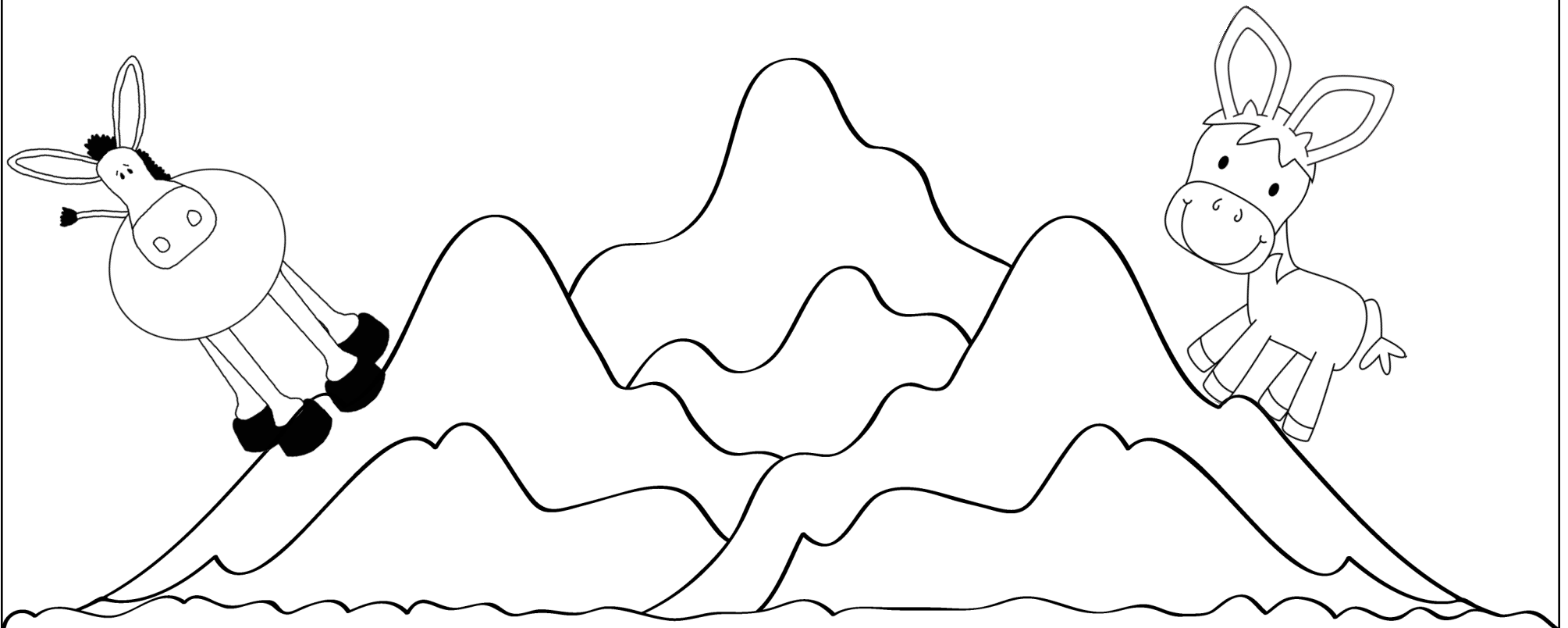
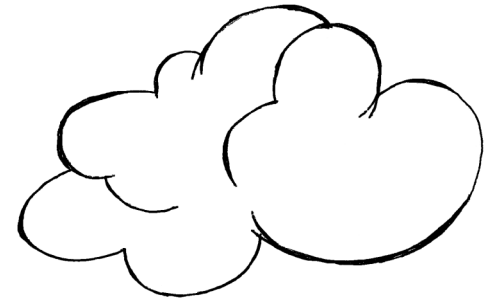
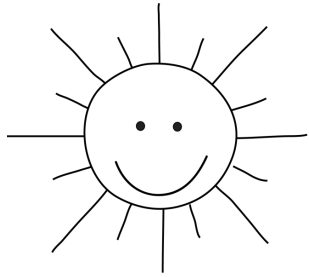
The strings and piano play the March of the Lion.

HENS AND ROOSTERS



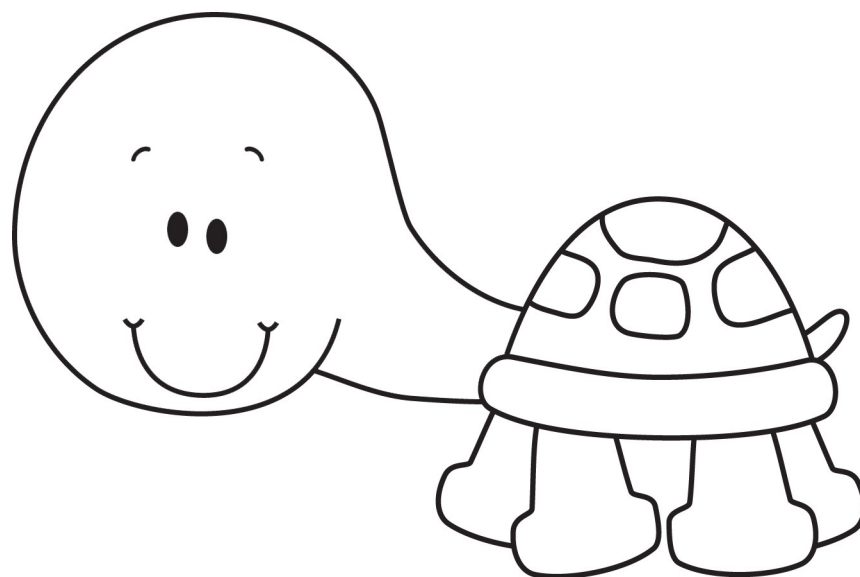
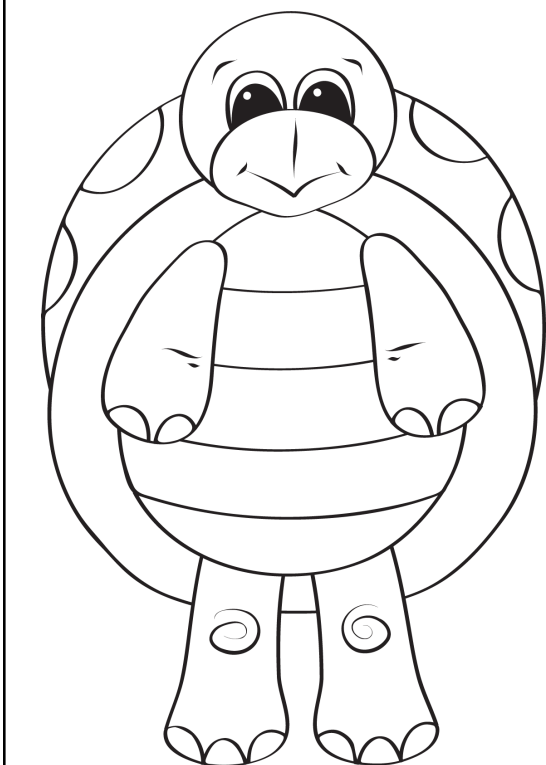
The **Hens and Roosters** music sounds like clucking, crowing, and squawking and is played by the violin, clarinet, and piano.

THE MULES



The Mules music rushes up and down the keyboard as if the mules are chasing each other up and down the mountain.

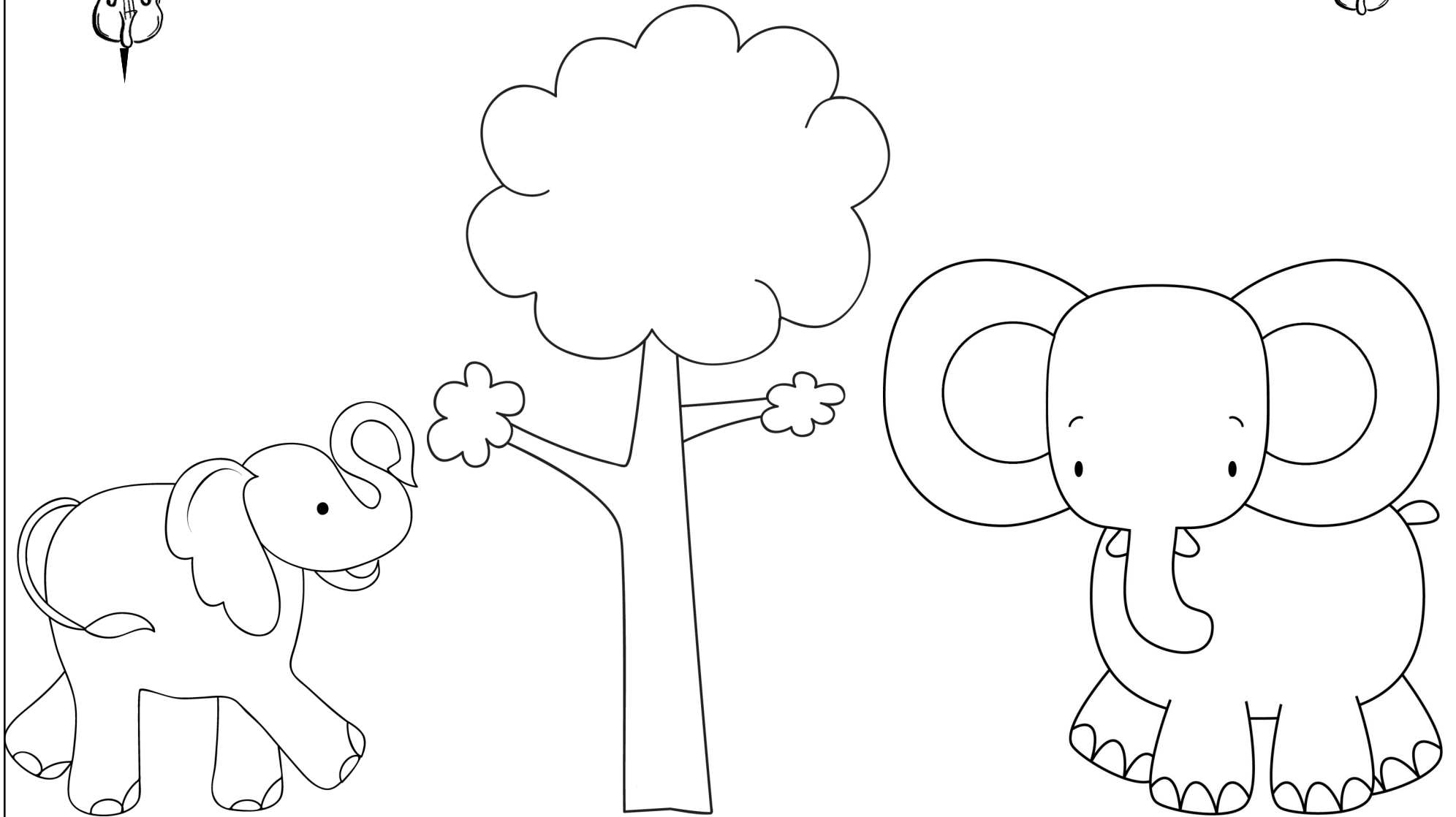
TORTOISES



Tortoises move very slowly. The strings and piano are played with a slow tempo.



ELEPHANTS



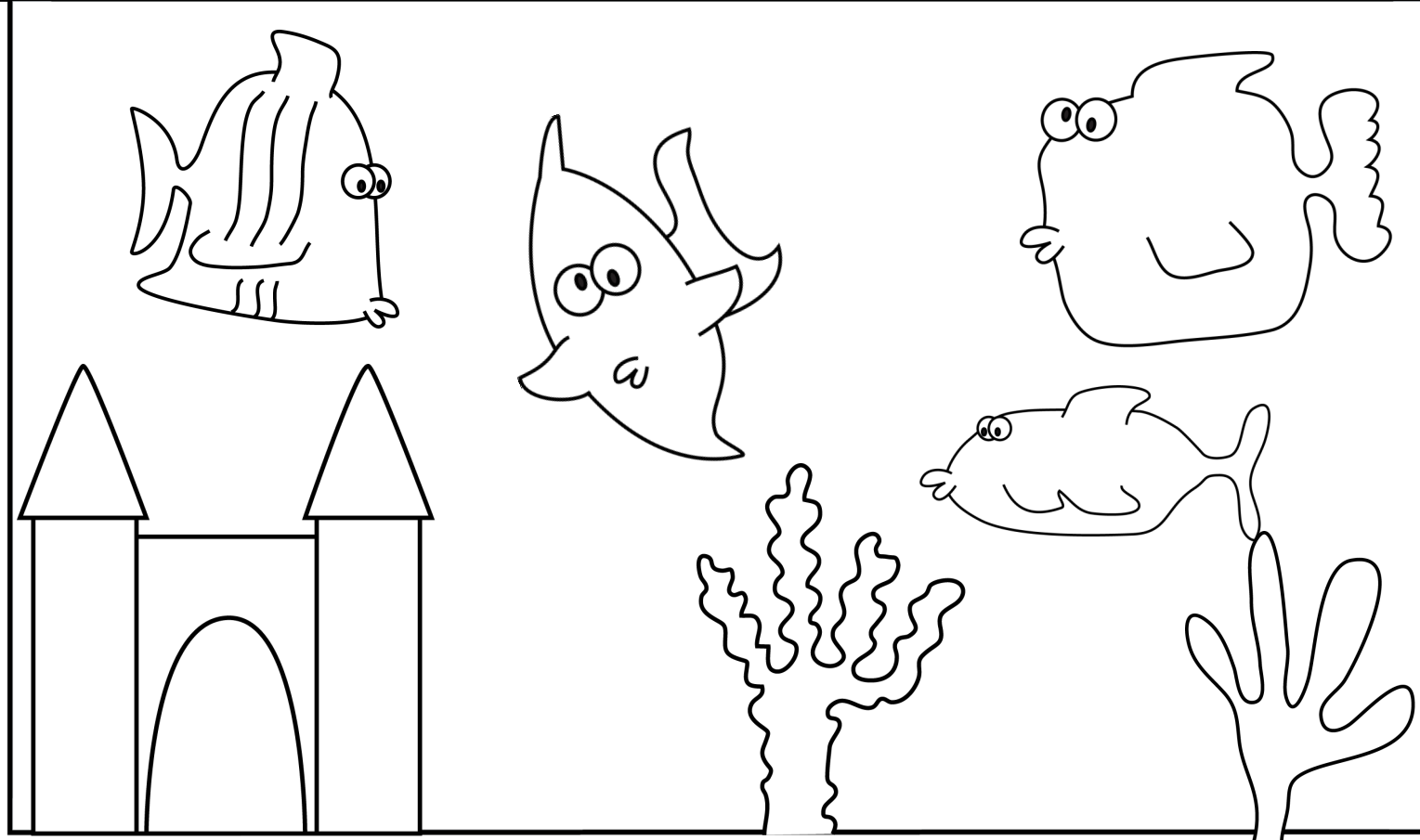
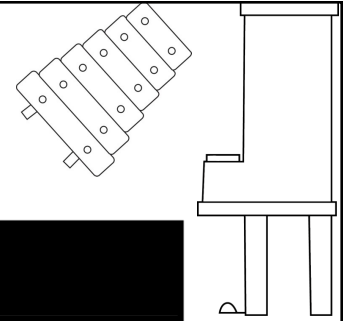
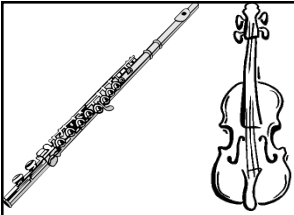
The **Elephant** dances the waltz as the double bass plays the sound of deep plodding steps.

KANGAROOS



The bouncy music of the **Kangaroos** sounds like they are hopping up and down the piano.

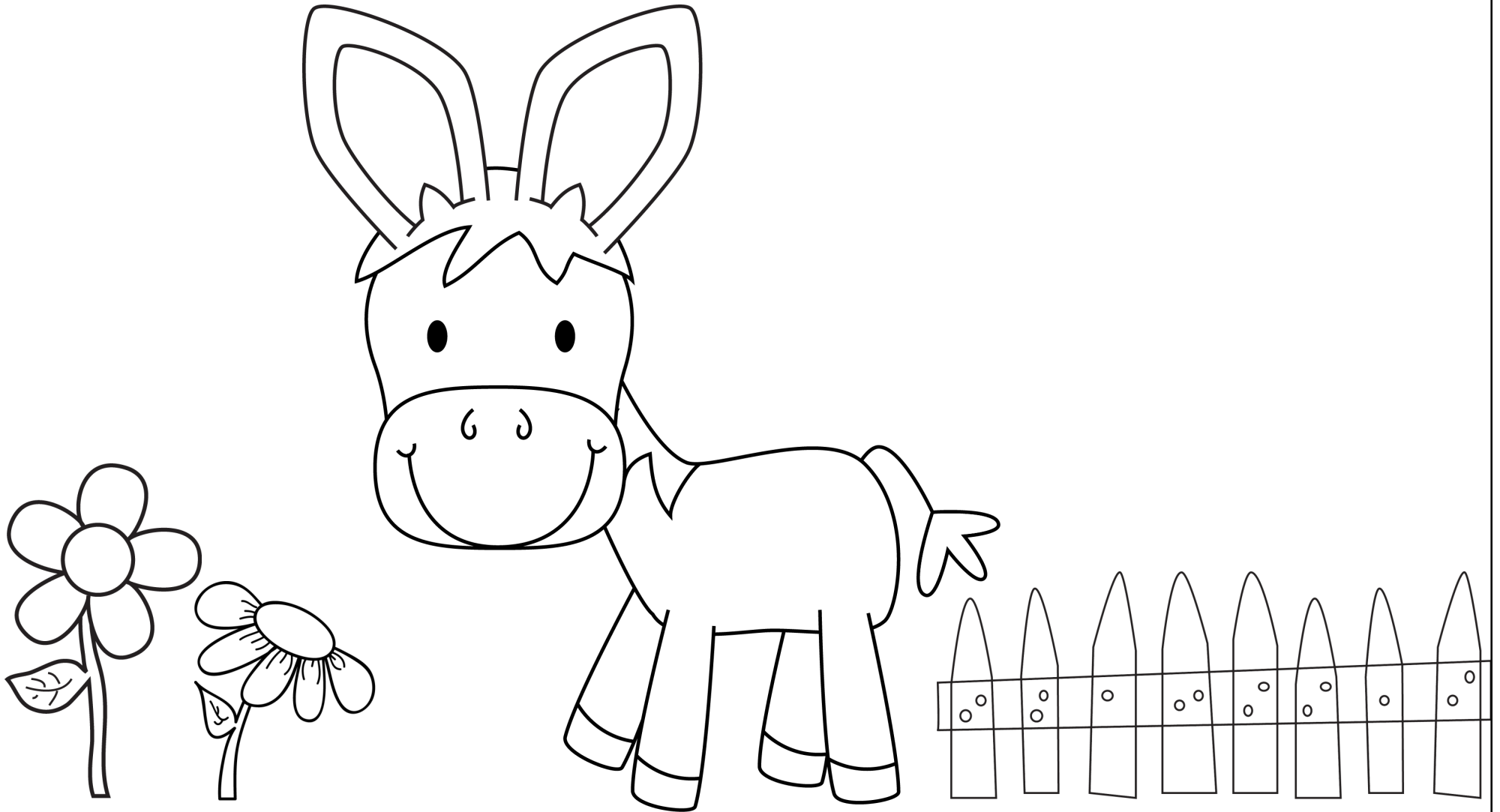
THE AQUARIUM



In **The Aquarium** flutes and string instruments sound just like music should sound under the sea. Listen carefully to hear the tinkle of the glockenspiel.

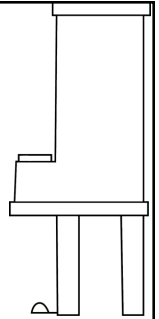


ANIMALS WITH LONG EARS



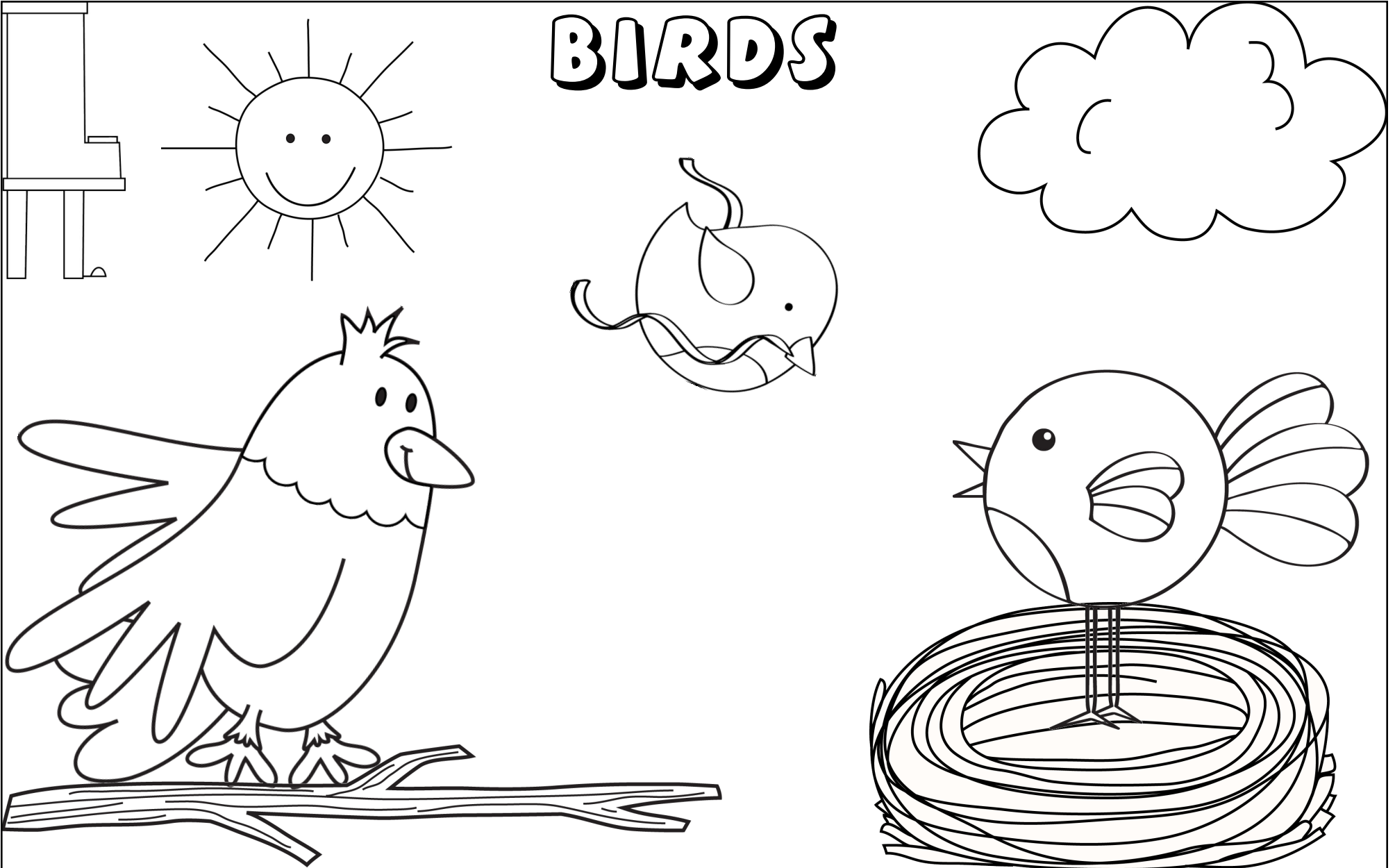
As the violin plays **Animals with Long Ears**, the hee-haws get louder and faster.

CUCKOO IN THE WOODS



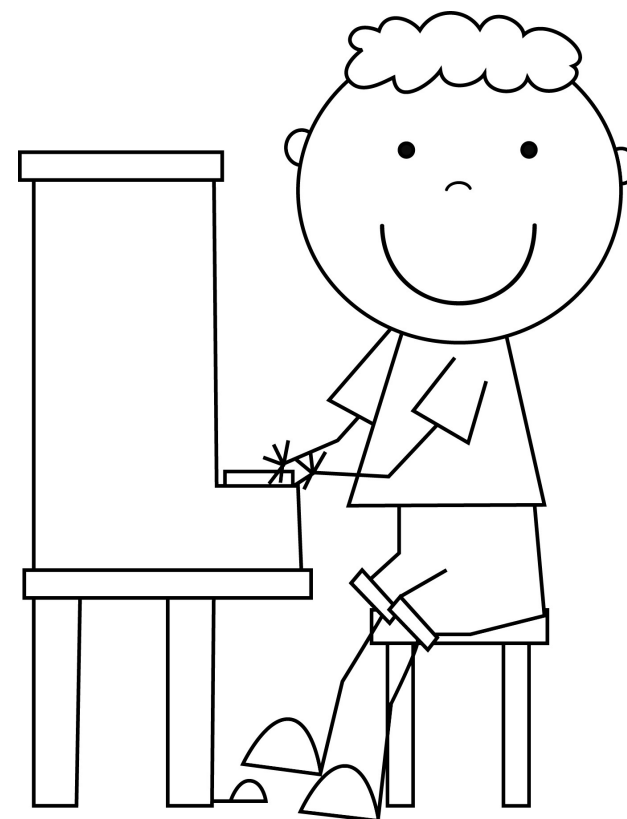
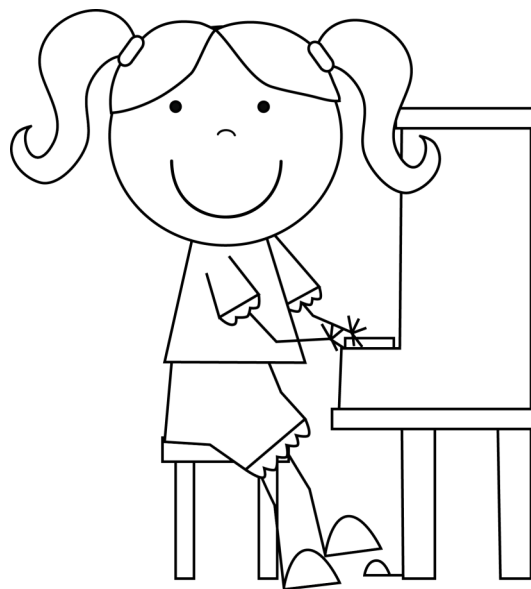
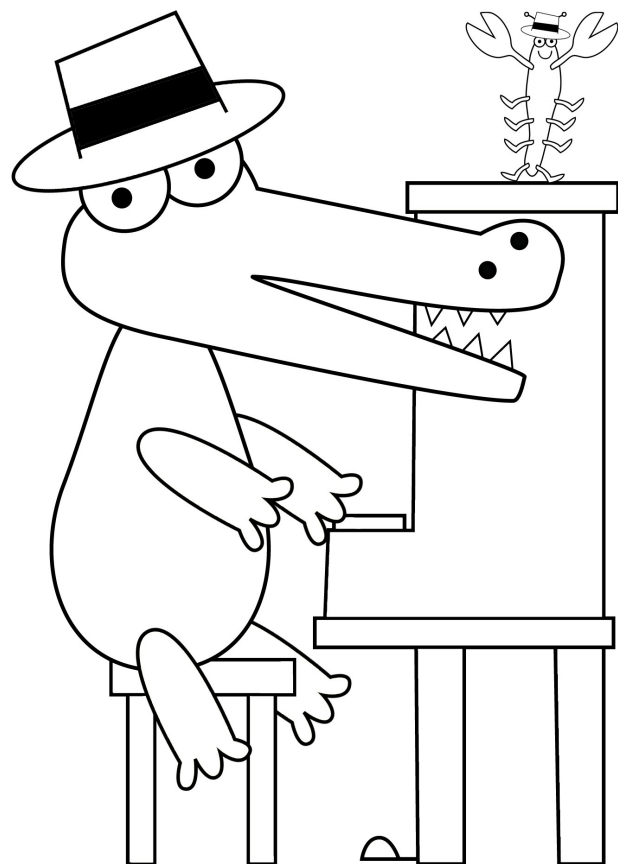
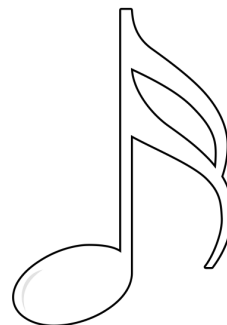
Cuckoo in the Woods is gentle music. The cuckoo's call is played by the sweet sound of the clarinet. The piano sounds like footsteps walking into the woods.

BIRDS



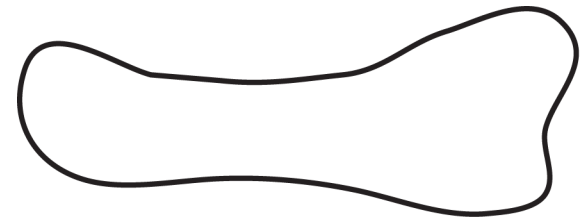
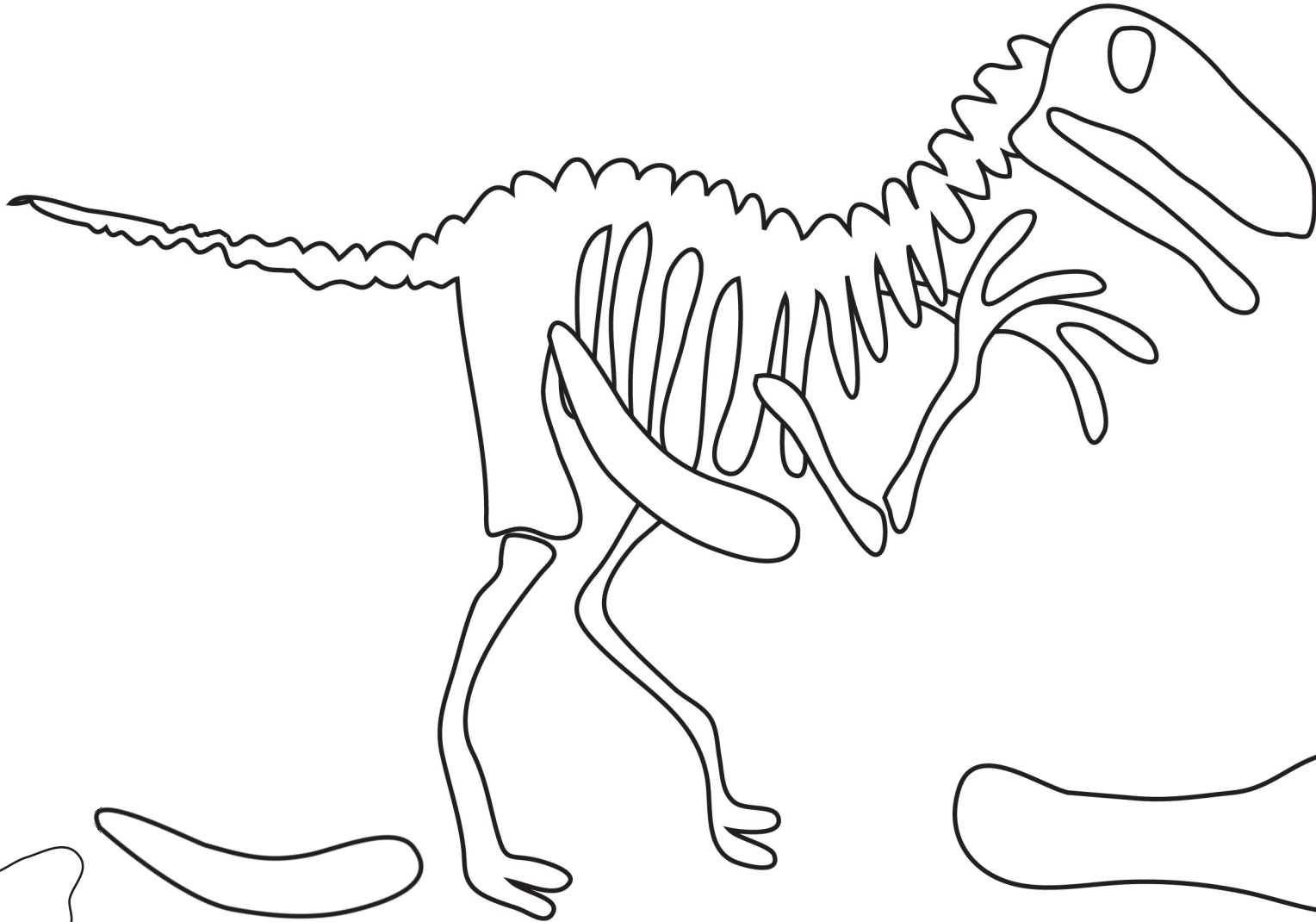
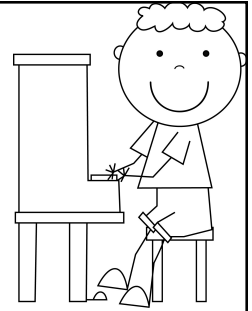
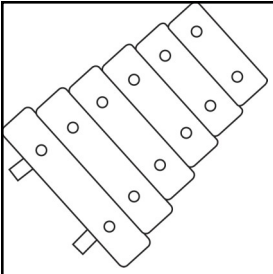
The **Birds** music is played by the flute making light and bouncy music. The violins hover in the background. The piano plays trills.

THE PIANISTS

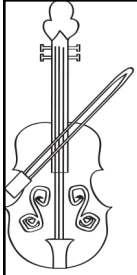


The Pianists practice the same musical scale exercises over and over again, up and down the keyboard.

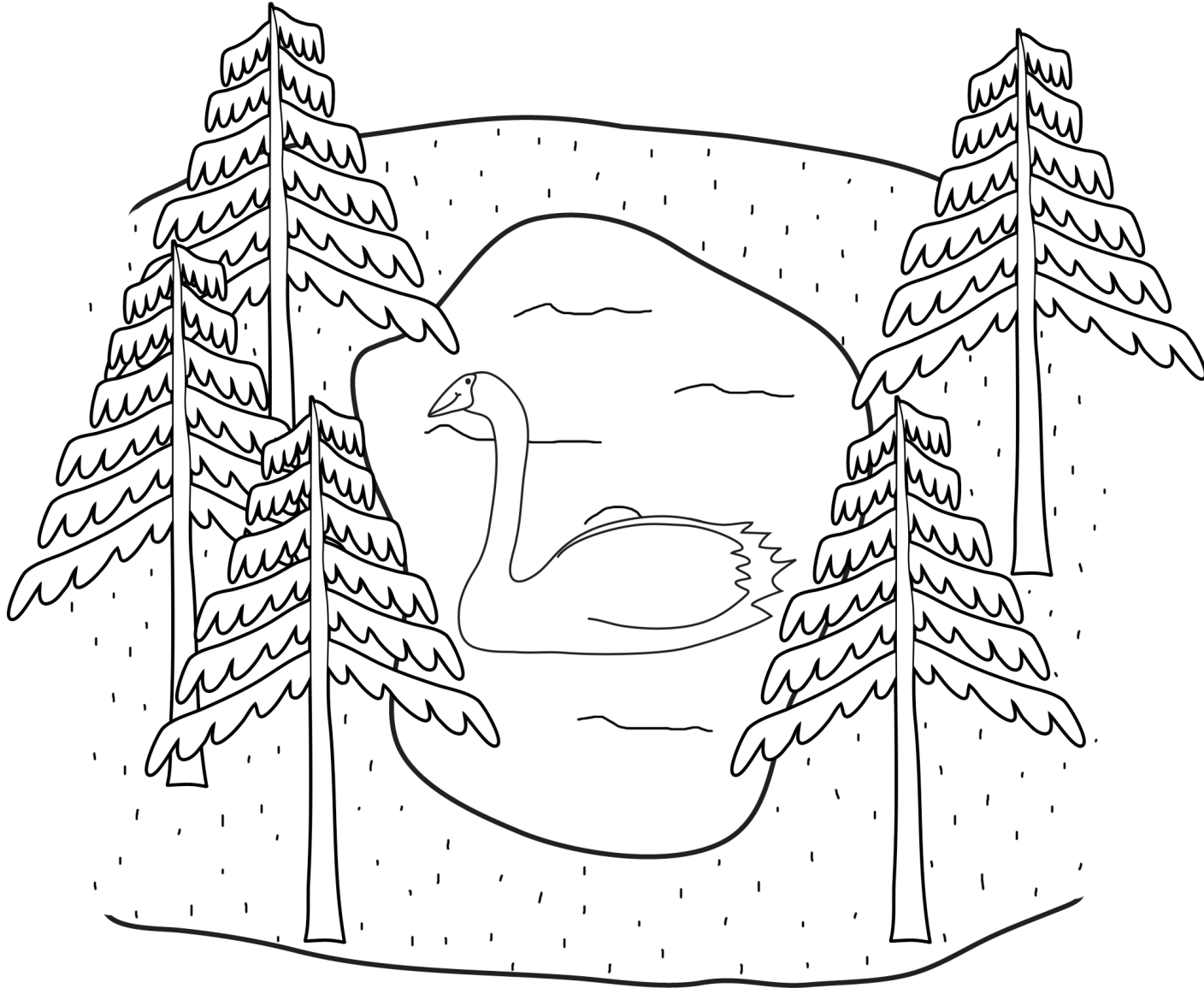
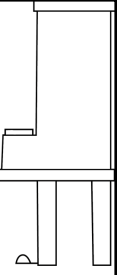
FOSSILS



Fossils is played by the xylophone and piano. They play a fast paced beat for the dancing bones.

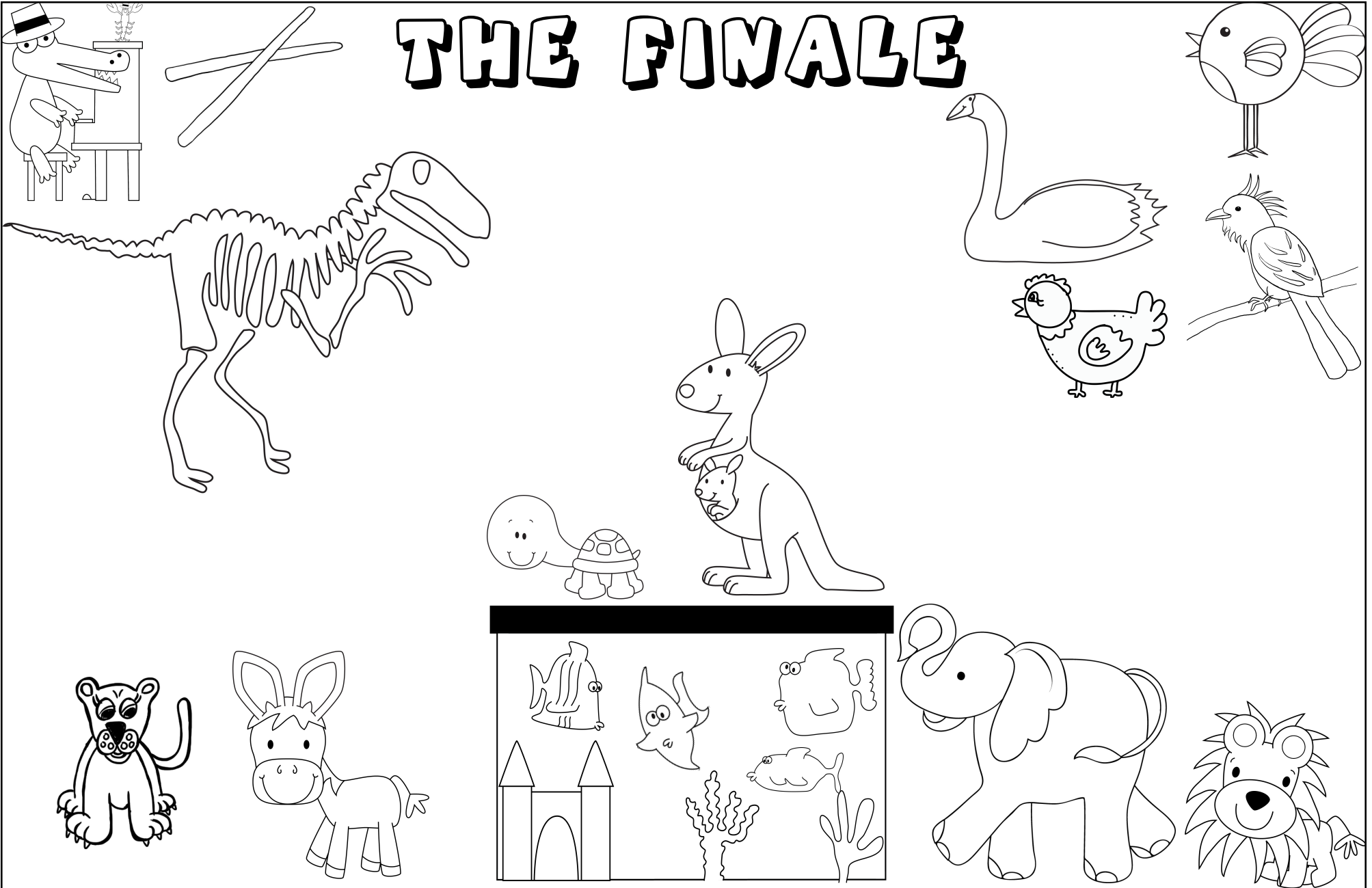


THE SWAN



The Swan main tune is place by the cello with the piano in the background. It sounds like a ballet.

THE FINALE



All of the animals come back for the **Finale**. It is time for rhythm sticks and another parade around the room!