

DARIUS MILHAUD LA CRÉATION DU MONDE



Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

Darius Milhaud was born 130 years ago in France. He was a violinist, composer, conductor and teacher. He was also a globetrotter. He spent 2 years living in Rio de Janeiro and the influence of Brazil can be heard in several of his pieces. He also travelled to New York, where he fell in love with jazz.

In these short films, you can see the wildly joyous mood in the jazz clubs of the 1920s:



LA CRÉATION DU MONDE (THE CREATION OF THE WORLD)

La Création du Monde is a piece of music written for a ballet. The premiere took place on 25 October 1923 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. The dance is rarely performed nowadays, but the music is!

The work consists of six movements that follow each other without a break.

Won't you come along on this voyage of discovery? Turn on the music for each movement and carry out the activities. Have fun!

1. THE OPENING

The *Création du Monde* was written for a group of 18 musicians. The orchestration is the same as for the jazz orchestras in New York in the composer's day.



ACTIVITY: LISTEN AND IDENTIFY!

Listen to the first movement, 'The Opening'. An alto saxophone plays the opening melody. The alto saxophone is the most frequently played sax. Saxophones are rarely found in a classical symphony orchestra, but is more often used in jazz.

Can you recognize the other instruments you hear? Put a check mark next to each instrument name you can hear.



Sopraan Alt Tenor Bariton

- VIOLIN
- SAXOPHONE
- CELLO
- DOUBLE BASS
- FLUTE
- OBOE
- CLARINET
- BASSOON
- HORN
- TRUMPET
- PERCUSSION

2. CHAOS BEFORE THE CREATION

The title 'Création du Monde' means: 'The creation of the world.' The choreography draws inspiration from traditional African folk tales about the origins of the world, of plants and animals and of human beings.

'In the beginning, there is chaos, a tangle of bodies and three giant gods that slowly move in the heavens (Nzame, Medere and N'kva, the masters of creation). They consult with each other, circle around the chaos and utter magic words that create life.'

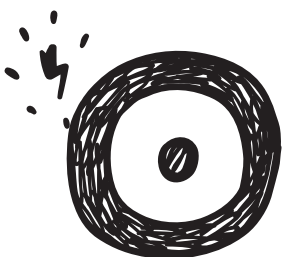


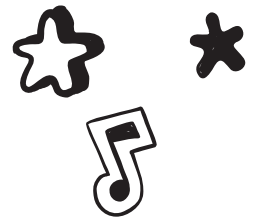
ACTIVITY: WRITE YOUR OWN STORY

Close your eyes and awaken your imagination. The music can help.

Think up your own story about the creation of the world. How do you imagine that the world came into being? Who or what came first?

Write this down in a few sentences and draw an illustration.





In the beginning, there was nothing.
The following day ...

A series of ten horizontal dotted lines for writing.



3. THE BIRTH OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

'The tangle of bodies begins to move. Slowly, a tree begins to grow, rises every higher vertically and when one of the seeds falls to the ground, a new tree grows from it.'

The artist Fernand Léger designed the stage set and costumes for the ballet. It was quite difficult for the dancers to move in such huge costumes! You can see that in this short film:



Fernand Léger Set design for *La création du monde*



Fernand Léger costumes for *La création du monde*



ACTIVITY: DRESS UP AND DANCE!

Come up with an imaginary animal. Make a mask out of cardboard, painted or covered with coloured paper. Look for colourful dress-up clothes that goes with your animal.

4. THE BIRTH OF MAN AND WOMAN

'Every creature slowly comes to life, takes a few steps, begins to move in a circle, turning ever faster around the three gods. An opening appears in the circle ... A man and a woman rise up. They recognize each other and look at each other.'



ACTIVITY: DO THE DANCE!

Think about how your imaginary animal moves to the music.
Use twisting and gradually increasing movements
so that you gradually come to life.
Keep moving faster and faster until you meet someone.
Who is it?
Your brother or sister, your dog or teddy bear?



5. LONGING

*'The couple start the dance of seduction, followed by the pairs' dance.
All living beings creep closer and join the round dance that takes on a dizzying speed.'*

ACTIVITY

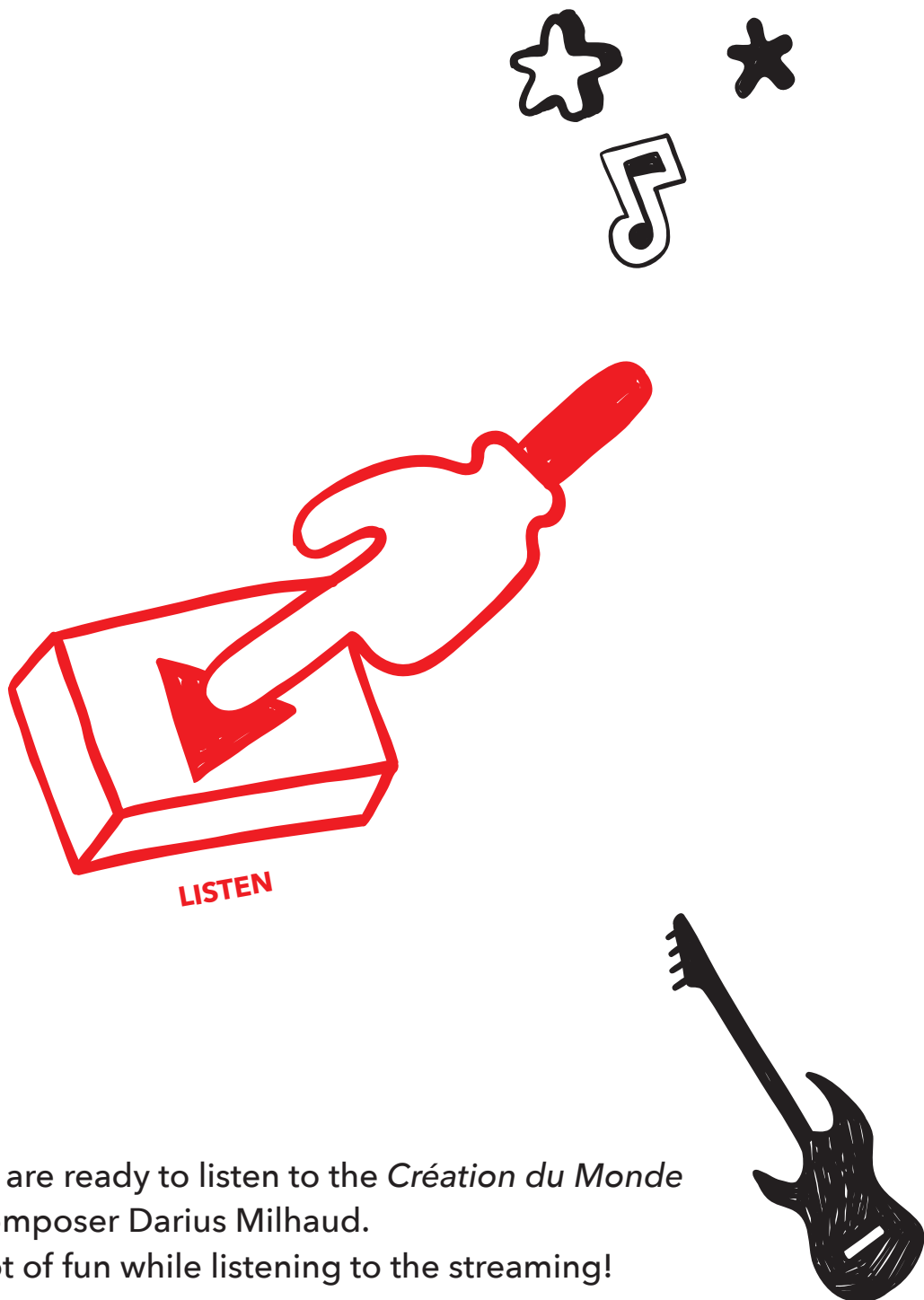
Have you ever been in love?
That feeling of butterflies in your stomach?
Imagine that feeling while you listen to the next movement and carry out the activity.
Take a sheet of paper and 2 different coloured pencils,
and find someone who will do the activity with you.
Take one pencil each.
While listening to the music, let the pencils dance on the paper.
Do they move far from each other?
Do they come closer together?
Are they moving slowly or fast?
Smoothly or in angular movements?
(if you are doing this alone, you can hold one pencil in each hand)



6. SPRING AND RELAXATION

*'The human couple sinks into a kiss, and everything quietens down.
Spring is here in the lives of human beings.'*

Can you hear the quiet calm returning to the music? Close your eyes and enjoy!



Now you are ready to listen to the *Création du Monde* by the composer Darius Milhaud.
Have a lot of fun while listening to the streaming!