

02. The Sound of Music

I. Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each.

Question 1. How old was Evelyn when she went to the Royal Academy of Music?

Answer: Evelyn was sixteen years old when she went to the Royal Academy of Music.

Question 2. When was her deafness first noticed? When was it confirmed?

Answer: Her deafness was first noticed when she was just eight years old. It was confirmed by the time she was eleven.

II. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (30–40 words).

Question 1. Who helped her to continue with music? What did he do and say?

Answer: Ron Forbes who was a percussionist, helped her to continue with music. He asked Evelyn not to listen through ears but to try to sense it some other way.

Question 2. Name the various places and causes for which Evelyn performs.

Answer: Apart from the regular concerts, Evelyn performs in prisons and hospitals. She also takes classes for young musicians.

III. Answer the question in two or three paragraphs (100–150 words).

Question 1. How does Evelyn hear music?

Answer: Evelyn hears music through different parts of her body. Ron Forbes asked her to try to sense the music some other way instead of ears. He started by tuning two big drums to varied notes.

Evelyn realized that she could feel the higher drum from her waist up and the lower drum from her waist down. Forbes kept repeating the same exercise, and then Evelyn realized that she could sense certain notes in different parts of her body.

She says that when she plays the xylophone, she can feel the music passing up the stick into her fingertips. When she leans against the drums, she could sense the resonances flowing into her body. When she performs on a wooden platform, she removes her footwear so that the vibrations pass through her bare feet and up her legs.

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Part II

The Shehnai of Bismillah Khan

I. Tick the right answer.

1. The (shehnai, pungi) was a 'reeded noisemaker.'
2. (Bismillah Khan, A barber, Ali Bux) transformed the pungi into a shehnai.
3. Bismillah Khan's paternal ancestors were (barbers, professional musicians).
4. Bismillah Khan learnt to play the shehnai from (Ali Bux, Paigambar Bux, Ustad Faiyaz Khan).
5. Bismillah Khan's first trip abroad was to (Afghanistan, U.S.A., Canada).

Answer:

1. The pungi was a 'reeded noisemaker.'
2. A barber transformed the pungi into a shehnai.
3. Bismillah Khan's paternal ancestors were professional musicians.
4. Bismillah Khan learnt to play the shehnai from Ali Bux.
5. Bismillah Khan's first trip abroad was to Afghanistan.

III. Answer these questions in 30–40 words.

Question 1. Why did Aurangzeb ban the playing of the pungi?

Answer: Aurangzeb banned the playing of the pungi because of the shrill unpleasant sound of the instrument.

Question 2. How is a shehnai different from a pungi?

Answer: A shehnai's stem is hollow, longer and broader than that of a pungi. Shehnai has holes in its body.

Question 3. Where was the shehnai played traditionally? How did Bismillah Khan change this?

Answer: Traditionally, shehnai was a part of the naubat or traditional ensemble of nine instruments found at royal courts. It was played in temples and at marriages.

Bismillah Khan took it onto the classical stage.

Question 4. When and how did Bismillah Khan get his big break?

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Answer: Bismillah Khan got his big break with the opening of All India Radio in Lucknow in 1938. He became an often-heard shehnai player on radio.

Question 5. Where did Bismillah Khan play the shehnai on 15 August 1947? Why was the event historic?

Answer: Bismillah Khan played the shehnai from the Red Fort on 15th August 1947. He was the first Indian to greet the nation with his Shehnai. The event was historic because that is the day when India got independence. Bismillah Khan played Raag Kafi to an audience that included Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Question 6. Why did Bismillah Khan refuse to start a shehnai school in the U.S.A.?

Answer: Bismillah Khan refused to start a shehnai school in the U.S.A because he did not want to leave his country. He felt an unbreakable bond with his towns – Dumraon and Benaras, and with River Ganga.

Question 7. Find at least two instances in the text which tell you that Bismillah Khan loves India and Benaras.

Answer: Two instances in the text which tell us that Bismillah Khan loves India and Benaras are given below:

- He says that whenever he is in a foreign country, he keeps yearning to see Hindustan.
- He also says that when he is in Mumbai, he thinks of only Benaras and the holy Ganga.

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WIND

I.

Question 1. What are the things the wind does in the first stanza?

Answer: The wind breaks the shutters of the windows, scatters the papers, throws down the books on the shelf, tears the pages of the books and brings the rain.

Question 2. Have you seen anybody winnow grain at home or in a paddy field? What is the word in your language for winnowing? What do people use for winnowing? (Give the words in your language, if you know them.)

Answer: Yes, I have seen my grandmother winnowing grain at home. “Fatakna” is the word in my language Hindi for ‘winnowing’. A winnowing basket is used for winnowing.

Question 3. What does the poet say the wind god winnows?

Answer: The poet says that the wind god winnows crumbling houses, doors, rafters, wood, bodies, lives and hearts and then crushes them all.

Question 4. What should we do to make friends with the wind?

Answer: To make friends with the wind, we should build strong homes and doors. We should strengthen our bodies and make the heart steadfast.

Question 5. What do the last four lines of the poem mean to you?

Answer: The last four lines give a very powerful message. They say that the wind that blows weak fires is the same wind that makes strong fires flourish.

This implies that the weak people are broken by forces but the people who are strong are strengthened by those forces. So, the friendship with the wind or a strong force is good. We have to just stay strong mentally as well as physically.

Question 6. How does the poet speak to the wind — in anger or with humour? You must also have seen or heard of the wind “crumbling lives”. What is your response to this? Is it like the poet’s?

Answer: The poet speaks to the wind with humour. He says that the wind destroys houses, doors, rafters, wood, bodies and lives. He says that it breaks the shutters of the windows and scatters the papers. But at the same time, he also points out that the wind brings rain. He tells the readers that we must become powerful and build strong houses because the wind only damages weak things.

Yes, I too have seen the wind crumbling lives on the news channels. Winds bring massive destruction sometimes. It uproots weak trees and even claims the lives of

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people. But as the poet says, we must try to be more powerful and build powerful structures.

II. The poem you have just read is originally in Tamil. Do you know any such poems in your language?

Answer: Yes, I have read such a poem in my language Hindi by the name “Toofan”.

- THE END -

Sources: Buju's notes