



The Sound of Music Part 2:

Vocabulary Questions

1. **What does the word "shrill" mean in the context of the sentence: "Emperor Aurangzeb prohibited the playing of the pungi because he thought its harsh, shrill, and disagreeable sound made it a reeded noisemaker"?**

- A) Soft and pleasant
- B) High-pitched and piercing
- C) Deep and resonant
- D) Mellow and soothing
- **Answer**: B) High-pitched and piercing

2. **In the passage, "He made a concerted effort to enhance the instrument's tone qualities," what is the meaning of the word "concerted"?**

- A) Casual
- B) Planned or coordinated
- C) Unintended
- D) Solo
- **Answer**: B) Planned or coordinated

3. **What is the meaning of the term "sonorous" in the sentence: "It generated an astounding sonorous tone when he played on it"?**

- A) Weak and faint
- B) Harsh and loud
- C) Rich and full
- D) Monotonous
- **Answer**: C) Rich and full

4. **In the context of the lesson, what does "auspicious" mean in the phrase: "The sound of the shehnai was considered auspicious and so it was played in the temples and at weddings"?**

- A) Unfavorable
- B) Favorable or fortunate
- C) Commonplace
- D) Temporary
- ****Answer****: B) Favorable or fortunate

Extract-Based Question

****Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:****

"However, Aurangzeb did not enjoy the pungi's harsh and disagreeable sound. He consequently forbade the use of this instrument in his palace. There was a barber who came from a musical household. He had entry in to the palace. He made a concerted effort to enhance the instrument's tone qualities by selecting a pipe with a natural hollow stem that was wider and longer than the original pungi. On the instrument's body, he cut seven holes. It generated an astounding sonorous tone when he played on it. In front of the king and his courtiers, the barber performed it. Everyone was awestruck. The apparatus was created by a 'nai' (barber) in the Shah's chamber, hence the name 'Shehnai.'"

1. Why did Aurangzeb ban the pungi in his palace?
2. What changes did the barber make to improve the pungi?
3. How did the audience react when the barber played the improved instrument?
4. Why was the instrument named "Shehnai"?

****Answers:****

1. Aurangzeb banned the pungi because he found its sound harsh and disagreeable.
2. The barber improved the pungi by selecting a pipe with a natural hollow stem that was wider and longer and by cutting seven holes on its body.
3. The audience, including the king and his courtiers, was awestruck when the barber played the improved instrument.
4. The instrument was named "Shehnai" because it was created by a "nai" (barber) in the Shah's (emperor's) chamber.

Short-Answer Questions (30–40 words each)

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

- Aurangzeb banned the pungi because he considered its sound to be shrill, unpleasant, and disturbing, referring to it as a "reeded noisemaker," and thus prohibited its use in the royal court. <https://www.successcds.net/learn-english/class-9/important-questions/chapter-2-the-sound-of-music-part-2>)

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

- A shehnai differs from a pungi as it has a longer and broader hollow stem with seven holes, producing a melodious and sonorous tone, unlike the pungi's shrill and unpleasant sound.

Long-Answer Question (100–150 words)

What are the recurring themes of Bismillah Khan's music, and how did they originate?

Bismillah Khan's music is deeply rooted in themes of spirituality, cultural heritage, and the natural beauty of India, particularly influenced by Benaras and the Ganga River. His music reflects a universal appeal, transcending religious and cultural barriers, as he believed music was a unifying force. These themes originated from his early life in Benaras, where, at the age of three, he was fascinated by his maternal uncle Ali Bux playing the shehnai at the Vishnu temple. Khan spent hours practicing on the banks of the Ganga, drawing inspiration from the flowing waters, which influenced his creation of ragas previously thought beyond the shehnai's range. His performances at temples and later on classical stages, including his historic shehnai recital at the Red Fort on India's Independence Day in 1947, highlight his connection to Indian traditions and his dedication to elevating the shehnai's status.