

Name _____

Date _____

FIND FACTS AND OPINIONS: THE *NAQQĀRA*

The *naqqāra* (nah-cah-rah) is set of two small kettledrums that are played in the middle eastern country of Turkey. These kettledrums were used in one of the most important types of music from Turkey's past, the Janissary (jan-uh-sehr-ee) or *Mehter* (mek-tair) military band. This type of band began in 1299 when a leader was given a drum called the *davul* (duh-vul) as a symbol of his new high rank. A large version of the *naqqāra* called the *kös* (cos) played special beats to demonstrate the ruler's power and especially to cause fear in the enemy. The *kös* would signal the soldiers when to attack or halt. During peacetime, Turkish leaders used the drums and *Mehter* to help spread news and announcements. Aside from the rulers, other important people in the government might have their own *Mehter* band and these groups were found in many Turkish provinces. This percussion music spread to new parts of the world because it took place during a time when the Turkish military conquered many surrounding areas in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The expansion called the Ottoman Empire lasted from 1326 to 1922.

Over many centuries, the Ottoman Turks expanded their empire through military conquest, and as they did, percussion music was an important part of those battles. Percussion was important for three reasons: it inspired soldiers to win, it signified the importance of the leaders, and it frightened the enemy. This military music, that included the *zils*, or cymbals, was performed as a sign of majesty, splendor, and power even though the music itself evolved from humble carnival music. The dignity and sacred nature of the state are expressed in the hitting of the drum.

The *naqqāra* are made from two clay bowls with goat skin drumheads tied on. Sometimes the drums are tied together. They are played with two beaters.

The *Naqqāra*



ROOTS OF RHYTHM – CHAPTER 8: THE *NAQQĀRA* FROM TURKEY
FUNSHEET

Directions: Read each of the following sentences and draw an X in the box to tell whether it is a fact or an opinion.

1. The *naqqāra* should always be played very loudly. Fact Opinion
2. The *naqqāra* are a set of two kettledrums from Turkey that were played in Janissary bands. Fact Opinion
3. Turkey is a country in the Middle East. Fact Opinion
4. The *Mehter* military band started in 1299. Fact Opinion
5. The *kös* are large versions of the *naqqāra* and are supposed to signify the power of the ruler. Fact Opinion
6. Turkish music should be played in China, Japan and other Asian countries. Fact Opinion
7. The Ottoman Empire lasted from 1326 to 1922. Fact Opinion
8. The best sound of *Mehter* music is when the *zils* are playing. Fact Opinion
9. Having lots of Turkish percussion instruments play together must have been difficult. Fact Opinion
10. The *naqqāra* are made from two clay bowls with goat skin drumheads tied on to them. Fact Opinion

Mehter Percussion:

