HISTORISCHES
MUSEUM
BASEL

animalistic! – The Sound of Animals

22 October 2021 to 25 June 2023

Historisches Museum Basel – Musikmuseum

Bird Whistle, HMB Inv. 2005.2350; Shutterstock_770551258 (background) © Historisches Museum Basel, Photo Andreas Niemz

This is an exhibition about the many different ways in which animals and music are connected. It asks such basic questions as: Are animals musical? Do whales and birds really sing? And how can we tell whether animals are «enjoying» music?

The pleasure people take in having animals dance or even play instruments will also be discussed, the classic instances of this being the dancing bear, the trumpeting elephant and the swansong. Another theme of the exhibition will be the use of animal parts to make musical instruments such as bone flutes, ivory keyboard keys and animal skin drums. Rather less well known is the use of baleen in pianos. These days, alternative materials are becoming increasingly widespread, reflecting our growing awareness of animal welfare.

The exhibition will be flanked by an extensive programme of events and can be experienced with the aid of an eGuide in German, English and French.

Historisches Museum Basel – Musikmuseum
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