

Musical Elephants

In the town of Lampang in northern Thailand, there is an unusual group of musicians. They play many different kinds of music—everything from traditional Thai songs to music by Beethoven. Both children and adults love this group. What makes them so **popular**? Is it their music? Their looks? Yes, it's both of these things, but it's also something else: they're elephants.



These musical elephants started at the Thai Elephant Conservation Center (TECC) in Lampang. The TECC protects elephant. It teaches people to understand and care for these **huge**, but **gentle**, animals. And like many zoos around the world, the TECC **encourage** elephants to paint.

Richard Lair works with the TECC. He knows a lot about elephants. He says some of the animals' paintings are very good. But, in fact, elephants hear better than they see. And so he had an idea: if elephants are intelligent and they have good hearing, maybe they can play music. To test his idea, Lair and a friend started the Thai Elephant Orchestra. During a **performance**, the elephants play a variety of instruments, including the drum and the xylophone. The animals also use their voices and trunks to make sounds.

But can elephants really make music **properly**? Yes, says Lair. They're very **creative**. Humans encourage the animals to play, but the elephants make their own songs; they don't just copy their **trainers** or other people. There are now CDs of the group's music, which earn money for the TECC. And the music these **artists** create is pretty amazing.



Vocabulary Practice

A. Completion. Complete the information with words from the box. One word is extra.

artists	earn
encourage	popular
trainers	creative



Many elephants can paint. In fact, elephants in zoos sometimes draw on the ground with a stick. Seeing this, some elephant (1) _____ show elephants how to hold a paintbrush, and (2) _____ the elephants to choose color and paint. Of course, not every painting is good. Just like humans, only some elephants are very (3) _____. Now, an online gallery sells Paintings by these elephant (4) _____. By doing this, the gallery hopes to (5) _____ money to protect elephants.

B. Word in Context. Complete each sentence with the best answer.

1. A **gentle** person _____ hurt an animal.
a. wouldn't b. would
2. A **huge** animal is very _____.
a. large b. small
3. If something is **popular**, _____ people like it.
a. a lot of b. very few
4. If you do something **properly**, you do it _____.
a. poorly b. correctly
5. An example of a musical **performance** is _____.
a. an orchestra playing music by Mozart
b. a teacher explaining how to read music

