

A musician wearing a black winter jacket and hood is performing in an ice bar. The musician is holding a microphone to their mouth. The background is a structure made of clear ice blocks. Several professional microphones on stands are positioned around the musician. The floor is covered in snow. The overall lighting is cool and blue.

The Coolest Music In the World

Word Pronunciations!

Sculptor	- SKULP-ter
Orchestra	- OR-kes-tra
Chisel	- CHI-zul
Cello	- CHEH-low
Acoustics	- a-KOO-stiks
Fahrenheit	- FARE-in-hite



The Coolest Music in the World

by Gail Hennessey ● 2021

In the Arctic, the northernmost part of the earth, it is extremely cold and icy and during the winter there are periods of almost constant night. In this text, a clever ice sculptor makes "ICEstruments," or instruments made from ice and snow.

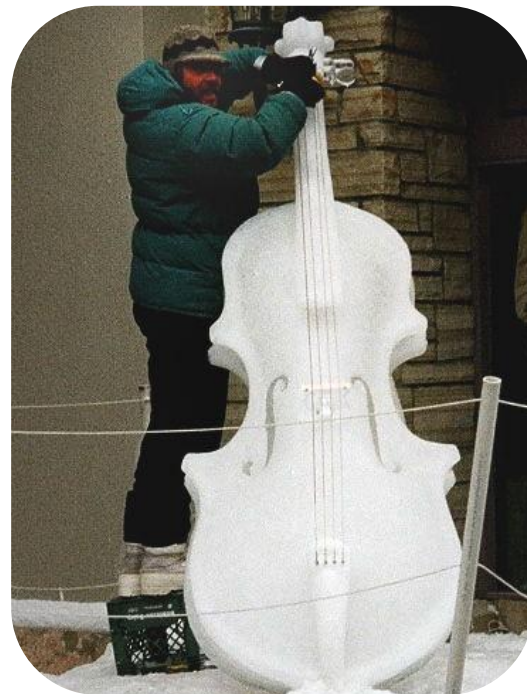
Do you play a musical instrument? Could you imagine playing one made from ice?

Tim Linhart is an American ice sculptor who has created a small **orchestra** of ice instruments. The **performances** have been entertaining people for more than 20 years.



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Linhart's first ice instrument was a giant violin. It was 10 feet (3 meters) tall. "A friend of mine made guitars, and I thought, I wonder what an instrument would sound like made from ice and snow," he says. Linhart got to work shaping his ice instrument. He used bass strings from an old piano. "When I plucked the strings of my ice violin, the sound was great. Unfortunately, when I tightened the strings to make a louder sound, my violin exploded into thousands of pieces." That experience just made him more determined to create ice instruments.



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Chainsaws, Chisels, and Drinking Straws

Linhart uses white ice, a mixture of snow and water. He also gathers clear ice from nearby rivers and lakes. He lives near the Arctic Circle, so that isn't a problem. With a chainsaw, he harvests the ice he'll carve into a musical instrument. "You have to dig about 8 inches (20 centimeters) down into the frozen lake to get bubble-free ice," he says.

His other tools include chisels, shavers, and drinking straws. The straws help to seal cracks. Blowing into the straw, he melts the ice a bit with the heat from his breath. Then he lets it refreeze. His "glue" is water.

An Intense Sound

The name of Linhart's orchestra is Ice Music. Instruments in Ice Music include violin, viola, cello, upright bass, banjo, mandolin, guitar, drums, and xylophone.

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Linhart has also created what he calls a rolondophone. It's a percussion instrument made up of 44 tubes, and every tube plays a different note. "You hit the top of each tube like you would a drum," he says. "It's like a very large pan flute." Some of the tubes of a rolondophone are 6 feet (1.8 meters) long or more. The smallest tubes are about 10 inches (25.4 centimeters).



Linhart likes the **acoustics** of ice. Wood is soft and absorbs a lot of an instrument's sound vibrations. Ice absorbs the vibrations too, but not as much. This makes for a very sharp sound. "Ice instruments produce a sound you can feel more intensely in your entire body."

Linhart says the instruments have a sound that becomes louder and sweeter as they're played. The instruments are very fragile. Even the warmth of a musician's breath can cause the sound to change. So the instruments need to be returned between each piece of music. Backup instruments are kept on hand in case one breaks, but some can be "repaired" with just a bit of water.

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Freezing Cold Concert Halls

Most performances by Ice Music take place in a specially created concert hall in Luleå, in northern Sweden. The hall seats up to 200 people, and the temperature inside is about 23 degrees Fahrenheit, or -5 degrees celsius.

The audience is encouraged to wear several layers of clothing, a hat, and gloves. Body heat and breathing can melt the instruments, so Linhart designed the hall as two igloos connected with a stage in the middle. A hole above each side of the audience acts as a chimney, allowing heat to escape. Because the concert hall cannot last through the warm season, it must be rebuilt every winter.

Ice Music concerts have taken place in other places around the world. Linhart has recently built an 80-foot-high (24.4-meter-high) cathedral-like hall inside a glacier in the Italian Alps.

When winter ends, Linhart tries to freeze some of the instruments in his "freeze house" for the next year's performances. Others that are too worn are allowed to melt in the sun.



'Ice'-strument Facts!

- ★ To keep the instruments from melting, the musicians perform on a specially constructed stage, which they call a “giant cosmic igloo.”
- ★ It can take a week to freeze and build each instrument out of ice.
- ★ These instruments are so heavy that some need to be attached to the roof for support and safety!
- ★ Time Linhart has created 19 ice orchestras and 11 igloo-style ice music concert halls in places from Luleå, Sweden, to the Italian Alps.
- ★ Players can't practice on their instruments because of their warm bodies, so they often compose music live and improvise in front of the audience.



Tim Linhart began making ice instruments because...

A) His friend dared him to do it.

C) People said it was impossible

B) No one has done it before

D) He was curious about how they would sound.

What does Linhart like about the ice instruments?

A) That the ice creates soft and gentle tones

B) That they are much stronger than people think.

C) That they have a strong and high-pitched sound

D) That the ice is best for making just one type of instrument.

Ice music concerts...

A) Take place every year in both Sweden and the Italian Alps.

B) Take place in special buildings that are recreated each year.

C) Were popular for a while but have become less popular over time.

D) Can now be performed anywhere with excellent air conditioning.

Vocabulary

Orchestra	•	•	n. A concert or show performed for an audience
Performance	•	•	n. Having a great degree of something; strong, as in sound
Chisel	•	•	n. A group of musicians who play different instruments and perform together
Intense	•	•	n. a large and important church
Acoustics	•	•	n. A tool with a long metal blade for cutting wood, stone, etc.
Cathedral	•	•	plural n. Having to do with how sound is created and delivered



Connotation

The way words 'feel' - the suggested meaning by a word.

Fragile

Brittle



Easily damaged or broken ← Denotation

The instruments are very fragile.

vs.

The instruments are very brittle.

← implies a need for careful handling, extremely delicate

← implies hardness, lack of flexibility

Connotation

Which of the following has the connotation that best fits this sentence?

Since he wanted to leave work early, he felt some _____ to work quickly.

A. coercion

B. pressure

C. fear

D. intimidation



Connotation

Which of the following has the connotation that best fits this sentence?

After cleaning for over an hour, the room was _____, without a speck of dirt.

- A. blue
- B. immaculate
- C. clear
- D. washed



Connotation

Which of the following has the connotation that best fits this sentence?

Joe had taken his car for repair three times now, and he was ____!
It still wasn't working.

- A. irked
- B. inconvenienced
- C. provoked
- D. angry





What do you think makes art beautiful? How do you know when a piece of art - a painting, piece of music, movie, or any other type of art - is beautiful?



Because ice is always sublimating away, ice instruments are constantly repaired.

Do you think it's worth it to keep maintaining the instrument's condition?