

### An Instrument Zoo.

It's not very often that you get the opportunity to try out many kinds of instruments. Have you ever blown a bassoon? Have you ever strummed an electric guitar, or tried a set of drums? We had the chance to do that on Saturday. The Woodhouse Conservatory of Music was holding what they called an 'Instrument Zoo' for the public to come and enjoy. When we walked into the entryway, we were greeted by a face painter (for the kids) and we were given a map showing us which instruments were in which rooms. On the main floor, we walked into the room which is normally used as an office. A young man was there with a clarinet. Cool! My sister used to play one when she was little. I love its cool tones. He played a great piece from Pirates of the Caribbean. We are movie soundtrack buffs in our household, and that is a soundtrack that we are very familiar with. He caught our attention immediately. "Do you want a turn?" he asked. Of course I did, but I wanted to let my kids try it first. They all looked shy, and I could tell what they were thinking, "He's just had that in his mouth; do I have to put it in my mouth?" I thought the same, so I asked if he could clean the mouthpiece. He graciously did more than that; he put a new reed in it for me. Anyway, after my obsessive compulsive disorder was satisfied, we all had a go and loved it. Next, we moved onto the bass saxophone. It's huge. In fact, it's about the same size as my daughter, who did her best to blow it, but couldn't. Upstairs to the second floor we went, following the map, hearing all sorts of lovely sounds coming from the rooms, and walking past signs that said, 'Don't feed the animals.' Yes, very funny. In the next room, something very special happened. The oboe teacher, seeing us walk in, played a track from Star Wars. The mouths of all my kids dropped open. This was the 'bomb' as they say here, which is slang for the very best. The boys lined up to have a turn, germs or no germs they didn't care. But believe me, it's hard to blow. That beautiful, haunting sound of the oboe requires a lot of breath! Suddenly, another lady walked in carrying a very long instrument, a bassoon. She gave us a demonstration of what it can do by playing some Mozart. Again, we all had a go, mixing and spreading germs, which now makes me cringe, but at the time seemed to be irrelevant. We finished off our tour with the electric guitar and the drums. Pink Floyd and The Rolling Stones were played by the guitar teachers, and my children just strummed one or two notes to accompany. What a great experience. When would you normally have that kind of an opportunity? Not very often, I think.

### Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: tone, graciously, to strum, reed.

1. His tone of voice was very harsh and threatening.
2. I accidentally scratched his car, but he graciously forgave me.
3. Don't strum the guitar too loudly; it sounds better when it is quiet.
4. Reeds grow near rivers; they are also used for instruments.

