

J IS FOR JURASSIC

Don't we all love dinosaurs? There's such a romantic notion about these magnificent beasts roaming the landscape, and there's also something magical about their bones lying hidden beneath our feet, and the fact that any of us could stumble across an undiscovered species of dinosaur.

Dinosaurs very nearly didn't make it into the show at all. It wasn't until my friend Kai did the beautiful line drawings for the poster, and he decided to make one of them a diplodocus, that I decided I had to get dinosaurs in somehow. At that stage, the letter 'D' was already taken by DNA, 'P' (for palaeontology, the study of long-extinct species) was already taken by phylogeny, and there were only five or six letters that I hadn't yet decided on. I had a loose idea for J to write a song about all the scientists I could find whose name was John, but it wasn't a very good idea. So J became Jurassic.

A jive is a type of swing dance, which originated in the USA in the 1930s, and is often danced to boogie woogie or rock'n'roll music, which is what I've tried to recreate here.

JURASSIC: a period of time that began just over 200 million years ago, and lasted for about 56 million years. Many of the most famous species of dinosaur were alive during the Jurassic.

TRIASSIC: a period of time immediately before the Jurassic, which began about 252 million years ago. The dinosaurs first appeared towards the end of the Triassic.

REPTILE: a large group of animals that includes living animals such as tortoises, snakes and lizards, as well as many extinct species, including all dinosaurs.

LIZARD: a type of reptile. Dinosaurs aren't actually lizards, but some of them look a bit like lizards, and the word 'dinosaur' comes from the Greek meaning 'terrible lizard'.

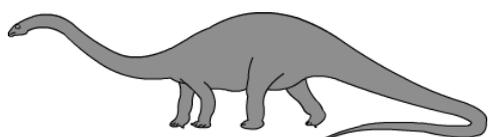
DIPLODOCUS: a very large herbivorous dinosaur, which was thought to be the largest land-animal ever until the even-bigger Argentinosaurus was discovered.

ARCHAEOPTERYX: now here's an interesting fact. You may well hear lots of people claim that dinosaurs are extinct. But that's not true. Some of them survived, but only the ones that could fly. And those ones continued evolving, and became the animals that we call birds. Archaeopteryx is an example of a dinosaur that shares many features with modern birds, and might possibly be a direct ancestor of birds.

STEGOSAURUS: one of the strangest-looking dinosaurs there ever was. As the lyrics suggest, we really don't know why they had those weird things on their backs – perhaps someone watching this show will one day discover the answer?

TYRANNOSAURUS REX: probably the most famous dinosaur, partly because it was so big and nasty, and partly because it had such funny little arms. As I hope I make very clear in the song, Tyrannosaurus Rex is *not* a Jurassic dinosaur.

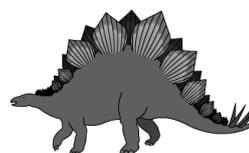
CRETACEOUS: a period of time that began immediately after the Jurassic, and ended 79 million years later when an asteroid hit Chicxulub in Mexico and three quarters of all species on Earth were wiped out.



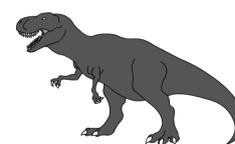
Diplodocus



Archaeopteryx



Stegosaurus



Tyrannosaurus rex

(pictures are not to scale – diplodocus is HUGE!)