



The Mini Page

Next Week:
Penguins

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Founded by Betty Debnam

Meet the Orchestra



photo courtesy Kentucky Country Day

An **orchestra** is a group of musicians who play together. There are about 100 musicians in a symphony orchestra. A symphony orchestra usually plays classical music.

The instruments in an orchestra can be divided into **four families**: strings, brass, woodwinds and percussion.

This week, The Mini Page finds out more about these instruments.

Strings

These instruments are made of wood, with four strings of sheep gut, nylon or wire. They are tuned by turning pegs at the top and stroked by bows made of wood and strung with horsehair. Strings include:

Violin: Smallest of the strings ... higher pitch than other strings ... has a warm, singing sound ... held under the chin.



Viola: Slightly larger than violin ... has thicker strings and a lower, deeper pitch ... held under the chin.

Cello: Has rich, mellow tones that are thought to be closest to the sound of the human voice ... so large that the player sits with the instrument tucked between his or her knees.

Brass

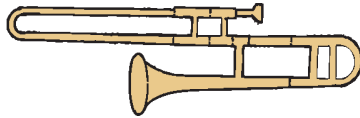
These instruments are made of metal tubing curled in different shapes and lengths. The longer the tube, the lower the tone.

Trumpet: Has a bold, high-pitched tone ... three valves can be pushed to change the

length of the tube and give a wider range of sounds.

Tuba: Has powerful, deep sounds that can be funny or scary ... the largest of the brasses, it has the lowest tone ... 18 to 35 feet of tubing ends in a flaring bell.

Trombone: Has a grand and lovely tone that can be soft or loud ... is the loudest instrument in the orchestra ... has no valves but a slide that is moved back and forth to give different pitches.



Percussion

Percussion instruments are made of a variety of materials. They are played by tapping, striking, shaking or beating to keep rhythm and add tone color. These include:

Bass drum: Like a huge toy drum ... has calfskin stretched over both ends ... makes a deep, booming sound.

Piano: Has 88 keys that are connected to tiny felt hammers that strike metal strings ... both a percussion and a string instrument.



Xylophone: A double row of small wooden bars of different lengths that sound notes when struck ... has a bright, sharp sound.

Woodwinds

Woodwinds are hollow tubes played by blowing into them. The tone is changed by pressing keys over holes in the instrument. Originally made of wood, today woodwinds can be made of wood, metal or plastic.

Oboe: Two-foot-long wooden tube that widens into a bell ... has a mouthpiece made of two pieces of cane fastened together (called a **double reed**) ... has a smooth and beautiful tone.

Bassoon: Eight-foot-long tube that doubles back on itself ... has a double reed attached to a long pipe ... can make lyrical or comical sounds.



Flute: Two feet long ... bright, birdlike tones ... player blows across the tube, just like blowing over the top of a bottle.

Leading the orchestra

A **conductor** sets the music's tempo (speed) for the musicians and signals people to play or change their volume by using hand and arm movements. The conductor usually uses a **baton**.



Franz Welser-Most conducts the New York Philharmonic.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPorchestra

At the library:

- "The Stories of Musical Instruments" by Stepanka Sekaninova
- "Orchestra" by Tyler Gieseke

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of orchestra instruments are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BATON, BRASS, CELLO, CONDUCTOR, FLUTE, INSTRUMENT, LEARN, MUSIC, OBOE, ORCHESTRA, PERCUSSION, PIANO, PLAY, STRINGS, SYMPHONY, TROMBONE, TRUMPET, VIOLIN, WOODWINDS, XYLOPHONE.

O J H R O T C U D N O C X N O
K H S Y M P H O N Y M V Y O T
A T N E M U R T S N I I L I R
T Q S G N I R T S R P O O S O
E F S P O B A T O N L L P S M
P N S K O B O E W L A I H U B
M R A F L U T E E E Y N O C O
U A R T S E H C R O P V N R N
R E B S D N I W D O O W E E E
T L C I S U M J A O N A I P G

Cook's Corner

Green Eggs (No Ham)

You'll need:

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 1/2 cups light sour cream
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, cooked and drained
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, chopped



What to do:

1. Combine first five ingredients in a medium bowl. Mix well.
2. Stir in cooked spinach.
3. Stir in hard-boiled eggs. Mix well.
4. Pour mixture into a greased, microwave-safe casserole dish. Microwave on medium for 4 to 5 minutes or until done. Let stand for 2 minutes. Serves 4.

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

1. Noises you understand by hearing (6-letter plural noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

2. Wires, plastic cords or gut that make tones (7-letter plural noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

3. Person who plays, writes or sings music well (8-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

4. To do something often to learn and improve (8-letter verb)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Charlotte really enjoys the _____ of the orchestra.
2. One of the _____ on Ann's cello broke yesterday.
3. This _____ has earned many awards for her talents.
4. Bob tries to _____ chords on the piano every day.

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by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Sounds, Strings, Musician, Practice.

Mini Jokes



Ollie: What happens if a piano falls on you?
Olivia: You will B-flat!

Eco Note



The first attempt to document the damage cats inflict on biodiversity finds that the felines eat more than 2,000 species, including turtles and insects — possibly more. "There's not much cats won't eat," says Christopher Lepczyk of Alabama's Auburn University. While his work did not point out ways to protect wildlife from the feline assaults, measures found to help include keeping cats indoors or in fenced gardens. Recent research finds that the cats are also spreading to wildlife the brain-altering parasite that causes toxoplasmosis.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about symphony orchestras.

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