



Unit 2

The Orchestra

Meet the composer, and explore the four instrument families of the orchestra, as well as pitch and timbre. Apply learning through Listening Challenges, reflective writing, and visual identification games.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"A Simple Melody," music and lyrics by Nick Scarim, © 2000 Nick Scarim, © 2008 Carnegie Hall. Performed by Sue Landis and Michael Mizrahi.

"Tideo," traditional American song. Performed by Sue Landis and Shane Schag.

"De Colores," traditional Mexican song. Performed by Sue Landis and Shane Schag.

"Ode to Joy" by Ludwig van Beethoven. Adapted by John Whitney. Performed by Sue Landis and Shane Schag.

"Au Claire de la lune" by Claude Debussy. Arranged by Richard Mannoia. Performed by Sue Landis.

"Hot Cross Buns," traditional American song. Performed by Sue Landis.

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LinkUP! is made possible through the generous annual support of The Marie Baier Foundation, Wachovia, The Rose M. Badgeley Residuary Charitable Trust, The Seth Sprague Educational and Charitable Foundation, and The Barker Welfare Foundation.

Unit 2: The Orchestra

Elvis: Wow! The musicians in the orchestra are playing so many different instruments. How are they organized?

Violet: My aunt knows all about the instruments, but I don't think she can help us since she's about to start a rehearsal. But let's keep looking for Gino, the Carnegie Hall cat. He knows a lot about music.

Elvis: There he is!

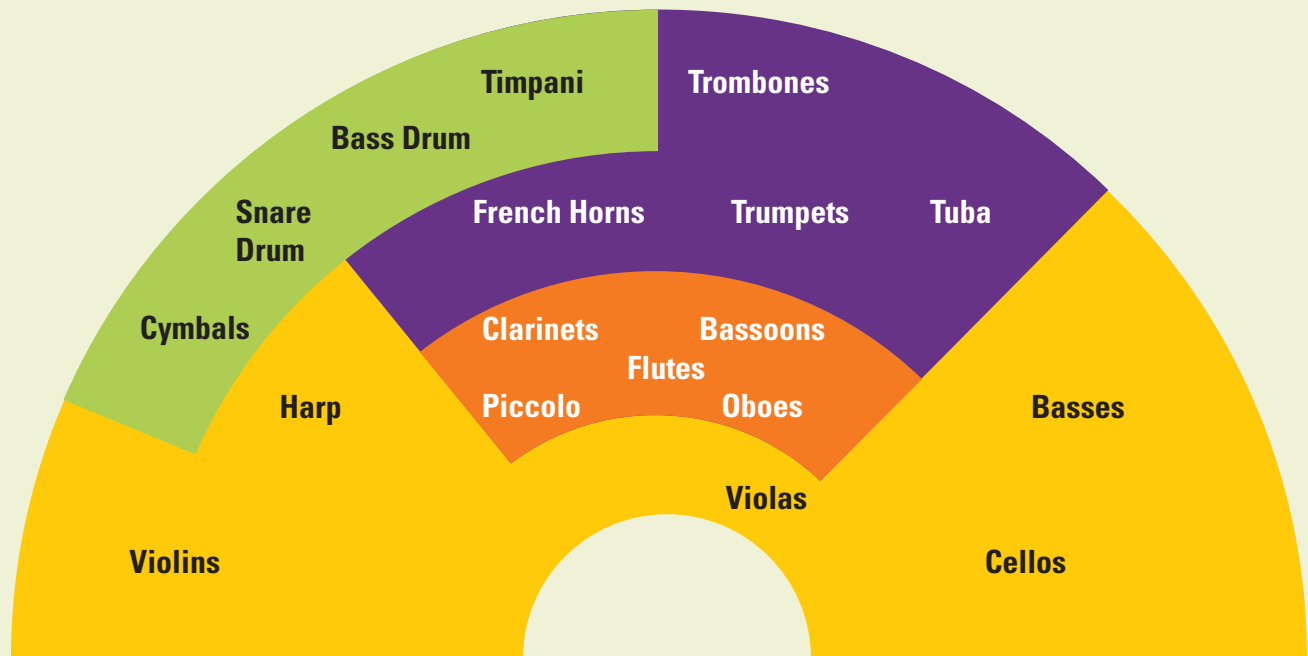


Violet: Hi there. We're Elvis and Violet, and we're so happy you found Gino, because we are curious about all those instruments. We heard Gino knows a lot about music and can help us.

Composer: Well, Gino sure knows how to get people the answers they need! I'm glad you're asking about the instruments, because I spend a lot of time thinking about them. I'm a **composer**, and I write music. When I'm working, I'm always thinking about how the piece is going to sound.

Violet: Isn't that why the orchestra is arranged the way it is—according to the different ways the instruments make sound?

Composer: You're right! The orchestra is divided into four different families: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Take a look at this map to see where they usually sit.



- **String Family**
- **Woodwind Family**
- **Brass Family**
- **Percussion Family**

Violet: Oh, I get it. The four instrument families all sit together onstage as one big extended family.

Elvis: Yeah, but how can we tell which instruments belong to which family?

PERCUSSION



STRINGS





The **woodwind instruments** look like long tubes with lots of keys. Some have pieces of wood, called reeds, that performers blow into to make sounds. Others, like flutes and piccolos, have a hole across which players blow to make sound. The **brass instruments** are made out of metal and are curvy. Performers blow into them through metal mouthpieces. The **string instruments** are wooden and make sound when performers draw a bow (a wooden stick that holds long strands of horse-hair) across the strings, or pluck the strings with their fingers. **Percussion instruments** have many shapes and sizes, and they make sound when they're shaken, scraped, or struck.

Elvis: This is fun! The families are all so different and interesting in their own ways. Let's hear what they all sound like.

Violet: They all sound so beautiful and different. It's kind of like each family has its own voice.

Elvis: Yeah, but I wonder if I could still match the sounds with the instrument families when I have my eyes closed!

Composer: Well then, here's a Listening Challenge to help you find out if you can.

reflective writing | listening challenge

How would you describe the sounds of the instrument families?
(Examples of these recommended works are available for download from your favorite online music retailer.)



Woodwind Family

listen to *The Final Fugue, The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* by Britten



Brass Family

listen to *Canzon septimi toni No. 2* by Gabrieli



Percussion Family

listen to *Act 1, The Nose* by Shostakovich



String Family

listen to *First Movement, Serenade for Strings* by Tchaikovsky

listening challenge

Examples of these recommended works are available for download from your favorite online music retailer.



listen to

The fanfare from *La Péri* by Dukas



listen to

Concerto for Two Oboes by Albinoni



listen to

Andante Cantabile by Tchaikovsky



listen to

Pas Redoublé No. 3 by Cherubini



listen to

Xylophonia by Joe Green



listen to

Adagio for Strings by Barber

For an even harder challenge, try identifying two families playing at once:



listen to

Fanfare for the Common Man by Copland



listen to

The Moldau by Smetana

Help Elvis and Violet identify the instrument families. Below are the names of the instruments. Below each one, write down the name of the family each one belongs to.



1. clarinet



2. French horn



3. flute



4. xylophone



5. oboe



6. timpani



7. bassoon



8. violin



9. trombone



10. tambourine



11. double bass



12. piccolo



13. tuba



14. triangle



15. snare drum



16. cello



17. trumpet



18. viola

Violet: That was pretty easy. I'm starting to notice that some instruments within each family look bigger than the others.

Composer: That's right. Each family has small and large instruments. The smaller ones make higher sounds, and the bigger ones make deeper or lower sounds.



Identify the instruments. Then sort them by size within their families and label each instrument **small, medium, or large**.

String Family



Name:

Size:

Brass Family



Name:

Size:

Percussion Family



Name: _____

Size: _____

Woodwind Family



Name: _____

Size: _____

Composer: Let's listen to the violin, the smallest and highest-sounding string instrument.



listen to

Caprice for Solo Violin No. 24 by Paganini

(Examples of this recommended work are available for download from your favorite online music retailer.)

And now let's hear the cello, a deeper sounding string instrument.



listen to

Allemande, Suite for Solo Cello No. 2 in D Minor by Bach (Examples of this recommended work are available for download from your favorite online music retailer.)

Elvis: Wow, that's such a big difference!

Composer: I'm glad you can hear that. In addition to highness and lowness, each instrument has its own distinct sound quality, or **timbre**. Do this Listening Challenge and see if you can identify a few more instruments by their timbres.

listening challenge

First, **write down** the name of the instrument family to which each instrument belongs. Then, **circle** the instrument you hear in each example.

Do you hear a:

1.



listen to **Track 1**



flute

OR



bass drum ?

_____ family

_____ family

2.  listen to **Track 2**



trumpet

OR



violin ?

_____ family

_____ family

3.  listen to **Track 3**



double bass

OR



oboe ?

_____ family

_____ family

4.  listen to **Track 4**



triangle

OR



tuba ?

_____ family

_____ family

5. **BONUS:**  listen to **Track 5**



bassoon

OR



bass drum ?

_____ family

_____ family

Composer: I know it's hard to believe, but you guys hear timbre all the time!

Elvis: We do? When?

Composer: When you listen to people's voices!

Conductor: Soon, you'll know the timbres of lots of other instruments, too.

reflective writing



Write about your listening experiences in this unit.

What were some of the words we used to describe a voice or sound?

What other types of sounds can you identify with your eyes closed?

What was most challenging about the type of listening we did in this unit?

Composer: Now that you know all about the orchestra, you're ready to be an expert audience member at Carnegie Hall. Let's practice being expert audience members as we listen to the whole orchestra play together.

Elvis: Thanks, but ... uh ... how do we become expert audience members?

The most fun part of LinkUP! is that, unlike many other concerts, the audience (that includes you!) gets to participate in active music making, like singing and playing the recorder or the violin, along with the orchestra musicians. Talk about a cool experience!

Wow! That means we'll be performing at Carnegie Hall—we'll be famous!



To learn more about instruments and orchestras, visit online: Carnegie Hall's animated game for Benjamin Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*

You can also check out YouTube.com, which has thousands of videos of conductors, orchestras, and people playing instruments.

Now your teacher is going to ask you to share your thoughts about being a member of an audience.



Lots of symphony orchestras have created interactive and educational resources, too!

Look up the websites of these orchestras:

- New York Philharmonic: lots of games and interactive information
- San Francisco Symphony: fun design and lots of information
- Dallas Symphony Orchestra: an interactive instrument encyclopedia