

A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

You may enjoy music in the car or on the radio. But music performed by a full orchestra opens a whole new world! An orchestra is a large group of musicians all playing at the same time. The musical instruments they play range from big, deep drums to small, high-pitched flutes. Because the orchestra is made up of so many different instruments, the music is rich and full. You'll be impressed!

Composers, the people who write music, sometimes create special work intended for children. Other times, the work is intended for everyone to enjoy, children included! Join the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as we allow the orchestra to introduce itself - through music!



**Atlanta
Symphony
Orchestra**

Stephen Mulligan
Assistant Conductor

Say Hello to t

An **orchestra** is a large group of musicians playing in four different groups of instruments. Each section has a different quality.

The **string** is made up of violins, violas, cellos, and basses. These instruments can sound soft and sweet, or soaring and grand.



How do you get sound from a string?

Those are vibrations.



The **woodwind** section consists of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons. Woodwinds carry the melody over the quietest and the loudest parts of a piece.



How do you keep from honking?

The air is controlled through these holes.



The **brass** includes horns, trumpets, trombones, and tubas. Brass instruments create epic swells and sudden bursts of sound in the loud, exciting parts of music.



Careful. This is going to be louder than you think.

That's why you're my favorite.



The **percussion** section is home to drums, chimes, gongs, cymbals, and whistles. These instruments provide pounding rhythms, booming drum rolls, and driving energy.



I like a big boom!

I do too!



What does an orchestra sound like?

The sound of the orchestra includes the brass, woodwinds, strings, and percussion. You might have heard music performed by a band or on the piano. Music performed by a full orchestra has a bigger and fuller sound. You might have heard orchestral music in concert halls, movie scores, pop music, or even on video games.

he Orchestra!

How to Listen to an Orchestra

As you listen to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, you might choose to follow the melody played on the woodwinds, the trumpets, or the strings.

You might choose to listen to the rhythm, set by the drums or by any of the other instruments.

You could follow the sound of one single instrument or the whole orchestra, all together. It will get loud. Orchestras have a lot of power. It will also get soft and quiet as well. Sometimes an orchestra is so soft you have to lean forward and listen carefully.

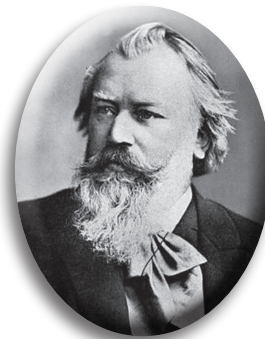
Music can make you feel happy or thoughtful. It can suggest a picture or tell a story - like a dog walking or a bee in flight.

You can choose how to want to listen to the orchestra. You might just enjoy being in the audience as you listen to the orchestra with your classmates and friend.

Do You Want To Dance?

Meet Johannes Brahms & his Hungarian Dance

Composer Johannes Brahms was born in 1833 in Germany. He fell in love with music when he was only six, creating his own way of writing melodies on paper. At the age of 10, he was already giving public performances on the piano.



A friend from Hungary introduced Brahms to the spirited gypsy music of his country. At parties, Brahms played dance music on the piano in that style to entertain his friends. Then he rewrote those dances for an orchestra so that audiences would be thrilled by the music too. Brahms' Hungarian dances became a huge hit.



Watch out! A bee!

Meet Rimsky-Korsakov & His Bumblebee

Composer Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov was born in 1844 in a village in Russia. His mother played the piano while she bounced him on her knee - and that's where he found his love for music.

He wrote his *Flight of the Bumblebee* to tell the story of a prince who is magically turned into a bumblebee so he can fly home. If you were pretending to be a bee, would you be *slow or fast? Soft or loud?* Listen to how Rimsky-Korsakov uses dynamics and tempo - to make the music sound like a bumblebee!

Which instrument did Rimsky-Korsakov pick to play the melody and sound like a bumblebee? Did he pick the right one?



Be a bumblebee!

Use sound and make-believe - and buzz like a bee!

When your teacher gives permission, make a buzzing sound as though a bee is buzzing around your head. Pretend to swallow the bee, so the buzzing is now inside your mouth! Pretend the bee flies down to your hand - keep buzzing and shake your hand! Pretend it flies down your leg - keep buzzing and shake your foot!

Let it fly from one hand to the other, and from one foot to the other - keep buzzing and shaking - until the bee flies out of your mouth! *Whew!* Goodbye, bee!



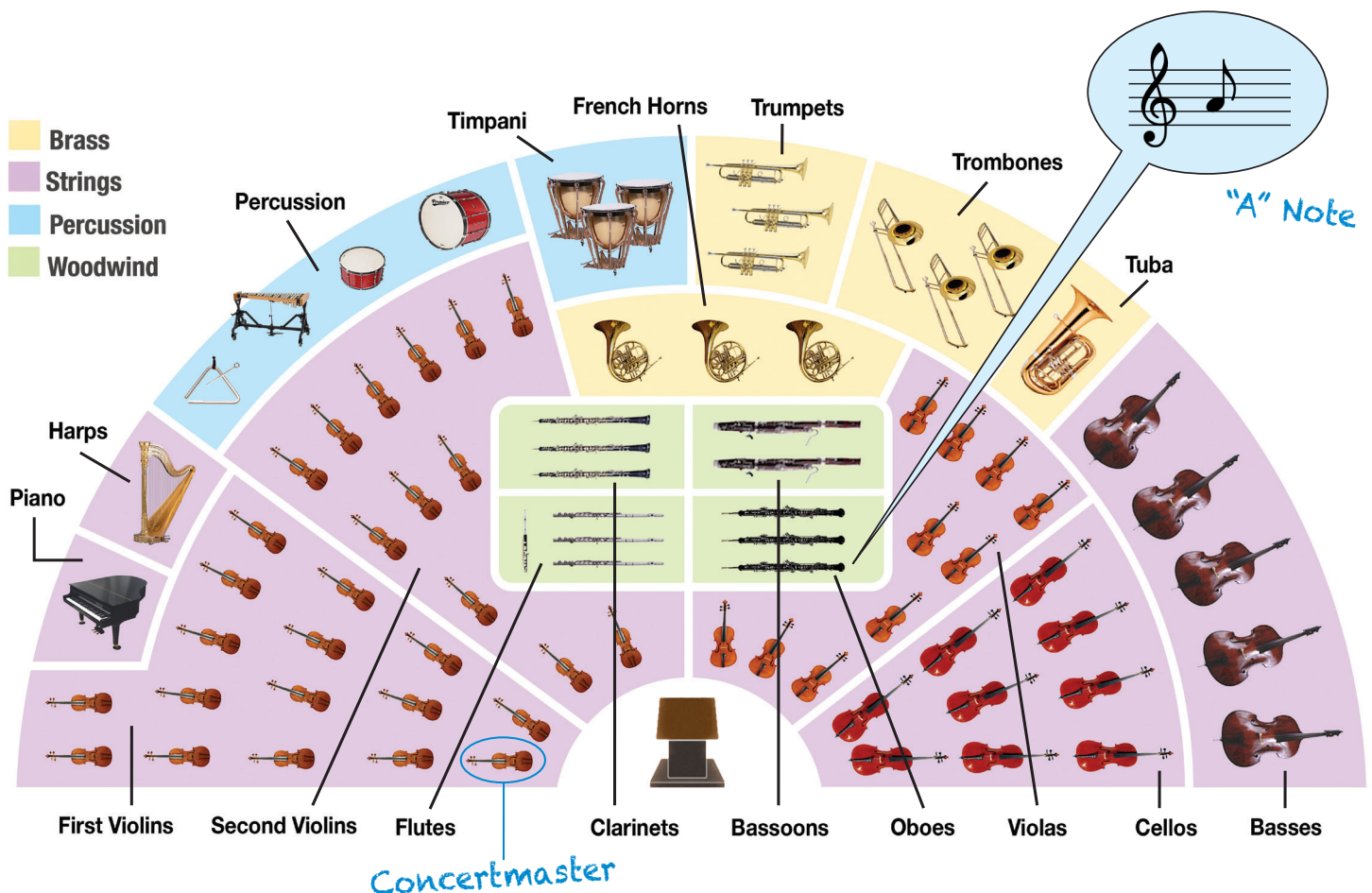
Who Are the People

The **conductor** is the man or woman who faces the orchestra with his or her back to the audience. Using a baton, the conductor “marks time” so that the musicians play together on the same beat from start to finish. The conductor also shapes how we hear the music, signaling the musicians to play louder or softer, faster or slower, with greater force or drama, like a march – or more gently, like a lullaby

The **composer** is the person who writes the music. The composer decides on the series of pitches – high, low, and in-between – that make up the melody. The composer also decides on the rhythm – the long and short notes – that add energy to the melody. You usually don’t see the composer on stage. But they’re the people behind the music.

A **musician** is the artist who has mastered a musical instrument. There are several different instruments in an orchestra. Each musician has studied their instrument for years to play it as well as he or she can.

Soloists are artists who are picked to play parts of the music all by themselves because they have the skills.



Look for the Concertmaster!

The leader of the violin section, known as the “Concertmaster,” usually enters after the orchestra is already seated. He or she is in charge of tuning the orchestra. You may notice the concertmaster ask for an “A” from the oboe player when the musicians are tuning up. At the end of the concert, the Concertmaster usually serves as the “point person” when the entire orchestra stands to bow.

in an Orchestra?



Have you seen my dog?

Meet Gershwin & His Pooch

Composer George Gershwin was born in 1898, in Brooklyn, New York to a Russian Jewish immigrant family. His parents bought a piano for his older brother but, at the age of 10, it was George who showed an interest in the piano – and talent.

Gershwin began his career as a piano player and a songwriter. In time, he became a serious composer of Broadway musicals, orchestral music and music for the movies. He is famous for bringing a more popular jazz sound to “serious” music.

Listen for the jazzy sound in this music he wrote for a movie in which people are walking their dog.

Which instrument did Gershwin pick to play the melody and sound like a dog? Did he pick the right one?



Tell me a funny one!

Meet Kabalevsky & his jokers!

Composer Dmitri Kabalevsky was born in Russia in 1904. His father wanted him to study math but Dmitri chose music instead. As a young man, he played the piano for silent films.

When Kabalevsky became a composer, one of his goals was to compose for children. He was asked to write music for a children’s play called “The Inventor and the Comedians” about a pack of travelling clowns. You might have heard this music performed while watching jugglers or acrobats. It is the most popular piece that Kabalevsky ever wrote.



I hear a march!

Meet Berlioz & his soldiers!

Composer Hector Berlioz was born in France in 1803. He fell in love with music as a child and studied the flute and guitar. He was not so great at playing an instrument but he was terrific at writing music for the orchestra, even though he was self-taught!

He wrote his famous Hungarian March to capture a moment when a man is inspired by the courage of a marching army. The work was hugely popular and still thrills audiences today. Notice that the march is fast but not too fast – and grand but not too grand. Berlioz got it just right!





Say Hello to Benjamin Britten!

Composer Benjamin Britten was born in England in 1913.

He composed a work called **The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra** to introduce children to the different parts of the orchestra.

In this work, the instruments in the orchestra take turns with the melody so that young people get to know the sound of each musical instrument.

Britten borrows the melody (below) from a tune written by a composer named Henry Purcell some 300 years before.



Fugue and Variations

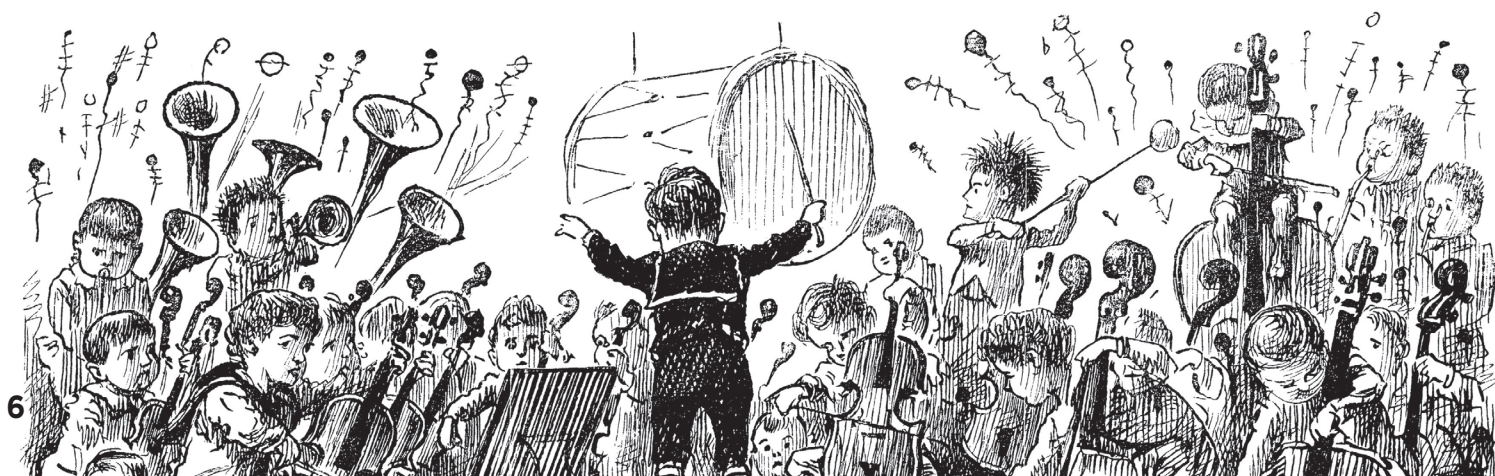
It helps to listen to “The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra” like a game.

In the **first section**, the melody is played by the full orchestra — then passed around the orchestra between all the different sections, from the woodwinds, to the brass, to the strings and percussion. It’s sort of like the playground game of “hot potato,” passing a ball around a circle of kids. Once the melody has been passed around, the full orchestra plays it one more time. Britten wants young people to hear all the different sounds in the orchestra.

In the **middle section**, the melody is passed around again - but this time, Britten changes the melody to show off special instruments in each section. When a composer repeats a melody but makes changes, the new version is called a “variation.” It might be the key or the tempo. The melody sounds the same but something is different. In this section, when the melody reaches the woodwinds, it is passed from the instruments with the highest voices, the flute and the piccolo, all the way down to the lowest voice, the bassoon. This new game happens in each section of the orchestra. Britten wants young people to hear the special sounds of each instrument.

In the **last section**, Britten starts what might sound like a “free-for-fall.” All the instruments are playing melodies, variations on melodies — backwards, forwards, or in a different key — and even brand new melodies, all at the same time. This section is known as a “fugue” - which is when a composer hands-off melodies but scrambles the hand-off and allows different instruments to play different versions, It’s like a playground game of “red ball green ball” - when things go crazy unless you really keep track.

The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra is a great way to get to know the orchestra - and it’s also a fun listen!





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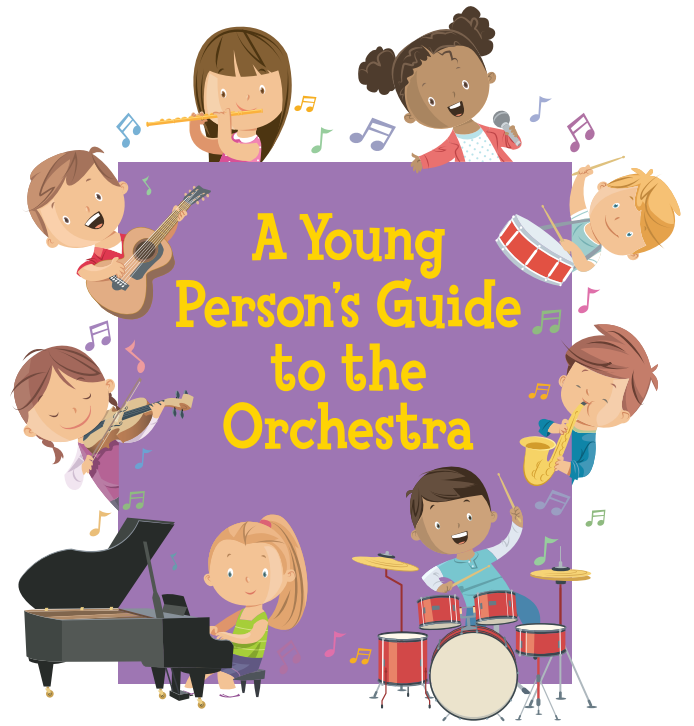
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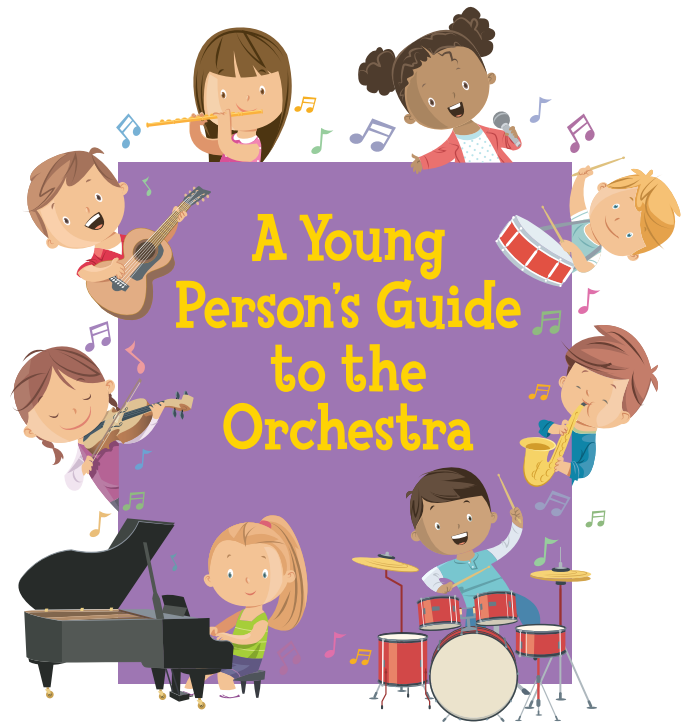
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BRASS



Brace yourself!
This is going
to get loud!

The **brass** section includes horns, trumpets, trombones, and tuba. Brass instruments are important in the loud, exciting parts of the music.

STRINGS

The sweet
part always
makes me cry!



The **string** section is made up of violins, violas, cellos, and basses. These instruments can sound soft and sweet, or soaring and majestic.

PERCUSSION



Let's get this
party started!

The **percussion** section is home to drums, chimes, gongs, cymbals, and whistles. These instruments provide pounding rhythms, booming drum rolls, and driving energy.

WOODWIND

Stand back.
I got something
to say!



The **woodwind** section contains flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons. Woodwinds can carry the melody over both the quietest and the loudest parts of music.