

# Students at the Symphony



A pre-concert guide for students

Sponsored by



SPRINGFIELD SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

with generous support from

Mr. Lawrence Landess and Mr. Mark Grimes

Getting  
ready  
for your  
first  
Symphony  
Concert!

PART  
ONE



# We Can't Wait to Meet You!

When you arrive, you will be greeted in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center by someone from the Springfield Symphony office. This person will talk to you about the concert and answer any questions you might have. Here are just a few reminders before the concert:

**What to wear:** Sometimes people will get really dressed up to go to the Symphony, but you don't have to. You should be comfortable.

**What to bring:** During the concert, you are not permitted to take pictures. However, after the performance you will have a chance to meet some of the members of the orchestra and get their autographs! If you have a camera and want pictures AFTER the concert, that would be fine!

**Before the concert:** Be sure to use the restroom before the concert begins. Once you are seated, you should try to stay in your seat until the Intermission. During the Intermission you may get up and move around. You may notice that refreshments are sold before the concert and at intermission. Notice, too, that some people buy them and some people don't. It is a matter of personal preference.

**During the concert:** Your job as an audience member will be to sit quietly and enjoy! Try not to talk or whisper to the person sitting next to you, because this will distract the people around you. All phones and electronics should be turned off, and kept in your pocket or purse! If you aren't sure when to clap, you can wait and see what the rest of the audience does. The most important thing is for you to enjoy the music!

**If you have a chance, go to [www.springfieldsym.org](http://www.springfieldsym.org)** and check out the Springfield Symphony website before the concert. You can meet the members of the Orchestra, and learn more about the concert you are attending and the composers who wrote the music you will hear. There are many interesting things on the website!



Introducing...

The  
musical  
instruments  
of the  
Orchestra

**PART  
TWO**



# Families of the Orchestra

You'll see four different families of musical instruments in a symphony orchestra. Members of the families are 'related' by the similar ways in which they produce sound. If everybody in the family is getting along great, the symphony will sound FANTASTIC! *Your first assignment is to look for the following families of instruments...*

## The Strings



The members of the String family include the **Violin**, the **Viola**, the **Cello** and the **Double Bass**. All the members of this family are shaped alike. They have curved, hollow, wooden bodies with four strings running from the large end to the small end. These strings can be plucked by the player's fingers (a stroke called pizzicato) or played with a bow held in the musician's hand. The bow is a wooden rod strung with the hair from a horse's tail.

The **VIOLIN** and **VIOLA** are held under the chin, and like all string instruments, the bow is drawn across the strings. The Viola is three inches longer and has a lower sound.



Violin & Viola



The **CELLO** and **DOUBLE BASS** stand on the floor. The cellist sits on a chair and holds the instrument between the knees. The Double Bass player must stand or sit on a high stool to play. Because this instrument is six feet tall and sounds so low, it is often called the "Grandfather of the Orchestra."



harp

There is one other instrument that is closely related to family, the **HARP**. The harp has strings that are plucked or strummed by the musician's hands.

# The Brass



All brass instruments are actually tubes made of brass or other metal alloys formed into different shapes and sizes. They all have cup-shaped mouthpieces on which the player's lips vibrate. The sound comes out of the wide, bell-shaped end of each instrument.



The **TRUMPET** is a three-valved instrument. It is the smallest member of the brass family and is responsible for playing the highest notes. It is made up of over four feet of coiled brass tubing and has 200 separate parts. The first trumpets were made out of shells and animal horns. The modern day trumpet was invented in France in the early part of the 19th century, but was not widely used in the orchestra until the late 1880s.

The **HORN** has three or four valves, and is responsible for playing the middle voice of the brass section, although it can also play very high and very low. It is a very challenging instrument to play mainly because it consists of 16 feet of brass tubing curled up into a circle only one foot wide. The horn is a direct descendant of the hunting horns used in England and throughout Europe. Today, most horn players play a double horn. The double horn, which combines both the F and the B $\flat$  horn into one instrument through the use of a fourth valve, was first launched at the beginning of the 20th Century.



The **TROMBONE** is the only instrument with a sliding tube for making different sounds, depending on how far the tube slides away from the body of the instrument. The trombone's original name was *sackbut*, which means “push-pull”. The sackbut looked very similar to the modern trombone, except the bell was much smaller. The instruments most in use today are the tenor and bass trombone. The bass trombone has one or two valves in addition to the slide.

The **TUBA** is the biggest brass member with 18 to 22 feet of coiled tubing. This instrument was designed in Berlin in 1835 and is the lowest voice of the brass family and often, of the entire orchestra. It is played with a large cup mouthpiece and may have up to six valves. Ancestors of this instrument include the *Ophicleide* and the *serpent*.



# The Woodwinds



Left to Right:  
Bassoon  
Clarinet  
Alto Saxophone  
English Horn  
Oboe  
Flute



Most of the woodwind instruments were once made entirely of wood, and because they are played by blowing with air or wind, they are called woodwinds. Now, they are made from both wood and metal.

All woodwind instruments are made out of a tube, usually with holes in it. When all the holes are covered, air goes all the way to the end of the tube and makes a low sound. When the holes are open, the air goes only a little way and makes a high sound. To further increase their range of notes, many of the woodwind instruments come in different sizes. The woodwind instrument with the shortest tubing and the highest sound is the piccolo, which is a smaller version of the flute.

Woodwind instruments make sounds in three different ways. Some, like the flute, make a sound by blowing air *across* a tone hole. Single reed instruments, like the clarinet and saxophone, use a single piece of cane or fiberglass which vibrates to produce a sound. The bassoon and oboe use a double reed, or two pieces of cane vibrating against each other, to make a sound.

The saxophone is the only woodwind instrument that is not used on a regular basis in a symphony orchestra, however more modern symphonic music does sometimes use the saxophone.

The **FLUTE** is one of the oldest musical instruments, known to have existed as early as 20,000 years ago. Before the seventeenth century, flutes were made in one piece and were wooden in material. Today's flutes are made of metal (usually silver, sometimes gold and/or platinum) and are in three parts - the "headjoint" (with mouthpiece), the "body" (with tone-holes), and the "footjoint" (with tone-holes).

The **OBOE** was invented in the mid-1600's, and at first had only three keys. Today's oboes are made of hard wood, most commonly granadilla, and have 23 keys. Oboes have a warm, but penetrating tone that is well suited to playing melodic passages or quick runs. When an orchestra tunes up, the pitch is given by the first oboist. This tradition has lasted because the sound of the oboe is easy to hear throughout the orchestra.

The **CLARINET** first appeared in the year 1700. Early versions had five or six keys and resembled the recorder. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the instrument was designed with thirteen keys, while today's clarinet has seventeen keys and 24 holes. By pressing these metal keys with the fingers of both hands, the player has the ability to play many different notes very quickly.

The **BASSOON** first appeared in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was made in one piece with six to eight holes and three keys. Today, the Bassoon is eight feet long, has 30 keys (thirteen of which are operated by the two thumbs), is most often made out of maple and assembled in five sections: the bocal (mouthpiece), the tenor joint, the bass joint, the butt joint and the bell. Bassoonists blow air through the *double* reed and the bocal, which opens into the tenor joint. The bassoon's relative is the Contrabassoon (sixteen feet long), which has a deeper sound, is folded into four parts and supported on the floor with an endpin. It is capable of producing sounds lower than any other instrument in the orchestra.



These musicians are woodwind players in the Springfield Symphony Orchestra. Look for them onstage!

# Percussion



## Percussion Instruments



**Percussion** instruments are the rhythm section of the orchestra. They make sounds when they are struck, scraped, or rattled with hands or special sticks. Some percussion instruments have a definite highness or lowness, a quality called pitch, and some do not have a definite pitch. Xylophone, timpani, chimes, vibraphone, and celesta are examples of pitched percussion instruments, while bass drum, snare drum, triangle, cymbals, and tambourine are non-pitched percussion instruments.

The percussion family has the most members, with new instruments added all the time. Modern percussion instruments can include different objects such as flower pots, china plates, and tin cans.

The first drum instrument introduced into the orchestra was the kettledrum or **TIMPANI**. It consists of a metal kettle, with a membrane of calfskin or plastic stretched across the top that vibrates when struck. Most orchestral works from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries employ four different sized timpani. Numerous other drum instruments belong to the orchestra. Most familiar are the **BASS** drum and **SNARE** drum.

The **TAMBOURINE**, also called a Basque drum, is actually a hybrid of two instruments. It has a drum skin stretched across a low wooden frame, which is cut away at intervals to allow insertion of axles (wires) that hold pairs of movable metal plates.

A round steel bar, bent in three equal parts with one open corner, the **TRIANGLE** comes in many sizes. It is played by a steel rod, usually suspended from a stand or from a piece of string or cloth held by the musician's hand.

**CYMBALS** are somewhat curved and have a central dome, to which a leather handle is attached. Their full diameter is usually 16-18 inches, sometimes more.

Up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a rule, composers were content with the timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals and triangle. It was during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the section began to expand into a wonderful array of colorful sounding instruments such as castanets, woodblock, whip and the xylophone.

The modern **XYLOPHONE** has wooden bars that are chromatically tuned (with different lengths) and laid in two rows like a piano keyboard. Each bar rests on a pair of thin wooden strips. Under each bar is a short, vertical metal pipe, tuned to resonate at the given note.

Other common percussion instruments used in today's orchestras include the **GONG** and the **BELLS**.



Tambourine



Chimes



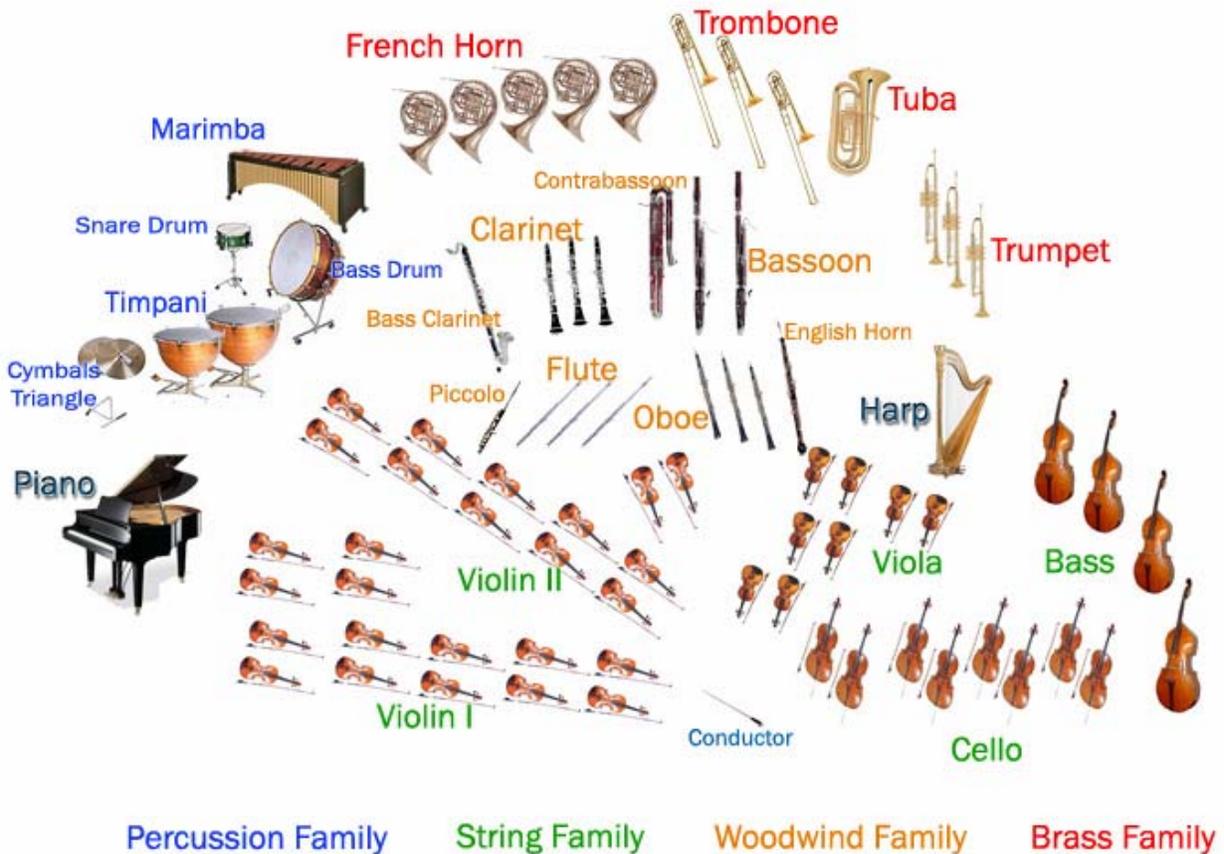
Triangle



Bells

# Seating Chart of the Orchestra

Every orchestra is different, but here is what you are likely to see when you attend a concert. A conductor can visit any orchestra and know where each family of instruments is sitting.



Now that you've seen all the different instruments in the orchestra, what instrument do YOU want to play someday? \_\_\_\_\_

**Draw a picture of your favorite musical instrument.**

# Symphony Search - Find the Instruments!

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

BASS ✓

CELLO

CYMBALS

GLOCKENSPIEL

HARP

PICCOLO

TAMBOURINE

TROMBONE ✓

VIOLA

BASSOON

CHIMES

FLUTE

GONG

MARACAS

SAXOPHONE

TIMPANI

TRUMPET

VIOLIN

CASTANETS

CLARINET

FRENCH HORN

GUIRO

OBOE

SNARE

TRIANGLE

TUBA

XYLOPHONE

Who's  
Who  
in  
the  
Orchestra?

**PART  
THREE**



Once you are seated, you will see the musicians on stage “warming up”. Just like an athlete who must warm up his muscles before he runs in a race, a musician must also prepare for a concert.

When the concert begins, the first person to walk onto the stage is the Concertmaster.

## **The Concertmaster**

The Concertmaster is the leader of the first violin section of a symphony orchestra. He or she is in charge of leading the orchestra in tuning before concerts and rehearsals , and also plays any solo violin parts that are in the music.

The concertmaster will walk onto the stage prior to performing, take a bow, and receive applause on behalf of the ensemble.

The Springfield Symphony Orchestra’s Concertmaster is Sujean Kim.



“I like to read between the lines. As a musician, I get to mine the depths of meaning of even a few scant notes to my heart’s content.” –Sujean Kim, Springfield Symphony Concertmaster

After the Concertmaster tunes the orchestra and is seated, the second person to walk onto the stage is the Conductor. When the Conductor walks out onto the stage and takes a bow, the audience will applaud. When you are at the Symphony, pay attention to what the musicians do when the Conductor steps up onto the podium.

## The Conductor

Conducting is a way of communicating real-time information to performers. There are no absolute rules on how to conduct correctly, and there are many different styles of doing it. The primary responsibilities of the conductor are to set the tempo, make the ensemble aware of upcoming changes in mood or beat, and to listen to and shape the sound of the ensemble.

An early form of conducting is cheironomy, which is a big word for how the conductor uses hand gestures to indicate melodic shape. This has been practiced at least as far back as the Middle Ages. In the Christian church, the person giving these symbols held a large staff to signify his role, and as music became more rhythmically involved, the staff was moved up and down to indicate the beat, acting as an early form of baton.

The large staff was responsible for the death of Jean-Baptiste Lully, who stabbed his foot with the staff while conducting. The wound became infected, and he died two months later, after refusing surgery to remove the infected toe.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, other devices to indicate the passing of time came into use. Rolled up sheets of paper, smaller sticks and unadorned hands were all used.



A modern wooden conducting baton

Conductors maintain eye contact with the ensemble as much as possible. Facial expressions may also be important to demonstrate the character of the music or to encourage the players.

# Meet Peter Stafford Wilson, Conductor of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra

Peter Stafford Wilson became the Springfield Symphony Orchestra's eighth music director in 2002 following a national search. In the last ten years, he has brought new excitement and energy to the orchestra. Peter Stafford Wilson's schedule has taken him around the United States and all over the world, including guest-conducting appearances in Germany, Austria, Hong Kong, and China!



## Fun Facts about Peter Stafford Wilson

- I heard my very first symphony orchestra concert when I was two years old!
- I started piano lessons at age 5
- In the third grade, I began playing the clarinet in the school band, then switched to oboe in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- With several of my friends, I started a city-wide youth orchestra in my home town of Greensboro, North Carolina when I was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- I conducted my first concert when I was in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- I attended the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the L'Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome, Italy
- If I had not been a conductor, I might have gone to culinary school and learned how to be a chef!
- When not conducting, I enjoy golf, reading, and, of course, cooking
- For other fun facts, including my current I-pod playlist, go to the Springfield Symphony's website, [www.springfieldsym.org](http://www.springfieldsym.org) and find my page.

## Look for these other members of the Springfield Symphony onstage:



SPRINGFIELD SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

**Fun places to visit online to learn more about the Springfield Symphony, Symphony Orchestras, and the music we play:**

[www.springfieldsym.org](http://www.springfieldsym.org)

[www.classicsforkids.com](http://www.classicsforkids.com)

[www.dsokids.com](http://www.dsokids.com)

[www.nyphilkids.org](http://www.nyphilkids.org)

# AFTER THE CONCERT...

*Complete the survey as best you can*

## ***Tell us about you:***

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1) This was the first time I have ever been to a Symphony Concert.         | Yes | No |
| 2) This was the first time I have ever been to the Performing Arts Center. | Yes | No |
| 3) I would like to attend another Symphony Concert.                        | Yes | No |
| 4) I play a musical instrument.  | Yes | No |

If so, what instrument do you play? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) If I could play a musical instrument, I would want to play \_\_\_\_\_

## ***How was the Concert?***

- 1) What I liked most about going to the Symphony was:

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- 2) Tell us about the music you heard. Did you like it? How did you feel when listening to it?

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