

Key Words, Terms and Facts about the Orchestra

ORCHESTRA – A large **ENSEMBLE** (group of musicians) of performers on various musical instruments who play music together. No set numbers of performers although a **SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** (a large orchestra) can have between **80-100+** performers.

FAMILIES/SECTIONS – Instruments of the orchestra can be divided into 4 families or sections: **STRINGS**, **WOODWIND**, **BRASS** and **PERCUSSION**

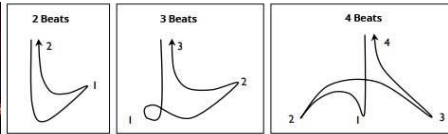
The Conductor

CONDUCTOR – Leads the orchestra with a **BATON** (white 'stick') and hand signals. Stands at the front so they can be seen by all performers. Sets the **TEMPO** and **BEATS TIME**. Brings different instruments 'in and out' when it is their turn to play. Keeps the performers together.

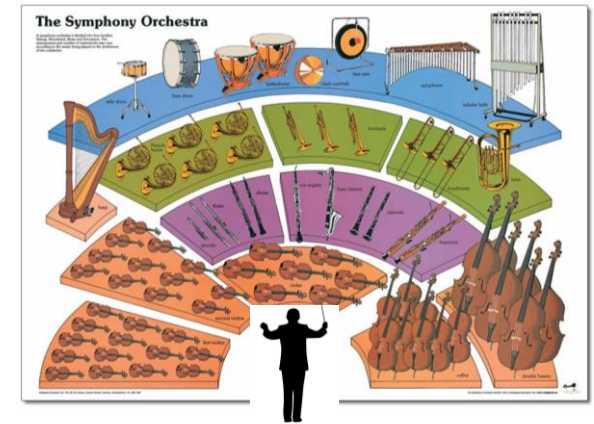
Famous Conductors



Conducting Beats in a Bar



The Layout of the Orchestra

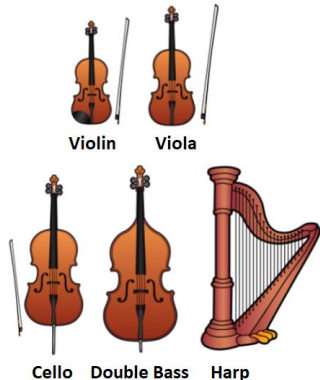


Strings Section/Family

Largest section of the orchestra who sit at the front, directly in front of the conductor.

Usually played with a **BOW (ARCO)**, (not the **HARP**) but can be **PLUCKED (PIZZICATO)**.

VIOLINS split into two groups: **1st VIOLINS** (often have the main **MELODY** of the piece of music) and **2nd VIOLINS**.



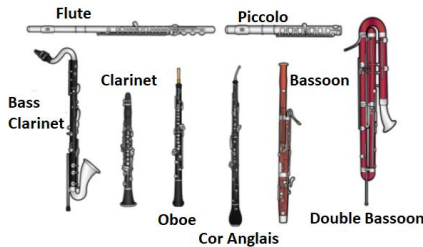
Woodwind Section/Family

Originally (and some still are) made from wood (some now metal and plastic). All are **BLOWN**.

FLUTES: Flute and Piccolo – air blown over hole.

SINGLE REED (small piece of bamboo in the mouthpiece): Clarinet, Bass Clarinet & Saxophone (not traditionally in the orchestra, but some modern composers have used it)

DOUBLE REED (two reeds in the mouthpiece): Oboe, Cor Anglais, Bassoon, Double Bassoon



Brass Section/Family

Four types of brass instruments in an orchestra, all made from metal – usually brass and **BLOWN** by the player 'buzzing their lips' into a **MOUTHPIECE**. The Trumpet, French Horn and Tuba all have three **VALVES** which, along with altering the players mouth positions, adjust the length of the tubing allowing for different notes to be played.

The Trombone has a **SLIDE** which adjusts the length of the tubing.



Percussion Section/Family

Always located at the very back of the orchestra as they can be very loud! Large numbers of instruments which produce their sound by being **hit, struck, scraped, or shaken**.

TUNED PERCUSSION (able to play different pitches /notes)



UNTUNED PERCUSSION (only able to produce 'sounds').

