



## 2024 Young People's Concert – Teacher Guide

November 2024

Maurice Cohn, Music Director



The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra's  
2024 Young People's Concert "People, Places, and Feelings in Music"  
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This guide has been developed to assist educators as they prepare their students for a live West Virginia Symphony Orchestra Young People’s Concert. It contains information as follows:

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Additional educational materials and activities available on [wvsokids.org](http://wvsokids.org).

## People, Places and Feelings in Music

People, Places and Feelings in Music features a myriad of music that illustrates how music can represent characters in a story, elements of nature, and human emotions.

### The Program:

Musicians of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra  
Maurice Cohn, Music Director

### To include the following selections:

**Brahms:** Hungarian Dance No. 1

**Bizet:** Carmen Suite No. 2, Movement 4 Chanson de Toreadors

**Ravel:** Mother Goose Suite, Movement 4 “Beauty and the Beast”

**Smyth:** Overture to the Boatswain’s Mate

**Respighi:** The Birds, Movement 3 “The Hen”

**Strauss:** Thunder and Lightning Polka

**Nicolai:** Overture to the Merry Wives of Windsor

\*Students attending at the Culture Center will also hear Azalea Kelley, sophomore at WVU, play Chopin’s piano Concerto No. 2, first movement.

\*\*Students attending at the Metropolitan Theater in Morgantown will also hear Suncrest Elementary School student Evan Wu play Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 21, first movement.

# Attending a YPC and What to expect!

## What to wear:

Wear something that makes you feel good! This isn't a formal concert, but it is always fun to 'dress up' to attend the symphony.

## Arrive early:

This will give you time to find your seats and get situated before the concert begins. You will want to have time to use the restroom before the concert, especially if you have a long drive!

## When you arrive:

- ♪ **If you are arriving by bus** – please have students remain in their seats – a volunteer or staff member will meet you to give instructions.
- ♪ **Students will be led into the building and to their seats in the concert hall.** At that time, the lead teacher/chaperone should check-in at the WV Symphony table (look for the blue tablecloth), confirm tickets, and submit payment for tickets.
- ♪ **If you are arriving by car** or coming with your family or a small group – park in the venue parking lot. After entering the venue, have one adult from your party check-in at the WV Symphony table (look for the blue tablecloth).
- ♪ You may eat your lunch or snack in the lobby, but **NO FOOD** or **DRINKS** are allowed in the concert hall.

## Before the concert starts...

- ♪ Take care of any restroom needs.
- ♪ Leave all food, drink, and gum outside the concert hall.
- ♪ Find your seats in the concert hall.
- ♪ Look on stage to see if you recognize any of the instruments you see or hear!
- ♪ Before the concert you will hear the musicians "warming up" on stage. This means they are getting themselves and their instruments ready for the performance.
- ♪ There will be an announcement from the stage, so you will know when it is time for the concert to start.

## Once the concert starts...

- ♪ The **concertmaster** (the first violin player) will walk on stage with their violin to tune the orchestra. When you see them, you should clap! The concertmaster will signal for the tuning note. You will hear the oboe play an “A” – one for the winds and one for the strings.
- ♪ The conductor will come on stage and the orchestra will stand. (This is another great time to clap.)

## While music is playing...

- ♪ No talking or texting, eating, or drinking.
- ♪ Try not to move about the hall during the music. If you need to leave for a bathroom break, try to do so between songs.
- ♪ Watch and Listen. Pay close attention to what is going on on-stage as the conductor leads the symphony through each song. Listen for the different instruments and for the melody, harmony, and rhythm.
- ♪ Reflect. Does any of the music sound familiar? What does the music make you think of a story, a memory? How does it make you feel?
- ♪ Clap! Show appreciation by applauding at the end of a musical performance. If you really like a particular musical selection, it is also acceptable to stand as you clap. This shows the orchestra that you thought their performance was very well done.
- ♪ Enjoy!

# Concert Etiquette

View Concert Etiquette on [WVSOkids.org](http://WVSOkids.org)

Attending a symphony orchestra concert is a very special event! A symphony orchestra concert is quite different from some other popular music concerts that your students may have attended in the past. Your students will have many things to watch and hear during a symphony orchestra concert but listening carefully is the most important thing to do.

Some guidelines to cover before you arrive are written below to help you and your students make the concert enjoyable for yourselves and for others:

- ♪ Please take care of all restroom needs before the concert begins – you may want to do this before coming into the concert hall.
- ♪ Be sure you turn off all cell phones, electronics, watch sounds/alarms, or anything that could make noise during the performance.
- ♪ Watch the conductor and you will see the signals he/she gives the orchestra.
- ♪ If you have a cough, you may want to bring a cough drop but be sure to unwrap it before the concert begins. If you must cough, cover your mouth, and cough as quietly as possible.
- ♪ Any talking, even whispering, can be heard everywhere. Wait until the end of the whole piece before saying anything to the friend sitting next to you.
- ♪ When you see the concertmaster (the principal violinist) walk onto the stage, stop all wiggling, talking, and whispering (even “shushing”) so the orchestra members will be able to tune their instruments and hear each other play during the concert.
- ♪ You should clap when the concertmaster enters and when the conductor enters. Watch the conductor for the right time to clap at the end of the concert.
- ♪ It is all right to laugh during the concert when the music or words are funny. However, you should not sing, hum, whistle, yell, or scream at ANY time unless asked to by the conductor.
- ♪ It is very important that you not bother other people around you by wiggling, poking, motioning, or even “shushing” a friend who is talking.
- ♪ Please stay in your seat and remain quiet through the whole concert. This helps everyone in the audience enjoy their experience fully.

# The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra

Detailed History: [click here](#)  
Website: <https://wvsymphony.org/>

The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra began 85 years ago as the Charleston Civic Orchestra under the direction of the first conductor, William R. Wiant. The first concert was performed in the Charleston Municipal Auditorium on November 14, 1939.

In 1943, the original name was changed to the Charleston Symphony Orchestra. Since 1988, the orchestra has become well-known in the United States as the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Over the years many famous musicians such as James Galway, André Watts, Yo-Yo Ma, and Kathleen Battle have performed with the symphony. Including Mr. Wiant, the orchestra has had eleven conductors. The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra's current conductor is Maestro Maurice Cohn – this is Maestro Cohn's first season with the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra.

The original Children's concerts became the Young People's concerts in 1968 and have continued every year to the present time.

The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra performs concerts all over the state, including Charleston, Parkersburg, Clarksburg, Lewisburg, and more!

*The earliest known picture of the Former Charleston Symphony Orchestra (now the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra)*



*The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra today in its 85<sup>th</sup> season!*





# The Conductor

A **Conductor** is the leader of the symphony orchestra. He or she stands on a podium, in the center of the stage, in front of the orchestra.

The conductor is the one who coordinates the musicians to play together. The conductor communicates with the orchestra using gestures and by moving their arms in ways that the orchestra understands. These gestures are done with their hands or a **baton** (a long slender stick).

Using gestures, the conductor shows the musicians the **tempo** (the speed of the music), the **dynamics** (how loud or soft the music should be) and cues the musicians to start or stop playing. The conductor also interprets what the composer intended for each piece of music.



Before the orchestra is ready to play a concert, it must have **rehearsal** (practice) with the conductor. Depending on the concert, a professional orchestra may need one or more times to rehearse. During rehearsal, the conductor leads the orchestra musicians through the music and shows and tells the orchestra how certain parts should be played.

The conductor also has the important job of deciding what **repertoire** (music) will be performed. This music is chosen far in advance so that the musicians have time to practice their parts and the conductor has time to study the scores. The conductor must be well prepared before leading the orchestra. Most conductors have had many years of musical training in college and private study.

The conductor uses a **full score** when leading the orchestra. This is basically a book that contains the music for each of the instruments that play on the piece. Sometimes a conductor has memorized the entire score and does not use it during the performance.

The conductor of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra is Maurice Cohn. (pronounced 'Cone' like ice cream)

## The Conductor (cont...)

# Maestro Maurice Cohn, Music Director

Maurice Cohn is the Music Director of the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra.



Born and raised in Galesburg, Illinois, Maurice Cohn became Music Director of the West Virginia Symphony in the 2023-2024 season. Musical highlights of his first year in Charleston include the Symphony's November 2023 collaboration with *Mountain Stage*, conducting the West Virginia Symphony premieres of music by Clara Schumann and Jessica Hunt, and expanding the orchestra through the hiring of sixteen new musicians.

Prior to moving to Charleston, Maurice served as Assistant Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for three seasons. He made his subscription debut in 2023, stepping in for Music Director Fabio Luisi, and conducted the orchestra in numerous concerts at Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, at venues throughout North Texas, and as part of the DSO's *Bravo! Vail* summer residency in Colorado. Concurrent with his time in Dallas, Maurice was appointed Assistant Conductor of the Aspen Music Festival for the 2022 and 2023 seasons.

When not in Charleston, Maurice conducts performances throughout the United States and abroad. Recent and upcoming guest conducting engagements include the Cincinnati Symphony, Utah Symphony, Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic, ensembleNEWSRQ, Omaha Symphony, Amarillo Symphony, and the Oberlin Conservatory Orchestra. He also serves as Artistic Partner and Conductor of Camerata Notturna, a chamber orchestra based in New York City.

Maurice spent two summers as a conducting fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, where he received the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize and the Aspen Conducting Prize. He received an M.M. in conducting from the Eastman School of Music and is a three-time recipient of the Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award. He holds a B.M. in cello performance from Oberlin Conservatory and a B.A. from Oberlin College, where he studied history and mathematics.

When not conducting or playing cello, you can find him reading mystery novels, playing tennis, or continually searching for the best podcast app.

# The Structure of the Orchestra

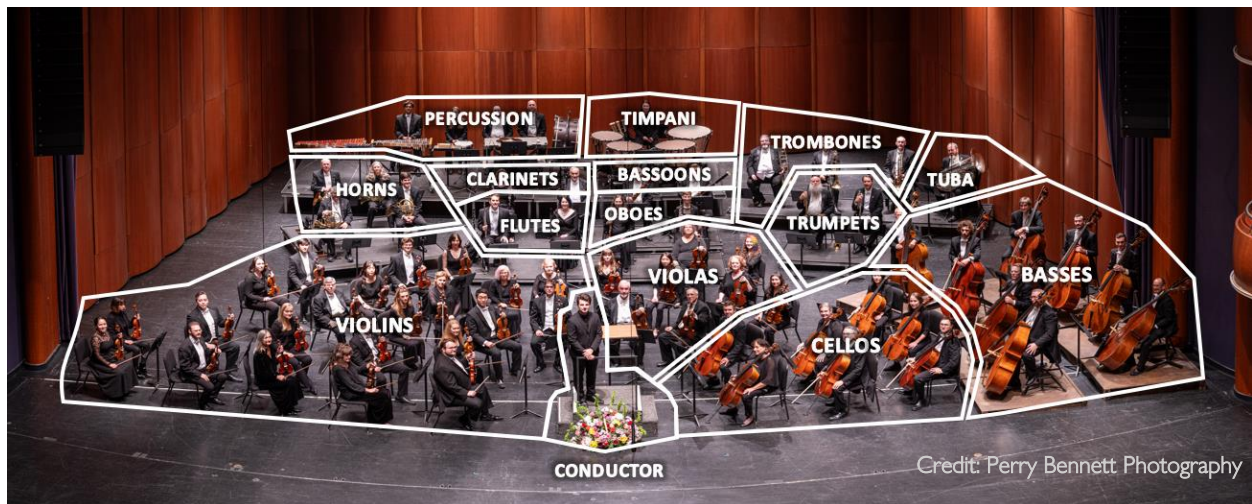
The symphony orchestra consists of **musicians** who play instruments from different “family” groups.

There are four families of instruments:

- The String Family
- The Woodwind Family
- The Brass Family
- The Percussion Family

Interactive Map of the Orchestra: <https://wvsokids.org/the-music/orchestra-structure/>

This is how the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra is arranged when it plays concerts:



## The String Family

Some of the earliest stringed instruments are thought to have been inspired by caveman's hunting bows. From the 10th century on, the instruments in the string family began to develop into the instruments of the violin family that are used in orchestras today. Very few changes have been made to the violin family since the 1600s – you may even see and hear some string instruments on stage that are hundreds of years old.

Of all the families of instruments, string instruments have the most in common with each other. A string instrument is an instrument which makes sound by the vibrating of strings. Harps and lyres were some of the earliest string instruments dating from about 5,000 years ago. The instruments that were ancestors of the violin family were long boxes of wood with one or more strings stretched over them. These string instruments create sound either by striking or plucking the strings, or by drawing a bow across the strings.

**The members of the orchestral string family are the violins, violas, cellos, and double basses.** They all look very similar – they are made of wood, shaped the same, and have four strings – but are just different sizes. The strings can be made of gut, steel, nylon, or a combination of materials. On all these string instruments, each of the strings is a different thickness. The thicker strings create lower pitches, and the thinner create higher pitches. Each string plays a different fundamental pitch, tuned by pegs, which adjust the tension of the string.

Creating sound on a string instrument begins with the vibrations of the strings. The vibrations are amplified by the body of the instrument, with the help of special f-shaped holes on the front. These vibrations can be started by plucking the strings with a finger (*pizzicato*) or from the friction of drawing a bow across the strings (*arco*). The pitches of the strings play can be changed by pressing the fingers of the left hand down on the strings. This shortens the section of the string that vibrates, making the sound higher.

The musicians of the string family make up the largest group of instruments in the symphony orchestra. On their own, string instruments are very quiet, so they need a larger group to be heard amongst the other instrument families. (See Structure of an Orchestra.)

## The instruments of the Orchestral String Family – from highest pitch to lowest pitch:

### Violin

The violin is the smallest in size and the highest in pitch of the stringed instruments. As small as it is, it has more than 70 parts. It is made of maple, spruce, pine, and ebony.

The player holds the instrument on their left shoulder and holds it in place under the chin, leaving the left hand free to move over the fingerboard. The violins make the core sound of the orchestra and often play the melody, but they are equally effective in a variety of supporting roles. There are more violins in the orchestra than any other instrument, usually 16 to 32 violins in an orchestra.



### Viola



The next largest stringed instrument is the viola. The viola has a larger body and longer and thicker strings. Violas look like violins, but the timbre (sound) is deeper, richer, more somber, and less brilliant than the violin.

It is in the "middle register" of the string family. The viola usually has a supporting role in the orchestra with fewer opportunities to play the melody, but it is good at expressing emotions of a more brooding quality.

The viola is played and held just like a violin, on the left shoulder. Although there are fewer violas than violins in the orchestra, they are an important part of the string section. A symphony orchestra usually has five to twelve violas.

## Cello

The cello is the low and rich sounding tenor member of the string family. Cellos often play the bass line together in octaves with the basses, when the soprano and alto are assigned to the first violins and second violins, respectively, and the tenor part to the violas.

The cello has the largest range of notes from high to low of the stringed instruments. At four feet tall, the cello is much bigger than the violin and viola. It is played with a bow that is thicker than a violin bow.

The instrument is held upright between the player's knees and is supported by a spike that comes out of the bottom of the cello and rests on the floor called an endpin. The player must be seated to play this instrument. The right hand makes the sound with a bow or by plucking. The cello is tuned a full octave lower than the viola. There are usually four to ten cellos in an orchestra.



## Bass

The double bass is sometimes called the string bass. The bass is the largest and lowest pitched member of the string family, standing over 6 feet tall. It is about 1 1/2 to 2 times taller than the cello and capable of reaching pitches one octave below the cello.

The bass player must stand up or may sit on a stool to play the bass. A bass player must have great finger strength to press the heavy strings. The spread between the fingers on the strings is the largest on the bass when compared to the other string instruments. A bow can be drawn across its strings or the strings may be plucked with the fingers.

Double basses are tuned in fourths, rather than fifths. There are two different types of bows the bass player may use; a French bow which is held overhand like a violin bow or the Simandl (German) bow which is held with the palm of the hand facing up.

The double bass was developed during the sixteenth century. The double bass can be found playing a wide assortment of styles of music from classical to jazz. It provides the rhythmic and harmonic foundation of the orchestra. There are usually two to eight basses in an orchestra.





## The Bow

The bow is made from a wooden stick with thousands of strands of horsehair, from a horse's tail, stretched from one end to the other. (This doesn't hurt the horse at all – it's just like getting a haircut!)

These strands of horsehair can be tightened with a special mechanism called a frog (from the German word *Frosch*). Rosin is applied to the horsehair to help the bow grip the string better. To make the sound, the bow is pulled up and down across the string, causing it to vibrate.



## Harp

Although not a member of the violin family, the orchestra string family also includes the harp!

The harp is the oldest of all string instruments. A harp is a large instrument with strings stretched vertically inside a carved wooden frame in order from longest to shortest (lowest to highest in pitch). Modern-day harps have 47 strings and 7 pedals to play all the notes in its range.

The use of harps in an orchestra depends upon the repertoire (music) being performed. Usually, an orchestra has one harp, sometimes two.



## Where to find the musicians in the WV Symphony's String Family:



Credit: Perry Bennett Photography

# The Woodwind Family

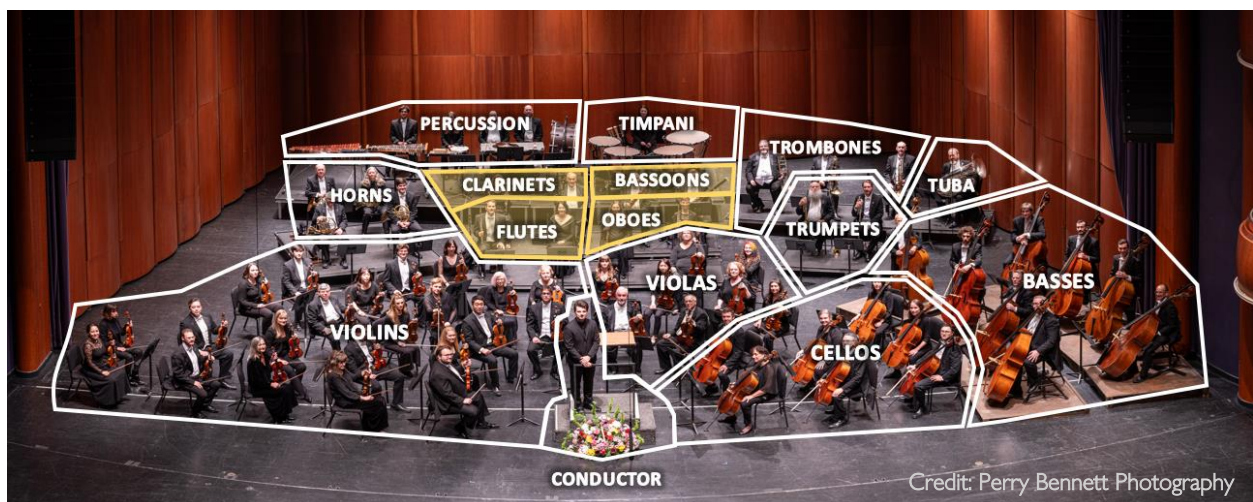
The very first woodwind instruments were made during the Stone Age, when someone discovered that blowing across the stem of a hollow reed made a sound. Later several reeds of different lengths were lined up beside each other creating Pan Pipes. The Ancient Greek and Romans had many different woodwind instruments.

Woodwind instruments, as the name suggests, were once crafted entirely from wood. Today, you'll find them made from a mix of wood, metal, and even plastic. Most of them are still mostly made of wood, except for the flute which is usually made mostly of metal.

All woodwind instruments basically narrow cylinders or pipes, with holes, an opening at the bottom end and a mouthpiece at the top. Many of the holes are covered by metal caps called keys.

To make music with them, air is blown into the mouthpiece (that's the "wind" part). The air vibrates against a **reed** or inside of the tube of the instrument, making a sound. Players then use their fingers to press different combinations of holes or keys to change the pitches the instrument plays. The player can also change the volume and **timbre** (color of the sound) by adjusting their air speed and **embouchure** (mouth muscles).

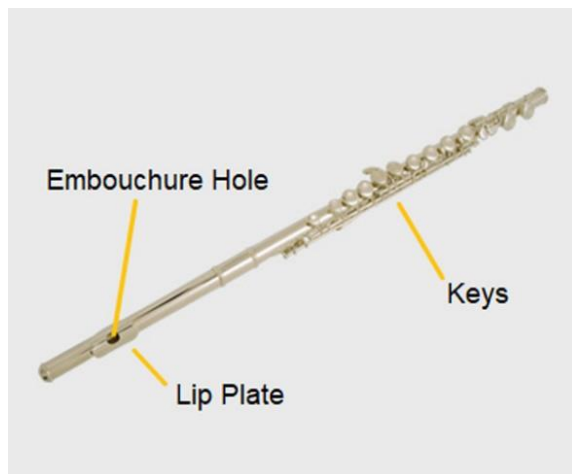
Where to find the musicians in the WV Symphony's Woodwind Family:





## The instruments of the orchestra's Woodwind Family:

### Flute



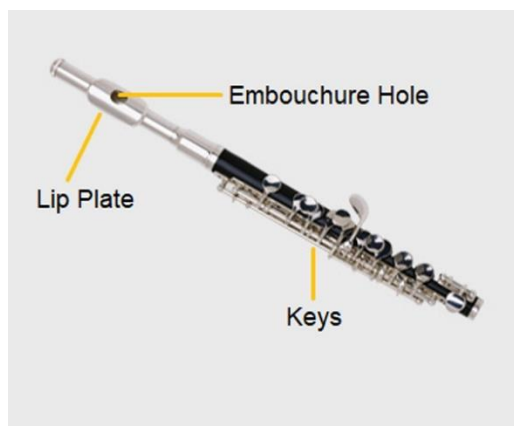
The flute is one of the oldest members of the woodwind family and one of the first instruments created that could produce pitched sounds. One of the earliest instruments known to man was the flute, used in Egypt over 4,000 years ago. Originally flutes were made of bone, wood, clay, or hollow bamboo-like reeds. Today they can be made of wood, silver, gold, platinum, glass, or **alloys**.

The flute and piccolo are the only woodwind instruments that do not use reeds. To assemble the flute, the player fits three hollow tubes together. Its

sound is produced by blowing across the aperture (embouchure hole) on the lip plate, sort of like blowing across a soda bottle.

The flute is the most flexible of all the woodwinds. It has a wide range of tones and pitches and is capable of very fast runs and trills. The flute usually plays the melody and is often written very technical **solos** or long **lyrical** passages. The sounds of the high notes are high and bird-like. There are usually two to four flutes in an orchestra.

### Piccolo



The word *piccolo* in the Italian language means “little.” The piccolo is sometimes called the “little flute” because it is a smaller relative of the flute. It is pitched an octave higher than the flute and can be made of wood, silver, or alloys.

This tiny instrument is played just like a flute. Although its lowest notes are very weak, the shrill highest notes can be heard even above the largest orchestra. There is usually only one piccolo in an orchestra.

## Oboe



The word *oboe* comes from *hautbois*, a French word meaning “high wood.” The first oboe was seen in France about 1660. It is made of wood or ebonite. The 21-inch-long oboe is a “double reed” instrument.

The double reed consists of two pieces of cane carefully carved and fitted together to vibrate against each other. From a distance, the instrument looks very much like a clarinet except for the double reed.

The oboe is a very challenging instrument to play because it is difficult to produce a good tone. The sound is made by the vibration of air between the two narrow reeds that are bound together with string around a metal tube. The reed must be soaked in water before it can produce a sound. Notes are changed on the oboe by a key mechanism which includes two octave keys.

Because the oboe has a very stable pitch, it is a reliable source for the tuning of the orchestra. The orchestra tunes to an "A" sounded by the oboe player. There are usually two oboes in an orchestra.

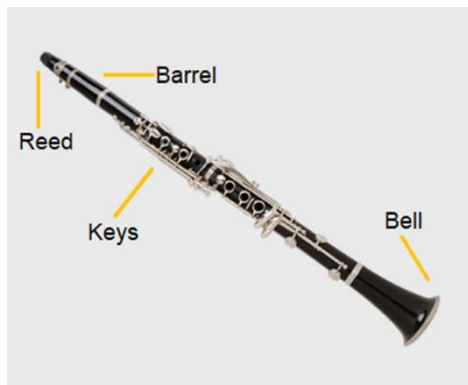
## English Horn

A relative of the oboe is the English horn. It is also known as the *cor anglais*, which is the French name for it.

The English horn has a pear-shaped bell and, like the bassoon, has a **bocal** that connects the reed to the instrument. The English horn is basically a larger and lower-pitched oboe with a deeper, gentler tone that sounds wonderful in slow, thoughtful solos.



## Clarinet



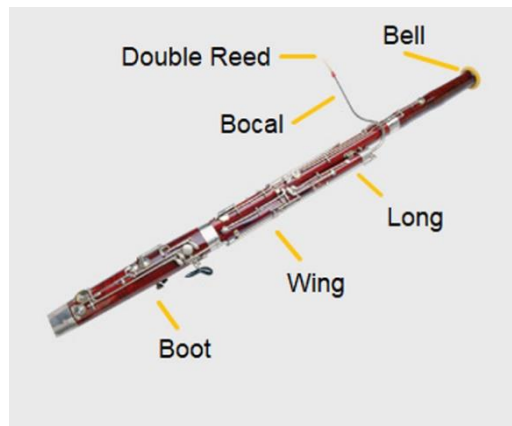
The clarinet is a single reed instrument. It was developed in Germany over 300 years ago, based on an older instrument called the chalumeau. The 26-inch-long instrument can be made of wood, ebonite, or plastic, and is usually black in color. In order to produce sound, a reed made of cane must be attached to a mouthpiece. The air that is blown by the player causes the reed to vibrate against the mouthpiece to make the sound. In the 1840's the Boehm system of keys was added to the clarinet.

With a range of four octaves, the clarinet has the widest range of all the woodwind instruments. It is also capable of playing a wide variety of styles of music from classical to jazz. Among its many flexible tones and registers are warm, mellow sounds and high piercing sounds.

There are usually two clarinets in an orchestra, but sometimes composers call for other sizes of clarinets in their compositions like E-flat clarinet or bass clarinet. The bass clarinet is a longer and lower-pitched clarinet – it is so long that it rests on the floor while being played. A smaller and higher version of the clarinet is the Eb clarinet.

## Bassoon

The first example of a bassoon was seen in the 16th century. Like the oboe, it is also a “double reed” instrument but with a low, deep, and mellow voice. At 8 ½ feet long, it is the largest and lowest sounding woodwind. To make it playable, it is doubled over so that it stands 4 feet off the ground. The bassoon is made of wood with a metal crook called a **bocal**, which holds the reed.



The bassoon is often the backbone of the woodwind section. It has a very versatile and expressive sound and can play both very low and very high. Because of the distinctive sound that is easy to identify - deep, reedy, and nasal – it often plays humorous sounding music. The bassoon is also capable of playing very beautiful solos. There are usually two bassoons in an orchestra.

Like the clarinet, sometimes compositions call for a larger and lower sounding bassoon called the contrabassoon.

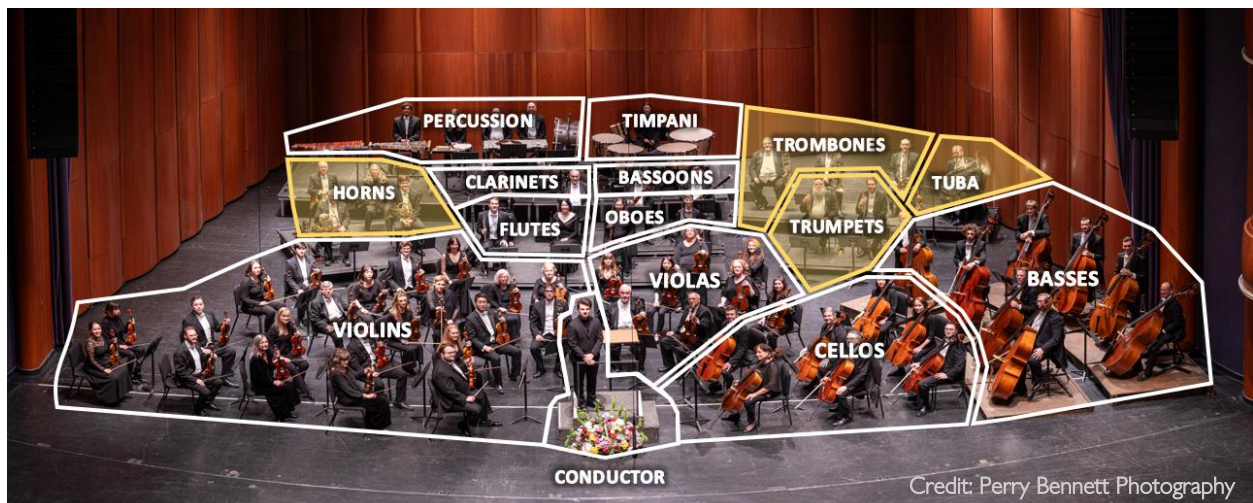
# The Brass Family

The brass family of instruments can play louder than any other instruments in the orchestra and can also be heard from far away. They are wind instruments which today are made mostly of brass, which is a type of metal. Some of the oldest versions of these types of instruments were made of non-metal materials like wood, tusk, animal horn, or shell.

Brass instruments began first as animal horns which were cut off at the smaller end. The earliest known one was the Hebrew *shofar*, made from a ram's horn. It is still used today in Jewish Festivals. Valved instruments were developed in the mid 1800s in Germany. Because they were made largely of brass (an alloy of copper and zinc), they became known as the brass family of instruments. Today they are usually lacquered or silverplated to make them easier to maintain.

Like with the woodwind family, brass players use air to make sound. Instead of blowing into a reed, the player buzzes their lips against a metal cup-shaped mouthpiece. The vibration of the lips is amplified by the mouthpiece and the tubing of the instrument. Because the tubing is so long, it is bent and **coiled** into different shapes so the player can hold it more easily. The pitch the instrument plays is determined by the length of the tube, which can be changed by using buttons to open and close **valves** or by moving a slide. The player must also use their airstream and lips to help produce the many different pitches possible on each instrument.

Where to find the musicians in the WV Symphony's Brass Family:

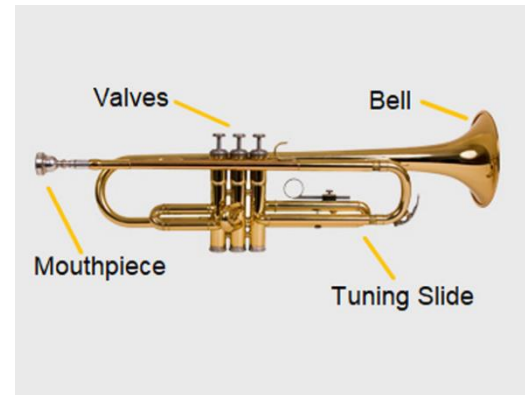


## The instruments of the orchestra's Brass Family:

### Trumpet

The trumpet is the smallest and highest pitched instrument in the brass family. It produces bright and vibrant sounds.

The first trumpets were used in Egypt 4,000 years ago, but these trumpets did not have valves. Throughout the years, the trumpet has been connected with nobility and fanfares, and was also used to sound alarms to gather people together for meetings or war.



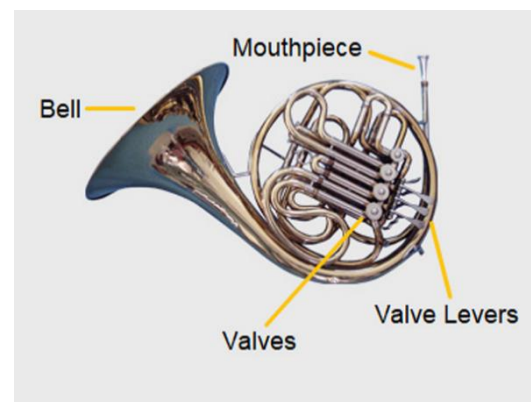
In addition to orchestras, the trumpet also plays an important role in marching bands and jazz music. Sometimes for different types of music, trumpet players need to change the sound their trumpet makes. To do this, they use a mute. There are various types of mutes, each with a unique sound.

The trumpet is made of thin brass tubing, bent into multiple loops, with a flared bell at the end. If you uncoiled a trumpet, it would be 6 ½ feet long – that's the same as the average height of a professional basketball player. There are usually two to four trumpets in an orchestra.

### Horn

The horn is a very versatile instrument. It can produce soft, velvety tones that blend well with strings and woodwinds. It can also be loud and produce bold or harsh sounds.

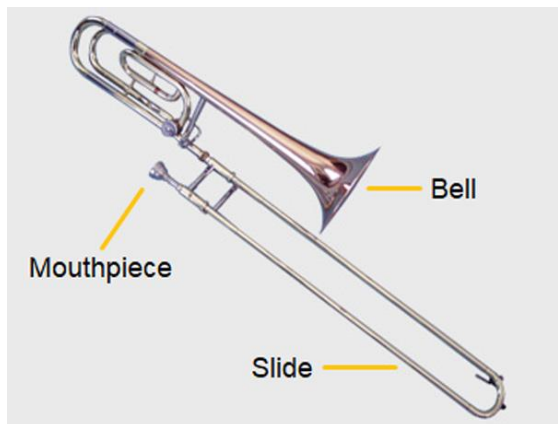
Sometimes referred to as the *French horn*, the modern horns used in orchestras today were developed from the French hunting horns used in the 1600s for hunting and signaling. *Natural horns*, one of the original versions of the horn, had no valves or buttons. The player could only change the pitches using their lips and air speed. Valved horns did not appear until the early 1800's.



Like the trumpet, the players use their lips and valves to change pitches. The horn player places his/her right hand inside the bell of the instrument. Because the funnel-shaped mouthpiece is so small, many consider the horn to have unique challenges for the player.

The horn consists of 18 feet of brass tubing with a large, flared bell at the end – It's almost three times longer than the trumpet! Horns are made of tubing that is **conical** (cone-like) in shape. There are usually four or five horns in an orchestra.

## Trombone



The trombone is the tenor (middle) voice of the brass section, similar to the cello or bassoon or the other instrument families.

The trombone is made of two U-shaped sections of brass tubing that fit together in the shape of an “S.” It is the only instrument in the brass family that changes notes using a slide instead of **valves**. A slide is made from two brass tubes that fit into each other. The player moves the outer one in and out to change the pitches. The pitch changes according to the length

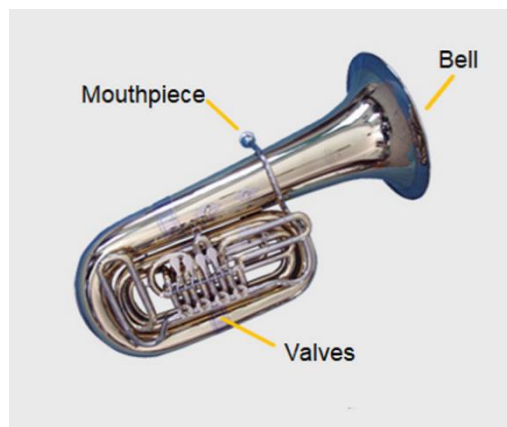
of tubing the air passes through; the greater the distance the air travels, the lower the pitch.

The tubing of a trombone is about 9 feet long. Even though the trombone tubing is shorter than that of the horns, because the tubing is larger in diameter and accompanied by a larger mouthpiece, the sound is lower. There are usually three trombones in an orchestra.

## Tuba

The tuba is the largest, lowest sounding instrument in the brass family. It provides the harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the orchestra. The player uses a large, metal mouthpiece and uses four to five valves to help change the pitches.

The tuba rests on the musician's lap when being played. They are made of large metal tubing. Stretched out straight, the tube of a tuba could be 12 to 18 feet long. There is usually only one tuba in an orchestra.



**ACTIVITY:** Measure out the different lengths of the brass instrument tubing using string or yarn and have students line them up next to each other. You might have to use the hallway!

Trumpet = 6 ½ ft    Horn = 18 ft    Trombone = 9 ft    Tuba = 18 ft

*Question?* Despite having the same length of tubing, why does/can the tuba play so much lower than the horn?



# The Percussion Family

The percussion family is the largest and oldest family of instruments in the orchestra. Over 8,000 years ago, people hit things together, beat on their chests, or clapped their hands to make sounds. Soon they used these sounds to send messages which could be heard a long way away. Many times, people made sounds with specific rhythms for special ceremonies.

Percussion instruments are classified as instruments that create sounds by being struck, shaken, or scraped. Because there is such a wide variety of instruments within the percussion family, it is divided into two main groups – pitched (those that can be tuned to produce specific or multiple pitches) and unpitched (those that cannot change notes).

Percussionists are often considered the ‘beat keepers’ of an ensemble – they must have a strong sense of the beat and be capable of playing many complex rhythms. In an orchestra, percussion instruments add special effects and sounds to create excitement. Since different pieces of music may require various kinds of percussion sounds, a percussionist in an orchestra may play as many as a dozen different instruments in one concert!

There is usually one timpani player plus two more percussionists in an orchestra.

## Where to find the musicians in the WV Symphony’s Percussion Family:



## The instruments of the orchestra's Percussion Family:

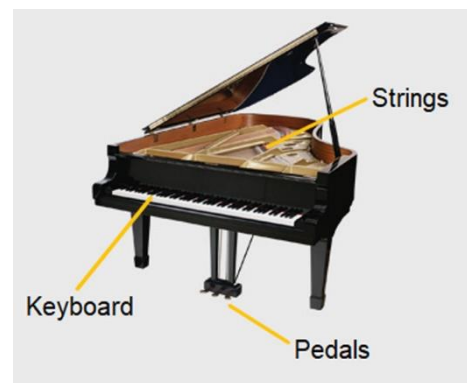
### Pitched Percussion

#### Piano

The piano is a large stringed instrument with a keyboard. There are strings inside that are all different lengths and thicknesses – each string produces a different pitch.

When a pianist presses a key on the piano, a hammer strikes one of the strings causing it to vibrate and produce sound. The sound the strings produce can be softened or lengthened using pedals worked by the player's feet.

The modern piano has a range of about seven octaves and 88 keys! If the piano is used as a solo instrument, it is placed at the front of the orchestra, with the player sitting to the left of the conductor. If used as part of the percussion section of the orchestra, the piano is placed behind the violins.



How does the **PIANO** create sound? It is...

Scraped  Struck  Shaken

#### Glockenspiel (bells)



The glockenspiel is a set of flat metal bars tuned to the **chromatic scale** – like a piano keyboard. These bars are struck with hard **mallets** to produce sound.

The glockenspiel's sound is bright and clear, similar to the sound of small bells.

To create sound, the **GLOCKENSPIEL** must be...

Scraped  
 Struck  
 Shaken



## Crotales



Crotales are small, thick, tuned cymbals arranged lowest to highest like the keyboard of a piano. They are played by using hard mallets made of either plastic or brass. Crotales can also be played using a string instrument bow, which creates an eerie sound effect.

To create sound, the **CROTALES** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

## Chimes

Chimes are a set of tube-shaped bells, each one tuned to a different note on the scale. The tubes are the different lengths to help with the tuning.

Chimes are played by striking the top of the tube with a hammer-like mallet made from plastic or rawhide. The sound chimes produce is similar to that of a “church bell.”



To create sound, the **CHIMES** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

## Xylophone



A xylophone is a set of wooden bars, mounted on a frame. The wooden bars are arranged from lowest to highest like the keyboard of a piano. Each bar is tuned to a different pitch. The lower pitched bars are long, and they become gradually shorter as they become higher in pitch.

Xylophones are played by striking the bars using sticks called **mallets**. When the bars are struck by small hard mallets, the xylophone gives a bright and sharp sound; soft mallets make the sound softer.

Under each wooden bar is a metal tube, called a resonator. The resonators are tuned to the same pitch as the bar above. Striking the bars causes the tube to vibrate, which **amplifies** and **sustains** the sound of the bar.

To create sound, the **XYLOPHONE** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

## Marimba

The marimba is an instrument with rosewood bars on a large frame, arranged like a piano keyboard (similar to the xylophone). The marimba can play much lower notes than the xylophone and produces a mellower sound.

When playing the marimba, percussionists use from two, sometimes four, mallets at a time!



To create sound, the **MARIMBA** must be...

- Scraped  Struck  Shaken



To create sound,  
**TIMPANI** must be...

- Scraped  
 Struck  
 Shaken

## Timpani

Timpani are large, bowl-shaped, copper “kettle” drums. They have large **drumheads** which are made by stretching calfskin or plastic across the top of the drum. Timpani is played by striking the drumhead with soft, felt-tipped mallets.

Timpanists can tune these drums to different notes throughout a concert by tightening or loosening the **tension** of the drumheads using pedals. They have a range of more than a dozen pitches.

As a pitched percussion instrument, the timpani supports both rhythm and harmony. Usually there are three to five timpani of various sizes in the orchestra, all played by one musician.

# Unpitched Percussion

## Snare Drum

A snare drum is a shallow, cylinder-shaped drum with two drumheads, one stretched across the top and one across the bottom. The orchestral snare drum has a diameter of 15 to 16 inches across and a depth of 5 inches.

Steel wires called snares are stretched across the bottom drumhead. The snares rattle intensely when the drum is played. The snares can be turned on and off for special effects.

A pair of wooden drumsticks are used for playing different rhythms on the snare. You will often hear the snare used to help keep the beat, and to play “drum rolls” and crisp, complex rhythms that accent the music.



To create sound, a **SNARE DRUM** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken



## Bass Drum

The bass drum is the largest and the lowest of the percussion family (like the bass of the string section). It is structured like the snare drum but is much larger and does not have snares. The bass measures from 32 to 40 inches across.

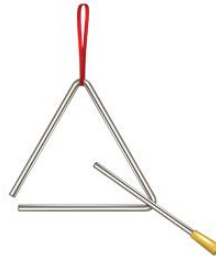
The bass drum is used to keep the beat in music. It is played by using sticks with large, soft heads. The bass drum can produce anywhere from loud, thunderous sounds to soft, distant rumbles.

To create sound, a **BASS DRUM** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

## Triangle

A triangle is a steel rod bent into the shape of a triangle. To create sound, the triangle is suspended by a string struck with a metal bar. Triangles come in many different sizes.



To create sound, a **TRIANGLE** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken



To create sound, **CYMBALS** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

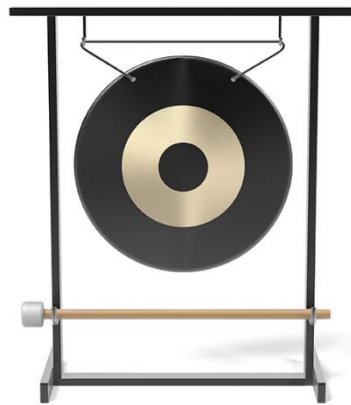
## Cymbals

Cymbals are a pair of two bronze, circular plates. They can come in many different sizes.

Cymbals are played by striking one cymbal against the other to make a loud crashing sound. A single cymbal can be suspended (hung up) and hit with a drumstick, mallet, or metal brush.

## Gong (tam-tam)

A gong or tam-tam is a large, metal disk, usually hanging from a frame. It almost looks like a giant cymbal. The gong is struck in the center with a soft, padded mallet creating a large crashing sound.



To create sound, a **GONG** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken



## Tambourine

A tambourine is a small shallow hand drum with mini cymbals/jingles attached into its circular frame.

The tambourine can be played by shaking and/or striking with the hand. It can also be mounted on a stand and struck with a drumstick or mallet.

To create sound, a **TAMBOURINE** can be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken



## Guiro

The Güiro is an instrument from Latin American made from either a hollow gourd, wood, or plastic. The body of the güiro has a grooved surface on top and large holes in the bottom so the percussionist can easily hold the instrument. There is also an opening on one end to amplify the sound.

To create sound,  
a **GÜIRO** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

To play the güiro, the percussionist scrapes across the grooved surface with a stick in rhythmic patterns.

You can create a similar sound to the güiro by rubbing a pencil along the coil of a spiral-bound notebook.



## Maracas

Maracas are another instrument originating from Latin American. Traditionally, maracas are made from dried gourds with dried seeds or beans, beads, or pebbles inside. The contents inside make sounds when the gourds are shaken by holding wooden handles attached to the gourd.

To create sound,  
**MARACAS** must be...

- Scraped
- Struck
- Shaken

Maracas are played in pairs, typically with one high-pitched and one lower-pitched maraca. Modern maracas can be made of plastic, rawhide, wood and may be filled with small steel or plastic balls.

You make maracas at home/school by partially filling recycled water bottles with different materials – beads, rice, coins, paperclips, sand, etc. Each material will create a different sound!

**Note:** There are many more instruments in the percussion family – explore more of them at [WVSOkids.org](http://WVSOkids.org) by clicking [here](#).

## What is a Composer?

A **composer** is a person who writes music. Musical **compositions** usually do not just appear from the imagination of the composer. Composers must have an extensive knowledge of music and music theory to be able to combine the elements of music into a masterpiece.

There are various reasons why a composer writes music. Sometimes they write to express emotions they are feeling. Sometimes they are inspired by a melody they hear in their head, folk songs from their childhood, landscapes, stories or even people. Some also write music for the sake of creating music. Often, composers will be hired to create a piece of music for a special event or to honor a person, this is called a **commission**.

Once having inspiration for a piece, the composer must write down pieces of his/her ideas in musical **notation**. This is then followed by an outline of how the beginning and the end will be. Then the composer will expand upon these ideas through many rough drafts before the final piece is completed. By using different instruments, adding other instruments, adding accompaniments, or adding other contrasting music, the initial idea can take new shapes!

Sometimes “leftover” ideas can be used in later musical compositions. A composer or a writer never throws anything away!

The following pages contain information about the composers whose music will be featured during the Young People’s Concert.

For older grade levels or middle/high school, these fact sheets can be used as short research activities.

## Composer Biography: JOHANNES BRAHMS

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1833. He showed early promise as a pianist, first studying music with his father and with other teachers starting at age 7. By age 14, he played in various inns in the dock area of his hometown to help earn money for his family. At the same time, he also began composing music and performing recitals.

During his life, Brahms wrote symphonies, chamber music, piano works, choral compositions and over 200 songs. In 1850 during his performances in the dock area of Hamburg, he met Eduard Remenyi, a Jewish-Hungarian violinist, where Brahms was exposed to “gypsy-style” music. Brahms and Remenyi played together for several years. Their collaboration generated the musical ideas and sounds which Brahms wrote into his *Hungarian Dances*.

Completed in 1879, the *Hungarian Dances* is a colorful blend of oral history of Hungarians and Hungarian minorities living in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Moravia, Croatia and other surrounding areas. Originally the *Hungarian Dances* were composed to be played on the piano, but later Brahms arranged Dance No. 1 to be played by a full orchestra.



**Dates:** 1833-1897

**Location:** Germany

**Period of Music:** Romantic

**Instrument:** Piano



Music you will hear by Brahms at the YPC:

Hungarian Dance No. 1

## Composer Biography: GEORGES BIZET

Georges Bizet was a French composer of the **Romantic period**. He was best known for his operas, such as his most popular opera *Carmen*. Bizet studied at the Paris Conservatoire in 1848 before his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday due to his demonstration of skill. His father was a voice teacher, and his mother was a talented pianist.

Bizet was recognized as an incredibly skilled pianist but rarely performed publicly. He preferred composing over performing.

Bizet died very young, at age 36 during the opening production of *Carmen*. He never got to experience the success of his most popular work of art.

*Carmen* is known as an *opéra comique* (comic opera) with musical numbers inserted between spoken dialogue. *Carmen* is considered the first of the modern operas. The West Virginia Symphony will perform a concert version of the opera in March 2025.



**Dates:** 1838-1875

**Location:** France

**Period of Music:** Romantic

**Instrument:** Piano



Music you will hear by Bizet at the YPC:

*Carmen* Suite No. 2

Movement IV – *Chanson de toreador* “Song of the Toreador”



## Composer Biography: MAURICE RAVEL

Maurice Ravel was born in Ciboure, France, into a family that encouraged early signs of talent. He started taking piano lessons at age 7. His relationship was particularly close with his mother, whose Basque-Spanish heritage had an influence on his works.



Ravel studied at the Paris Conservatory where he focused piano for a few years. He left the conservatory for a short time, but then re-enrolled and began studying composition with French composer Gabriel Faure.

Ravel listened to music from Russia and was influenced by some of the great composers of his time. He borrowed their musical ideas and created his own sound mixtures with instruments to bring about vivid imagery and emotion. This newer sound came to be called *Impressionism*, where the music paints sound pictures and lets the listeners' minds create visual pictures in their minds.

**Dates:** 1875-1937

**Location:** France

**Period of Music:** Impressionism  
& Late Romantic

**Instruments:** Piano

In 1910, Ravel wrote the *Mother Goose Suite* which includes 5 movements for a piano duet, each focusing on a different fairy tale. In 1911, he orchestrated 5 pieces for full symphony orchestra. Story number 4 is based on "Conversation of Beauty and the Beast."

In the music, movement 4 transports the listener between the lyrical beauty (Beauty character) and dissonance (Beast character, music sounds a bit ugly). The nature of love is expertly captured through sounds of the orchestra. As Beauty sees through the exterior of the Beast to see his kindness and courage, the beast is transformed into a handsome prince. The character and sound of the music changes as the story progresses, illustrating the power of true love.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Ravel was celebrated as France's greatest living composer.



**Music you will hear by Ravel at the YPC:**

Mother Goose Suite:

Movement IV – *Beauty and the Beast*

## Composer Biography: ETHEL SMYTH

Ethel Smyth was a British composer and **suffragette**, a member of an activist women's movement that fought for women to gain the right to vote in the United Kingdom. She was an excellent pianist by age 10 and began composing by age 12. Her father didn't understand why a woman would want to pursue music as a career. But he did finally allow Ethel to attend musical studies at the Leipzig Conservatory. While there, she met and became acquainted with some famous composers Dvorak, Greig, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Clara Schumann.

By 1893 Smyth was considered a serious composer. She wrote some operas, Mass in D, chamber music, a concerto for Violin, Horn and Orchestra, and choral works. Her opera *Der Wald*, performed in 1903 was the only opera by a woman composer ever produced at New York's Metropolitan Opera House until 2016.

Smyth took a 2-year break from composing to work with the woman's suffrage movement, and did a stint in prison for throwing rocks at a protest. After prison, she returned to composing as well as explored her interests in writing, publishing ten primarily autobiographical books between 1919-1940. She wrote an hour-long symphony called *The Prison*.

She was both praised and passed over as a female composer. She gained praise from critics for composing music that was too masculine for a "lady composer." Her works were finally performed later in her life. Her compositions were celebrated at a festival in 1934 in the presence of the Queen, but Smyth was completely deaf by that point and could hear neither her own music nor the cheers of the crowds.



**Dates:** 1858-1944

**Location:** England

**Period of Music:** 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Instruments:** Piano



**Music you will hear by Smyth at the YPC:**

*Overture to the Boatswain's Mate*

## Composer Biography: OTTORINO RESPIGHI

Ottorino Respighi was an Italian composer, a violinist himself and also a teacher and **musicologist**. He was born into a very musical family, and his father encouraged his musical studies in violin and piano from an early age. Respighi took some lessons, but didn't really get excited about music until he was 8 years old. He had multiple teachers but remained a mostly self-taught pianist. He would not include scales in his compositions due to his own inability to play the scales correctly.

Respighi also taught himself how to play the harp over just a few days. In 1890 he began two years of training on the violin. Just ten years later in 1900, he was asked to be the principal violinist in the orchestra of the Russian Imperial Theatre, in Saint Petersburg during the opera season.

As an adult, he loved to study geography, science, and languages. He could read literature in 11 different languages during his adult life. Due to his extensive travel all around the world, and his love of creating and teaching, Respighi is looked at as one of the greatest Italian composers of his time.



**Dates:** 1879-1936

**Location:** Italy

**Period of Music:** 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Instruments:** Piano, Violin



**Music you will hear by Respighi at the YPC:**

The Birds:

Movement III – “The Hens”

## Composer Biography: JOHANN STRAUSS

Johann Strauss was an accomplished violinist and violist as well as an Austrian composer of the Romantic Period. He became famous for his dance pieces, particularly the *waltz* and the *polka*. The *polka* was a very popular style of both dance and music during this time.

Strauss composed “Thunder and Lightning Polka” which has been referred to as his noisiest piece. You will get to hear this polka at the concert. Strauss wanted to create the feeling of a thunderstorm using heavy percussive voices. He wanted to both entertain and amuse audiences with his music.

Johann Strauss was a very popular composer across Europe. He played at Queen Victoria’s coronation. He worked hard to compose works that would appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Three of his sons also followed in their father’s footsteps by becoming successful composers themselves. Their music dynasty dominated the Viennese social scene from 1830-1900.



**Dates:** 1804-1849

**Location:** Germany/Austria

**Period of Music:** Romantic

**Instruments:** Piano



Music you will hear by Strauss at the YPC:

*Thunder and Lightning Polka*

## Composer Biography: OTTO NICOLAI

Otto Nicolai was a German composer, a conductor and most known for his operatic version of Shakespeare's comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. You will hear the overture to the opera at the concert. Nicolai composed four other operas, **lieder** (German art songs), works for orchestra, chorus, and solo instruments.

He was considered by many to be a child prodigy-- first studying with his father Nicolai, but he ran away from home when his parents divorced in June 1826. He went to live with August Adler who nurtured Nicolai's music talent and made sure he went to Berlin to study at age 17 with Carl Friedrich Zelter.

Nicolai began as an organist, then composed operas in Italy, along with conducting for the Vienna Court Opera and the Berlin Court Opera. He traveled and worked throughout Europe, in particular Rome, Vienna, Milan and Berlin.

Sadly, Nicolai collapsed and died just 2 months after the debut of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He is noted to be the founder of the Vienna Philharmonic, which still pays tribute to Nicolai at a concert each year.



**Dates:** 1810-1849

**Location:** Germany

**Period of Music:** Romantic

**Instruments:** Piano, organ



**Music you will hear by Nicolai at the YPC:**

*Overture to the Merry Wives of Windsor*

# Vocabulary

**Accent** – stressing a note or chord, by increasing the volume or extending the duration of it

**Alloy** – material made up of two different metals mixed together

**Aperture** – an opening; hole

**Arco** – the term used to tell a string player to use their bow

**Arrangement** – a new version of an existing musical work

**Bass** – the lowest-pitched member of a family of instruments; the lowest part in a musical composition

**Baton** – a long slender stick-like tool that a conductor uses to direct a group of musicians

**Beat** – a regular, repetitive pulse that underlies the rhythm in music

**Bell** – cup-shaped or flared opening of a wind or brass instrument

**Bocal** – a curved metal tube which holds the double reed on a bassoon or English horn

**Bow** – a narrow, slightly curved rod, pointed at one end, about 30 inches long, with horsehair stretched from end to end; used for playing an instrument in the string family, such as a violin

**Chromatic Scale** – a musical scale with twelve pitches/notes, each a half-step, above or below its adjacent pitches

**Classical Period** – a period in music spanning roughly from the mid-18th century through early 19th centuries, known for music where balance, a clear style, and moderation were important; art songs, chamber music, operas, and symphonies were important styles of music during this time

**Coiled** – twisted into spirals or rings that look like a coil

**Commission** – special requests for composers to produce a specific piece of music, either for specific occasions or musical ensembles

**Composer** – a person who writes music

**Composition(s)** – written musical work(s), often long and detailed; the structure of a written piece of music

**Concert(s)** – public performance(s) of music by instrumentalists, singers, or both

**Concertmaster** – the first violinist in a symphony orchestra; often the assistant to the conductor

**Conductor** – a person who leads an orchestra, band or other musical group in rehearsals and performances

**Conical Tubing** – tubing that starts small and gradually gets wider; shaped like a cone

**Conservatory** – a special college for studying classical music or other arts

**Contemporary Music** – music written beginning in the mid-1900s to modern times

**Coordinate** – to bring together; to musically agree

**Cue(s)** – signal(s)

**Cylindrical** – having the shape of a tube

**Divertimento** – a light and entertaining composition

**Double reed** – two thin pieces of cane bound together using string; also a class of instruments including the oboe and bassoon

**Dynamics** – varying degrees of loudness or softness in a musical work, and the symbols that indicate them

**Embouchure** – the way in which a player applies the mouth to the mouthpiece of a brass or wind instrument

**Ensemble** – a group of musicians, large or small, who perform instrumental or vocal music together

**Etiquette** – usual rules for acceptable behavior in public

**Fingerboard** – a narrow strip on the neck of most stringed instruments (such as a violin) where the fingers press the strings to change pitches

**Folk Music** – music that originates in traditional culture or that is written in such a style. Folk music is typically transmitted orally from generation to generation.

**Form** – the design or structure of a musical composition

**Friction** – the rubbing of one thing against another

**Full Score** – directions for a musical piece; the notation for each instrument, written as separate parts but lined up vertically as they will sound

**Harmony (harmonies)** – related to the structure, progression, and relationship of chords

**Horsehair** – hair from the mane or tail of a horse, used in making bows to play stringed instruments

**Impressionism** – a style of classical composition that aims to evoke mood and atmosphere through sound color, orchestration and harmony

**Incidental Music** – music that provides background or atmosphere for the action in a play, musical or movie

**Lieder** – art songs for voice and piano set to German poetic texts

**Lyrical** – music that expresses emotion

**Major** – referring to a scale from one key note to the next, consisting of all whole steps, except for half steps between the third and fourth notes and seventh and eighth notes; going from C to C on all white keys of a piano

**Mallet(s)** – light hammer(s) with rounded head(s) used for playing certain percussion instruments

**Mellow** – soft and rich in quality

**Melody** – an orderly succession of pitches/notes that is musically satisfying; a tune

**Minor** – referring to a scale from one key note to the next, consisting of all whole steps, except for half steps between the second and third notes, sometimes between the fifth and sixth notes, and sometimes the seventh and eighth notes depending upon whether it is the natural (going from A to A on all white keys of a piano) or melodic minor scale; the harmonic minor scale has a step and a half between the sixth and seventh notes

**Minuet and Trio** – a style of music, in triple meter (3/4 or 3/8), with two contrasting musical themes

**Motif** – a small musical idea that is often heard throughout a piece of music; sometimes a tune associated with a character in a story

**Musician** – a person who plays an instrument, especially as a profession

**Musicologist** – a person who studies about music

**Musicology** – the study of music

**Mute** – a device placed in (or on) an instrument to muffle or soften its tone

**Ostinato** – a repeated musical phrase

**Piece(s)** – musical work(s)

**Pitch** – highness or lowness of notes

**Pizzicato** – an Italian word that means to play by plucking rather than bowing the strings

**Podium** – a platform raised above the level of the floor so the person on it can be seen

**Premiered** – the first performance of a piece

**Quartet** – a small musical ensemble composed of four musicians

**Range** – the total number of notes that an instrument can produce

**Reed** – a small, vibrating strip of cane or wood attached to the mouthpiece of some woodwind instruments, which produces sound when air goes over it

**Rehearsal** – practice before giving a public performance

**Repertoire** – a French word meaning ‘the collection of musical pieces a group is prepared to perform or can perform’

**Rhythm** – patterns of long and short sounds that follow a musical beat

**Romantic Period** – in music roughly spans from the early 19th century to the early 20th century

**Romanticism** – roughly from 1820-1900 where composers focused on personal expression and originality. Romantic music often expressed powerful emotions like anger and passion, but also quieter moments of joy and pleasure

**Serenade** – to lovingly play or sing music for someone; like Romeo might to Juliet outside her window

**Shofar** – a Hebrew word meaning ‘an ancient, natural trumpet made from a ram’s horn’; played during religious ceremonies and as a warning in battle

**Suffragette** – a woman who fought for the right to vote in public elections, especially in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

**Tempo** – how fast or slow a piece of music is played

**Theme** - the main melodic phrase in a piece; often related to the melody

**Timbre** – a French word meaning tone color or quality of a musical sound

**Valved** – brass instruments using devices which can quickly change the air flow through a shorter or longer length of tube to change the pitch of the notes





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