



SMSO
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Transforming All Lives Through Music



INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORCHESTRA

3 Lessons for 3rd & 4th Grade Students



Grade: 3rd or 4th

Concept: Learning about the instruments of the symphony orchestra, their qualities/characteristics, and how they relate to one another.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify the names of the instruments in the symphony orchestra.
- Students will be able to identify the family (strings, woodwind, brass, or percussion) to which each instrument belongs.

Michigan Music Standard:

ART.M.III.3.5: Identify the timbre of specific instruments in string, brass, woodwinds, and percussion families.

Materials: “Instrument Families Worksheet” pre-test copy for each student, access to YouTube videos via a projector and a copy of the “Instrument Families of the Symphony Orchestra” worksheet for each student

Introduction: We will soon be attending a concert of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra and will be able to see many different types of instruments! There are four “families” of instruments that we will see during our visit: the string, brass, woodwind, and percussion families. Each type of instrument has distinct characteristics that we will learn about today. First, however, we’re going to check what you already know about instrument identification and take a pre-test.

Teaching Sequence:

- Have students fully complete the “Instrument Families Worksheet” pre-test and collect the papers to compile the results and send to the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra
- Play the video **“String Instruments of the Orchestra”**
 - Ask the students to listen closely to determine which instrument makes the highest sound (violin) and which instrument makes the lowest sound (bass).
- Have students circle the highest sounding instrument (violin) and draw a square around the lowest sounding instrument (bass) on the “Instrument Families of the Symphony Orchestra” worksheet
- Play the video **“Brass Instruments”**
 - Ask the students to watch closely and identify the only brass instrument that is played with a long slide (trombone) and circle that instrument on the worksheet
- Play the video **“The Woodwind Family”**
 - Ask the students which woodwind instrument in the video is the only one that is made completely of metal and not wood (flute) and circle that instrument on the worksheet
- Play the video **“Percussion Instruments”**
 - Ask the students to watch the video and ask which instrument in the video was played without using mallets (sticks) to make a sound (cymbals)? Have students circle that instrument on the worksheet.

Extension:

There are YouTube videos of the pieces that will be performed by the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra concert available to view. Choose one or more of these videos to view and ask students to describe what they hear. What does the music sound like? Which instruments/instrument families are creating which sounds? Do they recognize the music, and if so, where have they heard it before? Pieces to be performed, along with composer information, can be found at the bottom of the “Teacher Packet.”

INSTRUMENT FAMILIES OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Listen closely to the video and **draw a circle** around the instrument of the strings family that makes the highest sound and a square around the instrument that makes the lowest sound.

String Family



Circle the only brass instrument that is played with a long slide, rather than keys (buttons).

Brass Family



Circle the only woodwind instrument that is made completely of metal, not wood.

Woodwind Family



For the percussion family, draw a circle around the one instrument that is NOT played with mallets (sticks).

Percussion Family





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- Students will be able to identify the family (strings, woodwind, brass, or percussion) to which each instrument belongs.
- Students will be able to describe specific characteristics of each instrument family.
- Students will be able to describe specific characteristics of each individual instrument.

Michigan Music Standard:

ART.M.III.3.4: With teacher guidance, use music vocabulary to analyze, describe, and evaluate music of various styles.

ART.M.III.3.5: Identify the timbre of specific instruments in string, brass, woodwinds, and percussion families.

ART.M.III.3.7: Use music vocabulary to express personal reactions for musical works and styles.

Materials: Access to YouTube videos via a projector

Introduction: Last week we learned about the different families within the symphony orchestra and about each of the individual instruments. Today we're going to watch and listen to performances by instrument family groups and describe what we see and hear.

Teaching Sequence:

- Play video "[Piazzolla: Libertango \(arr. For string orchestra\)](#)" and ask the students the following questions:
 - What family of instruments is this (string family)? Do you remember the names of the four instruments that make up this family (violin, viola, cello, bass)?
 - What does this music sound like (open ended answer)? What does it remind you of?
 - Provide some characteristics you would use to describe string instruments (open ended answer).
- Play video "[Canadian Brass: NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert](#)" and ask the students the following questions:
 - What family of instruments is this (brass family)?
 - What is the name of the very first instrument you hear in the video (trumpet)?
 - What do brass instruments sound like to you (open ended answer)?
 - Are brass instruments generally louder or quieter than string instruments (generally louder)?
- Play video "[Jacques Ibert - trois pièces brèves, I. Allegro - Carion](#)" and ask students the following questions:
 - What family of instruments is this (woodwind family)?
 - There is one instrument in this video that actually doesn't belong to the woodwind family, which is it (french horn)?
 - What is the mood of this music (open ended answer)?

- Play video “[Collide by Jacob Remington](#)” and ask students the following questions:
 - What family of instruments is this (percussion family)?
 - What are the four large drums in the back on the far right called (timpani)?
 - Is this music soothing or frantic? How so? (open ended answer)
 - How do the different types of percussion instruments contribute to the overall effect of the music (open ended answer)?

*All videos do not need to be played in their entirety, it is at the teacher’s discretion to decide when to stop each video before leading the discussion.

Extension:

There are YouTube videos of the pieces that will be performed by the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra concert available to view. Choose one or more of these videos to view and ask students to describe what they hear. What does the music sound like? Which instruments/instrument families are creating which sounds? Do they recognize the music, and if so, where have they heard it before? Pieces to be performed, along with composer information, can be found at the bottom of the “Teacher Packet.”



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Michigan Music Standard:

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Materials: Access to YouTube videos via a projector, “Instrument Bingo!” sheet for every student, bingo markers, “Orchestral Instruments Bingo Timestamp Cheat Sheet”

Introduction: We’ve been learning about the instruments of the symphony orchestra in preparation for our concert visit, and now we’re going to check our knowledge with a bingo game. I will play a video where you will see a picture of an instrument, hear it, and then you should place a bingo marker on the name of that instrument. We will play this game several times.

Teaching Sequence:

- Handout blank bingo sheets and markers to every student.
- Have students write the name of every instrument they’ve learned about so far randomly in the bingo spaces. There will be 7 spaces leftover after they write one of each, so they can choose to repeat whichever names of instruments they want after they have used every instrument name. Make sure they use at least one of each of the following instruments:
— Violin, viola, cello, bass, harp, flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, french horn, tuba, cymbals, snare drum, xylophone, timpani
- Use the teacher’s guide, the “Orchestral Instruments Bingo Timestamp Cheat Sheet” that lists all of the instruments and the timestamp that they occur at in the YouTube video, “Orchestral Instruments Bingo No Names” to determine at your own discretion which order to play the clips for students. Make sure to track which instruments you play as you go to check when students yell, “Bingo!”
- Play the video **“Orchestral Instruments Bingo No Names”** at various timestamps and have students play the game
- Repeat game several times as desired.

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ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENTS BINGO

Timestamp Cheat Sheet for Teachers

- Violin - 00:23
- Viola - 01:00
- Cello - 02:15
- Bass - 02:58
- Harp - 03:46
- Flute - 04:21
- Clarinet - 04:56
- Oboe - 05:20
- Bassoon - 05:50
- Trumpet - 06:15
- Trombone - 06:42
- French Horn - 07:32
- Tuba - 08:00
- Snare Drum - 08:55
- Cymbals - 09:27
- Timpani - 10:53
- Xylophone - 11:49

PIECES TO BE PERFORMED BY THE SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



VALERIE COLEMAN

[Seven O'Clock Shout](#)

Valerie Coleman is a contemporary American composer and Grammy-nominated flutist, recognized as one of the "Top 35 Women Composers" by the Washington Post. Her piece, *Seven O'Clock Shout*, was written in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic to commemorate the frontline workers and the daily celebration they received from New York City residents. Every evening at seven o'clock, New Yorkers would open their windows and serenade the streets, paying recognition to those working tirelessly on the front lines, and to briefly escape the isolation of quarantine, as the City joined together in song.



JOHN WILLIAMS

[Main theme to *Star Wars*](#)

["Harry's Wondrous World" from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*](#)

John Williams is an American composer who is most known for writing the music to many popular films. Some of his most recognized pieces come from *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, and the first three *Harry Potter* films. He has written for over 100 films in total.

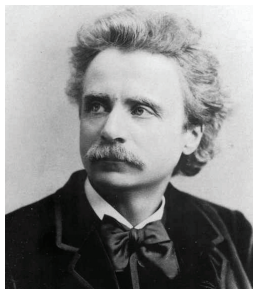


PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

[Symphony No. 4, Movement II](#)

[Symphony No. 4, Movement III](#)

Tchaikovsky was a popular composer of Romantic music who wrote 6 symphonies and some of the world's most performed ballets including *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty*.



EDVARD GRIEG

[In the Hall of the Mountain King](#)

Edvard Grieg was a Norwegian composer and pianist. He is best known for his Piano Concerto in A minor and *Peer Gynt* (which includes *Morning Mood* as well as *In the Hall of the Mountain King*).