



: SPOTLIGHT ON

The Musical Families of the Symphony Orchestra

There are 4 families of musical instruments in the orchestra – see the information on these two pages and click on the name of the family to go to another webpage with more information:

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

The String Family

All of the instruments in the **String Family** in the orchestra have a body made out of wood and are strung with long strings, from the top to the bottom. A bridge holds the strings up off the belly of the instrument.

These instruments are fingered by the fingers of the left hand. The right hand holds a bow made of wood and horse hair.

In the orchestra there are two sections of violins, called first and second violin, a section of violas, a section of cellos and a section of basses – there are 4 – 12 players per section!

The instruments of the **String Family** are:

- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Bass (or String Bass)



Violin



Bass

The Woodwind Family

All the instruments of the **Woodwind Family** are or used to be made out of wood. All of them have a mouthpiece of some sort that is either blown across or blown into that passes the air from the player's body into the body of the instrument.

To change the pitch of the note, the holes of the instrument are covered either by fingers or by keys (which fingers push on).

The instruments of the **Woodwind Family** are:

- Flute
- Piccolo
- Oboe
- English Horn
- Clarinet
- Bassoon



Flute



Clarinet

The Brass Family

All the members of the **Brass Family** in the orchestra are long tubes that wrap around and end at a large opening called a bell.

Brass instruments all have mouthpieces. The player puts their lips on the mouthpiece and blows air into the instrument. To change the pitch of the instrument, valves are pushed down that in turn change the amount of metal tubing the air travels through.

The instruments of the **Brass Family** are:

Trumpet
French Horn
Trombone
Tuba



Trumpet



French Horn

The Percussion Family

All the members of the **Percussion Family** in the orchestra create their sound by being plucked or hit.

Drums have a top called a head or skin that is hit by a striker or mallet to create a sound. Other instruments are struck with a mallet or striker to create their sound.

Harp look like stringed instruments, but because the fingers pluck the string, they are considered percussion instruments.

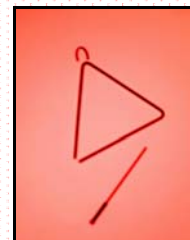
Pianos, even though they have strings on the inside, are actually percussion instruments because each string is actually hit by a soft hammer (that's what happens when the piano key is pushed down by a finger).

The instruments of the **Percussion Family** include:

Drums (Snare, Tom Tom, Bass)
Tympani, Triangles, Cymbals
Gongs, Xylophones, Bells, Chimes
Piano, Harp



Snare drum



Do not forget to write a question before the concert in the Musical Carnival! During the concert members of the Pacific Symphony, will answer your questions!

