



Toronto
Symphony
Orchestra

18 School
19 Concerts

Gr. 4 to 8
Study Guide

Play It by Ear!

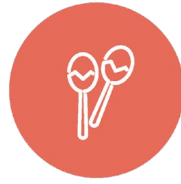
Conductors for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra School Concerts are generously supported by Mrs. Gert Wharton. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra's School Concerts are generously supported by The William Birchall Foundation and an anonymous donor.

Table of Contents



Concert Overview

3



Concert Preparation

4 - 6



Program Notes

7 - 11



Lesson Plans

12 - 38



Artist Biographies

39 - 42



Musical Glossary

43 - 44



Instruments in the Orchestra

45 - 56



Musicians of the TSO

57 - 58



Teacher & Student Evaluation Forms

59 - 60

*The Toronto Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges **Pierre Rivard & Elizabeth Hanson**
for preparing the lesson plans included in this guide*



Concert Overview



Play It by Ear!

February 26-28, 2019

Suitable for grades 4–8

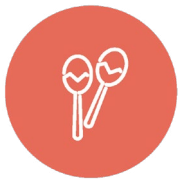
Simon Rivard, Resident Conductor
Kevin Frank, host
Second City Alumni, actors
Talisa Blackman, piano

*Co-production with the
National Arts Centre Orchestra*

No two performances will be the same in this laugh-out-loud interactive concert about improvisation! Featuring Second City alumni, and hosted by Kevin Frank, this delightfully funny show demonstrates improvisatory techniques and includes performances of orchestral works that were created through improvisation. Each concert promises to be one of a kind!

Program to include excerpts from*:

- Mozart: Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*
- Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, Op. 35, Mvt. 2 (Excerpt)
- Copland: *Variations on a Shaker Melody*
- Beethoven: Symphony No. 3, Mvt. 4 (Excerpt)
- Holst: *St. Pauls Suite*, Mvt. 4



Let's Get Ready!

Your class is coming to Roy Thomson Hall to see and hear the Toronto Symphony Orchestra! Here are some suggestions of what to do before, during, and after the performance. Whether it's your first symphony concert or you're a seasoned audience member, there's always something new to learn and experience!

Before Listen and Read



Listen to the pieces of music

- Have you heard any of these pieces before?
- Which one is your favourite and why?
- Do you hear anything new or interesting?
- Try out one of our listening journals and record your observations.

Read the biographies and program notes

- Were there any composers you had never heard of before?
- Did you learn anything new or interesting about one of the pieces, composers, instruments or TSO musicians?

During Look and Listen

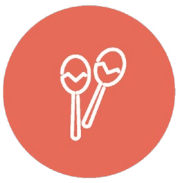


Look around the orchestra and the hall

- Have you been to Roy Thomson Hall before?
- Are there any instruments you haven't seen before?
- Do you notice anything interesting about the orchestra?

Listen to the orchestra and conductor

- Is it different listening to the live orchestra versus a recording?
- Think about how the different pieces make you feel.
- Is there a particular instrument or part of the piece that you like listening to the most?
- What instruments are used to create different sound effects?



Concert Preparation

After Discuss and Reflect



Discuss and reflect with your classmates

- Was there anything that surprised you during the concert?
- What was your favourite/least favourite piece and why?
- Was your experience different from your classmates?
- Fill out our Student Feedback form and let us know what you think!

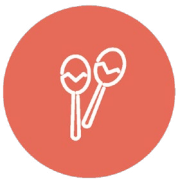
Review Rules and Reminders



Review these rules and reminders with your classmates

- No outside food or drink allowed inside Roy Thomson Hall.
- No flash photography or recordings.
- Please visit the bathroom before the concert. Audience members walking in and out during the concert can be distracting.
- We encourage you to applaud and show appreciation. The orchestra relies on your energy to perform.
- If you're unsure when the piece of music is over, look to the conductor and performers on stage. The conductor will turn and face the audience once the piece of music is over.

Have fun and enjoy your experience!



Listening Journals

Name: _____

Date: _____

Name of the piece _____

Composer _____

1) What kind of instruments do you hear? What type of group or ensemble is playing?

2) What different dynamics do you hear? Do the dynamics stay the same or change?
(pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff, crescendo, diminuendo, etc.)

3) How would you describe the mood of the piece? Why?

4) What tempo marking would you give this piece?
(ex. Largo, Adagio, Andante, Allegro, Presto)

5) What type of key is this piece in?

Major Minor Both Other

6) How does the music make you feel? Why do you think the composer wrote this piece?

7) What two words would you use to describe this piece of music?



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)



Imagine being so talented that your parents think you're literally a miracle, and you might have an idea of what Mozart's life was like! Born with musical abilities that quickly surpassed those of his parents, Mozart was playing piano at three, and composing at five. He had perfect pitch and a precise memory for music: after hearing a piece he could copy it from memory or play it himself. His father was amazed and felt bound to share Mozart's gifts with the world. From as young as six years old, Mozart went on musical tours of Europe with his similarly gifted sister and their father, playing or improvising for all the aristocrats that would hear him. He wrote in all genres of his time, and excelled at each of them. *The Marriage of Figaro* was Mozart's breakthrough work in the genre that meant the most to him as a composer, opera buffa (comic opera).

Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro*



Watch & Listen

The Marriage of Figaro is based on a famous and scandalous play by the colourful French writer Beaumarchais. The main themes, all of them introduced quietly, convey stealth, aptly so for an opera laced with intrigue and disguise: the first theme scurries (strings and bassoons), while the second theme, with its dynamic accents and crisp ornaments, darts and feints (strings, with commentary from flutes and oboes). The overture is set in a three-part ABA pattern called sonata form, but it bends the rules by shortening the second part, or development section. A handful of themes are presented (A), then, after the merest transition back to the home key (B), the whole sequence is repeated (A). With a brief coda, featuring noisily chattering woodwinds, the overture comes to a joyous close.

Did you know?

The music for the famous *Miserere* of Gregorio Allegri (1582–1652) was never meant to be shared outside of the Sistine Choir, but Mozart copied it out from memory after hearing it once.



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)



Rimsky-Korsakov almost wasn't a composer. Doubting his musical ability, he joined the naval academy like many in his family had done. Ironically, it was here that he met the teacher who inspired him to make music his life's work. His training proved haphazard, almost comically so at a crucial point. Having somehow been offered the post of professor of composition and orchestration at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he kept ahead of his students only by quickly digesting the same textbooks he was teaching them. Diligent study and natural talent eventually made a genuine teacher out of him. He mastered the art of colourful orchestration, a skill through which he expressed his taste for exotic and fantastic subjects, no doubt acquired from his travels. Unsurprisingly, his operas and symphonic works are also full of oceanic scenes!

Scheherazade, Mvt. 2 (Excerpt)



Watch & Listen

Scheherazade is based on one of the world's best-known collection of Persian, Egyptian and Indian folklore, the *Arabian* or *1001 Nights*. Schererazade is the wife of a bloodthirsty Sultan who has sentenced her to death, but she keeps delaying her execution by entertaining the Sultan with a new magical fable each night. The movement begins with Scheherazade's theme played on solo violin with accompanying harp, declaring "Once upon a time..." Solo bassoon launches the tale, playing a winding melody that unexpectedly twists like the best stories do. Then different solo winds take the focus, playing in a flexible rhythm over a throbbing string accompaniment, making sudden and unpredictable changes reminiscent of an improvised solo.

Did you know?

Rimsky-Korsakov composed one of the most famous pieces of music, *The Flight of the Bumblebee*! [Click here to listen!](#)



Aaron Copland (1900-1990)



Copland was born in New York City to Russian-Jewish immigrant parents. He was taught to play piano by his older sister. By the age of 15, he had decided he would become a composer. Although he initially struggled towards this goal, a charismatic teacher, Nadia Boulanger, would eventually nurture his talent and help him reach his potential. Copland ultimately achieved his greatest fame and success from his compositions that celebrate and directly quote the folk music of America. One of his most beloved works, *Appalachian Spring*, was a ballet created in collaboration with choreographer Martha Graham. In it, Copland quotes a piece of American folk music: Simple Gifts, a song associated with the Shakers, a religious sect that had emigrated from England to escape persecution and settled in north-eastern United States.

Variations on a Shaker Melody (Simple Gifts)



Watch & Listen

Joseph Brackett, Jr., a Shaker elder, composed Simple Gifts in 1848. He intended it as a combination of hymn and work song. The Shakers were so-called because of their religious services, during which they shook and trembled to rid themselves of evil. Copland was able to take this melody and create variations of it in his distinctively expressive modern style. It is the source of the song's now widespread popularity.

Don't miss your chance to sing or play Simple Gifts along with the TSO when you attend the Play It By Ear concert in February! [You can find it on our teacher resources page.](#)

Did you know?

Simple Gifts went on to become the theme of the Irish musical, Lord of the Dance!



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)



Beethoven's father recognized his son's great talent, and tried to showcase him as a child prodigy, but it wasn't until his teenage years that Beethoven caught people's attention, including that of Mozart who is reportedly said to have been highly impressed by Beethoven's improvisatory skills, and told others that, "this young man will make a great name for himself in the world." Beethoven would prove to be a great musical innovator, creating some of the most iconic and ubiquitous pieces of music we hear today, such as his Symphony No. 5 which is arguably the most well-known piece of music. Beethoven was the predominant musical figure of his time, and is considered by many to be the greatest composer who ever lived.

Symphony No. 3 "Eroica", Mvt 4 (Excerpt)



Watch & Listen

Beethoven began this work in 1803 to honour Napoleon. But, in May 1804, when he heard the news that Napoleon had proclaimed himself emperor, Beethoven removed Napoleon's name from the inscription. The finale – a theme with ten variations – uses for its theme the same one Beethoven had used earlier. Intriguingly, one theory notes that this theme bears a striking resemblance to Steibelt's music turned upside-down, which is what Beethoven had improvised with during a musical duel with the lesser-known composer. The fourth movement begins not with the main theme itself, but with the bass of the theme. Only gradually, as layers of melody are added, is the theme itself discovered. The variations that follow form a cohesive symphonic movement that sweeps powerfully toward a climax, resolving both movement and symphony.

Did you know?

Beethoven struggled against encroaching deafness. Some of his most memorable work, like Symphony No. 9, was written when he was virtually unable to hear.



Gustav Holst (1874-1934)



Holst was drawn to music at an early age, having been born into a family that had professional musicians in the previous three generations. Holst's musical career was shaped by his health. Originally a pianist and later a trombonist, persistent health problems made playing difficult and led him to composition. As a composer, he supported himself by teaching, most notably as the Music Master at St. Paul's Girls' School. Holst worked in a time when women were not represented in professional orchestras, and is considered a pioneer of music education for girls. It was at St. Paul's, in the comfortable retreat of his soundproof studio, that Holst wrote much of his best-known work, including *The Planets* and *St. Paul's Suite*.

St. Paul's Suite, Mvt. 4



Watch & Listen

The suite was named after the St. Paul's Girls' School, and was written for the school orchestra. It was created in gratitude for the soundproof studio the school had built for him when they added a new music wing. Originally a suite for strings, Holst would later add parts for an entire orchestra. In the final movement, Holst plays with themes and variations of two well-known traditional pieces, in the same way that an improviser might do to make something familiar feel new again. First, the folk song "Dargason" is introduced softly, followed by cellos playing the famous "Greensleeves", and as the piece goes on the two are blended together in surprising ways.

Did you know?

The first orchestra in the world to ever hire women musicians was the Queen's Hall in London in 1913. Priorly, it was considered "immodest" for a woman to perform in public.



Themes and Variations in Music and Drama (Gr. 4-8)

Curriculum Expectations

Drama: B.1, B.2, B.3

Music: C.2, C.3

Learning Goal: Students will understand the musical form of theme and variations through the lens of drama.

Prior Knowledge: Students should minimally be familiar with music and drama concepts from the Gr. 3 curriculum. The lesson can be adapted for more experienced students.

1. Minds On

a. Hook (5 minutes)

- Begin by unveiling an unusual object that your class is likely to never have seen. Your goal is to get the group to generate as many different possible uses for the object, no matter how impractical. There are no right or wrong answers. Ask them, "What do you think this object could be used for?"
- If students are hesitant, put forth your silliest ideas to break the ice, "Maybe I could use it as (*your examples*). What else can you think of?"
- Whenever students propose a use for it, encourage them saying something like, "Yes, I could use it for that! That's a unique idea! What other new uses can you think of?"
- If someone actually guesses what the object is, acknowledge them and keep the game going by saying, "Yes, this is a (*name of object*) and I could use it to (*function of object*), but what else could it be used for?"
- Stop after a dozen or so suggestions. Congratulate the class for their creativity. "I'm impressed that we found (#) uses for this object. I had us do this because I wanted us to practice improvising."

2. Action

b. What Is Improvisation (10 minutes)

- "In February, we are going to attend a concert at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra called Play it by Ear! This concert is all about **improvisation**."
- "How would you describe improvisation?" (*Examples: Spontaneous, response to a prompt, unrehearsed, playful, unfiltered, etc...*)
- "There are many skills that an improviser needs to have, but one of the most important is listening. Why do you think **listening** is such an important skill?" (*To build on what's been said... or played*)
- "Listening is especially important in musical improvisation. I'm going to play you a musical piece by Mozart. You'll notice that it has a familiar melody, but listen carefully to how it changes... I'll have some questions afterwards."
- Play [Mozart's "Variations on 'Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman"](#) (Playing the first 5 variations will give them the idea... stop around 3:14)



Lesson Plans

- “How would you describe what you’ve just heard?” (*Melody was played, then repeated in many different ways*) “This form is called **theme and variations**.”
- “How is this similar to our opening game?” (*We started with a core idea, the object or a melody, and reinterpreted it.*)
- “How did Mozart create variations on the original melody? In what ways did it sound different as the piece went on?” If students are unfamiliar with the elements of music, paraphrase their answers to help draw the connections:
 - **Pitch:** Additional notes were added to embellish the melody.
 - **Duration:** Length of notes was modified, which changed the rhythm (ex: **syncopation** in the 5th variation).
 - **Dynamics:** Used different dynamics and articulations
 - **Texture/Harmony:** Used chords instead of simple harmonies
- “When musicians improvise, they will often create variations on a theme. At its root, all composition is a form of improvisation. In a way, improvisation is simply an early stage of the creative process. It’s a way of generating ideas, before you start deciding what’s good and what’s bad.”

c. Themes and Variations Drama Game - Set-up (10 minutes)

- “We are going to play a drama game inspired by the musical concept of **theme and variations**. Instead of a theme, each person will have one phrase. You’ll be in groups of two. There’ll be a phrase A and B. In your group of two, you are going to create as many different scenes as possible.”
- “We talked about how Mozart manipulated the elements of music to create variations out of the same theme. How can we modify the elements of drama to create different scenes using the same words?”
 - **Role and character:** You can convey different characters through your voice (*tone, volume, pace, etc.*), body language/movement, and gestures.
 - **Relationship:** You can convey a different relationship based on how you physically interact with the other actor.
 - **Time and place:** You can use mimed actions to establish a different time and place
- “For example, let’s say phrase A is, “That’s a problem.” There are different ways you could say phrase A: questioningly, accusatorially, worriedly, mockingly, helpfully, etc...” (*After each adverb, say the phrase how you’ve described it to model*)
- “Let’s say phrase B is, “Thank you.” You could say this: sarcastically, gratefully, embarrassedly, reluctantly, happily, etc...” (*After each adverb, say the phrase how you’ve described it to model*)
- “The way you connect the two phrases in your skit will create even more variety:
 - 1 - “For example, maybe person B is walking and feels it beginning to rain (*miming: palm out to feel for drops, looking up, wiping rain from face*); they look upset because they have no umbrella. Person A notices this, ‘That’s a problem,’ and opens an umbrella for them. Person B is grateful, ‘Thank you.’”



Lesson Plans

2 - "Another example, Person A and B are working on a project, gluing something together (*mimed actions*). Success, and a thumbs up. Person B shakes the other's hand, happily saying, 'Thank you!'. They try to separate their hands, but they are glued together. Person A worriedly says, 'That's a problem!'"

3 - "Third example, Person B is painting on a canvas (*mimed*). Person A walks over, looks at the canvas, then at the model, and back at the canvas again. Person A begins point out all the mistakes, making it sound more and more dramatic each time: 'That's a problem. *That's* a problem. *That's* a problem.' Person B is flustered and dismissively says, 'Thank you!'"

- "As you can see from these examples, even though the words are the same, the way you say them can completely change the meaning. I want you to be creative and dream up as many different short scenes as you can, each 5 to 20 seconds long."

d. Themes and Variations Drama Game - Playing (25 minutes)

- There are modifications that you can make to this activity to make it more or less complex. Please choose what would work best for your group:
 - **Variation 1 (Gr. 4-6):** Have the class use the same two phrases across all groups. Single words work well too. To build more interest, you can choose them as a class and vote for the top two. Afterwards, divide your class into groups. When groups present to the class, they will only present one scene (and it has to be different from all those before it). In the end, you will have created a collaborative piece called, "(X) variations on (*phrase A*) and (*phrase B*)."
 - **Variation 2 (Gr. 7/8):** Allow each student to choose their own generic phrase. Do this before creating the groups. Get the students in line, and have them tell you what their phrase is. If something is too specific or inappropriate, make them choose another. They can no longer change their phrase. Pair up the first person in line with the last person, and repeat until all groups are formed. In the end, groups will present 2 to 5 variations to the class (depending on time).
 - **Variation 3:** You can add a phrase C to have groups of 3. This will reduce the overall presentation time, and may help groups come up with more scenario ideas.
- Have students work on their scenes. Walk around the class, answering any questions, and encouraging them with idea suggestions.



3. Consolidation

e. Students Present (20 minutes)

- Have groups present their scenes to the class.
 - If the whole class is working with the same phrases, take a moment after each scene to talk about how they made their variation different. Put questions to the audience, such as, “How could we tell that...” or “What do you think happened?” to point out how the elements of drama were used to create variety.
 - If something is unclear, make a suggestion about how to improve the scene and then have them try it again. (ex. Come further downstage, face the audience, use a bigger gesture for this, etc...). This will help the groups that follow.
- If students chose their own phrases (gr. 7/8), allow for **an extra 15 minutes** to present. Ideally, groups will show three variations, but two can also work if they are highly contrasting.

f. Reviewing and Conclusion (10 minutes)

- Get the class to give itself a round of applause!
- “Why do you think a musician or an actor might use improvisation?” (*Generate new ideas, a way to develop your creativity, for entertainment, etc...*)
- “Why do you think it’s so important in improvisation to build on ideas, rather than reject them?” (*Various answers*) “Improvisation is an early part of the creative process. It’s the stage before you decide what’s good and what’s so-so. Even mediocre ideas can lead to inspiration if you build on them.”
- “In the Play it By Ear! concert that we will be attending at the TSO, there will be performers who graduated from The Second City. The Second City is a famous improv and sketch comedy group. Similarly to how composers use improvisation to generate new ideas and then set them down permanently as written composition, The Second City actors improvise new material all the time, and when they think something is especially funny, they write it down and it becomes a sketch in one of their shows.”
- “Before we conclude this lesson, I want you to listen to one of the pieces we will be hearing in the TSO concert. [This is a piece by Aaron Copland and it is called, “Variations On a Shaker Melody”](#). I want you to listen carefully, and see if you can identify when the melody ends, and the variations begin.”



4. Accommodations and Extensions

- If the “themes and variations” game is too difficult for a student, you can have them use a prop instead of a phrase. They could present, “(#) Variations on a (*name of object 1*) and (*name of object 2*)”. In their scenes, they would be allowed to say whatever they want.
- If students would like to play similar drama games, here are couple of our favourites:
 - **“I Am a Tree” (Gr. 4-6):** The class forms a circle. One person enters the circle, freezes in the shape of tree, and says, “I am a tree!” A second person enters, and freezes in a position that establishes a relationship with the previous character. *Ex: curls into a ball and says, “I am the apple, that hasn’t fallen far from the tree!”*. From here, there are only ever two people in the circle; the person entering establishes a relationship with the previous character, and the other person goes back to their spot in the circle. *Ex: on all fours, “I am a raccoon eating the apple,” (tree person silently leaves)*
 - **“Freeze Circle” (Gr. 7/8):** The class forms a circle. Two students start an improvisation based on a suggestion from the group. When a student thinks the actors are in an appropriate position, they can clap their hands to “freeze” the scene, and then tap out one of the actors and take the exact same position they had. When play resumes, a completely different scene takes place inspired by the position. Encourage students to use large, exaggerated gestures in their scene as it allows for more possibilities.



Scenes to Music (Gr. 4-8)

Curriculum Expectations

Drama: B.1, B.2, B.3

Music: C.2, C.3

Learning Goal: Students will improvise a scene and modify it based on the music they hear.

Prior Knowledge: Students should minimally be familiar with music and drama concepts from the Gr. 3 curriculum. The lesson can be adapted for more experienced students.

1. Minds On

a. Hook (10 minutes)

- Ask the class what their favourite movie is. "Is there a particular moment in it that is highly emotionally charged? Why do you think that is?" Lead a discussion that guides them towards music's emotional impact on a scene.
- To show them how this works, [play the following clip opening clip of The Lion King, which has been edited with different musical pieces](#). "I'm going to show you a clip from The Lion King. First, the scene will be played without music. Then, there will be different music added. Pay attention to how you feel during each one..."
- "How did your feelings change?"
- Ask them if they've ever watched a scary or suspenseful film. "Have you ever tried watching it with the sound off? How did it change the mood? It is suddenly much less scary or suspenseful, isn't it?" When it comes to telling a story, sound holds the power. Put another way, you understand what you see, but you feel what you hear.
- In film, there are two types of music: **diegetic** and **non-diegetic**. Diegetic music is sound that exists in the world of the story (a character can hear it). For example, a song that is played by a band in the film. Non-diegetic exists outside the story world (the characters don't hear it). An example of non-diegetic music are **movie scores**.
- "Today, we are going to be playing an improv game inspired by the idea of how non-diegetic sound influences a story. But first, we need to talk about **improvisation!**"



Lesson Plans

2. Action

b. What Is Improvisation (10 minutes)

- "In February, we are going to attend a concert at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra called Play it by Ear! This concert is all about **improvisation**."
- "How would you describe improvisation?" (*Examples: Spontaneous, response to a prompt, unrehearsed, playful, unfiltered, etc...*)
- "There's one golden rule in improvisation, what do you think it is? (*Take up answers*) Here's a hint: Improvisation is sometimes compared to, "building a fire," what do you think that means? (*Take up answers*) The most important thing about improvisation is that you are always adding to it, similarly to how you slowly build a fire by adding fuel to it. In improvisation, you want to be thinking, "**Yes, and...**", meaning you are always building on the previous ideas and adding more."
- "What do you think would happen if you kept rejecting your partner's ideas?" (*It wouldn't be fun for anyone, audience or actors*)
- **Note:** This is not the same thing as disagreeing with your partner, which is required for creating conflict, tension, and drama. For example:
 - **Rejecting ideas** is like person A saying, "I really like petting your dog. Her fur is so soft!" and person B saying, "What are you talking about? We're in space, there are no dogs here!"
 - **Creating conflict** through disagreement is like person B saying, "You should pet my dog! Her fur is so soft!" and person A saying, "I have a serious allergy to dogs. Please keep her away from me or something terrible might happen." *That's drama.*
- "Now that you know that "building on what's been said" is essential, what do you think is the most important skill to have as an improviser?" (*Take up answers*) **Listening!**
- "One beautiful quote from an improviser describes it like this, "Listening is the willingness to change." What do you think that means? (*In improv, your character is mostly established by what others say about you. It's important to listen to what others have said about your character, and to act accordingly.*)

c. Scenes to Music Drama Game – Set-up (10 minutes)

- "We are going to play an improvisation game based on the idea of music influencing the mood of a scene. I will have you improvise a scene, without music, and then you will do it again, but I will play different kinds of music, and you will have to change the storyline accordingly..."



Lesson Plans

- “To begin, we need some ideas of problems to help start our stories, because drama comes from conflict.” Give students a category to brainstorm, and collect their answers on pieces of paper. Place the answers in a hat if they are appropriate. They can be picked out at random this way. Brainstorm ideas based on grades:
 - Gr. 4: A challenge you might have at school
 - Gr. 5: A challenge you might have in your family
 - Gr. 6: A challenge you might have in a workplace
 - Gr. 7: A challenge you might have in a friendship.
 - Gr. 8: A challenge you might have in your life.
- “Before we begin, we need to establish our own musical conventions, so that we are all on the same page. I’m going to play the start of music pieces, and I want us to assign a mood to it as a class”
- Play the excerpts one at a time, and have the class decide how it makes them feel. The moods should all be different. These excerpts are the same that will be heard in the Play it By Ear concert. (Only play 30 seconds or so of each):
 - [Mozart - Marriage of Figaro Overture](#)
 - [Rimsky-Korsakov - Scheherazade – Movement 2](#)
 - [Beethoven – Symphony 3, 4th Movement](#)
 - [Holst – St. Paul’s Suite, 4th Movement](#)
- For example, here are some suggested cues to take from the music (but you can choose others, if you’d like):
 - **Mozart:** Make the story happier... “Something wonderful is going to happen...”
 - **Scheherazade:** Make the story sadder... “Something terrible is going to happen...”
 - **Beethoven:** Make the story take an unexpected twist... “Add something surprising to the story...”
 - **Holst:** Make the story more suspenseful... “Add uncertainty: perhaps you won’t solve the problem?”
- Make sure the class understands the conventions you’ve established.
- Divide the class into groups of two or three.

d. Scenes to Music Drama Game – Team Huddle (3 minutes)

- Groups pick a challenge from a hat. They have one minute to brainstorm how they will solve the problem, and who is playing what role.



Lesson Plans

3. Consolidation

e. Scenes to Music Drama Game (45 minutes)

- One at a time, groups come to the front of the class to improvise a 1-minute scene based on the suggestion they had pulled from the hat. Keep the time and give them a 10-second warning before the end.
- After establishing the story without music, they are to play the same scene again, except this time they must change the storyline based on the music that plays, following the conventions that you established as a class.
- You can choose to play whichever piece you think will make the story more compelling. It can start with music, or music can be brought in. You'll only be able to play one or two pieces.
- After their version with music, give them constructive feedback, and other ideas of how they could have modified their storyline. This will give upcoming groups more ideas to work with.

f. Reviewing and Conclusion (7 minutes)

- Get the class to give itself a round of applause!
- Review the importance of music and how it can affect a story. What does **diegetic** and **non-diegetic** music mean?
- As an example, when the TSO has its movie with orchestra concerts, the non-diegetic music is removed from the film and played live by the orchestra instead. Meanwhile, the diegetic music, which is the music heard by the characters (*like the Cantina band music in Star Wars, for example*), is left in the film."
- The reason we were learning about improvisation today is because we will be attending a concert at the TSO called Play it By Ear!
- "In this concert, there will performers who graduated from The Second City. The Second City is a famous improv and sketch comedy group. One of the games they play will be similar to what we've done today."
- "The next time you watch a movie, television show, or any form of media, I want you to pay attention to how music is used to influence your feelings."

4. Accommodations and Extensions

- To make this activity easier, you can do any of the following:
 - o Tell groups which type of music you will play. This way, they can plan ahead for how they will modify their drama scene.
 - o Reduce the music options to 2. For example, one leads to a "happy" ending, and another to a "sad" ending.
 - o You can give them more time to plan their scene.



Music Duels & Rap Battles (Gr. 4-8)

Curriculum Expectations

Music: C.1., C.2, C.3

Learning Goal: Students will write multiple bars of lyrics spoken over an ostinato triplet rhythm.

Prior Knowledge: Students should minimally be familiar with music concepts from the Gr. 3 curriculum. The lesson can be adapted for more experienced students.

1. Minds On

a. Hook (5 minutes)

- Begin by asking your class who is the “best” music performer right now. (*You will get wildly different answers; ask the group if they agree with the answers. Eventually, your class will gravitate towards two choices.*)
- Ask them, “It sounds like we think that (*performer A*) and (*performer B*) are the best. But how could we tell which of them is better?” (*Students might suggest looking at album sales and song charts, but these don’t necessarily reflect skills*) “But how can we compare who is the more skilled musician?” (*Music duel, rap battle, etc...*)
- “How does a rap battle/music duel work?” (*Lyrics/music are improvised; crowd decides who wins*) “When do you think people started doing this?” (*Students are likely to guess it is a recent phenomenon*)
- [Show the class the following clip about musical improvisation contests](#) (Beethoven Vs. Steibelt).
- “As you can see, these type of sparring contests have existed for a long time!” (The above example is from the 1800’s) “In these contests, musicians would take a well-known piece and improvise variations on them.”

2. Action

b. What is a musical duel (10 minutes)

- “In February, we are going to attend a concert at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra called Play it by Ear! This concert is all about **improvisation**.”
- “How would you describe improvisation?” (*Examples: Spontaneous, response to a prompt, unrehearsed, playful, unfiltered, etc...*)
- “Why do musicians improvise?” (*Multiple reasons, but focus on **displaying one’s skill***)
- “Have you ever heard of a **cadenza**? A cadenza is a passage inserted into a movement in a concerto or other work, typically near the end. During the cadenza, the orchestra will either stop playing or sustain a note/chord, while the soloist improvises a virtuosic passage of music. In popular music, you might hear about something similar called an instrument **solo**.”



Lesson Plans

- “It’s easy to imagine concert-goers who heard different cadenzas wanting to know who the most skilled musician was, similar to how people today compare athletes or musical performers like (*performer A & B from earlier*).”
- “In their time, composers like **Mozart** and **Beethoven** were involved in improvised musical sparring contests, although the context isn’t the same as it might be today.”
- “For example, with Beethoven, the contests were chiefly to entertain the Viennese aristocracy. The crowd was full of people with high social status, like Princes, and would take place in palaces or other exclusive venues. The aristocracy was wealthy and could patronize musicians, therefore there was more to lose than just your reputation!”
- “[According to some researchers](#) (*Michael Tilson Thomas and John Suchet*), after the music duel between Beethoven and Steibelt, where Beethoven parodied Steibelt’s music and humiliated him, Beethoven took the first four notes of Steibelt’s music (which he had mockingly placed upside down on the music stand) and used it as the basis of the theme in his 3rd Symphony’s fourth movement. The exact details of the Steibelt/Beethoven duel vary, and the story of Beethoven reusing a similar melody is debatable, but one thing is certain: the finale of Beethoven’s 3rd symphony is based on a theme that he liked well enough to use in three earlier works.”
- “Here’s an excerpt of [Beethoven’s 4th movement from his 3rd Symphony](#), which we’ll hear at the Play if By Ear! concert in February.” (Listen for approximately 5 minutes)

c. Rap Battle – Set-up (10 minutes)

- “Now that we’ve been inspired by Beethoven and this idea of musical battles, we are going to have our own musical competition. We are going to have a rap battle over a piece of classical music!”
- “We’ll be using the beginning of [Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata as the “track” we are rapping over. This is what it sounds like.](#)”
- A few things to note:
 - The tempo is **Adagio**. In other words, it is slow and will be easier to keep up with the beat.
 - It has an **ostinato triplet rhythm**. You can hear this by counting along with the 1-2-3 rhythm. This means that you will be rapping in triplets!
 - To do this, you’ll be writing with three syllables per line. You can also have two syllables and leave the third as a **rest**.
 - There are four triplets per **bar** of music.
- Here’s one example of how you could do it:

Bar 1

When you write (3 syllables)
Your lyrics (3 syllables)
You will want (3 syllables)
To use (2 syllables + rest)

Bar 2

Only three (3 syllables)
Syllables (3 syllables)
Or sometimes (3 syllables)
Just two (2 syllables + rest)



Lesson Plans

- Go back and forth between listening to the piece and modifying your lyrics. Experiment and find something that sounds best to you.
- Play with the **dynamics**: try placing the **accent** or stress on different beats. (Normally, in a rap song, you would stress the syllables on the beats where the kick drum and snare lands, to compensate for their loudness. However, you have more freedom in Moonlight Sonata, because it is played **pianissimo** or “very quietly”, and the loudest it gets is **piano** or “quietly”.

d. Rap Battle – Set-up (10 minutes)

- It’s time for students to begin working on their lyrics.
- “For this activity, I don’t want you to actually try insulting each other like you see in rap battles. Instead, I will give you a category, like (*types of food, or types of pets, or sports teams, etc., make it age appropriate/relevant*). You will have to choose your favourite from that category, which you’ll be rapping about.”
- Place students into groups of four, and give each group a different category. The group will choose their two favourite things in that category, things A and B. Two people will write lyrics arguing that A is best, and two people will write lyrics arguing that B is best. They will write their lyrics in pairs. In the class presentation, they will alternate rapping over 4 bars each. We’ll stop the music after 16 bars, so each person will have rapped for 8 bars. Then the other half of the group will present.
- There are modifications that you can make to this activity to keep it simple or make it more complex:
 - **Variation 1 (Gr. 4-6)**: Rhyming not required.
 - **Variation 2 (Gr. 7-8)**: Rhyming lyrics are required. You can specify the rhyming pattern.
- Once explained, have students work on their lyrics. If possible, give students access to the music so that they can practice their lyrics and see how it sounds before presenting.
- If groups A and B finish writing their 16 bars of lyrics early, they can be asked to write another set of 16 for a potential “round 2” rap battle (if time allows).
- **Note**: Bar 16 ends at approximately 1:16 into the piece, at regular tempo.



Lesson Plans

3. Consolidation

e. Rap Battle – Students Present (30 minutes)

- Students will be presenting their rap battle to the class. Before it begins, announce what the two competing things are. For example, “This rap battle is about types of pets. On my right, we have an unusual exotic pet, CHEETAHS, and on my left, we have everyone’s best friend, DOGS. Are you ready, cheetahs vs. dogs?” (*said in your most exuberant announcer voice*)
- **Optional:** If you have a class ritual for deciding who goes first, it can add to the theme of a battle (rock-paper-scissors is customary)
- For each rap battle, one group begins and raps their lyrics until the end of bar 16. The music is stopped and restarted for the second half of the group.
- After both sides have presented, have a class vote to see who was more convincing.
- Regardless of who “wins”, have a student who voted for A explain why they picked A, and have a student who voted for B explain why they chose B. Help draw the connection between students’ answers and the elements of music.

f. Reviewing and Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Get the class to give itself a round of applause!
- From classical musicians improvising on a theme, to contemporary rappers freestyling lyrics, musical duels have been around for a long time.
- “Why do you think a musician might use improvisation in a cadenza or musical duel?” (*Show off their skills, entertain others, pay tribute to an older musician, etc...*)
- “In the Play it By Ear! concert that we will be attending at the TSO, there will performers who graduated from The Second City. The Second City is a famous improv and sketch comedy group. Similarly to how musicians initially improvised their cadenzas and later set them down permanently as written composition, The Second City actors improvise new material all the time, and when they think something is especially funny, they write it down and it becomes a sketch in one of their shows.”
- “Before we conclude this lesson, I want you to listen to one of the pieces we will be hearing in the TSO concert. [This is a piece by Rimsky-Korsakov, and it is an excerpt from the 2nd Movement of his Scheherzade.](#) I want you to listen carefully to the virtuosic instrument **solos**, which still have that audacious, improvisatory sound from when it was first composed.”



4. Accommodations and Extensions

- To simplify the language component of this activity, students can be challenged to find rhymes, with no logical connection between words. There can be a new rhyme in each bar (easier), or you can keep the same rhyme going for multiple bars (harder). For example, they could find as many words as possible that rhyme with car. Varying between 1, 2, and 3-syllable words will create a unique pattern:

Bar 1

Candy bar (3 syllables)
Movie star (3 syllables)
Cookie jar (3 syllables)
Guitar (2 syllables + rest)

Bar 2

Car, far, spar (3 syllables)
Au revoir (3 syllables)
Repertoire (3 syllables)
Jaguar (2 syllables + rest)

- You can also make it easier, or more difficult, by changing the **tempo** on YouTube by modifying the playback speed.
- To make it significantly more difficult, students can be given a topic and completely improvise their rap on the spot (no prewritten lyrics).



Student Composed Rap and Kindness Rap Battle (Gr. 4-6)

Note: Rapping is distinct from spoken word poetry in that it is performed in time to a beat. Stylistically, rap occupies a grey area between speech, prose, poetry, and singing.

Curriculum Expectations

Language:

1. Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience
2. Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience.

Music:

- C.1. **Creating and Performing:** apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music;
- C.3. **Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts:** demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their sociocultural and historical contexts.

Learning Goal: Students will use improvisation to co-create a chorus (catchy part of the song) and the verses will be a rap battle. (See *Extension*: add a harmonic ostinato.)

Big Idea/Essential Question: How can we use improvisation to create a rap and kindness rap battle?

Materials: Projector or SMART Board with speaker, whiteboard, whiteboard markers, lined or plain paper and pencils for students.



Lesson Plans

Introduction: Music and Improvisation

Human beings are innately creative. In everyday life, we improvise constantly. We decide what to say next in conversation, how to dress, how to cook a meal, how to solve a problem and for young people how to PLAY! Playing and acting out roles comes natural to young people. We are also natural musicians, and young people often make up songs and melodies on the spot without inhibition. At any age, we can put aside our judgment and jump into musical improvisation. As you try these activities, it helps to remember that everyone is creative and everyone is a musician, therefore, you and your students are **IMPROVISERS** despite your past experience. Now is always a good time to start. One of the key rules in acting improvisation is to say **YES** to whatever happens in the scene to keep it moving. So say "YES, KEEP GOING, THAT'S IT" to yourself and your students and mostly HAVE FUN PLAYING MUSIC!

Improvising and Mozart: When we think of improvisation, we often think of jazz but we may not realize that classical musicians and composers like Mozart used to improvise over their own compositions. Mozart's public concerts almost always contained a complete standalone improvisation. The listeners at the time would have expected it. His improvisations were so incredible that some were more impressed by them than the music that he actually wrote down.

Step #1 - Hook

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

What do you know/like about rap?

What do you want to know?

Step #2 - Make a Beat

EXPLAIN - Rap is performed to a beat. Students can share beats they know on their desk or legs like (low (*fist*) high (*slap*) low low low high.) See if anyone in your class has drumming or rapping experience. For the drums you can play on desks, drums, buckets or beatbox.

TECHNOLOGY HELP - If possible record your favourite beats on a phone or recording device.



Lesson Plans

Step #3 - Chorus & Verse

EXPLAIN - What is a chorus and what is a verse in a rap or any song?

The catchy part of a rap is the chorus which can be sung or rapped. Most of the other parts are called the Verse.

Listen to "Glory" from the movie Selma. When John Legend sings "One day, when the glory comes..." that's the chorus. Make a letter "C" in the air when you hear the start of the chorus. Make a "V" in the air when Common raps - that's the verse.

Hint: the song starts with the chorus.

[Glory - Sung by John Legend Rapped by Common](#)

Please note: There is also a bridge in this song which you can think of as an extended chorus. It comes right after the 2nd chorus when you hear:

BRIDGE:

Now the war is not over Victory isn't won

And we'll fight on to the finish Then when it's all done

We'll cry glory, glory, oh glory, glory We'll cry glory, glory, oh glory, glory

Step #4 - Brainstorm Topic - Kindness Makes a Difference

(To save time, the topic is given. However feel free to choose your own topic. Rap often involves social justice themes. Students enjoy writing about what they want to see change in the world. Keep it positive.)

On the board: Start with a **THINK-PAIR-SHARE** and then brainstorm words and ideas around the topic **Kindness Makes a Difference**.

Step #5 - Improvise Rap Lines to Create the Chorus

Have student get into pairs/trios and see what comes to mind. Follow rhyme patterns like AABB, ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABAC or XAXA (X's do not rhyme) or anything goes! Explain the examples below then throw them right into it. (Paper and pencils or you can record spoken ideas.)

Example of ABAB:

Everything is everything

What is meant to be, will be

After winter, must come spring

Change, it comes eventually

Come back and share - class can keep the lines they like until a chorus is chosen. Try putting it to the beat.



Lesson Plans

Step #6 - KINDNESS RAP BATTLE OPTION #1 (Verses)

Challenge your class to be thoughtful. NOTE: No comments about a person's physical appearance.

- Form two lines in parallel.
- The first student in each line will rap battle.
- Person 1: rap two lines (improvised) that appreciates the person across from them. When possible rhyme the last word of each line but not necessary. The idea is to just see what happens and remind students that it is a SAFE SPACE.
- Person 2: raps two line about the person across from them.
- Person 1 & 2 go to the end of the line.

Example:

Hey Justin you got a great beat.
I see you are also fast on your feet.

OPTION #2: When students find it too hard to do this out loud they can also work in pairs or write individually. It's still improvisation.

Step #7 - PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Challenge your class to be thoughtful. NOTE: No comments about a person's physical appearance.

Start with the drum beat 4xs.

Chorus (everyone) then verse (rap battle or compiled rap battle parts - 2 to 4 students per verse)

You can start with the chorus or verse. (Songs vary.)

Consolidation

Exit Slip: Read the following questions and freewrite.

What was it like making up lines for the rap? What went well? What was challenging? Would you try writing a rap on your own? Why or why not?

Extension: Bass or Keyboard Ostinato

For music teachers or teachers with access to keyboard, bass, guitar or keyboard. You can add a bass line or rhythmic ostinato (repeating pattern)

For example: One bar of C and E together straight eighth notes and one bar of B and D straight eighth notes.



Exploring Improvisation In the Lives of Mos Def, Miles Davis, Mozart and Me (Gr. 7-8)

(Mos Def=Rapper, Miles=Jazz, Mozart=Classical, Me=_____)

Curriculum Expectations

Music:

C.1. **Creating and Performing:** apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music;

C.2. **Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing:** apply the critical analysis process to communicate their feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of music and musical experiences;

C.3. **Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts:** demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their sociocultural and historical contexts.

Learning Goal: Students will analyze and discuss three improvisations in freestyle rap, jazz and classical music. Students will draw comparisons between three great musicians and consider how they use improvisation in their own lives in any area.

Extension 1 - Body Percussion Activity

Extension 2- Pentatonic Improvisation (for instrumental music classes)

Big Idea/Essential Question: How can/do I use improvisation in my life? How did Mos Def, Miles Davis and Mozart heighten, enhance or energize their performance through improvisation?

Materials: Projector or SMART Board with speaker, whiteboard, whiteboard markers, lined or plain paper and pencils for students.



Lesson Plans

Introduction: Music and Improvisation

Human beings are innately creative. In everyday life, we improvise constantly. We decide what to say next in conversation, how to dress, how to cook a meal, how to solve a problem and for young people how to PLAY! Playing and acting out roles comes natural to young people. We are also natural musicians, and young people often make up songs and melodies on the spot without inhibition. At any age, we can put aside our judgment and jump into musical improvisation. As you try these activities, it helps to remember that everyone is creative and everyone is a musician, therefore, you and your students are **IMPROVISERS** despite your past experience. Now is always a good time to start. One of the key rules in acting improvisation is to say **YES** to whatever happens in the scene to keep it moving. So say "YES, KEEP GOING, THAT'S IT" to yourself and your students and mostly HAVE FUN PLAYING MUSIC!

Improvising and Mozart: When we think of improvisation, we often think of jazz but we may not realize that classical musicians and composers like Mozart used to improvise over their own compositions. Mozart's public concerts almost always contained a complete standalone improvisation. The listeners at the time would have expected it. His improvisations were so incredible that some were more impressed by them than the music that he actually wrote down.

Step #1 - Hook

Explain or read - Have you ever been in this situation: "You have to do a presentation in about 1 minute and realize you forgot to do the closing section. You don't have enough time to finish preparing. You think "What can I do?" The teacher calls you up in front - you start the presentation and during the presentation an idea comes to you. When get to the closing you make it up, you wing it, and it goes pretty well."

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

TURN TO SOMEONE NEAR YOU and share a time when you had to make something up on the spot. Maybe you were cooking and missing an ingredient, maybe you wanted to convince your parents to let you do something.

When we make up stuff on the spot, that's called improvising. We do it all the time naturally often without realizing it.

We also use improvisation in the arts **IN THEATER** in acting in skits and writing skits like in the show Saturday Night Live.

IN MUSIC rappers freestyle in cyphers or on stage - jazz musicians create melodies on the spot and even classical musicians like Mozart improvised.

VISUAL ARTISTS sometimes just follow their mind to create without any plan or just a basic sketch then improvise.



Lesson Plans

Step #2 - Freestyle Rap by Mos Def

Today we are looking at musical improvisation past and present - Watch this video of the well known rapper Mos Def as he freestyles in a rap cypher or circle.

WATCH: Link to [Mos Def Freestylin'](#)

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

What do you like/notice about this video of Mos Def improvising?

NOTE:

Rapping is distinct from spoken word poetry in that it is performed in time to a beat. Freestyle Rapping is as defined by Kool Moe Dee in his book, *There's A God On The Mic*: "There are two types of freestyle. There's an old-school freestyle that's basically rhymes that you've written that may not have anything to do with any subject or that goes all over the place. Then there's freestyle where you come off the top of the head."

Hand out the text to Mod Def's rap and have the students read it or project the text. Then watch the video again with just sound and have the student read along. This freestyle (among several others) can be found on the documentary 'Freestyle: The Art of Rhyme'.

<p>Lyrics: Slim brown skin I be Standin' 5'10" I be Rockin it when I be In your vicinity Raw style synergy Recognize symmetry Constant to the edge of me Broken down chemically Ain't the number ten emcee Talkin' 'bout how been I be Styled it like Kennedy Late like a ten to three When I say when I be Girls say venga aqui Cause they tend to be Way out like Tennessee</p>	<p>Take me to a place called the BK Without pause or delay Get run like Penn Relay Don't deal with he say she say Ain't workin' for no cheap pay The Mos Def beat play This what the streets say Hey Mr. DJ: Play that devil MO'gain That Jam got me open Beside I break it broken From front, front side to side, middle to back Never the wack I come from Bedstuy, Black From Louis A-V-E to be exact BROOKLYN!! BROOKLYN!!!</p>
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Lesson Plans

Step #3 - MILES DAVIS / JAZZ IMPROVISATION

Explain: Here is a video clip of Miles Davis improvising on his tune "So What". In the clip Miles starts off by playing memorized pre-composed music then at 54" he improvises over the chords to the melody. What do you like/notice about the performance? MAKE SURE TO SAY IMPROV at 54".

[Miles Davis on Improvising Jazz](#)

On the next listening try to notice the difference between the pre-written sections and the improvised section. Pre-written 0"-54" Improvised 53" - 2'38" or sooner. Notice especially the role of the bass when entering the improvisation.

Step #4 - MOZART / CLASSICAL IMPROVISATION

WATCH: Mozart as acted by Tom Hulce in the film *Amadeus*.

[Mozart \(acted by Tom Hulce in Amadeus\) improvising](#)

Step #5 - COMPARE MOS DEF, MILES AND MOZART

Draw Venn Diagram on board

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

What are the similarities and differences between the three forms of musical improvisation?

Step #6 - THE EFFECT OF IMPROVISATION

Challenge your class to be thoughtful. NOTE: No comments about a person's physical appearance.

Step #7 - PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

How do you think improvisation heightens, enhances or energizes a performance?

Pick one of the three examples from today - How do you think improvisation heightened, enhanced, energized or added tension to the performance?

Consolidation

Exit Slip: Free write activity - Choose one question to write on for 5 minutes.

1. How have you used improvisation in the past in any area of your life? (writing, acting, telling stories, presentation, playing music, cooking, playing with a sibling, playing with friends as a small child etc.)
2. How would you like to use improvisation in your life in the future?
3. From the three videos which did you like the most, explain in detail why?



Lesson Plans

Extension #1: The BEAT that REPEATS

Have your class stand in a circle. Using the voice or body have everyone come up with a SIMPLE beat that REPEATS. Use clapping, tapping legs and snapping and stomping.

Beatboxers encouraged to beatbox.

Pick someone to start who has a clear simple idea. After the beat is established, each person adds something to the beat that is simple and repeats. Students can join another student by doing the same beat or make up their own. See if you can get all the way around the circle to create a class beat.

Add a break: After the beat is solidified, stop, ask someone for a simple break.

Try doing the first beat 3 times then add the break, repeat again 3x's beat 1x break, practice several times. Try new breaks.

Extension #2: Pentatonic Scale Improvisation (for instrumental music classes)

Give everyone (percussionists can start on mallets) 5 notes from the Bb Concert Scale:

Put on board:

- Flutes/Guitar/Keyboards/Trombones/Tuba: Bb, C, D, F, G
- Clarinets, Trumpets, Tenor Sax: C,D,E,G,A
- Alto and Baritone Sax: G,A,B, D, E
- Horn: F, G, A,C,D

Bass Players: Compose a 1 bar or 2 bar ostinato starting on Bb.

Drummers (drum set or bass drum with rim): Put a beat to the bass ostinato.

Success Criteria:

1. Use only the given notes of the Bb Concert Pentatonic only.
2. Use a combination of long and short note values (rhythms).
3. Start with a simple idea and develop it (optional).
4. Experiment over bass and drum vamp - record your ideas! (Don't lose them)
5. Write down the ideas you like.
6. Melody must be 8-16 bars.
7. End on beat 1 or 3 (common time).
8. Have fun and don't judge yourself.

To share out: Establish bass line, drum beat then each person shares one at a time. Students can keep ideas they like and edit as they choose for next lesson.



Using Embellishment and Variation as a Form of Improvisation (Gr. 9-10)

Curriculum Expectations

Music:

- C.1. **Creating and Performing:** apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music;
- C.2. **Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing:** apply the critical analysis process to communicate their feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of music and musical experiences;
- C.3. **Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts:** demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their sociocultural and historical contexts.

Learning Goal: Students will analyze, discuss and create musical improvisations through embellishment and variation. Examples in both jazz and classical music are explored.

Big Idea/Essential Question: How do musicians use embellishment and variation as a form of improvisation? What approaches can we use to to achieve this?

Materials: Projector or SMART Board with speaker, whiteboard, whiteboard markers, lined or plain paper and pencils for students, staff paper (optional)

For the extension: instruments when available



Lesson Plans

Introduction: Music and Improvisation

Human beings are innately creative. In everyday life, we improvise constantly. We decide what to say next in conversation, how to dress, how to cook a meal, how to solve a problem and for young people how to PLAY! Playing and acting out roles comes natural to young people. We are also natural musicians, and young people often make up songs and melodies on the spot without inhibition. At any age, we can put aside our judgment and jump into musical improvisation. As you try these activities, it helps to remember that everyone is creative and everyone is a musician, therefore, you and your students are **IMPROVISERS** despite your past experience. Now is always a good time to start. One of the key rules in acting improvisation is to say **YES** to whatever happens in the scene to keep it moving. So say "YES, KEEP GOING, THAT'S IT" to yourself and your students and mostly **HAVE FUN PLAYING MUSIC!**

Improvising and Mozart: When we think of improvisation, we often think of jazz but we may not realize that classical musicians and composers like Mozart used to improvise over their own compositions. Mozart's public concerts almost always contained a complete standalone improvisation. The listeners at the time would have expected it. His improvisations were so incredible that some were more impressed by them than the music that he actually wrote down.

Step #1 - Hook

Do you ever cook something and substitute an ingredient for something else?
Do you ever take some text and rewrite it in your own words? Or sing a song and change some words because you forget part of it? Maybe you play an instrument and you take a simple melody and add some notes to it or change it up a bit? **THESE ARE ALL FORMS OF IMPROVISATION!**

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

TAKE A MOMENT TO THINK of a time when you changed up something given like in the previous example?

EXPLAIN: In music, improvisers often take a simple melody and add or subtract notes to make it more their own. This is a form of improvisation called improvised embellishment or variation.

Step #2 - MOZART EMBELLISHES (or VARIES) A THEME

Explain/Listen:

Watch this scene from the film *Amadeus* of Mozart (Acted by Tom Hulce) embellishing Salieri's melody. This scene is fictional but based on real practices of the classical era, Mozart's time..

WATCH: [Mozart Embellishes or Varies Melody in the film Amadeus](#)

Explain/Listen:

Next, notice in this Louis Armstrong tune how the melody that Armstrong plays on the trumpet is embellished by the clarinet player.

WATCH: [Louis Armstrong: Struttin With Some Barbecue](#)



Lesson Plans

Step #3 - APPROACHES TO EMBELLISHMENT/ VARIATION

READ and POST: Here are some ways musicians can vary a melody.

Rhythmic Variations

1. Repeat notes, for example, turn a quarter note into two eighth notes
2. Turn a long note into a short note and leave space for other musicians to respond
3. Syncopation – move notes to the off-beats
4. Displacement – move an entire phrase by starting it early or late
5. Stretch out or contract phrases
6. Change the tempo

Melodic Variations

7. Embellish the melody with passing tones and neighbor tones
8. Change the pitch of a few melody notes or whole section
9. Add fills in the rests
10. Omit notes from the melody
11. Change instrumentation (same music on different instrument)

Pitch Inflections

12. Experiment with vibrato, scoops, and bends

Step #4 - LISTEN FOR APPROACHES to EMBELLISHMENT/ VARIATION

Listen to the first 5 variations of Twinkle. Twinkle and see which method the improviser uses.

Hint: Use omission to help you narrow down an answer.

[12 Variations on Mozart - Twinkle, Twinkle](#)

Answer Key: Variation 1=9, Variation 2=8 & 9, Variation 3=1, Variation 4=9, Variation 5=2&3,



Lesson Plans

Step #5 - TRY IT! - Create your own variation on Hot Cross Buns

Listen to the first 5 Take a very simple known melody like Hot Cross Buns.

Hot Cross Buns (Me-Re-Do)

Hot Cross Buns (Me-Re-Do)

One a Penny, Two a Penny (Do, do, do, do, Re, re, re, re)

Hot Cross Buns (Me-Re-Do)

Do = C, Re = D, Me = E

With your voice or an instrument play Hot Cross Buns then choose one of the Rhythmic, Melodic or Pitch Inflection methods of variations stated above.

If you prefer you can use a pop song, simple jazz standard, or section of a classical piece that you know.

Practice on your own, or in pairs then share out.

Consolidation

Instrumentation in Copland's Theme and Variations on a Shaker Melody

Another way composers vary a melody is by changing the instrumentation (different instruments or groups of instruments play different sections). Listen to or play (if you have an arrangement for your ensemble) Copland's Theme and Variations on a Shaker Melody. (This will be played at the NAC Concert that you will see.) Identify the start of each variation from the video of the Greenville County Youth Orchestra

- Theme
- Variation 1 - Oboe/Bassoon
- Variation 2 - Cello and Violin
- Variation 3 - Trumpet and Trombone
- Variation 4 - Clarinet
- Variation 5 - Full Orchestra with Timpani (kettle drums)

[Greenville County Youth Orchestra: Copland Theme and Variations on a Shaker Melody](#)

Explain on a exit slip - What effect does changing the instrumentation have on the music?

EXTENSION: Listen to Bolero by Ravel and explain how the composer uses instrumentation to create variations on a melody.

[Ravel's Bolero - Vienna Philharmonic - Dudamel Conducting](#)



Toronto Symphony Orchestra



Peter Oundjian conducting Debussy's La Mer

Every year, over 37,000 young students experience the TSO in performance. In consultation with Music Coordinators from the Boards of Education, TSO staff design School Concerts to help teachers deliver the Ontario Music Curriculum. The concerts are entertaining yet firmly based on educational concepts. Four different programs address the learning needs of Primary (Kindergarten to Grade 4), Junior/Intermediate (Grades 4 to 8), Intermediate/Senior (Grades 7 to 12), and French-language students (Kindergarten to Grade 5).

Established in 1922, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) is one of Canada's most important cultural institutions. The TSO has distinguished itself as an active supporter of new Canadian and international works. Since 2008, the Orchestra has released eight recordings under its self-produced label tsoLive, and three recordings with Chandos Records. Over the past decade, the TSO has toured throughout Canada and internationally. Tour highlights include the Orchestra's performance at Reykjavik's Harpa Hall in 2014, and, more recently, the TSO's first-ever

performances in Israel and residency at the Prague Spring International Music Festival in 2017. Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall has been the TSO's home since 1982. The TSO also serves the larger community with TSO SOUNDCHECK, the original under-35 ticket program; the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (which is tuition free); and music-education programs that reach tens of thousands of students each year.

The TSO was founded in 1922 by a group of Toronto musicians and Viennese-born conductor Luigi von Kunits. The New Symphony Orchestra, as it was then called, gave its first performance in April 1923 at Massey Hall. The name Toronto Symphony Orchestra was adopted four years later.

Throughout its history, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra has welcomed some of the greatest international artists including James Ehnes, Barbara Hannigan, Maxim Vengerov, Emanuel Ax, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Jessye Norman, Karen Kain, Yefim Bronfman, Angela Hewitt, Renée Fleming, Pinchas Zukerman, Lang Lang (in his first week-long residency program in North America), and actor Christopher Plummer. Renowned composers Henri Dutilleux, R. Murray Schafer, Aaron Copland, Phillip Glass, John Adams, Tan Dun, and George Benjamin, among many others, have been in attendance for the Orchestra's presentations of their music.



Kevin Frank Host



Kevin has been an actor/writer/musician for the last 30 years. During this time, he has performed in over 60 television commercials and has had countless appearances on popular series television. Kevin hosted the popular children's game show *Kidstreet* for five years (350 episodes) and co-starred with Walter Matthau and Carol Burnett in *The Marriage Fool*. He enjoyed success as the host of Life Networks' *Pet Project*, which received 4 Gemini nominations, including Best Host in a Lifestyle & Information Program. He can also be heard as many of the voices in the *Thomas the Tank Engine* 1st feature movie. Kevin enjoys writing and hosting the Annual Toronto Symphony Orchestra's Education Week. He performs regularly with fellow Second City Alumnus Neil Crone and Pat McKenna in *The Yes Men*.

Kevin began his career studying improv comedy in 1984 with the Second City in Toronto. He left his sales position with a major Computer company to perform with the Second City on the main stage at the Old Firehall. He joined the faculty as a teacher in 1988 and for the past 9 years he has served as the Artistic Director of the Second City Training Centre. Kevin loves teaching improv to today's new hopefuls. Kevin Frank is also a Senior faculty member with the Second City Works division. He delivers corporate workshops to Fortune 500 companies throughout North America.

When Kevin isn't improvising he can be found behind his drum kit keeping time for *Glendale One*. Their CD, *Wanted* is creating a buzz on the Indie scene. You can check them out on iTunes.



Simon Rivard Resident Conductor



Simon Rivard is one of CBC's recent and notable "30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians under 30." He is the newly appointed Resident Conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra Conductor. He is concurrently serving as the Associate Conductor of the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra (TBSO).

During the TBSO's 2017-18 season, he conducted over 30 concerts with the orchestra and chorus as their Resident Conductor, and received mentorship. Throughout the season, he has been an advocate for collaboration with Indigenous artists, as well as local arts organizations. Also in 2017, he stepped in for Jean-Philippe Tremblay as Music Director of the Orchestre de la Francophonie. In previous years, he has served as Assistant Conductor of the Ottawa Choral Society and the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul under Jean-Sébastien Vallée.

Social transformation through music plays a significant role in his professional life. He has been associated with the Orchestre des jeunes de l'Ontario français since August 2017. He has also worked at the Fondation du Dr Julien, an organization offering free music lessons to socioeconomically disadvantaged children in Montreal. In 2015, he travelled to a Haiti orphanage with a team of professionals to offer three weeks of music, arts, and theatre lessons to the children.

He studied violin performance with Anne Robert and orchestral conducting with Raffi Armenian at the Montreal Conservatory of Music. He completed an MMus in Orchestral Conducting at McGill University under Alexis Hauser and Guillaume Bourgogne.



Talisa Blackman Pianist



Talisa Blackman has performed with some of the top orchestras from North America and Russia. She most recently appeared as soloist with the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ronald Royer performing Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in October 2017, and has performed as soloist with the Georgian Bay Symphony Orchestra and John Barnum, the National Repertory Orchestra and Carl Topilow, and the National Academy Orchestra and Genevieve LeClair. She will appear as soloist playing Ravel Piano Concerto in G with the Symphony on the Bay and Claudio Vena in their 2018/2019 season.

As an orchestral pianist, she performs extensively with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, Hamilton Philharmonic, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and the Niagara Symphony Orchestra, and has performed with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra under the direction of Valery Gergiev.

Talisa is also an active chamber musician, with performances across the Canada and the US. She has collaborated with noted vocalists and instrumentalists, most recently with acclaimed Scottish violinist Nicola Benedetti, as well as celebrated Canadian baritone Russell Braun in a recital for Jeunesses Musicales du Canada. Talisa has also performed with musicians from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, as well as Toronto Symphony Orchestra on their concert series Five Small Concerts. She plays a variety of different music and has performed with the Moody Blues and Evanescence.

Talisa is co-artistic director of the chamber music series 3-in-the-6ix in Toronto's Bloor West Village and, together with her sister, runs ClassyAF, a series that presents classical music shows in bars across Toronto.



Musical Term Glossary

A cappella: music sung without instrumental accompaniment. In Italian, *a cappella* means "in the style of the chapel."

Accented Beats: these are the beats in a rhythm pattern that are stronger because they are emphasized or stressed. Accented notes are indicated using a ">" symbol which goes above or below the note to indicate that that note should be stressed or accented.

Amplify: to make a sound stronger or louder. The hollow body of an instrument amplifies its sound.

Arco: to play a stringed instrument using a bow.

Bar: another name for a measure

Bar line: a vertical line on a musical staff that divides the beats into small groups or bars.

Baton: a small stick used by the conductor to beat time. A stick helps to make the motion more easily visible to the members of the orchestra.

Beat: a beat is a regular pulsation. It is a basic unit of length in musical time.

Clef: a sign at the beginning of the staff to fix the position of one note. The most common are the treble and bass clefs.

Chord: a series of notes, usually three or more, that are sung or played together to create harmony.

Col legno: Italian for "hit with the wood", this is a bowing technique where players strike the string with the stick of the bow, rather than by drawing the hair of the bow across the strings.

Concertmaster: the leader of the first violin section who tunes the orchestra and works closely with the conductor.

Conductor: leader of the orchestra who makes decisions about how the music will be played with respect to tempo and dynamics, and keeps the musicians together during a performance.

Crescendo: gradually increasing in loudness.

Decrescendo: gradually decreasing in loudness

Dotted note or rest: a note or rest to which a dot is added. The dot adds one-half of the note's value.

Double-stop: a technique on string instruments in which two notes are played simultaneously. Triple stops and quadruple stops can also be played, in which three and four (respectively) notes are played simultaneously.

Dynamics: the intensity, or loudness and softness, of music.

Embouchure: the way the mouth is held to play a woodwind or brass instrument.

Fingerboard: the strips of wood on a stringed instrument's neck over which the strings are stretched and fingered to change the pitch.

Harmony: the sound created when two or more notes are played at the same time.

Improvise: to make up music as you go, without using scores or musical notation that is written down. Many jazz musicians incorporate improvisation into their performance.

Legato: notes played smoothly and in a connected manner, without any noticeable break or articulation between them.

Leitmotif: a phrase or melodic cell that signifies a character, place, plot element, mood, idea, relationship or other specific part of an opera of symphonic work.

Measure: the notes and rests between two bar lines.

Metre: a regular pulse made up of strong and weak beats.

Melody: a sequence of musical notes that make up a tune.

Movement: a section of music which contains certain musical ideas, much like a chapter in a book.

Notes: representation of musical tones using written symbols.

Octave: the distance between one tone of a scale and the next higher or lower tone of the same pitch; for example, middle C and C above middle C are an octave apart.

Pitch: the highness or lowness of a sound.

Pizzicato: to play a stringed instrument by plucking the strings with the fingers.



Musical Term Glossary

Pluck: to pull up or down on a string with your finger, thumb or a pick.

Podium: the raised platform in front of the orchestra on which the conductor stands.

Reed: a thin piece of cane or other material, attached to an instrument at one end and free to vibrate at the other. Found on oboes, clarinets, saxophones and bassoons.

Resonator: the part of an instrument, usually the body, that amplifies the sound caused by vibrating strings or air column.

Rests: a pause or interval of silence between two tones.

Rhythm: patterns of sound and silence in a piece of music.

Scale: music arranged in ascending or descending pitches. The C major scale consists of the notes c,d,e,f,g,a,b,c.

Score: music in written form with all the parts set down in relation to each other.

Sound Wave: when something vibrates, or moves quickly back and forth, it causes molecules in the air to move, creating sounds that move in waves in your ear.

Spiccato: a bowing technique that uses a semi-off-the-string style to produce a light "bouncing" sound. Watching the musicians it looks like the bow is bouncing up off the string the second it makes contact. Spiccato is usually performed at the balance portion of the bow. The balance portion of the bow refers to the area of the bow where weight is distributed evenly on both sides, allowing for maximum control.

Staff: five parallel horizontal lines, on which notes are written in the spaces, on the lines, or above and below the staff using ledger lines.

Strum: to play long strokes across all the strings of a string instrument, one after another very quickly using your thumb, fingers or a pick.

Symphony Orchestra: a large group of musicians, led by a conductor, who perform together on string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

Syncopation: displacement of beats of accents so that emphasis is placed on weak beats rather than on strong beats.

Tempo: the speed at which a piece of music is played.

Timbre: the character or quality of a musical sound or voice as distinct from its pitch and dynamics.

Time Signature: appears at the beginning of the staff. The lower figure shows the kind of notes taken as the unit of measure, while the upper figure shows the number of these notes that can fit in a measure.

Tone: the tone is the quality of musical sound, such as rich, mellow, harsh, brilliant, etc.

Tremolo: a rapidly repeated note.

Unison: two or more instruments sounding the same note.

Valves: the mechanisms on some brass instruments that make it possible for the musician to change pitches and play all the notes of the scale.



The String Family



Jonathan Crow
Concertmaster

Theresa Rudolph
Assistant
Principal Viola

Winona Zelenka
Associate
Principal Cello

Jeffrey Beecher
Principal
Double Bass

Heidi Van
Hoesen Gorton
Principal Harp

The string family is the largest family of instruments in the orchestra. The violin, viola, cello, and bass are made of carefully carved wood and have a set of four strings stretched across them. The strings themselves are made of nylon, steel and sometimes gut. The bow is made of wood and the strings of the bow are either synthetic or horsehair from actual horse tails! The harp is very different from the other string instruments and has a set of 47 strings. It is one of the oldest string instruments and is often considered part of the string family.

Sound is produced by plucking the strings or drawing the bow across them causing the strings to vibrate. The bodies of string instruments are hollow inside to allow sound to vibrate within them. Players apply a substance called rosin to their bows to help the strings vibrate. Rosin is primarily made up of pine sap and helps the hairs on the bow grip the strings. The harp doesn't use a bow but sound is also produced by plucking or strumming the strings.

Players can tune the violin, viola, cello and bass strings using either tuning pegs or fine tuners. To change pitch, players use their left hand to press down their fingers on the fingerboard while their right hand moves the bow or plucks the strings. Players tune the harp using a tuning key to adjust the tuning pegs. The harp is played with both hands and feet! There are seven foot pedals that are used to add accidentals or sharps. The violin, viola, cello, double bass and the harp make up the large string family.



The String Family



Violin

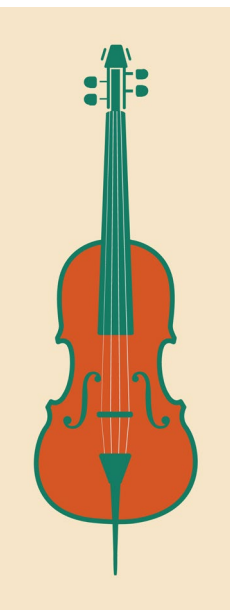
The violin is the smallest member of the string family and has the highest voice. There are more violins in the orchestra than any other instrument (up to 30!). The four strings of the violin from the lowest to highest are G, D, A, and E. In an orchestra, the violins are divided into two groups: first violin and second violin. The first violins usually play the melody and the second violins support them by playing intricate harmonies and rhythms. They work together as a team to create complex inner voices and harmonies.

The concertmaster is the leader of the first violins.



Viola

The viola looks like a slightly bigger violin. It has thicker strings and produces a lower and warmer sound. The four strings of the viola from the lowest to the highest are C, G, D, and A. The viola is a perfect fifth lower than the violin. Although the violin and viola share three strings (G, D, A), the tone and sound are very different. Music for viola is usually written in the alto clef (also known as the viola clef or C clef). In the alto clef, Middle C is on the third line of the staff. In an orchestra there are usually between ten and fourteen violas.

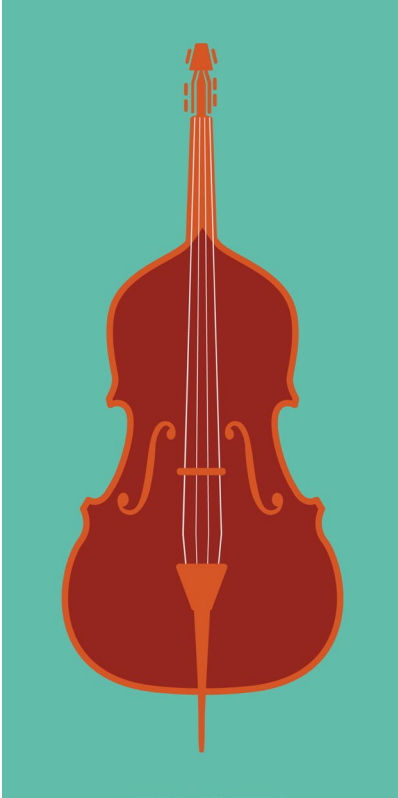


Cello

The cello looks like a very large violin or viola. It is around 4 feet long and has thicker strings than either the violin or viola. The four strings of the cello from the lowest to the highest are C, D, G and A—same as the viola! However the cello is tuned an octave below the viola. The cello is held between the knees instead of being held under the chin like the violin and viola. The cello rests on the ground and is supported by a metal peg called the end pin. The cello has the closest range to the human voice—which is why people find it so calming to listen to. In an orchestra, there are usually between eight and twelve cellos.



The String Family

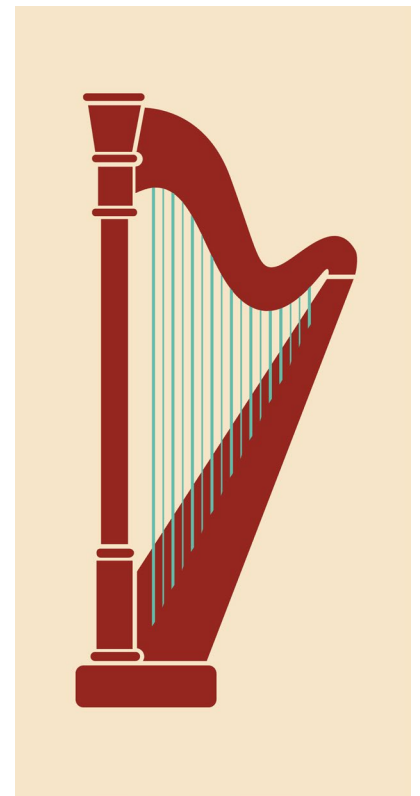


Double Bass

The double bass is the largest and lowest voice of the string family. It is over 6 feet long and has the longest strings. The four strings of the double bass from lowest to the highest are E, A, D and G. To increase their range, bassists will occasionally add a fifth string or install a mechanical extension to help lower their bottom string to C. The double bass is the only string instrument tuned in fourths (though some players will tune in fifths). The double bass is so big that a player must stand or sit on a high stool in order to play it. Like the cello, the double bass also has a metal spike (or end pin) at the bottom, which allows it to rest on the floor. In an orchestra, there are usually between six and eight double basses.

Harp

The harp is one of the oldest instruments. The concert harp stands about two metres tall and covers a range of over 6 ½ octaves. It has 47 strings and seven foot pedals, and is played by strumming or plucking the strings with both hands, and by pressing the pedals with your feet. The pedals are used to add accidentals (sharps and flats) so that the harp can play in different keys. The harp is usually considered part of the String Family because the strings create the sound. However, it is very different from all other stringed instruments and isn't played with a bow, so it can sometimes be classified in a separate category all on its own.





The Woodwind Family



Julie Ranti
Associate
Principal Flute

Sarah Jeffrey
Principal Oboe

Joaquin Valdepeñas
Principal Clarinet

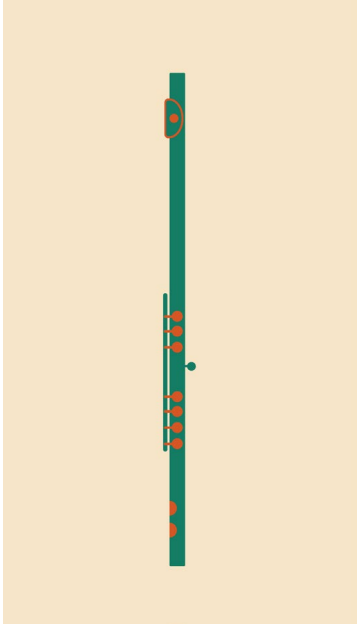
Michael Sweeney
Principal Bassoon

Many of the earliest woodwind instruments were originally made of wood. Today's modern woodwind instruments are made of a variety of different materials such as wood, metal, and plastic. All woodwinds are played with mouthpieces and share a similar shape (a narrow cylinder or tube with holes). Sound is produced by blowing air through the instrument. The mouthpieces for some woodwinds, including the clarinet, oboe and bassoon, use a thin piece of wood called a reed, which vibrates when you blow across it. The clarinet uses a single reed made of one piece of wood, while the oboe and bassoon use a double reed made of two pieces of wood joined together.

The pitch of woodwind instruments is changed by opening or closing the holes with your fingers. Metal caps called keys cover the holes of most woodwind instruments. Similarly to string instruments, the smaller sized woodwinds play higher pitches and the longer and larger instruments play lower pitches. The flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon make up the woodwind family.



The Woodwind Family

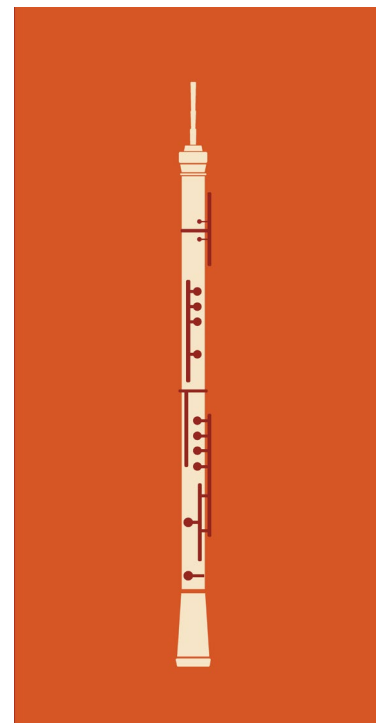


Flute

The flute was originally made from wood, stone, clay or bamboo. Today's modern flutes are made of silver, gold or platinum. The flute is held sideways and to the right of the musician's mouth. Sound is produced by blowing across a hole in the mouthpiece of the flute which causes the air inside to vibrate. The smaller version of the flute, called the piccolo, is half the size of the flute and is one of the highest sounding instruments in the orchestra. In an orchestra, there are usually between two and four flutes.

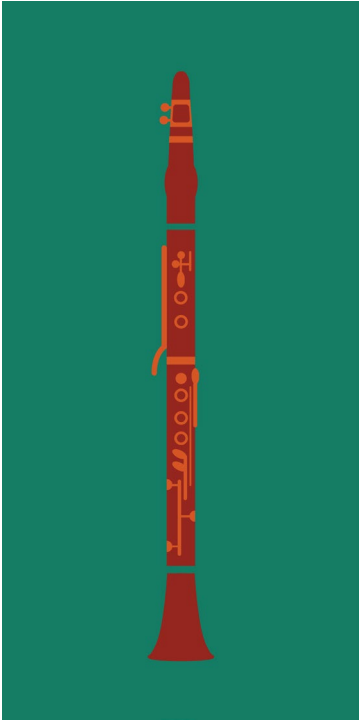
Oboe

The oboe is the first instrument you hear at an orchestra concert. It plays a single note (an "A"), and all other instruments tune their instruments to the oboe's pitch. Sound is produced by blowing air through a double reed at the top of the instrument. This double reed is made up of two very thin pieces of wood that are tied together and vibrate when air passes through them. In an orchestra, there are usually two to four oboes. It often plays important melodies because of its distinctive sound.





The Woodwind Family

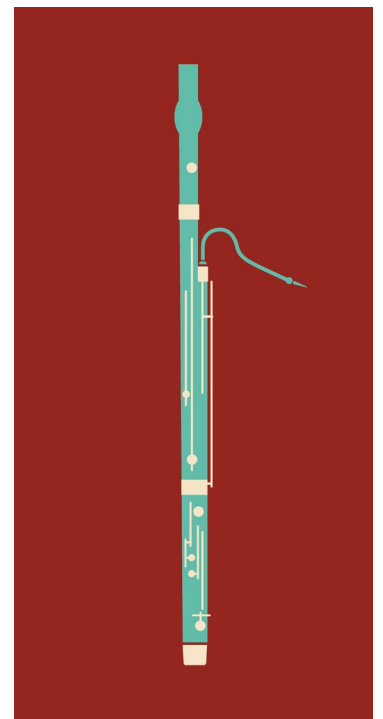


Clarinet

The clarinet is very similar to the oboe in shape and size. Its mouthpiece however, uses a single reed instead of a double reed. The clarinet is made of wood or molded plastic and has a smooth, mellow tone. They can come in a variety of sizes from the small, e-flat clarinet to the large, bass clarinet. In an orchestra, there are usually between two and four clarinets.

Bassoon

Like the oboe, the bassoon is another woodwind instrument that uses a double reed. The modern bassoon can be made from wood or plastic. The bassoon is the second largest woodwind instrument followed by the contrabassoon, which has the lowest voice in the orchestra. If you took apart the bassoon and laid the different pieces from end to end, it would measure 2 ½ metres long and the contrabassoon would be 5 metres long! In an orchestra, there are usually between two and four bassoons and they have a similar range to the cello. Most woodwind instruments don't require much use of the thumb; however, the bassoon is unique in that it has 13 keys which can be played by the thumb.





The Brass Family



Audrey Good
French Horn

Steven Woomert
Associate
Principal Trumpet

Vanessa Fralick
Associate Principal
Trombone

Mark Tetreault
Principal Tuba

Early ancestors of the brass family were made of materials such as animal horns, tusks, wood or even shells. Today's modern brass instruments are made of brass, gold and silver. Brass instruments are made up of a very long pipe which has been curved and coiled into different shapes. This makes them easier to hold and play. Did you know that if you stretched out a French Horn it would measure more than 6 metres in length?

To make a sound, players buzz their lips together into the mouthpiece. The trumpet, french horn, and tuba have valves attached to their long pipes. To change the pitch, players can press down different combinations of valves, or change the pressure and shape of their lips. Brass players sometimes use a combination of these techniques to change the pitch. Instead of valves, the trombone uses a slide to change pitch by pushing the slide in or out. The trumpet, french horn, trombone, and tuba are most the commonly used brass instruments in an orchestra.



The Brass Family

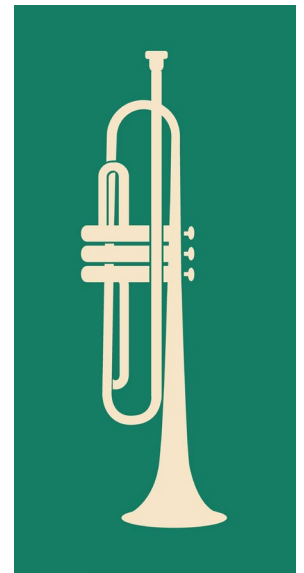


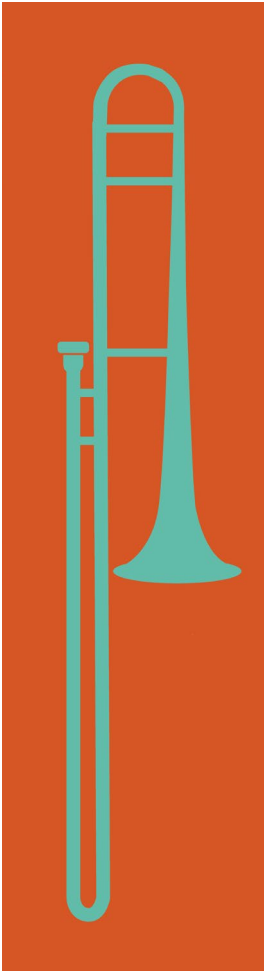
French Horn

The very first horns were made from the horns of animals and were used to send signals to people beyond calling distance. The hunting horn is the French Horn's ancestor and was designed so that the tubing wrapped around in a circle, making it easier to carry over the hunter's shoulder. Valves were added to the instrument in the 1800s, increasing the range of the instrument. In an orchestra, there can be anywhere between two and eight French Horns at a time. The player uses their left hand to press the valves, and inserts their right hand into the bell of the instrument to change the quality of the sound.

Trumpet

Famous for sounding alarms, calls to war, or hunting, the trumpet as a musical instrument has had a long and rich history. Its ancestors were made of conch-shell, animal horn, wood or metal. The trumpet is the smallest and highest pitched member of the brass family. Today's modern trumpet has three attached valves which creates a wider range of notes than its ancestors. There are typically between two and to four trumpets in an orchestra.





Trombone

Invented in the 15th century, the trombone was first called a sackbut. It is the only instrument in the brass family to use a slide instead of valves to change pitch. Two U-shaped pipes are linked at opposite ends to form an "S". One pipe slides into the other so you can extend or shorten the total length of the pipe. Players use their right hand to change pitch by pushing the slide in or out. In 1808, Beethoven helped popularize the trombone in orchestral music after writing a trombone part in the finale of his Fifth Symphony. The trombone family is made up of three trombones: alto, tenor and bass. In an orchestra, there are typically two tenor trombones and one bass trombone.

Tuba

The tuba is the biggest and lowest pitched instrument of the brass family. Invented in 1835, the tuba is the youngest member of the brass family! It has a very rich, deep sound and if you stretched the tuba out into one long piece, it would measure about 5 ½ metres. Typically, there is only one tuba in an orchestra and it usually plays harmony, rarely the melody. The tuba is related to the euphonium (a smaller, high-pitched tuba) and the sousaphone (an instrument invented by John Philip Sousa, and used a lot in marching bands).





The Percussion Family



Charles Settle
Principal Percussion



David Kent
Principal Timpani

The percussion family traditionally includes any instrument that produces sound when struck, shaken or scraped. Percussion instruments can be classified into different categories: pitched or unpitched. Pitched instruments, such as the xylophone, timpani, or piano, play specific pitches just like the other instrument families. Unpitched instruments, such as the bass drum, tambourine, or cymbals, produce no definite pitch.

Percussionists will often play many different instruments in one piece of music. In the orchestra, the percussion section is one of the most versatile sections and provides a huge range of timbres, rhythms, unique sound effects and textures. The snare drum, bass drum, glockenspiel, xylophone, triangle, tambourine, cymbals, timpani, and piano are the most commonly used percussion instruments in an orchestra.



The Percussion Family



Timpani

The timpani, sometimes called kettledrums, are made of a large copper bowl with a drumhead stretched across the top. These large, pitched drums are used frequently in orchestral music. The pitch of each timpani depends on the size of the bowl, as well as the tension of the drum head; the tighter the skin, the higher the note. The range of timpani is approximately two octaves. To change notes, players use a foot pedal located at the base of the timpani. Timpani were the first drums to be used in the orchestra, with most orchestras using three or four in their setup.

Snare Drum

The snare drum has a crisp, and bright sound. It has two heads stretched over a hollow metal or wood frame. The top head is struck with two wooden drum sticks. The bottom head has strings of wire or gut stretched across it called snares. The snare produces a rattling sound as it vibrates across the head. The snares are loosened for softer notes and tightened for a crisper or sharper tone.

Bass Drum

The bass drum is the largest drum in the orchestra and has a low, deep sound. It is constructed like the snare drum but without snares. The bass drum is played on its side so that both sides can be played. The bass drum is played with a bass drum beater which is a large wooden stick with sheep's wool or felt covering one end. Both the snare and bass drums were originally used in the military before they became members of the orchestra's percussion section.

Tambourine

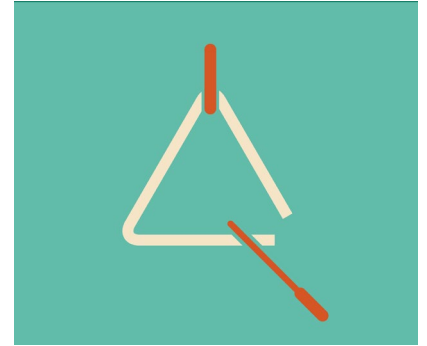
A tambourine is a small frame drum with a calfskin or plastic head stretched across one side. Inside the frame, there are several small metal discs attached that jingle when moved. Sound is produced by shaking, rubbing, or striking the head.



The Percussion Family

Triangle

A triangle is a piece of metal bent into a triangle shape. It is commonly made out of steel and is suspended on a nylon loop. It is played by striking it with a metal beater. The triangle produces a shimmering, tinkling sound similar to a bell.



Cymbals

Cymbals are two slightly curved brass plates, which are held with leather straps. When hit together they produce a resounding ring. Cymbals come in a variety of sizes and can produce a wide range of sound effects. A single cymbal can also be suspended from a stand and struck with drumstick or padded mallet.



Piano

The piano is a pitched keyboard instrument with 88 black and white keys. It has the largest range of any instrument in the orchestra. When a player presses the keys it causes a small hammer to strike the corresponding strings inside the instrument. The piano is classified as a percussion instrument because sound is produced by hammers striking the strings.

Xylophone

The xylophone is a pitched mallet instrument consisting of tuned wooden bars mounted on a metal frame. The wooden bars are usually made of rosewood but can also be made of synthetic materials. The bars are arranged in two rows similar to the keys of a piano. The xylophone produces a bright, sharp, short tone. Sound is produced by striking the bars with hard mallets. The xylophone sounds one octave higher than written. The origin of the xylophone is unclear, but similar instruments were known in Africa and Asia, dating back to the 14th century.

Glockenspiel

The glockenspiel is a pitched mallet instrument and is often called "bells". It is made of tuned steel bars that are arranged in two rows like the keys on a piano. The glockenspiel has a very bright and piercing tone. The range is generally two and half octaves and it sounds two octaves higher than written. Sound is produced by striking the steel plates with hard mallets.



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Peter Oundjian
Conductor Emeritus
Steven Reineke
Principal Pops Conductor
Simon Rivard
Resident Conductor and
TSYO Conductor
Gary Kulesha
Composer Advisor
Emilie LeBel
Affiliate Composer

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Mark Skaznitsky,
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CONCERTMASTER
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ASSISTANT
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PICCOLO

Camille Watts

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ENGLISH HORN

Cary Ebli

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Sheryl L. & David W. Kerr Principal
Clarinet Chair
Eric Abramovitz,
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Miles Jaques
Joseph Orlowski

BASS CLARINET

Miles Jaques

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Darren Hicks,
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
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Fraser Jackson

CONTRABASSOON

Fraser Jackson

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THE MUSICIAN'S KIT

Joaquin Valdepeñas

TSO Principal Clarinet



*Photo by
Sean Howard*

- 1 I play Yamaha clarinets—I particularly like their German-style instruments, like this one. German clarinets [compared to French] tend to sound a little darker, a bit more concentrated, due to the different shape of the bore [the inside of the clarinet]. I had a part in the development of this clarinet's initial design. It has extra keys at the bottom that help open up the low notes, which otherwise tend to sound very flat on a French instrument.
 - 2 I always have my phone (a OnePlus) with me—I'm always multi-tasking.
 - 3 When I'm warming up backstage, my case acts as the perfect makeshift music stand.
 - 4 I use this cloth to remove the condensation that accumulates inside the clarinet when I play it. The cloth has a string with a plastic-covered metal weight at one end to help me pull it through the inside of the instrument. When the plastic wears out, exposing the metal weight, I know I need to get a new cloth, otherwise the audience will hear the weight rattle through the clarinet if I'm drying it during a performance.
 - 5 Every musician needs to have a pencil but, more importantly, [to remove old markings from rented music] you need to have a good eraser! This eraser is the best, and I've found them only at a store in Yorkville.
 - 6 I take my clarinets to Tomoji Hirakata at Yamaha in New York City for maintenance. He creates all sorts of tools for me, including this spring-adjustment tool that allows me to adjust the springs underneath the clarinet keys. The springs open and close the keys for greater agility.
- I play on Vandoren reeds **7**, which I shape using a reed-shaper **8** and a reed knife **9**. A clarinet reed needs to be adjusted to fit the mouthpiece to which it is to be attached. I've had these tools for a long time.



Teacher Evaluation Form

Date you attended: _____

Name of school (optional): _____

1. How did you hear about this concert? (Please circle)

Brochure Email Website Advertisement Colleague Other

2. Please circle the appropriate rating:

Audience Response	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Educational Value	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Conductor's Rapport with the Students	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Teachers' Study Guide	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

3. Was this the first time you brought a group to the TSO School Concerts ? Yes No
If not, how long have you been bringing students to the TSO School Concerts ?

4. What did your students like most?

5. Which section of the Teachers' Study Guide did you find most useful?

6. Did you use the podcast? Yes No If so, what was most useful?

7. Is there anything you'd like to share with the generous donors who support the TSO School Concerts?

8. Any additional comments? We greatly value teacher feedback and would love to hear from you!