



The Orchestra

A Symphony Orchestra is a group of musicians who play mostly classical music and are led by a Conductor. The Orchestra is made up of four groups or “families” of instruments:

Strings, Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion.

Pictures and a discussion of all of the instrument families included on-line, in this collection.

Activity: Explore the Orchestra

- Have Students list the instruments they know.
- Choose 3 contrasting instruments and have students describe them in detail.

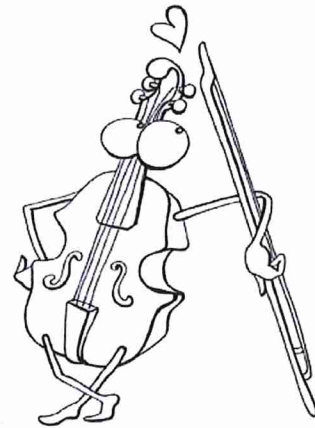
Compare and contrast, discuss the similarities and differences:

Appearances (color, shape, size)

Materials (wood, metal, strings, reeds)

Mechanisms (slides, valves, finger holes, bridge, strings, pads, mutes)

How sound is produced (breath, buzzing, fingers, bow, shaking, scraping, striking)



About Oakland Symphony

Founded in 1988, the Oakland Symphony is a critically acclaimed and community-focused regional orchestra dedicated to serving the diverse population of the East Bay.

Under the artistic leadership of Maestro Michael Morgan, the Oakland Symphony reaches over 60,000 people annually, with more than one-third of its operating budget dedicated to education and outreach programs. Performing on the concert stage of the historic Paramount Theater in downtown Oakland, the Oakland Symphony has become a positive force in bringing together the creative talents of diverse artists, performing arts organizations and audiences from all over the Bay Area. In June 2010, the Oakland Symphony joined in partnership with the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Oakland Symphony Chorus.

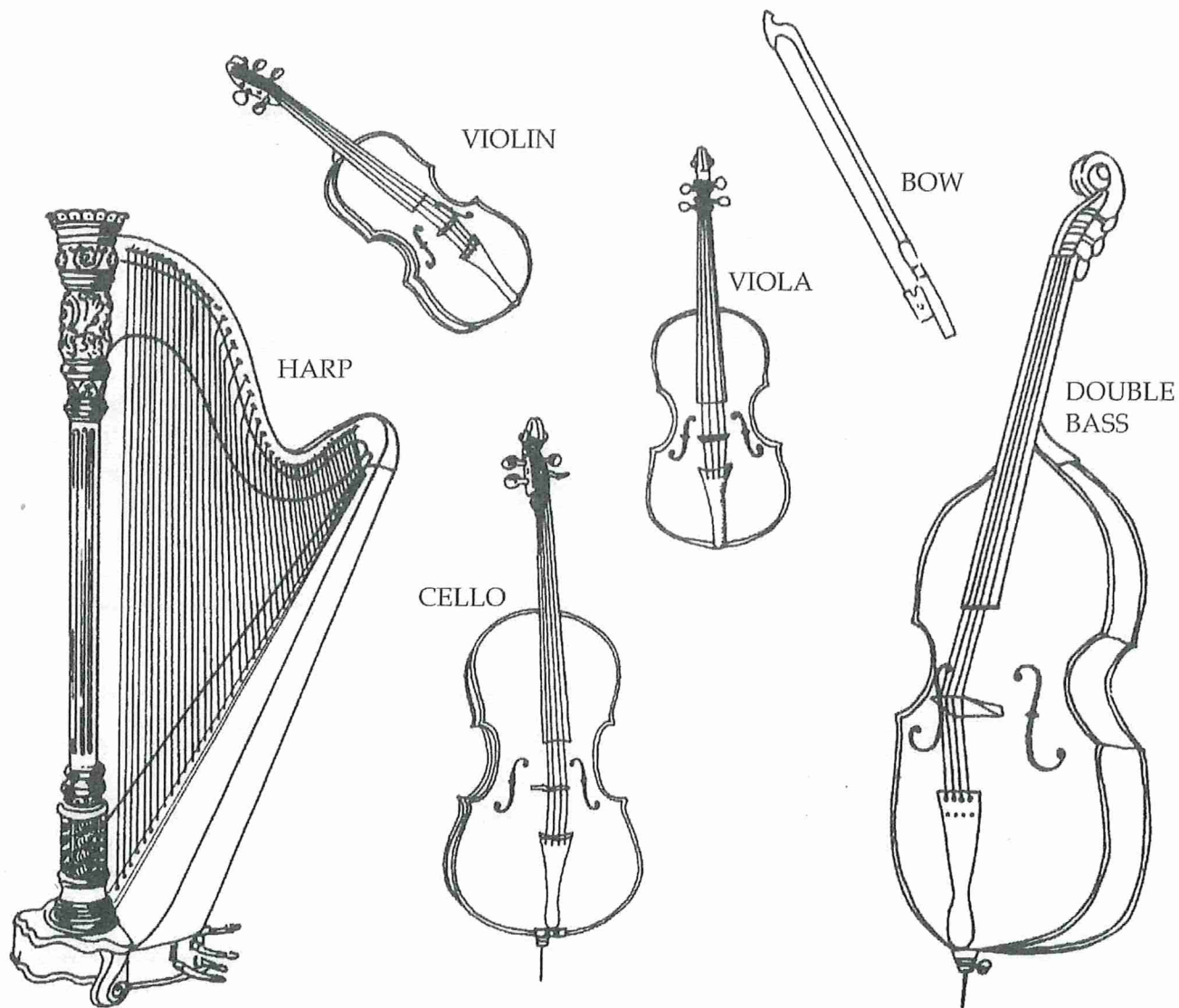
For more information about all of these programs, please visit our website:

www.oaklandsymphony.org

Instruments of the Orchestra

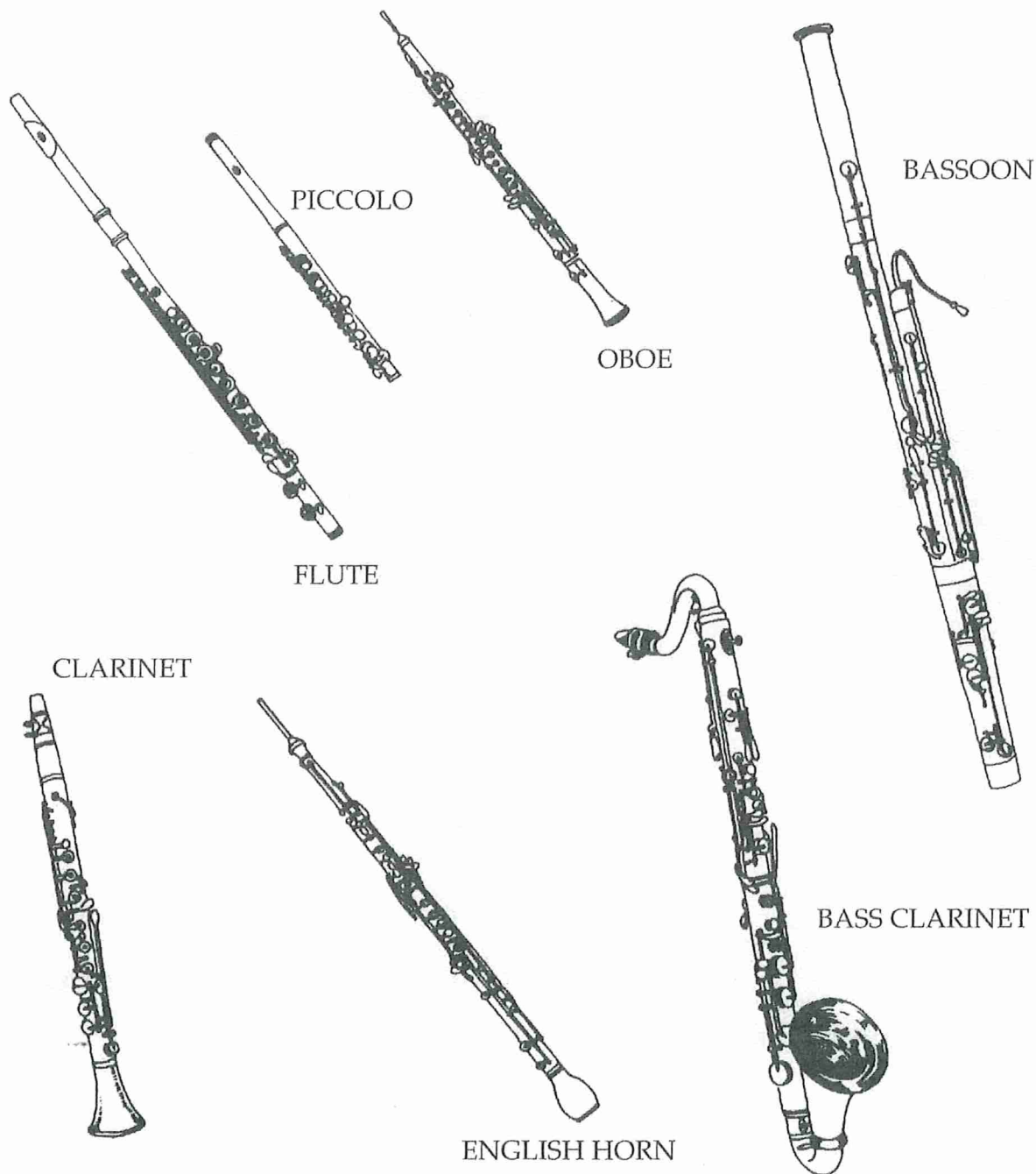
Strings

Stringed instruments make up more than half of the symphony orchestra. Except for the harp, they are all shaped alike, but they come in different sizes. The violin is the smallest, and it is held under the chin when played. The viola, also held under the chin, is somewhat larger than the violin. The cello and the double bass are so large that they must rest on the floor. These four instruments are made of wood. They are hollow, with strings stretched from top to bottom across the front piece of wood. To produce sound, a player draws a bow across the strings. (A bow is a wooden stick with horsehair attached to either end.) A player can also pluck the strings with his fingers. The harp is another kind of stringed instrument. It is different in shape from the violin, and the harp is never played with a bow – it is always plucked.



Woodwinds

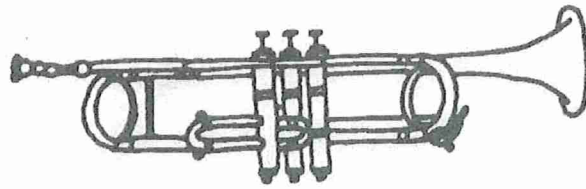
The woodwinds produce tones by blowing air into a pipe or tube. Originally, all the woodwind instruments were made of wood. Except for the flute, these instruments use a thin piece of wood called a "reed" to produce sound. When the player blows across the reed, the reed vibrates and creates sound. The clarinet uses a single reed (just one piece of wood), while the oboe and bassoon use a type of reed made of two pieces of wood joined together.



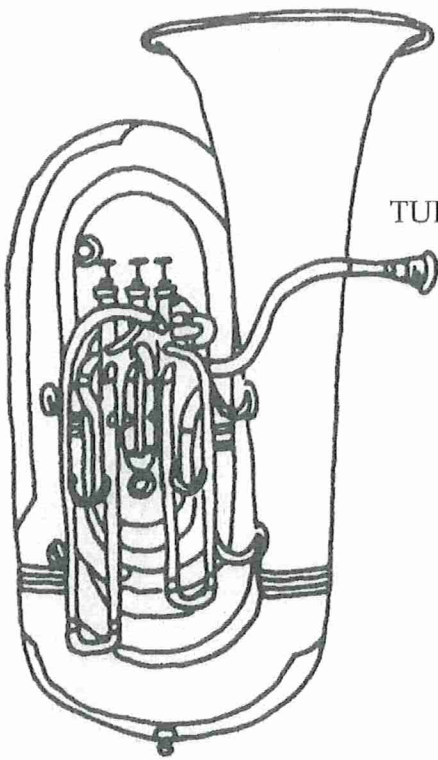
Brass

The brass instruments are made of long brass tubes curled up into different shapes. They all have cup-shaped mouthpieces into which the player blows air. The sound comes out of the flared end of the brass tube, which is called the "bell." The brasses can play the loudest music of all the instruments of the orchestra.

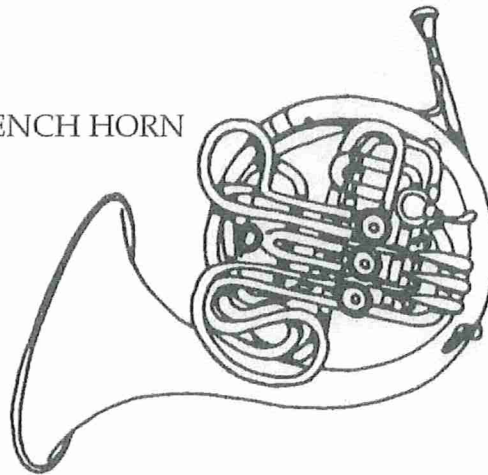
TRUMPET



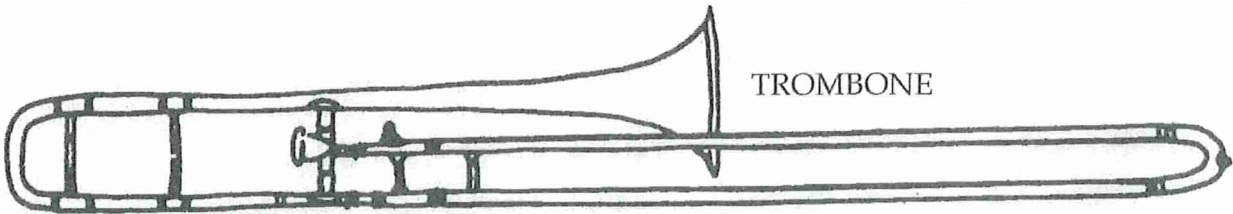
TUBA



FRENCH HORN



TROMBONE



Percussion

Sound is produced on percussion instruments by hitting them, usually with another object such as a stick or beater. The percussion section includes instruments that do not produce a definite pitch (such as different kinds of drums), as well as instruments that can play many different notes (such as chimes or xylophone).

