Woodwind Family

Wood, wind. What is the relation within these two? That’s why, its special. When wood and wind become one, they create beautiful sounds, produced by the “wind” going through holes in a “wood”, in this case sometimes metal. This kind of instruments is played by blowing the hole on the end of the instrument, and able to produce different sounds by closing certain holes in the instrument.

1. Flute.

The flute is maybe the most popular woodwind instrument there is, since it is small and easy to play. In the past, flute is usually made from metal, some from gold or silver, but nowadays, there are also flutes that are made from plastic. A standard flute is around 27 and half inches long. Blowing the pointy end plays flute, like most of woodwind instrument. The holes are closed and opened to produce different sounds.

1. Clarinet

You must be familiar with the name clarinet, since it is a famous instrument, an important part of the orchestra. To put it simply, the clarinet is a long slender black tube, with keys, mostly metal. The clarinet comes in different sizes. A standard clarinet is slightly shorter than the flute, 26 inches long. To play it, you blow the clarinet through the mouthpiece, and while blowing, press the keys with your both hands to change the sound produced.

1. Oboe

You may not be familiar with the oboe, but it is an important instrument for the orchestra. An oboe looks almost exactly like a clarinet, just without the mouthpiece, and the size is different, too. The oboe is 2 feet long. Not only the shape, how you play the oboe is also exactly the same way you play the clarinet, you blow the oboe, and while blowing, press the keys with your both hands to change the pitch of the sound produced.

1. Bassoon

A bassoon. Now this instrument is not similar to the little ones before, this one is big, huge, if I may say. A bassoon is simply a long tube, folded in half, and just like other woodwind instruments, with a lot of metal keys. The fold is not useless; it is useful to make the instrument easier to play. If straighten, the bassoon can be around 8 feet long. to play it, to save some space, it’s exactly the same as other woodwind instruments. Blow it and at the same time, open and close the holes with both of your hands.

1. Piccolo

This little guy is usually made of silver or wood, the piccolo is the highest pitched instrument of the orchestra. Its notes are one octave higher than the other instruments. Often used in marching bands, orchestras, chambers and jazz band. It is played just like a flute, but requires tighter holding. The piccolo is 12.5 inches long and made up of two parts.

1. English Horn

Despite the name, this is not exactly a horn, and it’s not exactly English. This instrument is very similar to an oboe, but with a double reed. And the size, it’s also longer than the oboe, so automatically, it has a lower pitch.

1. Contrabassoon

This instrument is still categorized as an bassoon, but, this one is much larger than the bassoon. If bassoon is folded once, the contrabassoon is fold twice. The contrabassoon is one of the lowest-pitched instruments in the orchestra.

1. E flat clarinet

This clarinet looks exactly like a standard clarinet; so normal people won’t be able to distinguish the two. The only difference is that this clarinet is slightly smaller than the normal clarinet. And because it’s smaller, the pitch is automatically higher than a normal clarinet.

1. Bass clarinet

Just like the E-flat clarinet, this instrument is a relative to the normal clarinet. But, if the e flat clarinet is smaller, this one is bigger than a normal clarinet, thus, produces lower pitch.

Brass Family

As the name implies, the instruments in this family is made entirely from brass. These instruments can produce the loudest sounds in the orchestra. Brass instruments are basically long, very long tubes with “bells” in the end, when straightens, the brass tubes are very long and difficult to handle, so the creators curved the tubes into circular sizes to make them easier to hold.

Like the woodwind family before, the brass family instruments are using the breath of the player to produce sounds, as well as using but the difference is that when playing the brass instrument, instead of blowing, you buzz your lips against a metal mouthpiece.

1. French Horn

Yes. Unlike the confusing “English horn”, this one is indeed a horn, and came from France. The French horn was originally a hunting horn, which is frequently used in the 17th century. It produces a wide variety of sound; it can be very loud, or even very soft. From very harsh, to very mellow. The French horn, when straightened, is 18 feet long. to play the French horn, first, hold it with the bell curving downward and, well, buzz it.

1. Trumpet

You may be familiar with the name, but do you know that the trumpet, no, more like, the ancestor of the trumpet, have played a big part in the human history of music. The trumpet is the smallest brass instrument, but, even this “small” instrument, when straightened, can reach 6 and half feet long. Trumpets are played by holding it horizontally then buzz through the mouthpiece.

1. Trombone

The trombone, unlike any other instrument in its family, uses a slide instead of valves to change pitch. A standard trombone is made of 2 U-shaped long and slender metal tubes, which is linked at opposite ends to form an S. When straightens, a trombone can reach about 9 feet long. To play it, you hold the trombone horizontally and then buzz through the mouthpiece. While buzzing, the right hand slides the sliding piece to change pitch.

1. Tuba

The Tuba is probably the biggest instrument of the brass family, which automatically made it the lowest pitched brass instrument there is. Like other brasses, the tube is a long, huge metal tube, carved into an oblong shape, with a huge bell in the end. The tuba is so huge, the one playing it cannot stand when playing it, and they need to sit down. It takes a lot of breath just to make a tiny little sound with the tuba.

String Family

The string family, probably the most significant family of music instrument for the orchestra. They all look similar, but believe me, they sounded very differently. As the name implies, all of the instruments in this family consist of strings, and is using the strings to produce beautiful sounds.

1. Violin

Now, you must be very familiar with this one instrument. Violin is the smallest instrument in the string family, so, automatically, it is the instrument with the highest pitch in its family. A standard violin is about 24 inches long. Violin are the most used instrument in the orchestra. You can play it by tucking it between your chin and shoulder, and pressing the strings down with your left hand to change the pitch.

1. Viola

Viola. If you know the violin, you got to know this one too. It’s almost alike but, since this instrument is bigger than the violin, the pitch is also lower. There can be 10 to 14 violas in an orchestra. A normal viola is around 27 inches, and the viola bow is around 29 inches. You play the viola like the violin, by tucking it between your chin and shoulder. Your left hand adjusts its angle to change the pitch of the sound.

1. Cello

Imagine a violin with a bigger body and a lower pitch. That is, a Cello. A normal standard Cello is around 4 feet long. Like the other instruments in the family, you play the Cello while seating. Just like the violin and the viola, to play it, move the bow or pluck the strings with your right hand while your left hand press the strings to change the pitch.

1. Double Bass

The double bass is the largest instrument in the string family, automatically made it the lowest pitched instrument in this family. The low sound created by this instrument hold the harmonies and, at the same time, help carrying the rhythm. A normal Double bass is approximately 6 feet in length. Just like any string instrument, you can play this while sitting, mainly because of the size.

1. Harp

This one is a large one, it is a large instrument with 47 strings, that is connected to a frame of wood. A normal harp weighs is about the same size as the double bass, 6 feet tall. To play this one is a little bit different from any other instruments. To play the harp, as usual, you sit down with the harp in the middle of your legs, then use both of your hands to pluck each side of the strings.

Percussion Family

The percussion family, probably the largest family of the usic instrument. This family consists of instruments that are usually used to mantain the tempo. The instruments from this family can be played by hitting it, shaking it, but mostly hitting. It may look easy to play these, but actually it is very complicated. The job to mantain the tempo cannot tolerate any mistake. It requires practice and practice to hit it perfectly.

1. Snare drum

Snare. Do you know what is a snare? A snare is Just like its name, it is simply a drum with a snare. The snare on the drum is a set of wires located outside the bottom drumhead and made, it makes a rattling sound when you hit it. This is not a tuned drum, so you can’t play distinct notes. The purpose of this instrument is to keep the rhythm on track, you can play it by hitting it using sticks, mallets, or brushes.

1. Timpani

Have you heard the name timpani? Or maybe you are more familiar with the name kettledrums? Because the both of them are just the same. A timpany is simply large pots of metal, combined with drumheads. Unlike most of the other instrument in the family, you can play different tunes with the timpani, by using a certain pedal that is used to adjust the tenseness of the drumhead.

1. Cymbals

You must be familiar with this one, too. A cymbal is basically 2 metal plates that is crashed with each other to create sounds. Although seems simple, this is a somehow complicated instrument. Cymbals come in different sizes, and the size differentiates one cymbal with the other. Cymbals is usually used to create an exciting atmosphere in the sound effects. If you are used to playing the cymbals, you can easily create different sounds with it.

1. Bass drum

Have you ever seen a parade before? Have you ever seen the guy with the really big round thing that, when hit, produces a deep, big sound? That is the bass drum. This drum is the lowest-pitched instrument in the family. To hit this drum, a wooden stick with soft ends is often used.

1. Tamtam

Okay, i won’t make this hard on you. A tamtam is basically a gong. There, you know it. It is simply a large metal plate that is hung on a wood, when you hit it with a certain mallet, the bronze disc will produce a loud, even very loud sounds. A gong is rung usually to declare somthing, like the start of a race or something.

1. Glockenspiel

Do you know about the orchestra bells? The real name for that is the glockenspiel. This instrument is like a xylophone, just smaller. Also, instead of wood bars like the xylophone, the glockenspiel uses steel bars. The sound it produces is high and light..

1. Celesta

A celesta is basically a keyboard with 49 until 65 keys, and just like a keyboard, the sounds are created by presing the keys on them and it will trigger the hammer inside it to hit the small metal bar, thus make the sound.

1. Maracas

This instrument is simply rattles, which means they make rattling sounds, just like the rattlesnake. These are often made from gourds. To play them is also simple, you just have to hold them in both of your hands and shake them, the beads inside them will make the rattling sounds.

1. Chimes

Chimes are quite simple an instrument, really. It’s only a set consists of 12 to 18 metal tubes, 4 to 6 feet in length.They sound like deep ringing bells, the longer the metal tube, the note that it will produce will be lower.

1. Triangle

This is maybe the most simple instrument there is, it is simply a triangle made out of a shaped metal bar. To play it, you simply have to hit it with a small stick, mostly metal. When you hit it, it produces a high ringing sound, the only sound it can produce.