

THE LITTLE \_\_\_\_\_  
**ORCHESTRA**  
SOCIETY  
DINO ANAGNOST, MUSIC DIRECTOR

**MUSIC TELLS A STORY**



Drawing by Peter H. Reynolds

*Lolli-Pops*<sup>TM</sup>  
(ages 3-5)

Pre-Concert Activities

## Music Tells A Story

*Music Tells A Story* shows how composers use music to tell stories and inspire us to use our imaginations. Composers choose melodies, rhythms and instruments to help set the mood for a piece of music and tell a story without words. The listener's imagination might picture a variety of characters, actions, and ideas based on the composer's choices.

**Activity:** Choose a sentence your child thinks is fun. (e.g "I like ice cream.") Sing the sentence using the three different musical elements listed below demonstrating the different ways composers compose melodies.

- **Dynamics** – How loud or soft the music is played or sung.

Sing your sentence in a very soft voice. Children should repeat after you using their soft voices. How soft can you sing together?

Now sing the sentence very loud but without shouting. Composers and musicians use the musical term *piano* for soft and the musical term *forte* for loud.

Finally, sing your sentence four times in a row. Start *piano* and gradually get louder and louder. This is called making a *crescendo*. The opposite is a *decrescendo*, starting loud and gradually getting softer and softer.

- **Tempo** – The speed the music is played or sung.

Now, sing your sentence very fast and very slow. The musical term for very fast is *vivace* and the musical term for very slow is *largo*.

Do you get a different feeling when you sing your sentence slow and then fast? If so, describe how the tempo changes the feel of the sentence.

- **Range** – Refers to how high or low an instrument can play or a singer can sing. Typically, small instruments can play higher notes and large instruments can play lower notes.

Practice singing your sentence with your child using a high voice and then a low voice. Also try singing the sentence using notes that are in the middle range.

Raise your hands above your head when using your high voice. Place your hands below your knees when using a low voice. Place your hands at waist-level when singing notes in your middle range.

What character or animal do you imagine when you use a high voice? What character or animal do you imagine when you use a low voice?

---

## The String Family

The string family includes the violin, viola, cello and double bass. Each instrument has four strings that are stretched across the body of the instrument. The tension and thickness of the strings determine the pitch it plays. A thin string pulled tight will produce a high sound. A thick string that is looser will produce a low sound. Musicians pull a bow across the strings to produce sound. Sometimes they are asked to pluck the strings or use the wooden part of the bow. The bow is made of horse hair.

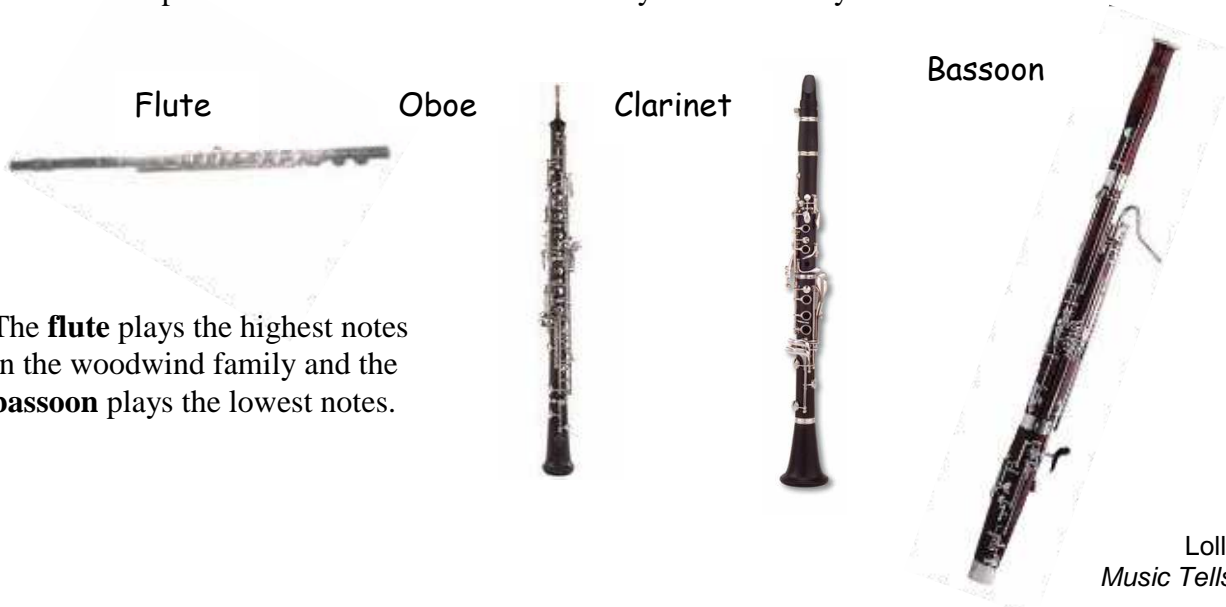


The **violin** plays the highest notes in the string family and the **double bass** plays the lowest.

---

## The Woodwind Family

The woodwind family includes the flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon. The name of the family describes them, they are made of wood and need air blown through them to produce a sound. Each instrument uses a special mouthpiece that has a reed made of bamboo inserted in the top. The exception is the flute. It is made of metal and air is blown across the top of the mouthpiece to make sound much like what you hear when you blow across a soda bottle.



The **flute** plays the highest notes in the woodwind family and the **bassoon** plays the lowest notes.

---

## The Percussion Family

The percussion family includes instruments that you strike, scrape or shake to make a sound. The snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, castanets, maracas are just a few members of the percussion family. The marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel and vibraphone are melodic percussion instruments which play melodies or tunes. One instrument that you might not expect to be in this family is the piano. The piano is considered to be a percussion instrument because there are hammers on the inside of the piano that strike the strings to produce a pitch or note. The piano has a total of 88 notes. Another percussion instrument that you will hear during the *Music Tells A Story* concert is the xylophone. The xylophone is struck with mallets and has a very bright sound. The xylophone has 44 notes and can also play melodies.

Piano



Xylophone



## Listening Activities

The following listening activities focus on pieces you will hear at the *Lolli-Pops™* concert *Music Tells A Story*. You can find recordings of the following music examples on iTunes.

*Carnival of the Animals*, by Camille Saint-Saëns

Suggested Recording: *Carnaval des Animaux*

London Sinfonietta

Charles Dutoit, conductor

1980 Decca Music Group Limited

### Activity:

**The Elephant** – The double bass is featured in this excerpt.

- Do the double bass notes sound high or low? Which instrument family is the double bass a member of?
- The elephant's theme is composed as a waltz. Count 1-2-3 as you listen to the music.
- What else do you imagine as you listen to this music?

**The Cuckoo** – The clarinet is featured in this excerpt.

- Which instrument family is the clarinet a member of?
- Dynamics refer to how loud or soft notes are played or sung. Practice singing the cuckoo's call both loud and soft. As you listen to the recording a second time, sing the cuckoo's call along with the music.
- Mood is the feeling you get when you listen to a piece of music. How might you describe the mood of this music?

**Fossils** – The xylophone is featured in this excerpt.

- Which instrument family is the xylophone a member of?
- What is a fossil?
- The xylophone plays the fossils theme in the very beginning of this movement. Raise your hand every time you hear the fossils theme played on the xylophone.
- The xylophone is not the only instrument that plays the melody in this movement. Can you identify the instrument that plays the melody in the middle of the example? (clarinet)
- Do the xylophone and clarinet sound similar or different? How?

**Aviary** – The flute is featured in this excerpt and starts playing at the beginning of this section.

- Which instrument family is the flute a member of?
- An aviary is a large enclosure where many different types of birds live together. What do you imagine as you listen to this music?
- How would you describe the tempo or speed of this music? How do you imagine birds moving at this speed?
- What are some dance movements you think of as you listen to this music? Share those movements with a family member or friend.