

### Can you imagine a day without music?



We live in a world surrounded by music. We hear "recorded" music coming from the radio, TV, movies, CDs, downloads and more. Where do you hear music? (Make a list.)
We may also hear music "live" if we are in the audience—that is, if you are there when the music is performed. Where have you heard "live" music? (Make another list!)
Some of you may also <b>perform</b> music. We all sing, and some of you play one or more instruments.
Do you play an instrument? Which one(s)?
Would you like to play a instrument? Which?

Although you can sing or play alone (solo), it's a lot more fun to do it in a group. Here are a few kinds of musical groups:

- School choruses
- bands and orchestras
- rock, jazz and country music bands
- church choirs

What other kinds of musical groups can you think of? What kind of group do you belong to or would you like to join?

One large musical group that we have in this region is the **Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra and Chorus** (PVS). Most of you heard this group live last year as part of your school's music program. Perhaps you have also gone to a PVS concert. We play five or six concerts a year, and generally have more than 60 people playing in each concert. We'll say more about the PVS later, but for now let's talk about what a symphony orchestra is.



## What is a symphony orchestra?

The word symphony has two different meanings.

- 1. It can describe a particular type of musical piece, such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony or Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony.
- 2. Symphony also describes a particular type of orchestra, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra or the Pioneer Valley Symphony. Not all symphony orchestras have the word "Symphony" in their name. In New York City, the major symphony orchestra is called the New York Philharmonic.

**PLAYERS**: A symphony orchestra is large, and requires between 65 and more than 80 players on different groups of instruments that are called "sections."

**INSTRUMENTS**: These are the different groups of instruments, or **sections**:

- Strings that are played with a bow—violin, viola, cello, double bass
- Woodwinds that are blown, and once were all made of wood—flute, piccolo, clarinet, oboe, bassoon (today's flutes are usually made of silver). Some of these instruments have reeds: thin slivers of cane in the mouthpiece. Single-reed instruments are clarinets and saxophones. Double-reed instruments are oboes and bassoons.
- Brass instruments that are blown, and made out of metal—trumpet, French horn, trombone, tuba

# Put the instruments in the right sections.

Draw lines to connect the instrument with its symphony orchestra section.

Flute

Trombone STRINGS

Cello

Piccolo WOODWINDS

Timpani

Tuba BRASS

Viola

Oboe PERCUSSION

French Horn

Triangle

 Percussion, meaning "struck" instruments, whose sound comes from being hit with a stick of some sort—timpani, snare drum, chimes, triangle, xylophone

Other instruments can be added. The orchestra often includes a piano and a harp.

The orchestra is led by a conductor (also known as the maestro) who uses a stick (baton) and looks at the score of the piece being played.

Each piece played at a concert has been written by a composer especially to be performed by symphony orchestras. The composer provides both a musical score (showing all the parts in the piece) and single parts for each individual player. Here are some instruments found in a typical symphony orchestra.

Write the name of each instrument under its picture.











3





6

#### **Musical terms**

Before we talk more about symphonies, here are a few terms it's helpful to know:

**FORM**: The overall shape of a single piece or a movement of a symphony. Think of a song with a chorus: that's its form. A movement of a symphony can have many different forms, including a dance form or something with a tune that keeps coming back, called a rondo.

**TEMPO:** How fast or slow the music is.

**TIME:** Also called "time signature" or "meter," it means the way the conductor counts the music. Most often it's in counts of two or four (like a march) or three (like a waltz).

**RHYTHM**: A pattern of long and short notes.

**MELODY:** The tune of a piece.

**SCORING:** The instruments the composer uses in his piece. Not all symphonies use all the available instruments.

**CHAMBER MUSIC**: Music written to be played by a small group, often at home. Some chamber music pieces are string quartets, trios, piano quartets, clarinet quintets, etc.

**TIMBRE** (pronounced tam-ber): The quality of a sound; a piano has a very different timbre than a violin.

#### **Interesting music fact:**

A piano is not a string instrument. It has hammers that strike strings, so it's a percussion instrument!

# What kind of music does a symphony orchestra play?

**Repertoire** is the general term for all the music an orchestra plays. The repertoire of an orchestra includes many different types of pieces. Another word for pieces is **compositions**. People who write them are **composers**.

 Symphonies—Long pieces divided up into different parts, called "movements," usually four of them. They feature the orchestra alone. A famous example is Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

- Concertos—Pieces in which one or more solo instruments play with the orchestra accompanying them. Concertos generally have three movements, and are designed to show off the skill of the soloist.
- Oratorios—Large-scale pieces that feature a chorus and solo singers, often on religious subjects.
- Ballet music—such as Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker.
- Operas—Plays that are sung throughout, with sets and costumes. The orchestra usually sits below the stage, in what is called the pit.
- Shorter works such as overtures, like Dukas's Sorcerer's Apprentice. (You might know it from Disney's movie Fantasia.)
- Music from movies, like Harry Potter, Star Wars, and The Polar Express.

### How did symphonies get their start?

The big orchestras we have today weren't around much before 1750—26 years before the American Revolution. Since the early days, the style of symphonies has changed. Here is a quick tour through the most famous periods and composers of symphonies we still perform today.

## The Classical Period: From 1750 to around 1800

The best known of the early Classical symphony composers is Joseph Haydn, often called "Papa Haydn, the Father of the Symphony." Haydn's symphonies have **four movements** that vary in speed (**tempo**) and **form**. In music, composers often used the Italian terms for different tempos to label their movements.

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)



Haydn was born in Vienna and lived in Austria and Hungary during his life, much of which he spent as Music Director for the noble Esterhazy family. He wrote new music every week to be performed on all occasions, not just symphonies but operas, oratorios, and

chamber music too.

He was a busy man—he wrote 104 symphonies during his lifetime!

Here are the typical movements of a Haydn symphony:

- **1. Fast:** An opening movement to capture everyone's interest, called *Allegro* (fast), *Presto* (quite fast) or *Vivace* (very fast).
- **2. Slow:** A slower, song-like movement for a change of pace, *Andante* (walking speed) or *Adagio* (quite slow).
- **3. Medium:** A stately dance-like movement in 3/4 time, called Minuet and Trio.
- **4. Really fast:** A final fast movement, often a rondo form.

The typical **scoring** for a Haydn symphony was:

**Strings**—2 sections of violins (first and second), and a section each of violas, cellos and basses

**Woodwinds**—depending on the musicians he had in his orchestra at the time, Haydn wrote parts for flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons in his symphonies

**Brass**—Mainly French horns and trumpets

**Percussion**—usually only *timpani*, although occasionally a bass drum or a triangle

# What was a concert like in Haydn's time?

In Haydn's time, symphonic music was mostly reserved for the very wealthy, who had their own orchestras. The musicians were treated much like servants, often living in quarters in the nobles' mansions or palaces. Haydn wore livery, the uniform all the servants wore in the Esterhazy court, for the thirty years he held his position as Music Director.

There were very few public concert halls then. Instead, other nobles and gentry would be entertained when they visited a palace like the Esterhazy's. Here is what the Esterhazy concert hall looked like:



When you have to compose so much music, it must be hard to stay enthusiastic. Haydn livened things up with his mischievous sense of humor. His music is filled with little suprises, like bird songs and sudden loud chords (you may have heard of the "Surprise" Symphony). In a string quartet called "The Frog", he uses music to imitate the croaking of the frogs.

In his old age, Haydn moved back to Vienna, where he taught and guided other composers. The most famous one was probably a young

man who came from Germany, eager to study in what was then the musical capital of the world. His name was **Ludwig van Beethoven**.

### Haydn's Musical Joke: The Farewell Symphony

In most pieces all the players stop at the same time—or at least, stay on the stage until the rest of the musicians finish their parts. But Haydn wanted to send a cheeky message to his employer, and composed his Farewell Symphony so that the players not only finished at different times, but In the first performance, when their part ended, they blew out the candles on their music stands and left one by one. Eventually only a single player remained on stage. This was possibly Haydn's way of suggesting that his musicians needed a vacation!

#### **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

(1756-1792)



Mozart showed his musical genius at a very early age. When he was six years old his father Leopold took Wolfgang and his older sister Nannerl (also very talented and a composer

as well) to royal courts all over Europe. The children played duets at the keyboard, and Nannerl accompanied her brother when he played the violin.

Wolfgang charmed kings, princes and empresses, and would often do musical stunts—including playing the clavier (an old-

fashioned type of piano) with the keys covered with a cloth, naming notes and chords with his eyes closed, improvising variations on a theme and more. People in the courts loved it.



Mozart composed all types of music throughout his short life: string quartets and quintets (pieces with four or five players only), concertos, dances, and operas as well as symphonies. Believe it or not, Wolfgang composed his first symphony when he was six, and his 41st and last, the "Jupiter," in 1788, three years before he died at the age of 35. His later symphonies are very famous and part of every orchestra's repertoire.

You may have seen *Amadeus*, a movie based loosely on Mozart's life.

# Recreating the past through music



The instruments in Mozart's time were a little different from their modern versions, and so a symphony performed in his day didn't sound quite the same as one performed with modern instruments.

Some musicians today like to try to recreate the old fashioned sound and look—when men always wore wigs in public and concerts were played by candlelight.

Mozart led his concerts from the keyboard. There was no such thing then as a conductor.

#### QUICK QUIZ:

- 1. How old was Mozart when he wrote the "Jupiter" symphony?
- 2. What was an old-fashioned piano called?
- 3. How many symphonies did Haydn compose?

#### Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)



Beethoven began a new era in classical music, when composers considered themselves artists rather than servants of wealthy families. Unlike Haydn, he did not write pieces for a noble's parties and special occasions.

By Beethoven's time, public concerts were more common. Beethoven was able to earn some of his living by publishing his music and performing it in concerts. Like Mozart, he was a concert pianist, and he published his first piece when he was 12.

Beethoven took the symphony in a new direction. His symphonies were longer, more intense, and more complicated than Haydn's and Mozart's. No wonder he only wrote nine in his entire life!

Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany, in 1770 and died in Vienna when he was 57. When he was only 30 years old he began to lose his hearing, and by the time of his death was almost totally deaf.

#### Symphonies that tell a story

Several of Beethoven's symphonies have meanings that go beyond the music. For instance, the first movement of his Sixth Symphony, called the "Pastoral," describes the "Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the country." It is followed by a movement in 3/4 time called "Happy gathering of country folk" which is interrupted by a thunderstorm! The timpani, cymbals and bass drum create such a realistic storm that it can even frighten a dog who is scared of thunder.

Beethoven's Ninth and last Symphony, the "Choral," takes more than an hour to perform and includes a chorus and four solo singers in its famous final movement, the *Ode to Joy*. This symphony is often performed at New Year's, as it expresses the hope that "All men will be brothers" and that the world will live in peace.

### Can you imagine what it would be like to go deaf, if music was your life?

Beethoven was very upset when he started to lose his hearing. He tried all sorts of "hearing aids" to help him. He pounded the piano so hard trying to hear what he was playing that he broke strings. But his musical imagination was very powerful; he could hear what he wrote in his head. His disability didn't stop him.



These are some of Beethoven's hearing aids.

### The Romantic Period 1800 - 1900

Beethoven really started something. His symphonies influenced composers for the whole next century, as they wrote symphonies that were longer and longer and used more instruments, trying to outdo Beethoven.

#### Adding color to a symphony

How can something you hear have color? By "color," we mean the different qualities of sound, created by different combinations of instruments. Romantic composers were very interested in creating these new sound colors, and a lot of new instruments were invented during this time. Here are a few:







Saxophone

Bass Clarinet

Glockenspiel

Some of the most famous symphony composers of the Romantic period are:

#### Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)



Brahms wrote four symphonies and a lot of piano and chamber music. He also wrote some very popular Hungarian Dances. He was a very traditional composer, writing symphonies with four movements, like Beethoven's, only with the

style that had been changing as musical tastes

changed. He was a great friend of the composer Robert Schumann, and stayed friendly with his widow, Clara Schumann, until her death.

#### Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were all from German-speaking countries. Dvořák, on the other hand, was Czech. At the time, what is now the



Czech Republic was part of a huge empire that included Austria and Hungary. Dvořák, like Beethoven, wrote nine symphonies.

#### Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



As music became more international, there were composers of symphonies from more different countries—including Russia.
Tchaikovsky wrote six symphonies during his

life. He is best known today as composer of the ballet, *The Nutcracker*.



#### Where are the girls?

By now you've probably noticed that all the composers mentioned here are men. That was partly because in earlier centuries, women didn't have the opportunities for careers that we have today.

And if you wrote a symphony, you had to have an orchestra willing to play it. Since all the members of the orchestra were men, that was pretty difficult!

That doesn't mean women didn't compose.

Mozart's sister, Nannerl, wrote music. The late-18th-century composer **Maria Theresia von Paradis**—who was not only a woman but became blind before she was five—composed operas, piano music, and songs.

But she was unusual. Most women composers at that time had to be content with composing smaller works that could be played at home, especially solo piano pieces. Here are two of the most famous ones from the Romantic period, and they are famous partly because of their links to well-known musical men:

#### **Clara Schumann** (1819-1896)

Born Clara Wieck, Schumann was a piano prodigy (she was a very talented pianist from a young age), who married the composer Robert Schumann. She wrote a lot of piano music to perform herself, as well as some songs. She gave up composing when she had children, and when her



husband died, she earned her living teaching and giving concerts.

#### **Fanny Hensel** (1805-1847)



Hensel was the sister of composer Felix Mendesssohn. Her strict father never allowed her to perform in public or publish her pieces. She was from a wealthy family, and composed for a private orchestra.

After she married, her husband Wilhelm Hensel encouraged her to publish, and she did.

#### **Hector Berlioz** (1803-1869)

Berlioz (pronounced "bear-lee-ohs") wrote four symphonies, all of which had descriptive titles and told stories. This is called **program music**. Berlioz's Fantastic Symphony: An Episode in the Life of an Artist describes an



artist's nightmare. (Note: "fantastic" in this case means based on fantasy.) The woman he loves rejects him, and he decides that life isn't worth living. The symphony is in five movements, and each one has its own title.

The fourth movement is called "March to the Guillotine," and it is a march to the artist's execution. Berlioz writes music that creates the sound of the guillotine blade falling, and afterwards, represents the head falling into the basket with a series of *pizzicato* (plucked string) notes. The last movement, a wild *Allegro*, is called "Witches' Sabbath" and uses strange sounds to create an eerie effect. One of those is having the string players hit their strings with the wooden part of their bows. This is called *collegno* (hit with the wood).

#### Franz Liszt (1811-1886)



Liszt (pronounced "list") was a Hungarian composer who moved to Paris as a young man. He was a true nineteenth-century rock star, very handsome and an

extremely flashy piano player. Ladies swooned when they heard him perform.

But he was more than just a pretty face. In fact, Liszt invented a whole new type of orchestra composition called a **Tone Poem.** This was a large piece for orchestra that didn't have the same form as a symphony. Usually it was one long movement that went through different moods. These tone poems also had descriptive titles, like Prometheus, Hungary, and Hamlet.

#### **Gustav Mahler** (1860-1911)

By the end of the 19th century, the Viennese composer Gustav Mahler was writing huge symphonies with very large orchestras. A single work could last an hour and a half or more.



In 1910 Mahler wrote his Eighth Symphony, known as "The Symphony of a Thousand", because the total number of instrumentalists and singers came to more than 1,000 people.

The orchestral score calls for: 2 piccolos, 4 flutes, 4 oboes, 1 English horn, 3 B-flat clarinets, at least two E-flat clarinets, 4 bassoons, 1 contrabasson, 8 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba and another brass group with 4 trumpets and 3 trombones. The percussion section included timpani, cymbals, bass drum, tamtam (Chinese gong), triangle and bells, with

a glockenspiel added at the final rehearsals. Keyboard instruments were an organ, a harmonium (a kind of small organ), and a piano, and plucked stringed instruments included 2 harps (4 would have been better), a celeste, and several mandolins. The string sections were all huge. There were two full choruses, a children's choir, and 8 solo singers.

#### **Test your Romantic Era IQ:**

How many blown instruments (woodwinds and brass) did Mahler use in his 8th symphony? Why did a woman have a hard time being a composer in the 18th and 19th centuries?

What new instruments were added to the orchestra during the Romantic Era?

How many symphonies did Tchaikovsky write?

Here is an old photograph of the first American performance (premiere) of Mahler's 8th Symphony's in Philadelphia in 1916. There were 1,068 performers.



## The "Modern" Period—the Twentieth Century (1900-2000)

The 20th century is known as the "Modern" Period. Composers of many nations still wrote symphonies, concertos, ballet music, and operas, but also invented new forms, like movie scores. Pieces were written for orchestras of different sizes and used new combinations of instruments. Percussion became more important. Three of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most famous symphony composers were Russian: Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich.

#### Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) became

famous for his ballets (*Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring*) that were performed in Paris. He composed 3 symphonies. One includes a chorus. He left Russia in 1920, then lived in



Switzerland and France. As World War II began he moved to the U.S., where he lived in Hollywood and continued his long and creative life.

#### Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) stayed in



Russia, later known as the Soviet Union. He composed 7 symphonies, as well as operas, ballets and

concertos. You may have heard his narrated story, *Peter and the Wolf*.

#### Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) wrote



his first symphony at age 19 and his last, the 15<sup>th</sup>, in 1971 when he was 65. Throughout his life he had trouble writing music that pleased the Soviet authorities,

particularly Josef Stalin, the USSR's long time premier. The second movement of his 10<sup>th</sup> symphony is a violent *scherzo*, said to be a portrait of Stalin, who had died while Shostakovich was composing the work.

#### American Music in the 20th Century

In the 18th century, almost all American classical music was imported from Europe. In the 19th century, that trend continued, with a few home-grown composers that have not become very famous. But in the 20th century, American classical music composers really came into their own.

One of the earliest American symphony composers was **Louis Moreau Gottschalk** (1829 - 1869). Born in New Orleans, he studied in Paris and spent a lot of his life outside the U.S. His three symphonies include many echoes of the American rhythms and folk music he heard.

One of the first truly
American symphonies was
composed by an AfricanAmerican, William Grant
Still (1895 - 1978). It was
the first symphony by an
African-American composer
ever performed by a major
symphony orchestra.



There were many African-American musicians in the U.S., however. They often found a way to use their talent in more popular forms, which were easier to break into than classical. You may have heard of **Scott Joplin** (1886 - 1917), known as the King of Ragtime. He didn't write any symphonies. His opera, *Tremonisha*, never performed in his lifetime, has since been staged by the Metropolitan Opera.



#### Aaron Copland (1900-

1990) created a true American voice, using rhythms and melodies from jazz and folk music. His Symphony no. 3, written from 1944-46, became very popular, as have his ballet scores (*Appalachian Spring*,

Rodeo). Copland also wrote music for films.

Women, too, finally were accepted as composers of symphonic music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest American to write works for large orchestras was **Amy Beach**. Her piano concerto, written in 1899, was played by PVS recently. Women composers of today include **Joan Tower, Libby Larsen, Luna Pearl Woolf** (who grew up in Amherst), **Gwyneth Walker,** and **Alice Parker** (who lives in Hawley).

There are too many talented composers to list here, but you might like to listen to one of the 8 symphonies of **Philip Glass** (b.1937), who writes in a style that is called **minimalism**. That means they use very little variation in melody, harmony, and rhythm, and repeat things a lot.

In 2012 the Pioneer Valley Symphony performed the Third Symphony by **Zeke Hecker**, who lives in Vermont and plays oboe in our orchestra.

## What is a Pioneer Valley Symphony concert like?

Every year the PVS usually plays 5 or 6 concerts in a large hall like the Greenfield High School auditorium. A full concert lasts between 1½ and 2 hours, and the program for each is different. The program will often have pieces in different styles. In a way, it's like a meal with several courses. Usually a shorter piece opens the concert. This is often followed by a concerto with a soloist. Then there is a break—the **intermission**—so the audience can stretch their legs a bit, and finally a big piece (or several smaller ones) ends the concert.

On Saturday, May 21, 2011 the PVS played a concert at the Academy of Music in Northampton. Maestro Paul Phillips conducted the orchestra, and there were two soloists. The program looked like this:

A Summer's Day

Lewis Spratlan
(b.1940)

Double Concerto, opus 102

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Nicholas Kitchen, violin
Yeesun Kim, cello

— INTERMISSION —

Symphony No. 5, in C minor, op. 67 Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

There were 68 players in the orchestra, including a piccolo, an English horn, a bass clarinet, a contrabassoon, and a harp. "A Summer's Day" was written in 2008 by a composer who lives in Amherst. Describing a day in his life, Spratlan uses sounds that he hears through his open window—a distant pick-up basketball game (a percussionist even bounced a **real** basketball), his typing at a computer, and the songs of crickets in the evening.

A "Double Concerto" is a piece that has two solo instruments. Not too many double concertos exist. Maybe that's because soloists like to be the stars all by themselves!

That concert ended with one of the most famous symphonies of all time: Beethoven's Fifth. You probably can hum the famous tune that opens it, with its *ta-ta-ta-tummm* rhythm.

What musical periods do the three pieces the PVS performed on that concert belong to?

Write your answers here. (Hint: Look at the composers' dates of birth.)

How do the PVS players get ready for a concert?

Our players live all over the Pioneer Valley, from Greenfield to Springfield, as well as from Vermont and Connecticut. Many drive 20 or 30 miles to get to rehearsal. Some of them are your teachers. Some are lawyers and judges. Some are doctors and scientists, carpenters or high school students. We all play for the fun of it, and don't get paid for playing.

We **rehearse** every Wednesday evening during the school year, preparing for each concert as it approaches.

The week of the concert, we rehearse in the auditorium where we will be performing. If the concert includes a concerto, the **soloist** comes to one or two rehearsals, and we finally hear what everything sounds like together. We have to watch the conductor's baton very carefully so that we stay together with the soloist.

Finally, the "dress rehearsal" (this is what the

final rehearsal is called, though it doesn't have anything to do with what we wear) is over. The next night we appear on stage, dressed in our concert clothes, and wait eagerly for Paul Phillips' opening downbeat.

## Do you share a composer's birthday?



Haydn March 31

Mozart January 27

Beethoven December 16

Brahms May 7

Tchaikovsky May 7

Dvořák September 8

Hensel November 14

Copland November 14

C Schumann September 13

Mahler July 7

Liszt October 22

Berlioz December 11

Shostakovich September 25

Stravinsky June 17

Prokofiev April 23

von Paradis May 15

Gottschalk May 8

Glass January 31

#### ACROSS



Fill our horn by using the clues!

### Find the Composers!

Prokofiev

Look for the names of the following composers: by row, from left to right or right to left; by column UP or DOWN; diagonally, either UP or DOWN.

Glass

Reethoven

Berl Bra	hms oland				Haydn Hecker Mahler Mozart				Shostakovich Still Stravinsky Tchaikovsky				
s	Н	0	S	Т	A	K	0	v	1	c	Н	L	v
c	D	s	M	Н	A	R	В	0	Q	w	Y	T	Y
v	J	$\mathbf{v}$	R	P	w	T	Н	E	C	K	E	R	В
E	X	C	0	P	L	A	N	D	S	F	C	S	M
В	0	X	E	R	G	M	M	v	В	L	Н	T	G
G	R	Н	N	X	A	Y	0	К	E	w	M	R	P
S	Q	R	D	J	X	K	Z	w	R	C	A	A	D
T	Н	E	Y	В	I	Q	A	N	L	P	Н	v	R
I	S	X	A	A	G	L	R	Y	I	N	L	I	X
L	P	R	H	В	E	E	T	Н	0	v	E	N	Y
L	w	C	G	L	A	S	S	В	Z	R	R	S	D
M	T	S	P	0	K	C	L	w	N	L	Q	K	G
$\mathbf{v}$	E	I	F	o	K	0	$\mathbf{R}$	P	$\mathbf{v}$	E	F	Y	В