

# SONORITY CITY

General Topic	Exploring Instruments of the Orchestra
<b>Scheme of Work Overview</b>	<p>This unit develops pupils' knowledge and understanding about orchestral instruments and families/sections of orchestral instruments. Pupils learn about the construction, sound production and timbres/sonorities of different orchestral instruments, the layout, grouping and the instruments which belong to each section of a modern symphony orchestra.</p> <p>Key to this unit is pupil's understanding of the terms: <b>TIMBRE AND SONORITY</b> with a general introduction to the orchestra followed by exploring one orchestral section or family per lesson. There is an optional lesson pathway to allow pupils to explore fanfares and the harmonic series when looking at brass and percussion instruments in more detail.</p> <p>This unit is enhanced by pupil's being able to explore and perform on traditional orchestral instruments "as a class orchestra", but with an awareness of limitations on resources, suitable keyboard voices can be used or any pupils who play orchestral instruments could be encouraged to perform on these during lessons.</p>
<b>Unit Learning Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about the layout and structure of the symphony orchestra.</li> <li>• Develop an understanding of musical instruments and how they are played, the families/sections, construction, different sound production methods and characteristic timbres/sonorities.</li> <li>• Perform on orchestral instruments (where possible) or use orchestral tones/voices/sounds from keyboards as part of a 'class orchestra' with an awareness of the experience of 'performing together' as an ensemble and the roles of different instrumental parts and textural layers on the music as a whole.</li> <li>• Learn about the origins and uses of fanfares.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Words, Concepts &amp; Musical Knowledge</b>	Strings, Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, Tuned Percussion, Untuned Percussion, Orchestra, Ensemble, Section/Family, Conductor, Pitch, Timbre, Sonority, Arco, Pizzicato, Bow, Fanfare, Harmonic Series.
<b>Musical Theory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words describing Timbre and Sonority</li> </ul>
<b>Links to GCSE Music</b>	Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910; Instrumental Music 1700-1820; The Concerto through time; My Music; Musical Forms and Devices (Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910); Music for Ensemble.
<b>IB MYP</b>	<p><b>Key Concept: Aesthetics</b></p> <p><b>Related Concepts: Role</b></p> <p><b>Global Context: Identities and Relationships</b></p> <p><b>Statement of Inquiry:</b> <i>One of the <u>aesthetics</u> of orchestral music is the <u>role</u> of different instruments and families/sections of instruments, not only their <u>identity</u> as a solo instrument, but their <u>relationship</u> when performing together as a collective.</i></p> <p><b>Factual Inquiry Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the sections/families of the orchestra?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What musical instruments are found in an orchestra?</li></ul> <p><b>Conceptual Inquiry Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we tell the difference between instruments of the orchestra?</li><li>• How can we define the word “Sonority”?</li></ul> <p><b>Debatable Inquiry Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent does an orchestra need a conductor?</li></ul>	
<b>Expectations &amp; Learning Outcomes</b>		
<p><b>All Pupils will (working towards):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be able to identify the most common instruments of the orchestra instruments visually and aurally when playing solo.</li><li>• Understand that an orchestra is made up of different sections or families of instruments and</li><li>• to name these correctly – <i>strings, woodwind, brass, percussion</i>.</li><li>• Give one or two simple features of the conductor of an orchestra <i>e.g. beats time, brings in different instruments</i>.</li><li>• Use basic musical vocabulary to describe how different instruments of the orchestra are constructed <i>e.g. wood, strings, metal</i>.</li><li>• Use a limited range of words when describing the timbre or sonority of instruments of the orchestra <i>e.g. shrill, harsh, piercing, soft, warm, mellow</i>.</li><li>• Perform a range of different pieces of orchestral music, either on instruments or keyboards, with support <i>e.g.</i></li><li>• <i>note names</i>, as part of a class orchestra.</li></ul>	<p><b>Most Pupils will: (working at):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be able to correctly identify most instruments of the orchestra visually and aurally when playing solo and in ensemble <i>e.g. strings when listening to a string quartet</i>.</li><li>• Understand and use the word ensemble to describe a group of performers such as an orchestra.</li><li>• Further describe the role of the conductor within an orchestra <i>e.g. rehearsals, balance of parts, sets tempo, interpretation of a piece</i>.</li><li>• Use musical vocabulary to describe sound production methods of different instruments of the orchestra <i>e.g. vibration, resonance</i>.</li><li>• Use more music-specific vocabulary, including reference to instrument construction and playing techniques, when describing the timbre or sonority of different instruments of the orchestra <i>e.g. metal, scrape, wood, gut, skin, shake etc</i>.</li><li>• Perform a range of different pieces of orchestral music, either on instruments or keyboards individually <i>e.g. reading from staff notation</i>, as part of a class orchestra.</li></ul>	<p><b>Some Pupils will: (working beyond):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be able to identify all instruments of the orchestra including those more difficult to identify, <i>e.g. Cor Anglais, Viola, Oboe, French Horn etc</i>. visually.</li><li>• Correctly identify solo instruments when accompanied by other instruments <i>e.g. in a concerto</i>.</li><li>• Use more advanced musical vocabulary to describe different playing techniques of instruments of the orchestra <i>e.g. pizzicato, arco, con sordino, glissando</i>.</li><li>• Use a wide range of musical vocabulary when describing the timbre or sonority of instruments of the orchestra <i>e.g.</i></li><li>• Perform solo parts from a range of different pieces of orchestral music either on instruments, keyboards or using own instruments taking on leading roles when rehearsing or assuming the role of the conductor when</li><li>• performing as part of a class orchestra.</li></ul>
<b>Language for Learning/Glossary</b>		

*Through the activities in this unit, pupils will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:*

• **Sounds:**

**STRINGS SECTION/FAMILY** – Instruments made from wood and have strings. They are usually played with a **BOW (ARCO)**, not the harp, but can also be plucked (**PIZZICATO**). The smaller the instrument, the higher the pitch, the larger the instrument the lower the pitch. Instruments in the Strings family/section include Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses and the Harp.

**WOODWIND SECTION/FAMILY** – A selection of instruments divided into two subsections: **FLUTES** (create a sound by air passing over a small hole and include the Flute and Piccolo) and **REEDS** (use a piece of bamboo reed to create a vibration). The Saxophone is not traditionally associated with the orchestra but is a member of the woodwind section/family along with the Piccolo, Flutes, Clarinets, Oboes, Bassoons and other less common instruments such as the Cor Anglais, Bass Clarinet and Double Bassoon.

**BRASS SECTION/FAMILY** – There are more brass instruments used in brass bands, but the orchestra normally has four. They are made of metal and the sound is made by blowing into the mouthpiece by buzzing the lips in a similar way to blowing a raspberry! The bigger the instruments, the lower the pitch; the smaller the instrument, the higher the pitch – the Trumpet is the highest and brass instruments of the orchestra also include Trombones, French Horns and the Tuba.

**PERCUSSION SECTION/FAMILY** – Includes many instruments which produce sounds when *hit, struck, scraped or shaken*. These fall into two subsections: **TUNED PERCUSSION** (able to play different pitches) – Piano, Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Timpani etc. and

**UNTUNED PERCUSSION** (instruments which are unable to play different pitches and normally play one or more unpitched sounds) – Bass Drum, Snare Drum, Cymbals, Woodblock Guiro, Triangle, Gong, Tambourine, Cabasa, Maracas etc.

**PITCH** – The highness or lowness of a sound (high/low; getting higher/getting lower, step/leap (conjunct/disjunct))

**TIMBRE or SONORITY** – Describes the **unique sound** or **tone quality** of different instruments and the way we can identify orchestral instruments as being distinct from each other – “each instruments’ own unique sound”. Sonority can be described by many different words including – *velvety, screechy, throaty, rattling, mellow, chirpy, brassy, sharp, heavy, buzzing, crisp, metallic, wooden etc.*

**FANFARE** – A short, lively, loud piece of music, usually for **BRASS INSTRUMENTS** and sometimes **DRUMS** and other **PERCUSSION**. A Fanfare is usually warlike or victorious in character and can be used to mark the arrival of someone important, give a “signal” e.g. in battles or be used to signal the opening of something e.g. a large sporting event or similar ceremony. Fanfares often use only notes of the **HARMONIC SERIES** – a limited range of notes played by bugles and Valveless trumpets.

• **Processes:**

**ORCHESTRA** – A large **ENSEMBLE** (group of musicians) divided into four **SECTIONS** or **FAMILIES** of musical instruments led by a **CONDUCTOR** who leads the orchestra with a **BATON**.

• **Context:**

*e.g. how the orchestra has developed and increased in size over time, which orchestral percussion instruments are found in the music classroom, how different musical instruments have been popular at*

*different times and with different composers.*

• **Speaking and listening:**

Through activities pupils could: *discuss and question what they are learning and how it is relevant in other contexts or when using different variables; discuss and respond to initial ideas and information, carry out the task and then review and refine ideas.*

**Future Learning**

*Pupils could go on to:*

- Draw illustrations showing the construction of different orchestral instruments labelling the materials that the parts are made from.
- Investigate, using real orchestral instruments, different or unusual ways and methods of producing different sounds, timbres and sonorities.
- Produce a “How to Beat Time” poster which could be given to a Year 6 pupil showing how an orchestral conductor beats 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 time.
- Listen to further examples of orchestral music from different times and places *e.g. from YouTube or Spotify* and bring “favourite pieces” in to play for the rest of the class.

**Enrichment**

*Learning could be enriched through:*

- Attending a concert of orchestral music or watching a live orchestra “in action”.
- Inviting a conductor of a local orchestra into school to discuss their role. Inviting a peripatetic instrumental teaching into music lessons to explain the workings/origins of a particular orchestral instrument or to give a brief working demonstration on an orchestral instrument to the class.
- Watching and listening to live musical performances of fanfares performed in different places *e.g. on Remembrance Day.*

**Links to External Websites to Support “Sonority City”**

[BBC Orchestras & Singers Classics for Kids](#) [SFS Kids Fun with Music](#) [Dallas Symphony Orchestra](#) [Listening Adventures with Carnegie Hall](#) [Khan Academy Instruments of the Orchestra](#) [DSO Learn by Instrument](#)

# **SONORITY CITY LESSON BY LESSON**

Lesson	Overview	Description
1	Bentley Test	4 x Listening tests - Pitch, Chords, Melody and Rhythm. To define the target for end of KS3.
2	Introduce the Orchestra & Seating Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introducing the Orchestra. Listen to Pirates of the Caribbean and Mozart's 40th Symphony to see what they know and can see.</li> <li>2. What does the word <b>ORCHESTRA</b> mean? How many orchestral instruments can pupils name (prior learning). Does anyone in the class play an orchestral instrument? Explore an image of an orchestra – count players, visually identify instruments/families, identify conductor and their roles; listen to an orchestra “tuning up” – why?</li> <li>3. Watch animated version of Young Persons guide to the Orchestra to establish <b>STRINGS, WOODWIND, BRASS</b> and <b>PERCUSSION</b> to identify sections/families of the orchestra. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcM-1UP5O2Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcM-1UP5O2Y</a></li> <li>4. Complete “The Layout of the Orchestra” colouring and identification activity (listen to orchestral music as pupils work) Colouring pencils required.</li> <li>5. Introduce the words <b>TIMBRE AND SONORITY</b> (Describes the unique sound or tone quality of different instruments and the way we can identify orchestral instruments as being distinct from each other – “each instruments’ own unique sound”. Sonority can be described by many different words including – velvety, screechy, throaty, rattling, mellow, chirpy, brassy, sharp, heavy, buzzing, crisp, metallic, wooden etc. Describe the timbre/sonority of a violin, trumpet etc.</li> </ol>
3	The four families	Introduce and explore the 4 sections of the orchestra (use interactive websites, demo and discussion on construction, playing technique and sound production – actual instruments if possible or keyboard.
4	Practical - Largo	Perform solo or ensemble pieces choosing an instrument of the Orchestra. The melody from “Largo” from ‘Symphony No.9’ by Dvorák Rehearse. WWW/EBI
5	Practical - Largo	Rehearse and Assess - solo or ensemble pieces choosing an instrument of the Orchestra. The melody from “Largo” from ‘Symphony No.9’ by Dvorák. – WWW/EBI Assess the performances
6	Largo if 7 lessons OR Written Assessment /Feedback	As Lesson 5 if there are 7 lessons in the series. <b>OR</b> Written Assessment Q 1-13 in silence - general knowledge Q14-19 Listening to the Swan (3 times) Q20 - 23 Listening to Gavotta (3 times) Peer mark Collect marks
7 if applicable	Written Assessment /Feedback	As per lesson 6 if 7 lessons in the series.

