

Making Music:

The Instruments of an Orchestra





An orchestra is like a band except that it has strings,
and many times orchestras play along when
somebody sings.

There are four main instrument families in most
orchestras today.

Woodwind, brass, percussion, and strings are what
these musicians play.



The **woodwinds** are the clarinets, flutes, oboes, and bassoons.

They all might play the melody of many different tunes.

Some woodwinds have single reeds like clarinets or saxophones.

The oboe has a double reed and plays distinctive tones.



There is a woodwind instrument that has no reed to
make it toot.

It's played by blowing air across a hole. It is called a
flute.

The woodwinds once were made of wood but not so
anymore.

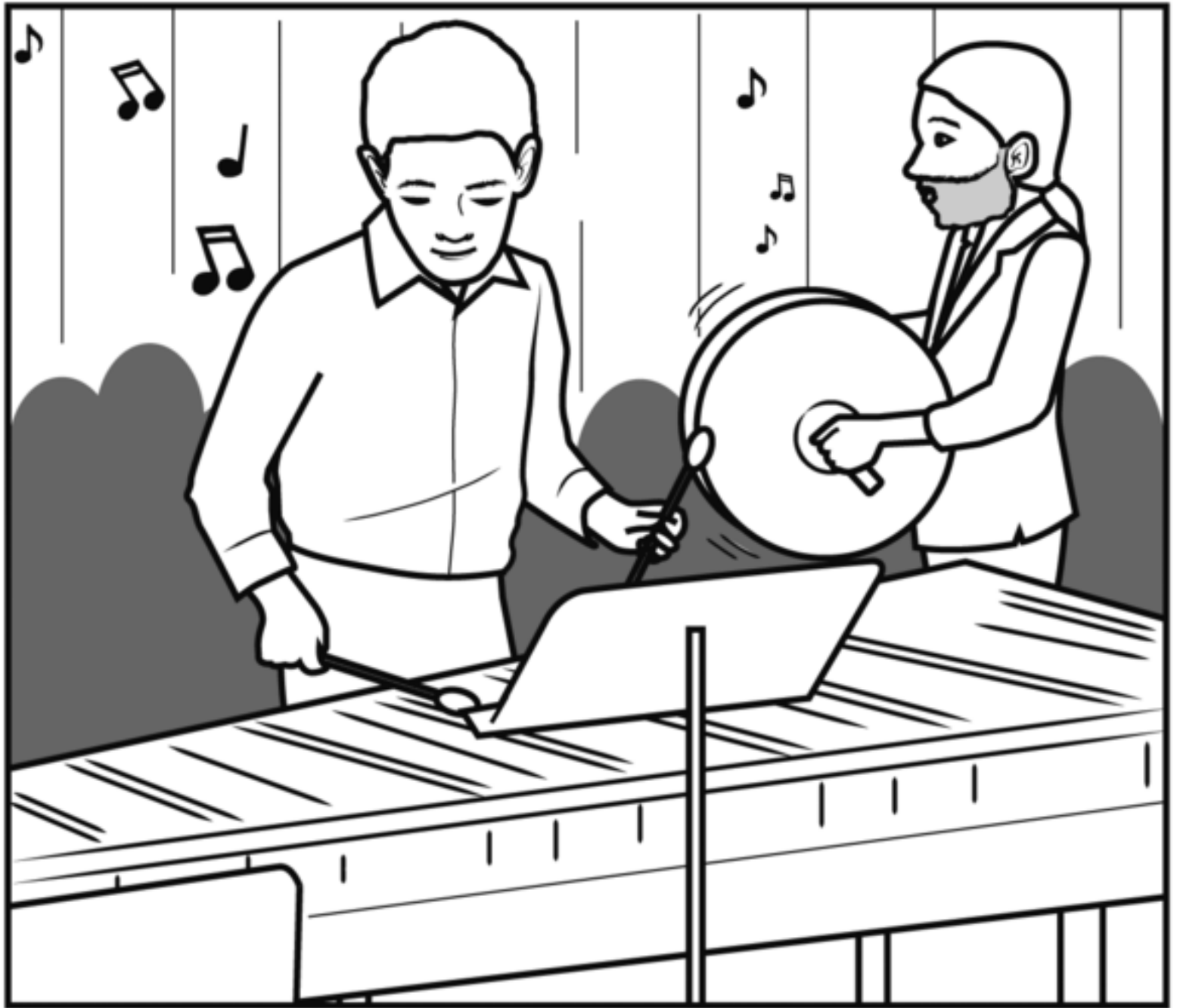
The woodwinds of an orchestra are all part of the
core.



Percussions are the instruments that keep the rhythm strong.

The drums help keep a steady beat when playing any song.

Some percussion instruments are a piano and a harp. These instruments can play a tune in any flat or sharp.

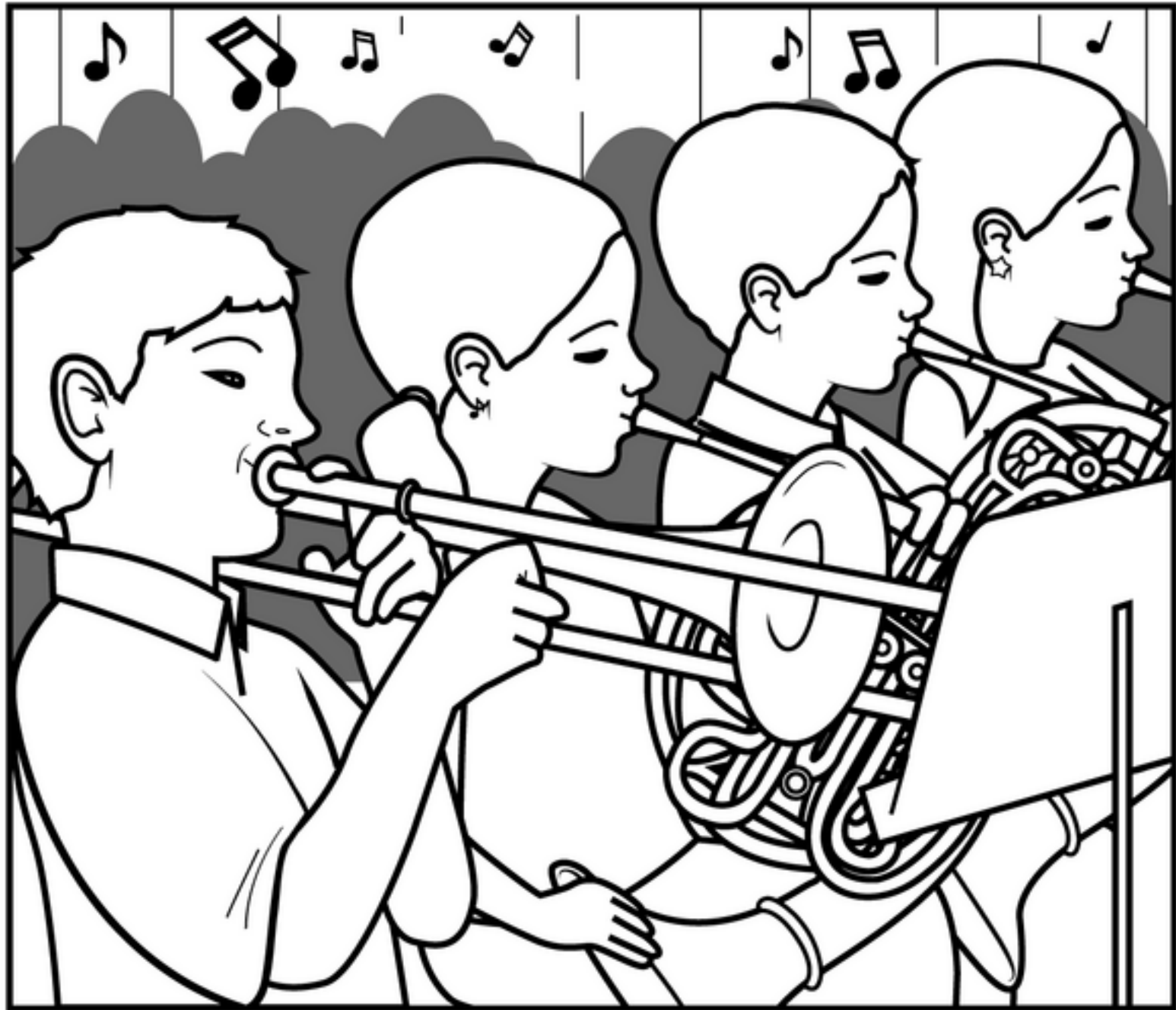


The bass drum and the snare drum are instruments that we know well.

Then there's the triangle, the xylophone, and perhaps even a bell.

There is the tambourine, the glockenspiel, and you might even hear a gong.

While the cymbals and the wood blocks add special interest to a song.



Instruments in the **brass** family need two lips to make a tone.

Players must blow upon a mouthpiece like those on the slide trombone.

Some brass instruments are trumpets, French horn, and the cornet.

Musicians blow the notes and press the valves, and then a tune they'll get.



Strings compose the largest section, and they balance out the sound.

The front and center of the orchestra is where most of the strings are found.

The string section has the violin and cello, the viola and the bass.

Sometimes a guitar, lute, or mandolin is added to this space.



The **conductor** directs everything from the center of the stage.

He keeps the music flowing as he quickly turns the page.

Orchestras play symphonies, overtures, and suites, and the audience enjoys it all while sitting in their seats.

1. How many main groups of instruments play in the orchestra?

- a. five
- b. six
- c. four
- d. ten

Answer: _____

2. A clarinet is in what group of instruments?

- a. percussion
- b. woodwind
- c. string
- d. brass

Answer: _____

3. Which of these instruments is a percussion instrument?

- a. violin
- b. trombone
- c. flute
- d. piano

Answer: _____

4. Which of these is a brass instrument?

- a. violin
- b. trombone
- c. flute
- d. piano

Answer: _____

5. Which section is the largest part of an orchestra?

- a. string
- b. brass
- c. woodwind
- d. percussion

Answer: _____

6. What kind of instrument is the flute?

- a. string
- b. brass
- c. percussion
- d. woodwind

Answer: _____