

# Pirate's Plunder

## Mission Imagination

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*Susan Morris*  
ADVENTURES IN MUSIC  
PROGRAMS



# Pirate's Plunder – Teacher Packet

Thank you for choosing to participate in the 2025/26 Mission Imagination production, Pirate's Plunder. We applaud and appreciate your decision to engage your students in this exciting musical adventure with the Omaha Symphony.

We hope this packet will serve as a resource for you as you prepare your students to attend Mission Imagination.



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# Standards & Objectives

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In this chapter, you will find:

- National Standards & Objectives
- Nebraska & Iowa Standards



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# National Standards & Objectives

**This program is designed to address the following National Core Arts Standards:**

- **Performing** - Anchor Standard 6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- **Responding** - Anchor Standard 7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- **Responding** - Anchor Standard 8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- **Connecting** - Anchor Standard 11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

**Through classroom activities and concert attendance we believe that students will be able to:**

- Identify the instrument families of the orchestra.
- Demonstrate knowledge of rhythm, pitch, tempo, and dynamics.
- Relate music to other areas of the curriculum and daily life.

**We encourage you and your students to:**

## **CREATE!**

Students will be invited to play a hand made instrument during the concert. Be sure to make your own instrument!

## **SING!**

During the performance, your students will be encouraged to sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Check out the music!

## **PARTICIPATE!**

Mission Imagination is an interactive production! Students should be ready to participate and follow along in several guided activities.

## **LISTEN!**

Expose your students to the music from the program prior to the concert!

## **EXPLORE!**

Students will be learning about the orchestra, its instrument families, and music elements such as rhythm, tempo, pitch, and dynamics. Check out the activities in this packet to explore these topics.

## **CONDUCT!**

Students will have the chance to conduct along with the Omaha Symphony. Try your hand at conducting before coming to the concert.



# State Standards

## Nebraska K-12 Fine Arts Standards:

- FA 2.4.2 Students will sing and/or play instruments to a variety of music that includes music elements of rhythm, pitch, dynamics, and form.
- FA 2.4.3 Students will recognize and describe elements of music to demonstrate how music makes them feel (impact of music).
- FA 5.4.2 Students will sing and/or play instruments to a variety of music that incorporates multiple elements of music.
- FA 5.4.3 Students will identify and describe elements of music to discern how music is appropriate for specific purposes/settings (intent of music).
- FA 2.2.1 Students will use the creative process to make works of art with a variety of materials.

## Nebraska Birth to Five Creative Arts Standards:

- (PK) Music, CA.01: Develops foundational skills to support creative expression through voice, instruments, and objects
- (PK) Visual Art, CA.02: Develops foundational skills that support creative expression through the process, production, and appreciation of visual art forms
- (PK) Movement, CA.03: Develops foundational skills that support creative expression through movement
- (PK) Dramatic Play, CA.04: Expresses creativity using puppetry, storytelling, dance, plays, and theater

## Iowa Core Fine Arts Alignment:

- MU: Pr6.1.3 a. Perform music with expression and technical accuracy; b. Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette appropriate for the context and venue.
- MU: Re7.1.K a. With guidance, list personal interests and experiences and demonstrate reasons behind musical preferences.
- MU: Re8.1.K a. With guidance, demonstrate awareness of expressive qualities (such as dynamics and tempo) that reflect creators'/performers' expressive intent.
- MU: Cn11.0.3a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

## Iowa Early Learning Standards:

- 5.1PS (Art) Children participate in a variety of art and sensory-related experiences.
- 5.2PS (Music, Rhythm, Movement) Children participate in a variety of music and movement experiences.
- 5.3PS (Dramatic Play) Children engage in dramatic play experiences.

# Pre-Concert Activities

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In this chapter, you will find:

- Program Synopsis
- Listening Guide
- Handmade Instrument Ideas
- Sing-Along: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”



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# Program Synopsis

*Pirate's Plunder* is a lively musical adventure that invites students to set sail with Captain Canon and the Omaha Symphony on a quest for the legendary Bizetbeard's Baton. Instead of searching for gold, this fearless pirate crew is after the greatest treasure of all—music! Along the way, students get to help solve puzzles, keep the ship afloat, and even battle a scallywag rival through the power of rhythm, melody, and song.

The journey takes the crew through exciting musical challenges that introduce core concepts in a playful, hands-on way. Students learn about **rhythm** by tapping along (*Surprise Symphony*), discover **tempo** through fast and slow movements (*Hungarian Dance No. 5*), explore **dynamics** (*Aragonaise*) by matching the orchestra's loud and soft sounds, and even practice **pitch** by fixing a silly version of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Each stop on the map connects music-making to teamwork, listening, and imagination.

Interactive participation is key! Students use their "pirate percussion hands," follow visual and musical cues, and even help the orchestra solve riddles to unlock pieces of the treasure map. By the time the crew faces off against the mischievous Scallywag William, students are keeping steady beats, responding to musical changes, and working together as true pirates of sound.

In the end, the treasure isn't just Bizetbeard's magical baton - although we do use the baton to conduct the orchestra (Thunder and Lightning Polka) - it's the joy of making music as a community. *Pirate's Plunder* leaves students feeling empowered, imaginative, and excited to engage with music, all while laughing, singing, and cheering alongside Captain Canon and the Omaha Symphony.





# Concert Listening Guide

**HOW TO LISTEN** > Embedded in the song titles are hyperlinks to YOUTUBE that can be used for listening to each selection.

[\*The Hebrides \(Fingal's Cave\) Overture by Mendelssohn\*](#)

- This is the first piece of Pirate's Plunder.

[\*Prince Igor, No. 17. Polovstian Dances by Borodin\*](#)

- The homemade instrument piece - Don't forget your handmade instrument!

[\*Scheherazade, Movements I, III, and IV by Rimsky-Korsakov\*](#)

- Practice keeping the beat on your body while listening.

[\*Symphony No. 94 "Surprise" Movement II by Haydn\*](#)

- Practice playing rhythms focusing on the main theme's "ti-ti ta" rhythm. Listen especially to the flute, oboe, and the violins for their rhythms.

[\*Hungarian Dance No. 5 by Brahms, arranged by Schmeling\*](#)

- Listen carefully for tempo changes and match body movements to the slow and fast changes.

[\*Carmen Suite No. 1, No. 1a Aragonaise by Bizet\*](#)

- Listen for dynamic changes as the piece begins forte (loud) and then is piano (soft) at times. Show the changes with your body.

[\*Thunder and Lighting Polka by Strauss Jr.\*](#)

- Our conduct-along piece! Get ready because it's your chance to conduct the orchestra!



# Make Your Own Instrument

Handmade instruments are not only encouraged but highly recommended for this musical adventure!

Select any of the ideas below to make your own instrument or use an idea of your own!



Paper Plate Shaker



Egg Maracas



Paper Bag Shaker



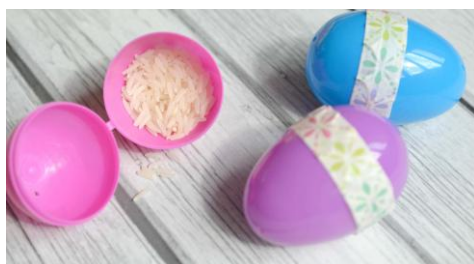
Paper Plate Tambourine



Water Bottle Shaker



Paper Towel Rainstick



Egg Shaker



Cup Shaker



Jingle Stick



# Sing-Along:

## ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT

Traditional

**Brightly**

**C** **F/C** **C** **F/C** **C**

Row, row, row your boat, gent - ly down the

**G/C** **C** **G/C** **C**

stream. Mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly,

**F** **G7** **F/C** **C**

life is but a dream. Row, row, row your boat,





# Sing-Along:

2

F C

gen - tly down the stream. Mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly,

F G7 F/C C

mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly, life is but a dream.



## A SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

“Row, Row, Row Your Boat” is a famous “round” that has been sung and enjoyed by people of all ages. When sung correctly, the melody actually goes around and around. Here’s how it works: The singers are divided into two groups. The first group sings the first line alone. At this point, the second group starts at the beginning, while the first group continues with the second line. In this manner, the groups are always exactly one line apart as the tune is repeated. The last time through, the second group sings the final line alone just as the first group sang the opening line alone. Try it . . . it’s fun!

# The Orchestra

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In this chapter, you will find:

- Hello, from the orchestra!
- Orchestral Introduction
- Meet the Orchestra!
- Instrument Families & Quiz



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A cartoon illustration of a pirate ship on the left with a skull and crossbones on its flag, and the mast of another ship on the right. In the background, there are white clouds and a blue sky.

# Hello, from the orchestra!

Dear Student,

We are very excited that you'll be assisting us with Captain Canon's Pirate's Plunder!

When you arrive many of us musicians will already be there, getting ready to play for the concert. You'll probably hear cellos or violins from our string family, clarinets or flutes from our woodwind family, trombones from our brass family, and lots of percussion instruments, like the drums. We'll be making lots of noise on our instruments, so that we can play our best for you!

At the beginning of the concert, our concertmaster stands up and helps us tune. We do this so we can play well together. Then, the conductor comes out so that we can begin. Everyone in the audience claps to show how happy they are to be there, and that they are ready to listen to us play. Then, the concert begins!

During the concert, there will be lots to see, hear, and do! The best way to show us that you are having a good time is by being a good listener and clapping after each piece. You will be asked to play and sing with us, and you will get the chance to conduct the orchestra!

We hope that you enjoy our concert and can't wait to see you there!

Sincerely,

The Musicians of the Omaha Symphony





A cartoon illustration of a pirate ship on the left with a skull and crossbones on its black flag, a sailing ship in the distance, and a ship's mast on the right. The background is a blue sky with white clouds.

# Orchestral Introduction

## What is an Orchestra?

An orchestra is a large group of musicians, made up of different instruments, that play music under the direction of a conductor.

## Instrument Families

There are 4 instrument families in the orchestra. Each instrument belongs to one of the following families:

Strings, Woodwinds, Brass, or Percussion

## How do Instruments Make Sound?

Instruments make sound through vibration. When something vibrates it makes a sound, and sends the vibrations out in all directions, like a wave. Because it is the air that is vibrating, you can't see it—but you can hear it! The rate of vibration is what causes instruments to have different pitch.

# Meet the Orchestra!





# Meet the Strings Family!

- There are **four instruments** in the **strings family**: the **violin**, **viola**, **cello** and **bass**. They look similar with their curvy wooden bodies and long necks, but they are all different sizes.
- String players use a bow, drawn across the strings, to make them vibrate. The vibrations echo within the body and produce sound. String players can also pluck the strings with their fingers.
- The **harp** is sometimes considered a part of the strings family because it has so many strings!





# Meet the Woodwind Family!

- The instruments in the woodwind family used to be made of wood, which is how they got their name. Today many of them are still made from wood, but some are also made of metal. These instruments have lots of different keys that help change the pitch and sound that the instruments make.
- Each woodwind instrument makes sound in a special way, but they all use wind - or air - to do it!
- See the Flute, Clarinet, Oboe, and Bassoon!



# Meet the Brass Family!

- The instruments in the brass family are all made of a shiny metal, called brass - which is how they got their name! The instruments are made by twisting the metal into all sorts of shapes and sizes.
- Brass instruments have a mouthpiece that they use with their instruments. When the player blows air through the instrument using the mouthpiece, their lips vibrate. These vibrations travel through the metal of the instrument, which makes sound.
- See the trumpet, trombone, French horn, and tuba!



# Meet the Percussion Family!

- The percussion family has a lot of different instruments in different shapes and sizes. Percussion instruments can either be **pitched** or **non-pitched**. Pitched instruments are able to play many types of notes. The piano, timpani, and xylophone are examples of pitched instruments. Non-pitched instruments can only play one note. The snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, and triangle are all non-pitched instruments.
- Percussion instruments can be played in many different ways, but the most common is to strike them with something. Usually percussionists use drum sticks, mallets, and even their own hands!





# Instrument Family Quiz

I'm a violin.

What family do I belong to?

- A. Brass
- B. Strings
- C. Percussion
- D. Woodwind



# Instrument Family Quiz

I'm a snare drum.

What family do I belong to?

- A. Brass
- B. Strings
- C. Percussion
- D. Woodwind



# Instrument Family Quiz

I'm a trombone.

What family do I belong to?

A. Brass

B. Strings

C. Percussion

D. Woodwind





# Instrument Family Quiz

I'm an oboe.

What family do I belong to?

- A. Brass
- B. Strings
- C. Percussion
- D. Woodwind



# Instrument Family Quiz

I'm a xylophone.

What family do I belong to?

A. Brass

B. Strings

C. Percussion

D. Woodwind



# Additional Resources

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In this chapter, you will find:

- Meet the Composers
- Pirate's Plunder Soundscape Activity
- Conducting 101
- Arts Education Websites
- Post-Concert Reflection
- Pre/Post-Concert Activity Extensions



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# Meet the Composers

COMPOSER	BORN – DIED	MUSIC ERA	COUNTRY
<a href="#">Felix Mendelssohn</a>	1809 - 1847	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">Germany</a>
<a href="#">Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov</a>	1844 - 1908	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">Russia</a>
<a href="#">Franz Joseph Haydn</a>	1732 – 1809	Classical (1750 – 1825)	<a href="#">Austria</a>
<a href="#">Johannes Brahms</a>	1833 – 1897	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">Germany</a>
<a href="#">Martin Schmeling</a>	1864 – 1943	20 <sup>th</sup> Century (1900-2000)	<a href="#">Germany</a>
<a href="#">Georges Bizet</a>	1838 - 1875	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">France</a>
<a href="#">Alexander Borodin</a>	1833 - 1887	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">Russia</a>
<a href="#">Richard Wagner</a>	1813 – 1883	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">Germany</a>
J. David Beasley	Contemporary	20 <sup>th</sup> Century (1900-2000)	<a href="#">United States</a>
<a href="#">Johann Strauss, Jr</a>	1825 - 1899	Romantic (1800 – 1900)	<a href="#">Austria</a>



# Pirate's Plunder – Soundscape Adventure

**Students will use instruments, voice, and movement to create a collaborative soundscape.**

## Learning Goals:

- Explore sound and rhythm using classroom instruments and voice
- Develop listening and collaboration skills
- Express creativity through musical storytelling
- Identify and create sounds that represent natural elements

## Activity Overview:

**Theme:** “Captain Canon’s Search for Treasure” Students will help Captain Canon and the SS Symphonic ship navigate the seas and explore their way to the treasure by creating sounds that match different scenes.

## Materials Needed:

- Instruments: shakers, drums, rain sticks, xylophones, tambourines
- Scarves or fabric for movement
- Pirate props (optional): hats, treasure maps, toy ship
- Visual aids: scene cards (e.g., “waves,” “parrot,” “volcano,” “treasure chest”)
- Bluetooth speaker or sound clips (optional for ambiance)

## Instructions:

- Set the Scene: Use a treasure map or visual aids to guide the journey. *“Captain Canon boards the SS Symphonic musical ship in search of treasure. They sail through the ocean, explore the cavern, navigate the tributary, explore tonic island, race a pirate, discover treasure island, and have a crew celebration.”*
- Explore Sounds: Demonstrate each instrument and let students experiment with how it can represent different natural sounds.
- Build the Soundscape: Move through each scene, layering sounds and movements. Encourage students to take turns leading or choosing instruments. Notate or memorize when the sounds/movements occur in the storyline.
- Perform Together: Combine all scenes into one continuous soundscape performance as you narrate the story. Add movement & encourage group coordination. Optionally record or share with another class.
- Reflect & Share: Ask students what sounds they liked best and how they felt during the adventure.
















# Pirate's Plunder – Soundscape Adventure

## Set the Scene:

*“Captain Canon boards the SS Symphonic musical ship in search of treasure. They sail through the ocean, explore the cavern, navigate the tributary, explore tonic island, race a pirate, discover treasure island, and have a crew celebration.”*

## Scene-by-Scene Chart:

 Scene	 Sound Ideas	 Instrument Suggestions	 Movement & Voice Prompts
 <b>SS Symphonic Musical Ship</b>	Ship creaks, sails flapping, crew singing	Rhythm sticks, drums, tambourines	March in place, chant “Aye aye, Captain!”
 <b>Ocean</b>	Waves crashing, sea breeze, seagulls	Ocean drum, scarves, wind chimes	Flowing arms, “whoosh” sounds, bird calls
 <b>Cavern</b>	Echoes, dripping water, mystery	Rainstick, glockenspiel, voice echoes	Whispering, tiptoeing, “Oooh” sounds
 <b>Tributary</b>	Fast/slow stream, sea turtles, school of fish, dolphins	Shakers, finger cymbals, xylophone	Swimming, trickling fingers, dolphin sounds
 <b>Tonic Island</b>	Melodic paradise, tropical birds, harmony	Xylophones, bells, chimes	Sing scale steps, flap arms like birds
 <b>Treasure</b>	Sparkles, chest opening, magical shimmer	Triangle, glockenspiel, sleigh bells	“Ooooh!” gasps, tiptoe to treasure
 <b>Scallywag Pirate</b>	Sneaky footsteps, growls, dramatic music	Low drums, minor chords, voice effects	Stomp, crouch, “Arrr!” and “Grrr!” sounds
 <b>Treasure Island</b>	Excitement, discovery, golden glow	All instruments, layered textures	Big smiles, arms wide, “We found it!”
 <b>Crew Celebration</b>	Singing, dancing, joyful rhythms	Tambourines, clapping, maracas	Circle dance, call-and-response chant





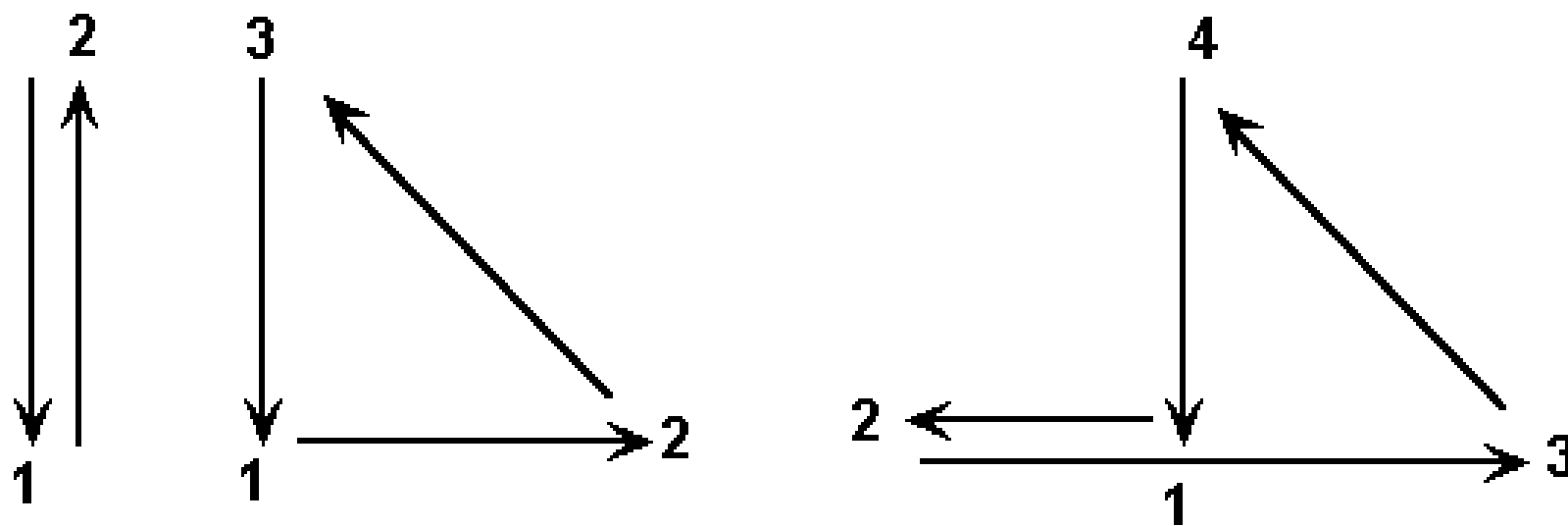
# Conducting 101

Have you ever put on music and pretended that you're leading the orchestra? Wouldn't it be fun to be a **conductor**?

A conductor leads the orchestra. Conductors need to have an idea about how the composer wanted the music to sound. The conductor must be a trained musician, know how to work with people in a group, and must be able to tell the musicians what they want them to do by using a series of gestures.

To show the musicians what they want them to do, a conductor 'draws' special shapes in the air with his or her baton, the stick used by the conductor to give musical directions, according to the number of beats in a bar.

**Try drawing these shapes!**



But a conductor does more than just beat time. What else might a conductor need to show the musicians with their gestures?

How fast or slow the music is.  
How loud or soft the music is or if the music should get louder or softer.  
When to start and stop playing.

Conductors also use their faces to show if the music should be happy, sad, scary, or even angry.

# How to Conduct an Orchestra

## Preparation:

Assemble enough “instruments” for each student. These can be simple percussion instruments, kazooos, or anything homemade or brought from home that will make a sound. You can also have students choose their own imaginary instrument to play and have them sing a song while they “play.”

You will also need something to use as a conducting “baton” - a pencil, pointer or short stick of some kind.

## Procedures:

1. Gather students together and have each select an instrument.
2. Seat the students in a semi-circle.
3. Ask for a volunteer to conduct the group. Let the volunteer arrange various instruments together in sections if he or she likes.
4. As the student is conducting, have them experiment with the following:
  - Have different parts of the group play at certain times.
  - Have the group play louder or softer, faster, or slower.
5. Have students take turns playing instruments and conducting.



## Discussion Questions:

1. What signals did the conductor use to communicate with the musicians?
2. What did it feel like to be a musician? Was it easy or difficult to understand what the conductor wanted?
3. What did it feel like to be the conductor? Was it easy or difficult to communicate with the musicians?  
Did they do what you wanted them to do?

# Arts Education Websites

We believe these are great resources for additional activities and information about the orchestra, its families, and music in general.

- [The Dallas Symphony Orchestra's award winning site for kids.](#)
- [Carnegie Hall's Online Resource Center - Games and Listening Guides.](#)
- [Arts Edge - The Kennedy Center's Site for arts educators.](#)
- [The New York Philharmonic's educational website for children.](#)
- [The San Francisco Symphony's educational website.](#)
- [The Nashville Symphony's educational website.](#)







# Post-Concert Reflection

## Summary & Reflection Questions:

### The Concert:

- What did you think about the concert?
- What was your favorite part of the concert?

### Instruments:

- What is an orchestra?
- What are the four instrument families?
- Name one or more instruments of each family.
- What is your favorite instrument or instrument family & why?

### Elements of Music:

- What is tempo?
- What is rhythm?
- What is pitch?
- What are dynamics? What is forte? What is piano?

### Conducting:

- What is a conductor? What does the conductor do?
- What shapes does a conductor make with their hands or baton?
- Would you rather be the conductor or one of the orchestra members? Why?

## Different ways to review:

- **Whole class discussion** (Q/A)
- **Basket-Ball** (answer correctly to shoot paper into trashcan)
- **Pair-Share** (teacher asks questions and partners share answers)
- **Ball Toss** (when the ball is tossed to you answer the question)
- **Quiz/Quiz/Trade** (prep flash cards w/ questions ahead of time; students walk around the room quizzing each other)
- **Bingo sheet** (one question per square – get initials of someone who knows the answer)
- **Flashcard sort** (prep pictures of instruments; students sort them into instrument families; done as a class or in small groups)
- **Jeopardy**
- **Four corners** (stand in the corner of your favorite instrument family; discuss characteristics & why you like it)
- **Draw to Show** (instrument family map, conductor patterns/purpose)
- **Other Games**



# Pre/Post-Concert Activity Extensions

*Embedded in the video titles are hyperlinks to YouTube. These videos are intended to further engage your students in their Omaha Symphony concert experience as pre- or post-concert activities!*

## [George Meets the Orchestra | An Introduction to the Orchestra for Children](#) (6:30)

- ☐ George chats with players of the Sydney Youth Orchestra and learns all about the four families of the orchestra – strings, brass, woodwind and percussion. A perfect introduction to classical music for kids aged 2-5.

## [Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen](#) (10:24)

- ☐ The video is an audio book of [Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen](#) by Howard Binkow, with examples of how good listeners sit. It also features a fun sing-along song.

## [What is Timbre?](#) (1:47)

- ☐ Introduction to beginner concepts of timbre by Berklee Online.

## [Sesame Street: People in Your Neighborhood -- Conductor](#) (4:03)

- ☐ Murray Monster and Ovejita travel to Lincoln Center to join New York Philharmonic Music Director Alan Gilbert to find out just what a conductor really does.

## [3-year-old Jonathan conducting to the 4th movement of Beethoven's 5th Symphony](#) (4:28)

- ☐ This young conductor is very expressive, moving his baton with the music.



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