

WHAT IS MELODY?

MUSIC CURRICULUM GUIDE



TY
SA
TACOMA
YOUTH
SYMPHONY
ASSOCIATION

Discover Music 2026¹

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PRESENTED BY THE
TACOMA
YOUTH
SYMPHONY
ASSOCIATION

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tysamusic.org

Letter to Teachers

WELCOME TO THE TACOMA YOUTH SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION'S 2026 DISCOVER MUSIC PROGRAM! THE THEME FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR IS *WHAT IS MELODY?*. WE HOPE THAT YOU ENJOY THE STUDY GUIDE WE HAVE CREATED TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS EXPLORE ORCHESTRAL MELODY. ALONGSIDE THIS PROGRAM YOU WILL FIND THE STORIES AND MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE FOUND WAYS TO CREATE LASTING MELODY, INVOKE FEELINGS AND INSPIRE IMAGINATION. WE HOPE YOU FIND THESE TO BE MEANINGFUL RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM. CONTACT MUSIC DIRECTOR, DR. JAMES WELSCH, WITH ANY QUESTIONS: MUSICDIRECTOR@TYSAMUSIC.ORG

SUGGESTIONS FOR INCORPORATING TSYA'S DISCOVER MUSIC PROGRAM CURRICULUM

- **ENJOY** OUR PLAYLIST BEFORE THE CONCERT. HAVE YOUR STUDENTS IDENTIFY DIFFERENT FAMILIES OF INSTRUMENTS IN THE ORCHESTRA,
- **DISCOVER** NEW ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM TO ENGAGE YOUR STUDENTS IN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL RICHNESS THAT CAN BE FOUND THROUGHOUT ALL MUSIC. EXPLORE BOOKS AND MATERIALS THAT WILL SUPPORT YOUR WORK AS A TEACHER IN THESE AREAS.
- **EXPLORE** ADDITIONAL MATERIALS IN THIS GUIDE TO STUDY CONDUCTORS, COMPOSERS, AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND WHAT HELPS CREATE A GREAT MELODY.
- **LISTEN** TO THE MUSIC FROM THIS CURRICULUM GUIDE WHILE STUDENTS WRITE THEIR OWN THOUGHTS ABOUT THE WAY MELODY MAKES THEM FEEL THROUGH CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISES.
- **SHARE** OUR CURRICULUM GUIDE WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS SO THAT STUDENTS CAN STUDY AT HOME.

About Us



Dr. Welsch

About Me

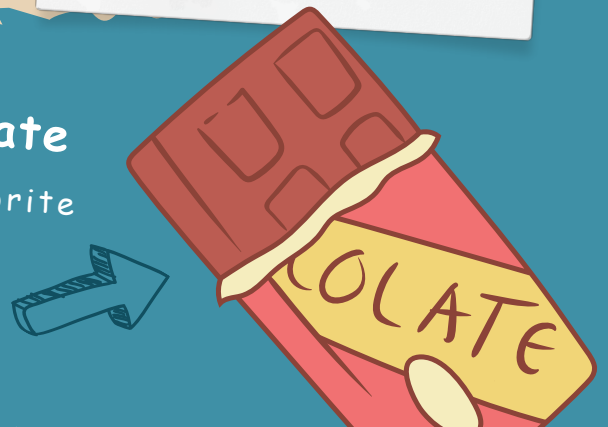
Hello fabulous young people! I have been a conductor for over 20 years! For all of those years I have been involved with teaching young people to appreciate and fall in love with music. I have lived all over the United States and recently moved to Tacoma. I am excited to get to know you and share some amazing music with you!

Even though music is my passion, I love spending time in nature. Often when I am outside, I have a book with me. I adore books - each one is a new adventure, a journey to different worlds and perspectives. I love the way words come alive, painting vivid pictures in my mind. Nature and books are not just a hobby; they are my escape - where I do most of my learning. In books, I find endless stories that inspire and enrich my life. Oh, and here are my pets: Santo (woof) and Onyx (meow).



Santo & Onyx

Chocolate
is my favorite

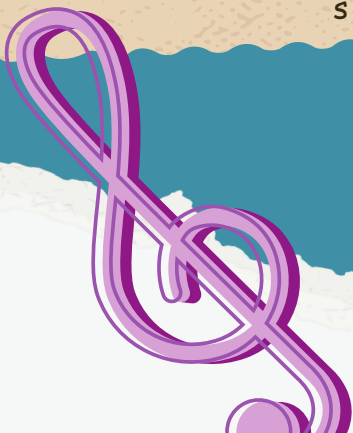


About Us

About TYSA & TYS

Known for providing music instruction to children, the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association provides much more than that. The nurturing familial atmosphere pervades the entire association from management to the students themselves. TYSA strives to challenge young musicians to pursue musical excellence, seek intellectual stimulation, experience the love and joy of music-making, appreciate cultural diversity, and become socially aware and responsible citizens.

Tacoma Youth Symphony (TYS) is a pre-professional symphonic orchestra for advanced high school and college musicians. This orchestra performs music of all styles from the standard professional orchestral repertoire. Conducted by the TYSA Music Director, Dr. James O. Welsch, this nationally renowned orchestra performs three concerts in downtown Tacoma, the Discover Music Concert for elementary school audiences, and the popular Costume Concert featuring music from the big screen!



We live for



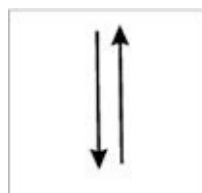
The Role of the Conductor

The conductor is the leader of the orchestra. They lead the orchestra by directing them onstage during rehearsals and performances. A conductor unifies musicians to share the message and intent of the composer. The conductor also sets tempo, starts and ends the orchestra, and leads the beat with their hand or baton. A conductor's right hand keeps the beat with a specific pattern. A conductor's left hand communicates the expressive qualities of music.

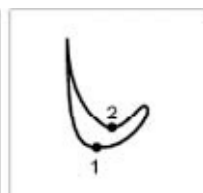
Together, with the musicians, the conductor translates musical symbols into sound that people come to hear. Even though the conductor seems to be in control, a good conductor knows that meaningful music can only be created WITH their musicians and there is a mutual respect that must exist between everyone on the stage in order to accomplish something meaningful together.



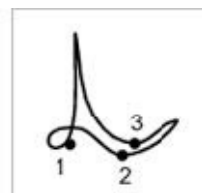
Some patterns a conductor may use



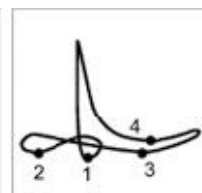
(a) 1-beat pattern



(b) 2-beat pattern



(c) 3-beat pattern



(d) 4-beat pattern

If you conduct, remember to lead with passion!

Featured Repertoire



John Williams: Flight to Neverland

Samuel Coleridge Taylor: Othello Suite

Augusta Holmes: La Nuit et l'Amour

Leroy Anderson: The Typewriter

P.I. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 (IV).



Lesson #1

MEET THE ORCHESTRA!

Objectives

- Students will be able to visually and aurally identify the four instrument families (string, brass, woodwind, and percussion), as well as the physical and musical characteristics of each family.
- Compare and contrast sounds of different orchestral instruments

Materials

- Instrument Flash Cards
- Symphony Orchestra Worksheet
- Computers/devices with internet access
- DSO Kids instrument sound files:
[DSO Kids Instrument Sound Files Here](#)
- Instrument Identification Worksheet

WA Standards
MU: Cr1.1.4

Lesson 1



Lesson #1

MEET THE ORCHESTRA!

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students what information they already know about symphonies or orchestras. Have they seen or heard an orchestra before? Do they know what types of instruments perform in a symphony? Ask the class if anyone plays a musical instrument. If so, do they know which instrument family their instrument belongs to?
2. Show the students the video from **The Flight to Neverland by John Williams** (see Featured Repertoire on p. 7). Do students recognize any instruments? What are some of the different ways the instruments are being played? How do they think specific instruments might produce sound?
3. Split students into groups of three to five to explore the DSO Kids website (link on previous page). Have students access the instrument descriptions and sound files to complete their Orchestra Instrument Worksheet and answer sheet located on pp. 15-17.
4. Ask students how the musicians manage to stay together as they perform. Is someone leading the orchestra? Explain the the conductor determines the tempo (fast or slow) and the dynamics (loud or soft). Ask students to demonstrate how they think the conductor communicates slower tempos, faster tempos, louder dynamics, and softer dynamics. (Answer: Students should move their arms slower/faster for changes in tempo and use larger/smaller gestures for changes in dynamics.) See the prior page about The Role of the Conductor for basic conducting gestures.
5. Explain to students that being a teacher can be a lot like being a conductor. Classroom signals show students what to do in the same way the conductor can signal, or cue, the musicians. Ask students to name the “conductor” of the other activities in their lives, like sports teams (coach), businesses (CEO), and driving a car (crossing guard). Once they have identified people that show signals or lead them through jobs and tasks, ask them what kind of cues they use to get their message across.

ASSESSMENT

Begin by taping a picture of an orchestra instrument (pp. 10-14) to each student’s back. Students will roam the room asking each other only “yes” or “no” questions to discover which instrument they have on their back. Once a student believes they have determined which instrument they have, have them report to the teacher. If the student guesses their instrument correctly, give them a new instrument to discover. The student who has collected the most instruments at the end of the game wins!

INSTRUMENT FLASHCARDS



VIOLIN



VIOLA



CELLO



BASS

INSTRUMENT FLASHCARDS



TRUMPET



FRENCH HORN



TROMBONE



TUBA

INSTRUMENT FLASHCARDS



FLUTE



CLARINET



BASSOON



OBOE

INSTRUMENT FLASHCARDS



TIMPANI



BASS DRUM



SNARE DRUM

INSTRUMENT FLASHCARDS



TAMBOURINE



XYLOPHONE

ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENT WORKSHEET

BRASS

1. Brass instruments produce sound by _____ their lips inside a mouthpiece shaped like a _____ or _____.
2. Match the instrument with its description.

a. Trombone	_____ The player presses valves with the left hand and moves the right hand inside the bell.
b. Trumpet	_____ It is made of 6.5 feet of tubing, bent in an oblong shape.
c. French Horn	_____ It is the only brass instrument to be played in someone's lap.
d. Tuba	_____ The listening excerpt includes a sliding sound, called a glissando, produced by its lack of buttons/valves.

Bonus: Which instrument sound file was from a movie soundtrack? _____

WOODWINDS

1. Which woodwind instrument is not usually in an orchestra? _____
2. The _____ is a larger and lower sounding relative of the clarinet. The _____ is a smaller flute. The _____ is a relative of the contrabassoon.
3. Write the number of reeds each instrument has. (If it doesn't use a reed, put 0)

_____ Flute	_____ Clarinet	_____ Oboe	_____ English horn
_____ Contrabassoon	_____ Piccolo		

WORKSHEET CONTINUED

STRINGS

1. Put the following instruments in order from highest pitched to lowest pitched:
violin, double bass, cello, viola. _____
2. How many strings are on a harp?
a.5
b.88
c.45
- 3.Which string instrument requires players to sit on a stool or stand? _____

PERCUSSION

1. Instruments in the percussion family are played by being _____, _____,
or _____.
2. Who added the bass drum to the symphony in 1782? _____
3. The percussion instruments are an international family. Name three parts of the world
that percussion instruments are from. _____
4. Circle the instruments that are played with sticks or mallets. Put a star beside the ones you
play with your hands.

Xylophone

Tambourine

Snare drum

Chimes

Timpani

Castanets

Cowbell

Cymbals

Glockenspiel

TEACHER RESOURCES

LISTENING LOG ANSWER KEY:

BRASS

1. Buzzing, cup or funnel
2. C, B, D, A
Bonus: French horn

WOODWINDS

1. Saxophone
2. Bass clarinet, piccolo, bassoon
3. Flute - 0; Clarinet - 1; Oboe - 2; Contrabassoon - 2; English horn - 2; piccolo - 0

STRINGS

1. Violin, viola, cello, double bass
2. 45
3. Double bass

PERCUSSION

1. Struck, shaken, scraped
2. Mozart
3. Middle East, Asia, North America, South America, Africa, Europe
4. Played with sticks or mallets (circled): xylophone, chimes, timpani, glockenspiel
Played with hands (starred): tambourine, castanets, cymbals