



## Story of the Orchestra: Listen While You Learn About the Instruments, the Music and the Composers Who Wrote the Music!

*Robert Levine , Meredith Hamilton (Illustrator)*

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Eye-catching illustrations, engaging text and delightful musical selections on the accompanying 70-minute CD lead children ages 8 to 12 (and parents, too!) on an exciting and educational tour through the instruments and music of the orchestra. Illustrated in exquisite and colorful detail with over 100 original drawings and photographs, this package is a fun and exciting musical journey for children.

The engaging text is broken into three sections: an introduction to each instrument of the orchestra from the cello to the timpani, the stories of famous composers from Bach to Stravinsky and an explanation of different musical styles from Baroque to Modern. Each step of the way, children can listen to actual musical examples of what they are learning about. Young readers will hear the sound of an actual violin as they study the instrument and enjoy the playful tune of a Mozart minuet as they read about the composer's precocious exploits as a child.

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## **Story of the Orchestra: Listen While You Learn About the Instruments, the Music and the Composers Who Wrote the Music! Details**

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# **From Reader Review Story of the Orchestra: Listen While You Learn About the Instruments, the Music and the Composers Who Wrote the Music! for online ebook**

## **Erin says**

I really enjoyed this book. The pictures were so bright and colorful, and the overall style and layout of the book was very appealing. I also learned quite a few things about the instruments myself. Children who love music will also love this book.

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## **Ebookwormy1 says**

This book has great ideas that are hobbled by inconsistent execution. There is too much to learn for one go at it, so we covered on chapter a day.

We actually read Part II: Instruments first. Students learn about the organization (where everyone sits) and instruments of the orchestra. Each chapter features an introduction into the featured section, followed by explanation of each individual instrument. Chapters include: Strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, and keyboard. Photographs well illustrate what the instruments look like, but the drawings are inconsistent. While they give visuals for interesting facts, they fail to show how all the instruments are played and we had to fill in from the internet.

What makes this a pleasure, though, is that music is provided for each instrument. Each piece is introduced by informing the student of the composer's inspiration, how the selection progresses and when to notice the instrument being discussed. This gives students an idea of both the individual sounds of the instruments as well as how they all work together. This CD made it delightful!

Then, we turned to Part I: Composers. In a similar manner, the chapters are arranged by Era: baroque, classical, romantic and modern. After a brief introduction to what made the era unique and how it fit into the progression or development of orchestral expression, individual composers of the era are biographed. Silly facts about them are fun, and the opportunity to listen to specific works that demonstrate their style is fantastic. But once again, there are gaps that have to be filled in. Music selections are NOT provided for ALL the composers and we had to fill in again from the internet.

Much of the text, be it in the instrument or composer section, is repetitive and the necessity to fill in from the internet is disappointing. When it was 'working' we enjoyed it immensely, when it wasn't we struggled through. Why couldn't they edit/ finish it to get the fine product they are on the verge of?!

I would LOVE to find something that could pull it all together: orchestra selections for every instrument and composer, consistently engaging text, illustrations of what the instruments are and how they are played. If you find such a resource: LET ME KNOW! In the meantime, this will have to do. 2.5 stars.

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## winda says

Bangeeeet sukanya, selain bisa sedikit tau sejarah musik klasik (mulai era barok, era klasik dalam musik klasik, era romantik, sampai era modern) juga bisa kenal sama komposer-komposer dari setiap era tersebut, baik yang sudah saya tahu nama dan karyanya ada juga yang baru saja saya tahu dari buku ini. Asyiknya, buku ini dilengkapi CD, jadi saya bisa mendengarkan karya dari komposer-komposer tersebut; seperti Wanger, Vivaldi, Bach, Hydn, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Mahler, Debussy, Stravinsky, dll. Serta disertai petunjuk, lagu tersebut menceritakan apa atau efek yang ingin disampaikan oleh komposernya :D

Oiya, ada banyak fakta mengejutkan yang saya dapat dari buku ini, contohnya Debussy yang terinspirasi oleh alat musik gamelan dalam acara Paris Exposition pada tahun 1889 sehingga menghasilkan musik baru! (ini maksudnya gamelan..gamelan Indonesia?! wwww.. kalau bener dari Indonesia, berarti musisi Indonesia di tahun 1889 udah *go international*. PR banget buat saya nyari tau tentang gamelan).

Kayanya abis baca cerita tentang Hydn, saya jadi ngefans deh. Karena dia itu gurunya dua komposer hebat : Mozart dan Beethoven.

Alat musik yang digunakan dalam orkestra juga dibahas dalam buku ini. Disertai contoh lagu yang mewakili instrumen tersebut, tentunya ditambah penjelasan lagu terkait instrumen yang dimainkan.

Saya juga suka ilustrasi gambar di buku ini ^^

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## Luisa Knight says

If you're looking for a good children's text book to introduce your kids to music basics, this is the one to pick. It goes over the musical eras and how they're defined, the most famous composers from those periods, and each instrument in the orchestra has it's own page spread with musical excerpts so you can know what they sound like.

Be sure to include this in your children's social studies course. It'd be best to spread it out into a few days/weeks rather than read straight through.

Ages: 8 - 12

Approx. Duration: 1 hour

Cleanliness: there is an image of a man with a loincloth and another image of someone naked - their backside is visible.

\*\*Like my reviews? I also have hundreds of detailed reports that I offer too. These reports give a complete break-down of everything in the book, so you'll know just how clean it is or isn't. I also have Clean Guides (downloadable PDFs) which enable you to clean up your book before reading it! Visit my website: The Book Radar.

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## Linda Gill says

Subtitle: Listen While You Learn About the Instruments, the Music and the Composers Who Wrote the

## Music!

This really fine book would make a great learning tool for families homeschooling and for anyone who wants to introduce their children to classical music and an orchestra's instruments. The CD adds to the book by having the type of music discussed as well as samples of each instrument. I come from a musical background of playing the clarinet and bassoon in high school along with learning piano during my early elementary ages and guitar as an adult. I don't play any of them now but I love music so this book delights me. To know that such a tool exists made my day when I found it. If I were homeschooling or teaching a classroom full of young children, I would use this great book and CD.

The colorful illustrations are a delight. Each page is filled with a variety of pictures. So searching and discovering brings a different kind of fun while learning so much.

I will give you some of the interworkings of this book...BUT not all, I promise!! There is just too much!! The Table of Contents will give me a board from which to jump off into this sea of music:

### Table of Contents

Orchestra Bob is a "classical music expert" as he calls himself, and is our "guide to the wonderful world of the orchestra." He shows up throughout the book to let us know when to play each track of the accompanying 70-minute CD.

### PART I: THE COMPOSERS

A short history of each composer and a history of each period dovetail throughout this section of the book. A few funny stories of some of the composers are interspersed here. The book does not touch on every composer we might wish had been included, but there are so many and this is a book for children. The idea is to keep their interest. This book is an excellent starting place in order to leap into other well-known composers from here.

Each period has music (on the CD) to illustrate the type composed during that era is included. I list only a few of the many that the CD offers:

#### Baroque Period

1600-1750

Vivaldi - a part of "Four Seasons"

Bach - "1st Prelude from 'Well-Tempered Clavier'"

#### Classical Music Era

1770-1830

Haydn - "Symphony No. 101" or "The Clock"

Mozart - "2nd Movement of 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik'"

Beethoven - "1st Movement of 5th Symphony"

"Last Movement of 9th Symphony"

#### Romantic Era

1805-1910

Diagram of Orchestra seating arrangement

Wagner - "Ride of the Valkyries"

Brahms - "Hungarian Dance"

Mahler - "Symphony No. 4"

## Modern Era

DeBussy - "Arabesque No. 1"

Stravinsky - "The Rite of Spring"

Schoenberg, Gershwin, Copland, Bernstein - no track but brief information

## PART II: THE ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENTS

Details of each instrument include names of each part of that instrument and what the instrument is made of with an illustration alongside. Music on the CD, having a particular type of instrument featured are included. Again, this is only a partial listing:

### String Section

Examples of the music in the section of strings: Bartok's "Concerto for Viola and Orchestra," Rossini's "William Tell Overture," and Saint-Saens "Carnival of Animals"

### Woodwind Section

Examples of music on CD: Bach's "Suite No. 2 for Flute, Strings and Basso," Albinoni's "Sinfonia in G Major for Two Oboes," and Dukas' "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (bassoon)

### Brass Section

Examples of Music: Haydn's "Concerto for Trumpet in E Flat," Mozart's "Horn Concerto No. 1" (French Horn)

### Percussion Section

Examples of Music: Schedrin's "Carmen Suite, Section Changing of the Guard," Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 4"

### Keyboard Instruments

It is explained that there is usually not a keyboard section in an orchestra, but a piano, an organ, or an harpsichord are often featured in one or more pieces in a concert.

Examples of Music: Bach's "Toccato and Fugue in D Minor" (for organ or harpsichord), Beethoven's "2nd Movement - Pathetique Sonata" (piano)

### The Conductor

The conductor is introduced as the person who leads the orchestra. "Most composers were also conductors." In this section, the patterns of directing to the various beats are given to encourage practicing and getting to know how music is written. Some fun may be had here.

I know this is a lot of information; I only gave you a part too. As a music-loving person, I think that this book is a wonderful teaching tool because of its layout, the fun and colorful illustrations, and the way the CD brings each composer and instrument to life in ways that just reading about the instruments or type of music could not duplicate alone. This is a \$20.00 book with CD, but there are discounted copies available across the internet.

Reading Level: 8 - 13 Years

### Author

Robert Levine is an internationally known classical music and opera critic, a writer whose work has appeared in dozens of publications. He was the co-editor of Tower Records' Classical Pulse! Magazine. He has been Senior Editor of ClassicsToday.com, a worldwide web-site devoted to classical music. He is the author of many of the texts in the Black Dog Opera Library, as well as Maria Callas - A Musical Biography, and

Weep, Shudder, Die - A Guide to Loving Opera. He lives in New York City.

Illustrator

Meredith Hamilton

From Mrs. Hamilton's website:

"My illustration tools include everything from copperplate pen nibs and French sepia ink to Photoshop. My work revolves around conveying information visually, whether it be in the form of a mobile app or an illustration for a children's book.

"In 2012 I co-founded BumpBump Books, which makes apps for mobile devices. My ongoing series "A Child's Introduction to..." (Black Dog & Leventhal Publishing) has received both Moonbeam and Parent's Choice Awards. Formerly an Art Director of Information Graphics at Newsweek, I have an MFA in Visual Journalism from the School of Visual Arts, and an AB in Comparative Literature from Brown University ....and oh yes, three children."

You can find her wonderful art @ <http://meredithhamilton.com/index.html>

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### **Dondra says**

This book comes with a CD that earns the whole thing a 5-star rating from this momma. My only complaint is that the modern orchestral pieces are not on the CD. I assume this had to do with copyrights, but it was a major disappointment to be reading and listening along and suddenly lose the option to hear a sample. Even still, five stars!

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### **Margie says**

A great way to be introduced to the instruments of the orchestra, not all, but most. The story/descriptions about composers and musical history as well as the instruments themselves are basic but contain enough detail to present a good grounding in classical music. The illustrations are colorful and point out interesting details of the instruments. The musical selections are very short and chopped off at times but do serve the useful purpose of allowing readers to also be listeners and in the case of music the listening is so very important.

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### **Marmot says**

It seemed ok, but the illustration style was not my preference (to cartoony". Kids weren't as into it as I had hoped. Maybe try getting it out from the library again when they are older.

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### **Cynthia ? ❤️ ❁ says**

My 19 month old twins love music, so this book grabbed my attention. I checked out The Story of the Orchestra a year too early for my children. I loved reading it! My 19 month old twins did not love hearing about the various composers and instruments. This book will be great when they are three, but at a hair away from two this book is way to complex for them. However, the CD that accompanies the book is absolutely

fabulous. It has many selections...not too much, but not too little...of the "best of the best" composers...the length is just right for a novice toddler's interest span. They both love the music so much I hate to return the book to the library. I will make sure to check this one out when they are ready to read and listen as the book it is designed to be enjoyed. For now we will enjoy the music, but not the words.

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### **Bea says**

Robert Levine's expertise in writing about classical music is clear in his beautiful children's work, *The Story of the Orchestra*. The book introduces children to the instruments of the orchestra and includes an overview of the different periods of classical composition and brief but interesting biographies of notable composers of each era. The book's history and facts are accurate and, with the simple organization of sections and subgroups (i.e. Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern are subgroups of the section Composers), the organization is clear, helpful and appropriate. Moreover, the book is informative while still maintaining a fun, lively format. Levine's passion for orchestral music comes through in his careful selection of silly but true facts about the composers and instruments, which are certain to spark a child's senses of humor and wonder. Levine introduces terms specific to the world of the orchestra and carefully defines and explains them in language appropriate for avidly reading elementary or middle school students. Further, the book is supplemented by Levine's tastefully chosen soundtrack, which includes tracks to highlight each instrument and composer. I highly recommend this book for use at home or in the classroom.

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### **Mary Conroy says**

This book comes with a CD of orchestra music that students can listen to as the book is read. I think this book is ideal to utilize to help children develop an understanding of the relationship between music and math. They can count beats and tempos. They will also learn how many instruments make up the different sections of the orchestra and how sheet music is essential to creating complicated melodies.

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### **endang cippy says**

Yang ingin mengenal sebuah orkestra. Buku ini adalah salah satu rekomendasinya.

Kenapa buku ini lama selesai di baca?

Karena aku menikmati CD yang ada di dalam buku ini.

Untuk mengenali bunyi dari berbagai alat musik.

Telinga butuh waktu untuk mengenalinya..

Dan aku puas dengan perkenalan alat-alat musiknya.

Era musik di dalam buku ini disebutkan dengan detail sekali.

Termasuk alat musik Gamelan di era 1800an pun menginspirasi Debusky untuk menciptakan orkestra :)

Ahh penemuan yang di suatu bazar buku di salah satu toko buku langganan Gramedia Cipinang Indah Mall. Menambah pengetahuan tentang musik orkestra itu sendiri.

Yang biasanya hanya aku lihat di Youtube, nama konduktor dari komik bergenre tarian klasik dan modern, atau dari novel-novel yang berlatar teater.

Buku ini melengkapi itu semua..

Hampir lupa aku sampaikan.. Piano, organ dan orgel ternyata berbeda bunyi dan alatnya ya..

Nilai : 8/5 (pendapat egois yang posting)

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### **April Poulter says**

This book is a bit lengthy and may take children a couple of times looking at it to get through the whole thing, but it is a fascinating book. It does a really good job of introducing music. It starts out by introducing various musical periods and composers, then moves on to introduce the different families of instruments (strings, woodwinds, brass, etc.) and specific instruments within that family. I'm a pretty musical person and I think that it does a fairly accurate job of explaining introducing music and instruments. I liked that it had fun illustrations as well as real pictures of the instruments. The illustrations gave it a fun feel while the pictures portrayed what instruments really look like. A unique thing about this book is that it has a CD to go along with it. Almost every page tells you which track to listen to so you can hear a song from the composer that it is talking about, or a clip of the instrument being played so you can know what it sounds like. Not only would this book be good to have in an elementary school classroom, but it would also be good for a music teacher to have on hand. No matter what instrument children learn to play, it is important that they learn about the other instruments as well.

Very informative without being boring!

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### **Allyse says**

I bought this book from a children's book fair a few years ago. Even though I teach, I actually bought the book in the hopes that I would learn something. I did.

I recently got another copy and just donated it to the music teachers at my school. They LOVE it and have managed to write a few lesson plans based on the book. If you have a young child you can encourage to listen to something besides 50cents or Britney Spears this book will help you introduce them to something new in a fun, informative way.

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### **Laura says**

I'm currently using this book to help my students learn music vocabulary. If you have kids or want to help someone learn about composers and instruments, this is a very fun book! Each page has lots of information about a composer or instrument (with funny drawings) and then you listen to a specific track on the CD. So for the flute, you listen to a piece featuring the flute, etc. All the music is classical music. I think I might want to buy this one. The CD itself has lots of good music on it too - even if they all are in short segments.

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