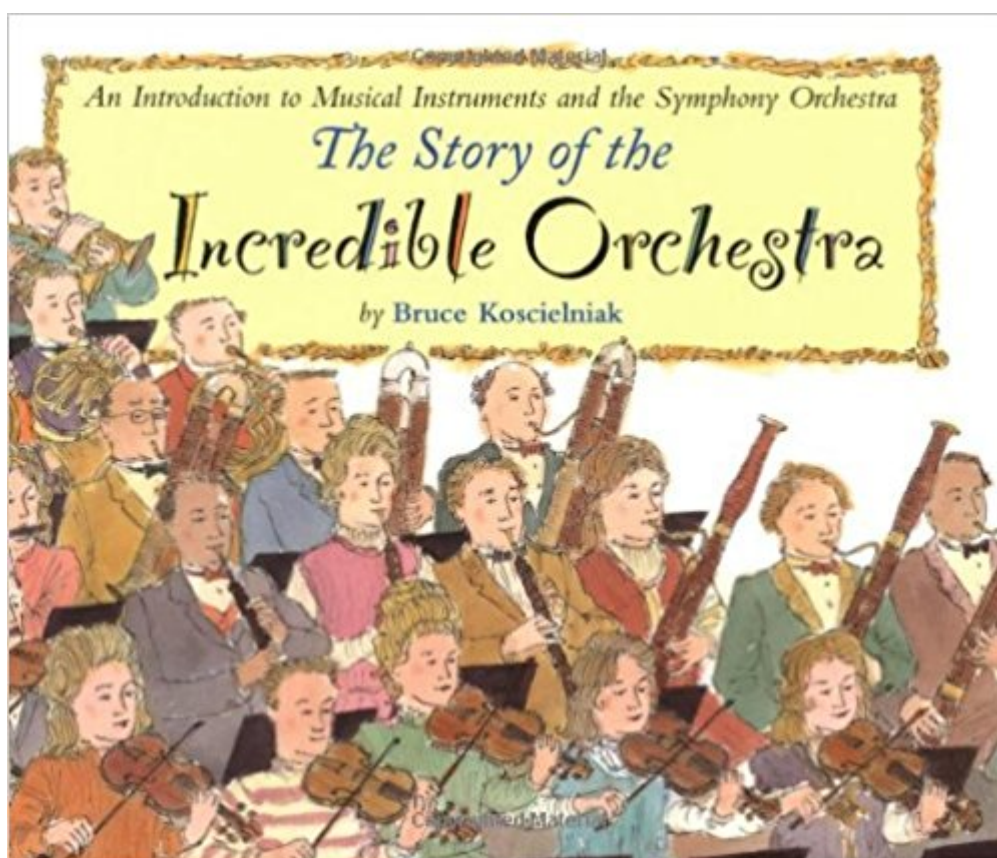


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The Story Of The Incredible Orchestra: An Introduction To Musical Instruments And The Symphony Orchestra



Synopsis

Have you ever seen an orchestra perform? What are all those different instruments and how do they all play just the right note at just the right time? In this fact-filled and entertaining picture book, Bruce Koscielniak gives us a lively look at the history of the orchestra and all the instruments that make up this wonderful gathering of sound. From the "tooter, strings and beaters" of the 1600s to the keyboard synthesizers of today, this playful exploration follows the developments and trends of music and instruments over the past four hundred years.

Book Information

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Informed and lively, Koscielniak's (Hear, Hear, Mr. Shakespeare) fact-filled excursion through music history is just the ticket for budding musicians and music-lovers at large. Deceptively breezy prose and pictures trace the various eras in the development of the modern orchestra, starting with the instrumental groups at the dawn of the 17th century ("Tooters, Strings, and Beaters") and continuing on up to the present day, with a look at synthesizers and computer sound modules. At the same time, Koscielniak explains the evolution of musical styles (Baroque, Romantic, Classical, etc.). He also clues in readers as to how various instruments have changed over the centuries, examining such intriguing instruments as the sackbut (early trombone) and shawm (a forerunner of

the oboe), as well as more familiar ones ("Kettledrums: Putting the Bomp Bomp Bah Bomp in the Orchestra"). Such important historical figures as Bach, Haydn, Duke Ellington and violin craftsman Antonio Stradivari are also introduced. Koscielniak expertly integrates text and art to convey all this information; the pages are busy but not cluttered, piquing interest with carefully selected detail. Close-up sketches show, for instance, a bassoon's double reed or how a piston valve works on a brass instrument. Watercolor wash in muted earth-toned shades bolsters the assured ink drawings, which seem both precise and spontaneous. Endpapers display a rogue's gallery of instruments, grouped by type and period. Ages 4-8. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 2-5-In a similar but much more focused format than his *Hear, Hear, Mr. Shakespeare* (Houghton, 1998), Koscielniak describes the evolution of the modern symphony orchestra and the instruments that comprise it. An informative narrative occupies at least one side of each double-page spread. Watercolor and line fill the pages, providing an up-close look at a variety of musical instruments and methods of sound production. Text inserts and captions accompany the artwork, describing the development of the instruments and their parts, or providing other related anecdotal information. The upbeat, whimsical drawings contrast with the rather formal narrative, which sometimes makes odd assumptions about readers' level of knowledge. Tempo is defined, for example, but not ensembles. The author covers a lot of ground here, perhaps too much, but most youngsters will learn something new. A fine complement to music-education programs. Corinne Camarata, Port Washington Public Library, NY Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

What a wonderfully unique work this one is. I must echo the opinions of several others in that this is an excellent book to introduce the young to the history of the orchestra, its beginning, the origins of many of the instruments and their evolution into what we are offered today. The author begins this study by addressing the small groups who played various instruments before 1600 and point out that in small groups, inside a small area, they were quite effective but outside their limited capacity was not all that dynamic. Instruments such as the guitar, tambourine, recorder, lute, zither, viola, chalumeau and harp are shown and discussed. The author then takes us through changes that occurred during different periods; different eras. He starts with the Baroque period (1600 - 1750) and here discusses not only the Violin, but pays very close attention to the development of the woodwinds, in particular the double-reed woodwinds...oboe, English horn, bassoon and their ilk. From there we are taken to a visit of the Classical Age (1750 - 1820) and are introduced to the crook horns, kettle drums, piano, other keyboard instruments (spinets, virginals, clavichords and the

larger harpsichord. Then comes the Romantic Period (1829 - 1910) and we find the flutes...alto, Flauto piccolo, B-flat clarinet, alto clarinet, long clarinets, and Bassett horn. (all of the single reed family of instruments). And then there is the Brass; cornets, French horn, tubas, tenor horn, piccolo trumpet, and on and on. This work then takes us to the early 1900s, Jazz Age, and ends with our present state with the various electronic devices used to create and or enhance what we already have. For such a relatively small book the author has covered a rather impressive amount of information. The illustrations alone, especially those of early instruments make this work quite worthwhile. Each instruments is drawn in exact detail with many side notes of explanation. Of course the members of the orchestra are all in period clothing and all accomplished with close attention to detail. To be honest, I found one of the last pages in the book to be most gratifying in that the author points out that there is a certain trend for many musicians and orchestras to return to the old and original instruments. Be that as it may...Music is an extremely important aspect of the lives of most of us and will be an important part of the lives of our children and grandchildren. It is important that we, and those that follow us know something of the origins of what we are listening to and enjoying. This work is a wonderful start in that direction and I do recommend it highly. The only possible objection I have to this work is that perhaps the author tried to address an extremely broad and large subject using a rather limited space. On the other hand, he had to start some place. Don Blankenship
The Ozarks

The Story of the Incredible Orchestra is a delightful way to introduce children to the history of the orchestra. Written and illustrated by Bruce Koscielniak, a musician who has played the violin and jazz guitar for years, the book can be enjoyed by both the casual reader as well as the music lover. The double-page spreads begin with a focus on a particular period of music and are followed by studies on the individual instruments introduced during that period. For example, violins during the Baroque Period and clarinets during the Romantic Period. The text itself is engaging and well-placed questions help focus attention on important points. Colorful illustrations spill across the pages, bringing the text to life and engaging the reader in a deeper understanding of what is being discussed. Side-notes and smaller diagrams explain the text further and give specific definitions and notes of interest. The end pages depict and name by group all the instruments that are to be found in a symphony orchestra. Koscielniak encourages readers to make orchestral music a part of their lives, and his book may well inspire a budding young musician to pick an instrument and join in.

Come meet the orchestra, and learn about the fascinating history and evolution of this large

ensemble, its individual instruments, and the wonderful music it plays. From its predecessor, the Beaters, Tooters, and Strings, to the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods, and the modern orchestras of today, Bruce Koscielniak takes the reader on a marvelous and inviting 400 year journey. His engaging and entertaining text is written in an easy to read, conversational style, and is full of historical information, fun facts, and trivia. Busy, detailed illustrations enhance the text, and contain additional facts, definitions, diagrams, and other notes of interest, and youngsters will enjoy exploring all the artwork, finding something new and exciting every time they open the book. Perfect for kids 7 and older, *The Story Of The Incredible Orchestra* is a creative and innovative book that's sure to whet the appetite and peak the interest of budding musicians everywhere. As Mr Koscielniak tells us, "We've seen the orchestra develop over the past four hundred years, always with a blend of ideas old and new. Without a doubt, the incredible orchestra, whatever its shape, will roll onward-to the great enjoyment of listeners along the way." Read, learn, and enjoy!

If you want your child to really understand the history of musical instruments, this book is a good place to start. It's more like a concise, nicely illustrated children's textbook than a story book, but could certainly hold the interest of a child who wants to learn about what's behind the music. It's probably most appropriate for 6-9 year olds.

I'm a cellist, and I really love this book...and I'm 50 years old! If you (or your kids) liked "The Philharmonic Gets Dressed," you'll enjoy this one, too. The text (written by a musician) is informative, and the delightful illustrations are amazing in detail and accuracy. I love that they even have baroque bows and bow holds on viol players!

A wonderful book that anyone who has a child, they want to share the beauty and imagination of music through this book. Highly recommended.

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