

# The Orchestra's Secret Formula

For 1st-4th grades







## Lesson 1 — Instruments of the Orchestra

### Objective

Students will learn the characteristics of each instrument family in the orchestra through sight and sound and will be able to identify instrument families in music as they listen.

### Suggested Materials

- Instrument Families of the Orchestra graphic (provided)
- Instruments of the orchestra videos available at 
- Behind the Music excerpts (provided)
- Audio recordings
  - o RICHARD STRAUSS *Also sprach Zarathustra* “Sonnenaufgang” (Sunrise) 
  - o JULIAN AGUIRRE *Gato* 
  - o WILLIAM GRANT STILL *Danzas de Panama No. 2* 
- Whiteboard/smart board or other classroom tool for recording observations

### New York State Arts Standards

MU:Re7.1.1a-4a  
MU:Re7.2.2a-4a  
MU:Re8.1.1a-4a

### New York State English Language Arts & Literacy Standards

Reading, Standards 1 & 2  
Speaking & Listening, Standards 1, 2, 4 & 6  
Language, Standards 1, 3, 4 & 6

### Procedure

- 1) Share the Instrument Families of the Orchestra graphic with students. A composer uses various instruments to achieve different sounds within the music. Individual instruments are grouped into families they share similar characteristics with.
- 2) Create a chart with four columns- one for each instrument family- and label each column. Choose one of the instrument families and ask students to identify what physical characteristics the instruments in this family share. Record the information in the appropriate column.
- 3) As you are discussing each instrument family, play a recording of several instruments that belong to the family so that students can examine how each individual instrument looks and sounds. You may already have audio resources in your classroom for this, but if not, quality musical instrument sounds from the BPO can be accessed at [bpo.org/play-on-wny](http://bpo.org/play-on-wny).
- 4) Repeat for each instrument family while recording students' observations under each column until all four families are complete.
- 5) Now that students have learned how individual instruments look and sound, have them identify the featured instrument family in the three music examples. Play each example for students and ask them to identify the instrument family being highlighted in the music. What individual instruments did they hear that helped them determine the featured instrument family? What does the music sound like or make them think of?

## Lesson 1 — *Instruments of the Orchestra* (continued)

### BEHIND THE MUSIC

**RICHARD STRASS** (1864-1949)

**“Sonnenaufgang” (Sunrise) from *Also sprach Zarathustra***

Written by German composer Richard Strauss, *Also sprach Zarathustra* is a tone poem, or symphonic poem. A tone poem is a piece of orchestral music with no breaks that evokes a landscape, a painting, a story, or some other non-musical source. Strauss was inspired by a philosophical book to write the piece. The music suggests different moods and imagery throughout the various sections. The opening, “Sunrise,” is a powerful fanfare that has been used in many movies.



**JULIAN AGUIRRE** (1868-1924)

***Gato***

Julian Aguirre was an Argentine composer, pianist, and champion of folk music. He was also active in the field of music education, founding two music schools in Argentina. Aguirre wrote more than sixty piano pieces, of which, *Gato*, is one of the most popular. “Gato” means “cat” in Spanish.



**WILLIAM GRANT STILL** (1895-1978)

***Danzas de Panama No. 2***

William Grant Still's *Danzas de Panama* are based on a collection of Panamanian folk tunes compiled by American violinist Elisabeth Waldo. Each movement reflects several different dances. The second movement, “Mejorana y Socavon”, sounds like a carefree Panamanian waltz, followed by a somewhat ominous dance.



Violin



Viola



Cello



Bass



## Strings

Oboe



Bassoon



Flute



Clarinet



## Woodwinds

Trumpet



French horn



Tuba



Trombone



## Brass

Snare drum



Chimes



Tambourine



Triangle



Timpani



## Percussion