

# The Orchestra

An orchestra is a large group of musicians who play on a variety of instruments. It is usually divided into four main sections: strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion. There can be as few as 35 or as many as 120 musicians playing together, depending on the piece of music that is being played.

The orchestra has changed in size and instrumentation throughout its history. During the Baroque Period of music, about 1700 AD, the orchestra included strings, oboes and horns. Sometimes flutes, trumpets and timpani were added.

In the mid 18th century (Classical Period), the orchestra usually included strings and two of each wind instrument - flutes, oboes, horns and bassoons. As the orchestra grew in size, it became important to have a conductor to lead the group.

By the end of the 18th century (Romantic Period), the standard orchestra also included 2 clarinets, 2 trumpets and timpani.

In the late 19th century and on to present day, composers often write for an orchestra that includes trombones, tuba, harp and a variety of additional percussion instruments. These may include cymbals, bass drum, snare drum, piano, harp and celesta.

The Jackson Symphony, founded in 1961, is a professional orchestra comprised of musicians from Jackson, Memphis, Nashville, West Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Mississippi. All of the musicians are paid for their services, though some of them may not be leading a full-time career in the music field.

During the 2007-2008 season, the Jackson Symphony will perform seven subscription concerts, two school concerts, the free Starlight Symphony and two Christmas Gift to the Community concerts. In addition, the Jackson Symphony Brass Quintet presented in-school workshops and The Symphony sponsored a Brazilian Percussion tour. The Symphony's many educational projects include a beginning string orchestra and full Youth Orchestra, Prelude: Concert Previews, private string lessons and the Symphony League's *Color of Music*, an art contest for young people. The art work from this contest will be exhibited at the Civic Center during the School Concert.

The number of musicians in the Jackson Symphony Orchestra varies according to the music selected for each program. The orchestra you will hear at this year's school concert will consist of approximately fifty-five players.

