Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

Circle group

Before a concert, an orchestra does something that may sound odd. One note rings out from the stage. Then many instruments join it in a wide hum. This is the tuning of the orchestra. It follows a set order.

The first note usually comes from the oboe. The oboe is a thin wooden instrument with a double reed. It plays the note A. Next, the other woodwinds and the brass play their A. Last, the strings tune to it. Each string player turns pegs or small screws until the sound matches.

Why the oboe? Its tone is clear and strong, so it can be heard over many instruments. An oboe also holds its pitch well. It cannot be bent as easily as a string. Strings often slip out of tune when the room warms up or a player moves. An instrument that stays steady gives everyone the same target.

Tuning matters. Even a tiny gap between two instruments makes a wobbly sound. When all match the same A, the music joins together. Then the lights go down, the conductor steps in, and the concert can start.

Questions

1. Which instrument usually plays the first note for tuning?

_____

_____

2. What note does the oboe play?

_____

_____

3. Who tunes last?

_____

_____

4. Why is the oboe a good choice for the first note?

_____

_____

5. What can make strings slip out of tune?

_____

_____

6. What happens when two instruments are a little different in pitch?

_____

_____

Words to know

orchestra: a large group of musicians who play together
tuning: adjusting an instrument so its notes are correct
woodwinds: instruments such as flutes and oboes that are blown
pegs: small knobs that are turned to tighten strings
conductor: the person who leads an orchestra

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

Triangle group

Before a concert begins, an orchestra does something that may sound strange. A single note rings out from the stage, and then dozens of instruments join it, making a wide hum. This is the tuning of the orchestra, and it follows a careful order.

The first note usually comes from the oboe. The oboe is a thin wooden instrument played with a double reed, and it sounds the note A. Next, the other woodwinds and the brass add their A. Last, the strings tune to it, and each string player turns pegs or small screws until the sound matches.

Why the oboe? Its tone is clear and strong, so it can be heard over many other instruments. An oboe also holds its pitch well, because it cannot be bent easily as a string can. Strings often slip out of tune as the room warms up or a player moves. Starting with an instrument that stays steady gives everybody the same target.

Tuning matters because even a tiny difference between two instruments makes a wobbly, uneasy sound. When every instrument matches the same A, the music joins together. Then the lights lower, the conductor steps in, and the concert can begin.

Questions

1. Which instrument usually plays the first note for tuning?

_____

_____

2. What note does the oboe sound?

_____

_____

3. Who tunes last?

_____

_____

4. Why is the oboe a good choice for the first note?

_____

_____

5. What can make strings slip out of tune?

_____

_____

6. What happens when two instruments are only slightly different in pitch?

_____

_____

Words to know

orchestra: a large group of musicians who play together
tuning: adjusting an instrument so its notes are correct
woodwinds: instruments such as flutes and oboes that are blown
pegs: small knobs that are turned to tighten strings
conductor: the person who leads an orchestra

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

Square group

Before a concert commences, an orchestra does something that may seem rather peculiar. A single note rings out from the stage, and then dozens of instruments gradually join it, producing a broad, swelling hum. This ritual is the tuning of the orchestra, and it follows a careful sequence.

The first note generally comes from the oboe, a slender wooden instrument played with a double reed, which sounds the note A. Next, the remaining woodwinds and the brass sections add their A, and finally the strings tune to it, with each string player turning pegs or tiny screws until the sound matches precisely.

Why the oboe? Its tone is clear and penetrating, so it can be heard above many other instruments. The oboe also holds its pitch remarkably well, because it cannot be bent as easily as a string can. Strings frequently slip out of tune as the room warms up or as a player moves. Beginning with an instrument that stays steady gives everybody an identical target.

Tuning is important because even a minuscule difference between two instruments creates a wobbly, uneasy sound. When every instrument matches the same A, the music fuses together. Then the lights lower, the conductor steps forward, and the concert is ready to begin.

Questions

1. Which instrument generally plays the first note for tuning?

_____

_____

2. Which note does the oboe sound?

_____

_____

3. Who tunes last?

_____

_____

4. Why is the oboe a sensible choice for the first note?

_____

_____

5. What can cause strings to slip out of tune?

_____

_____

6. What happens when two instruments differ only slightly in pitch?

_____

_____

Words to know

orchestra: a large group of musicians who play together
tuning: adjusting an instrument so its notes are correct
woodwinds: instruments such as flutes and oboes that are blown
pegs: small knobs that are turned to tighten strings
conductor: the person who leads an orchestra

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

Easier · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.3

1. The oboe.
2. The note A.
3. The string players.
4. Its tone is clear and strong, and it holds its pitch well.
5. A room that warms up or a player who moves.
6. They make a wobbly sound.

Triangle: Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

This passage · 200 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.1

1. The oboe.
2. The note A.
3. The string players.
4. Its tone is clear and strong, and it holds its pitch well.
5. A warming room or a player's movement.
6. They make a wobbly, uneasy sound.

Square: Why the Oboe Gives the Orchestra Its Note

Harder · 209 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.2

1. The oboe.
2. The note A.
3. The string players.
4. Its tone is clear and penetrating, and it holds its pitch well.
5. A room that warms up or a player who moves.
6. They create a wobbly, uneasy sound.