Alabama Symphony Orchestra
2026/2027 Teaching Guide



Music is All Around You

Alabama
Symphony
Orchestra

Alabama Symphony Orchestra

“The Symphony is All Around You”

Christopher Confessore, Conductor



Activities to prepare and inspire your visit to the orchestra:

Created by Mrs. Deanna Bell, Mrs. Melissa McIntyre, and Mrs. Rachel Adams

Ludwig van Beethoven – Symphony No. 5 – Mvt. I

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* – Mvt. I

Gioachino Rossini – *William Tell Overture* – Finale

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – *Waltz of the Flowers* from *The Nutcracker*

Leonard Bernstein – *Mambo* from *West Side Story*

John Williams/arr. Curnow – *NBC Nightly News Theme*
arr. Moore – *Baby Shark*

Koji Kondo/arr. Raine-Soto – *Super Mario Bros.*

John Williams/arr. Lavender – *A Tribute to John Williams*

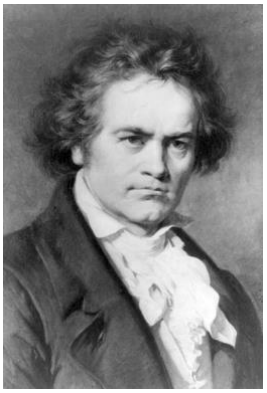
Lesson Objectives:

- Students will listen actively and describe how the music makes them feel.
- Students will identify musical contrasts (soft/loud, fast/slow, high/low).
- Students will explore “musical concepts” through movement and creative thinking.
- Students will identify the instruments of the orchestra.

Alabama Course of Study:

- Scan QR Code for the New and Updated Standards

1. Ludwig van Beethoven – Symphony No. 5 – Mvt.



- **What is a Symphony?**
https://kids.kiddle.co/Symphony

- **Listening/Watch: (8 minutes)**
Gustavo Dudamel - Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 - Mvmt 1 (Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar)

If desired, HERE is a listening log students can fill out while listening. (grades 1-3) HERE is one for older students. (grades 3-5)

Briefly discuss their answers after listening.

- **Learn about Beethoven's Life (1770 - 1827) - Germany:**

  Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj8XsvyTtEc&t=13s
  Website: https://www.classicsforkids.com/composer/ludwig-van-beethoven/
  Book Read-Aloud: What if You'd met Beethoven? - Read Aloud

- **Movement Activity with Scarves: (3 minutes)**

  - Pass out colored scarves or streamers to students and ask them to spread out in the room, if able.
  - If you choose, have students mirror YOUR movements, emphasizing dynamics (loud - forte, soft - piano), the melodic direction in the piece (the way the melody moves up and down), and the rhythmic qualities (the starts and the stops, the faster and slower portions of the piece)

OR

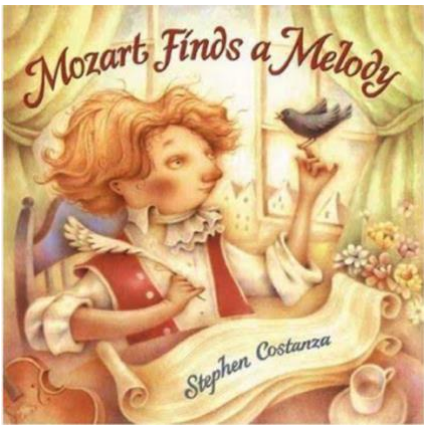
- Have students follow the line drawings in the video below with their scarves or streamers.

- Symphony No. 5 Scarf Tracing Video

Complete Word Search (attached at the end of packet)

Color and Create (15 minutes)
  - Students can color a worksheet (attached at the end of packet)

2. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Eine Kleine Nachtmusik – Mvt. 1



1. Listening: (8 minutes)

   Audio:
   https://youtu.be/oy2zDJPIgwc?si=cgKBIO8aRKG7vtzB

   Digital Mapping:
   https://youtu.be/tSL5-wxgvFY?si=m1EhzFrMecbAlnR6

2. Read aloud (14 minutes)

   by Lisa Weinhold, Principal Flute from the ASO
   https://youtu.be/N1cXE3GusIw?si=SM-M6IjhB1nJKFl6

3. Learn about Mozart (2 minutes)

   - His full name was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
   - He lived over 250 years ago
   - He started playing music when he was about 5 years old
   - He wrote hundreds of songs before he was an adult
   - People still listen to his music today!

   "Mozart was a child prodigy—that means he was *really* good at music when he was still a kid, just like you!"

4. Creative Draw (5 minutes)

   - Ask students to draw what the music makes them think of.
     - Colors
     - Animals
     - Feelings
     - Stories

5. Learn about the String Family in the Orchestra

   https://aptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/meet-the-strings-video/oso-virtual-instruments/

6. Color and Create (15 minutes)

   - Students can color a worksheet. (attached at the end of packet)

3. Gioachino Rossini -- William Tell Overture



Listen/Watch:

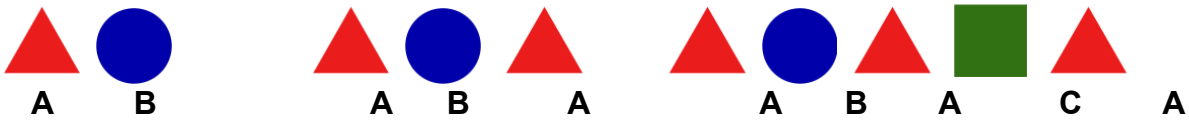
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIbYCOiETx0

If desired, HERE is a listening log students can fill out while listening. (grades 1-3)
HERE is one for older students. (grades 3-5)

Form - Discuss the following:

What is FORM in music? Form is the way a piece of music is put together. Most music follows some sort of organized pattern.

Let's compare musical form with shape patterns. Each shape is a different letter starting with A.



Music has these same forms. Each section (or new melody) of a piece of music is named for a different letter. The William Tell Overture is in a form called RONDO FORM. That means the sections keep coming back AROUND to the A section. It's pattern in shapes looks like this:



What would the letters name be? Listen to the music again. Every time you hear the main melody come in, raise your hand.

Activities for Movement:

Percussion Play along: William Tell Overture Finale - Percussion Play along
Got a Parachute? CHECK OUT THIS ACTIVITY taken from "Parachutes, Ribbons, and Scarves, Oh My!" by Artie Almeida

Extension Activity: In learning about form, students can create their own forms using one of the following worksheets. Activities can be done alone or in a group.
my shape song full creation.pdf (suggested for older students - 2-3 grades)

- Students can add a body percussion movement or a classroom instrument to each shape. Each shape could last for 4 - 8 beats.

8 beat kindergarten patterns.pdf - (suggested for K-2 students)

- Students can color each circle to create their own pattern. Add body percussion or classroom instruments. Each circle can represent 1, 4, or 8 beats.

Color and Create (15 minutes)

- Students can color a worksheet (attached at the end of packet)

4. Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky -- Waltz of the Flowers from "The Nutcracker"



- What is a **BALLET?** Ballet is a beautiful and graceful style of dance that tells a story or expresses a feeling without using words. Dancers use precise, flowing movements—like leaps and spins—to the rhythm of music, and they wear special soft shoes or stiff point shoes.
- What is a **WALTZ?** A waltz is an elegant dance piece written in ¾ time. You can often hear the "oom pah-pah" of the meter.
- **Watch an orchestra play the piece:** Tchaikovsky: Waltz of the Flowers from The Nutcracker Suite. Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.
- **Watch the ballet:** Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" - Waltz of the Flowers | Choreography by George Balanchine
- **Arts Integration Activity: Music and Visual Art**

Lesson Overview

- **Grade Level:** K–3 (Easily adaptable)
- **Objectives:** Students will recognize the 3/4 time signature of a waltz, analyze how musical tempo affects movement, and express auditory emotions visually through painting.
- **Materials Required:** Heavy drawing paper, watercolors, crayons/pastels, speakers for playing the music, and optional flower reference pictures.

Part 1: Music and Movement (Listening & Responding)

Choreographed Blooming: Direct students to crouch into a small ball (a closed bud) during the slower, moody introductions. As the sweeping, fast-paced strings swell, have them slowly rise and stretch their arms outward to represent a flower "blooming". **Movement Exploration:** Have students stand in a circle with scarves or ribbons. They can create their own movement or mirror you. HERE is an example.

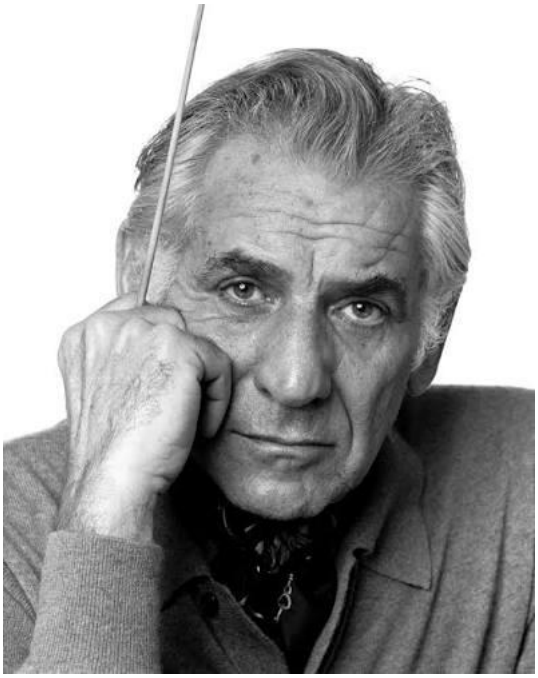
Part 2: Visual Arts Integration (Painting & Expression)

Inspiration: Introduce the artist **Georgia O'Keeffe**, who is famous for her massive, zoomed-in flower paintings. **Direct Connection:** Ask students: *"How did the music make you feel? Was it joyful, calm, or energetic?"* Tell them to channel those musical emotions and the shape of blooming into a giant flower on their canvas. **The Creation:** Have students draw their flower so large that the petals fall off the edges of the paper. Encourage students to use bright, warm colors inspired by the joyous melodies of the piece. Use a wax-resist technique by outlining with oil pastels or heavy crayons before painting over with liquid watercolors.

Part 3: Closure and Reflection: Display all the finished paintings around the room. Play the "Waltz of the Flowers" one last time while students do a "gallery walk" to view each other's art. Have them discuss how the different visual elements—such as color choices and brush strokes—mirror the different instruments in the orchestra.

5. Leonard Bernstein – Mambo from West Side Story

- Listen and View: https://youtu.be/kokbJvSEMUY?si=9dl56_qzWGW7D7nT
- Listening Discussion:



1. What made *Mambo* sound exciting?
2. How did Bernstein use rhythm?
3. What happened when the dynamics changed?
4. How did the tempo affect the music?
5. What instruments or instrument families did you notice?
6. How did the music make you feel?
7. Why do you think Bernstein used a dance style in this musical?

- Creative Composition – "Our Own Mambo"

Have students create a **one-measure rhythm**.

For example: ♩ ♪♪ ♩ ♩

Students can perform their rhythm using:

- Clapping
- Drums
- Rhythm sticks
- Hand drums
- Maracas/shakers
- Body percussion

- Class performance

Divide the class into three groups:

Group 1: Steady beat
Group 2: Ostinato
Group 3: Student-created rhythms

Conduct the class and gradually add each layer.

Then have everyone perform together.

6. “Baby Shark” Arranged by Moore



Choose which arrangement you would like your students to hear - they will probably sing along (or cringe) and that’s ok!

This is the arrangement played in the ASO Concert:
This is the original.

Arts Integration Lesson with Measurement and Dynamics

Lesson Overview

- **Grade Level:** 1–4 (Easily adaptable)
- **Objectives:** Students will recognize dynamic markings ranging from pp - ff and crescendo and learn about scale and proportion through measurements.
- **Materials Required:** measuring tapes or sticks, visuals of dynamic markings

Part 1: Measurement - Students will lay out on the floor to show the length of different types of sharks. Here are some examples you can use.

Bonnethead Shark: ~3–4 feet (90–120 cm). The smallest member of the hammerhead family.
Blacktip Reef Shark: ~5–6 feet (1.5–1.8 m). Recognizable by the black tips on its fins, commonly found in tropical coral reefs.
Bull Shark: ~7–11 feet (2.1–3.4 m). Highly adaptable, famous for its stout body and ability to swim in both saltwater and freshwater rivers.
Great White Shark: ~15–20 feet (4.5–6.0 m). The ocean's most famous apex predator.
Tiger Shark: ~10–24 feet (3.0–7.3 m). Nicknamed the "trash cans of the sea" due to their varied diet.
Whale Shark: ~40–60 feet (12–18 m). The undisputed giant of the sea, which—despite its massive size—is a gentle filter feeder

Part 2: Dynamics in Music - Students will learn about how dynamics are measured from softest to loudest using dynamic marking visuals ranging as follows:

pp p mp mf f ff

What are dynamics? Dynamics are how loud and soft a piece of music is.
How can we compare the dynamic markings to the measurements of our sharks? Place dynamic visuals according to the sizes of the shark to compare the two measurements.
How can we perform our “Baby Shark” song using dynamics?

- Work with the students to assign a dynamic marking to each verse, going from softest to loudest.
- Explain crescendo.

Use one of the recordings listed above. Students can sing along using the appropriate dynamic marking for each verse.

Extension: Add unpitched percussion playing to the appropriate dynamic marking.

Additional Resources: Baby Shark by Pink Fong | Steady Beat Boomwhackers - easy
Baby Shark (Pink Fong) Ukulele Play Along - difficult

6. Koji Kondo/arr. Raine-Soto – *Super Mario Bros*



Koji Kondo/arr. Raine-Soto – Super Mario Bros.
Grades 2-4 | 20-30 minutes

♫ LEVEL 1 — MEET KOJI KONDO!

- Read Aloud: Who is Koji Kondo?

Koji Kondo is a Japanese composer and musician who has created music for many Nintendo video games. He joined Nintendo in the 1980s and became one of the most important composers in video-game music. Kondo wrote the famous music for Super Mario Bros. When he created the music, he had to think about more than just making a good song. The music needed to work with what players were doing on the screen. Mario runs. Mario jumps. Mario gets coins. Mario enters pipes and explores new worlds. The music helps make all of those actions feel exciting!
Today, we are going to listen like composer detectives. Can you hear Mario moving inside the music?

♫ LEVEL 2 — LISTEN FOR MARIO!

- Play the Super Mario Bros. Arr. Raine-Soto. This is the ASO arrangement.

Here is the original. Super Mario Bros Original Theme
First Listen —
"Just Listen!"

Students close their eyes and imagine Mario moving through a level.
Ask: "What do you picture Mario doing while you hear this music?"
Can also add instrument identification: "What instruments do you hear in this arrangement?"
Second Listen —
"Become Mario!"
Students silently act out what they hear.
Listen for musical clues:

🏃 Running: Repeated, energetic rhythms
⬆ Jumping: Melodic movement that seems to lift upward
❓ Collecting coins: Bright, playful musical sounds
👣 Moving through a level: A steady rhythmic pulse
☆ Adventure: Energetic melodies and changing musical ideas Important: Explain that the music does not literally make every Mario movement sound. Instead, rhythm, melody, tempo, articulation, and musical energy can make us imagine movement.

♫ LEVEL 3 — COMPOSER CHALLENGE
"Imagine Koji Kondo asks you to compose music for one Mario action."
Students choose one:
🏃 Running
⬆ Jumping
❓ Collecting coins
🚪 Entering a new level
💀 Facing an enemy

Have students describe or create a rhythm for their action. Students may use vocal expression or instruments
to compose this music.

🍄 ☆ MISSION COMPLETE! ☆ 🍄

Extra activities:
-Boomwhacker Play Along
-Compare and contrast Raine-Soto arrangement with original music. How was the music changed to fit a live orchestra?

7. John Williams/arr. Lavender – *A Tribute to John Williams*



A Tribute to John Williams — Arranged by Paul Lavender

Time: 30–45 minutes

Describe how music can help communicate a character, setting, or emotion.

1. Hook —
"Name That Movie!" | 5 minutes
Play A Tribute to John Williams
See if students can name what movie each excerpt is from.
At the end ask students: "What do these pieces have in common?"
Reveal that all the music was composed by John Williams. Briefly explain that Williams is one of the most famous film composers of all time and has written music for some of the most recognizable movies in history.

2. History of John Williams
Watch Meet John Williams
Play a game of true or false! Give a statement about John Williams. If students think the statement is true, they stand up, if they think it is false they stay seated.

Example statement: John Williams learned multiple instruments as a kid. (That's true!)
Closing —

"Be the Composer" | 3–5 minutes
Ask students: "If you were scoring a movie, what kind of scene would you use this music for? Why?" Allow 2–
3 students to share.
Separate class into three instrument groups-two different kinds of unpitched percussion, one barred instrument. Then give them a movie scene scenario to compose a song for. Look for understanding of dynamics in relation to emotion.
Example: Imagine you are a superhero hiding from a villain trying to not get caught. (Look that students play soft to convey this emotion.)

■ BEETHOVEN: COMPOSER WORD SEARCH ■

Find the hidden words about Ludwig van Beethoven. Words may go across, down, backward, or diagonally!

Name: _____ Date: _____
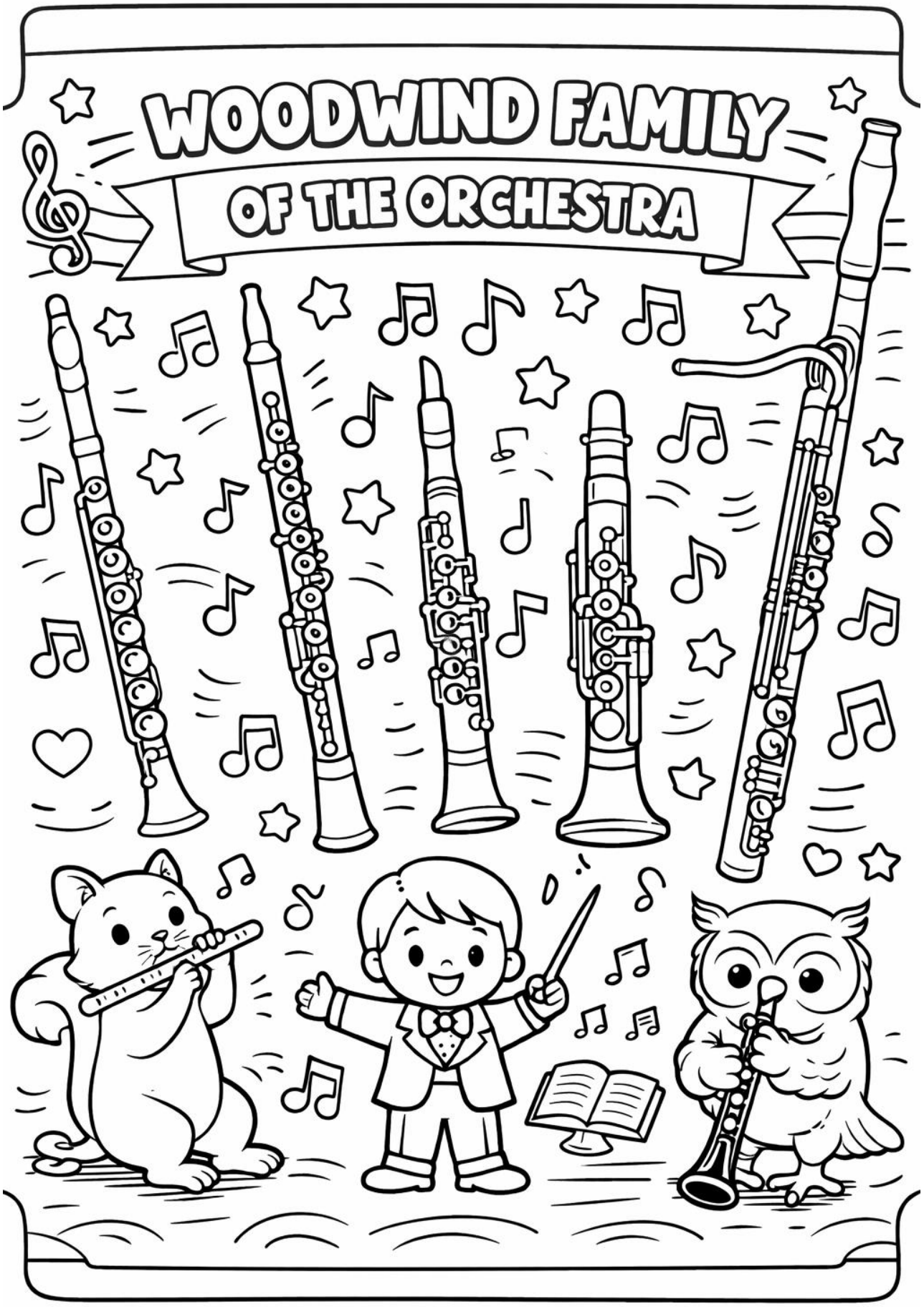
N	B	A	C	G	H	Q	T	A	R	G	W	U	W	R	C
N	H	Y	O	J	O	T	E	D	O	O	S	I	Z	A	O
Y	Z	F	W	N	K	O	R	C	H	E	S	T	R	A	N
I	N	E	G	Y	K	D	S	Y	M	P	H	O	N	Y	D
C	I	M	D	L	L	U	D	W	I	G	L	T	T	I	U
Z	N	B	X	R	E	S	O	P	M	O	C	H	O	R	C
D	T	M	C	R	J	U	T	C	L	S	G	G	W	C	T
B	H	V	H	Y	J	C	L	H	D	I	M	I	O	C	O
U	L	F	L	L	G	A	V	I	L	W	V	U	C	I	R
T	U	F	R	X	S	H	F	N	O	M	I	U	W	S	R
H	V	K	Y	S	Y	B	O	H	F	I	F	T	H	U	B
Z	K	M	I	I	C	O	G	S	W	K	G	U	P	M	M
U	O	C	E	I	M	E	H	X	O	N	A	I	P	R	R
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D	E	U	F	Z	V	N	T	C	M	M	T	O	Q	I	R

■ WORD BANK

BEETHOVEN LUDWIG COMPOSER PIANO SYMPHONY MUSIC GERMANY
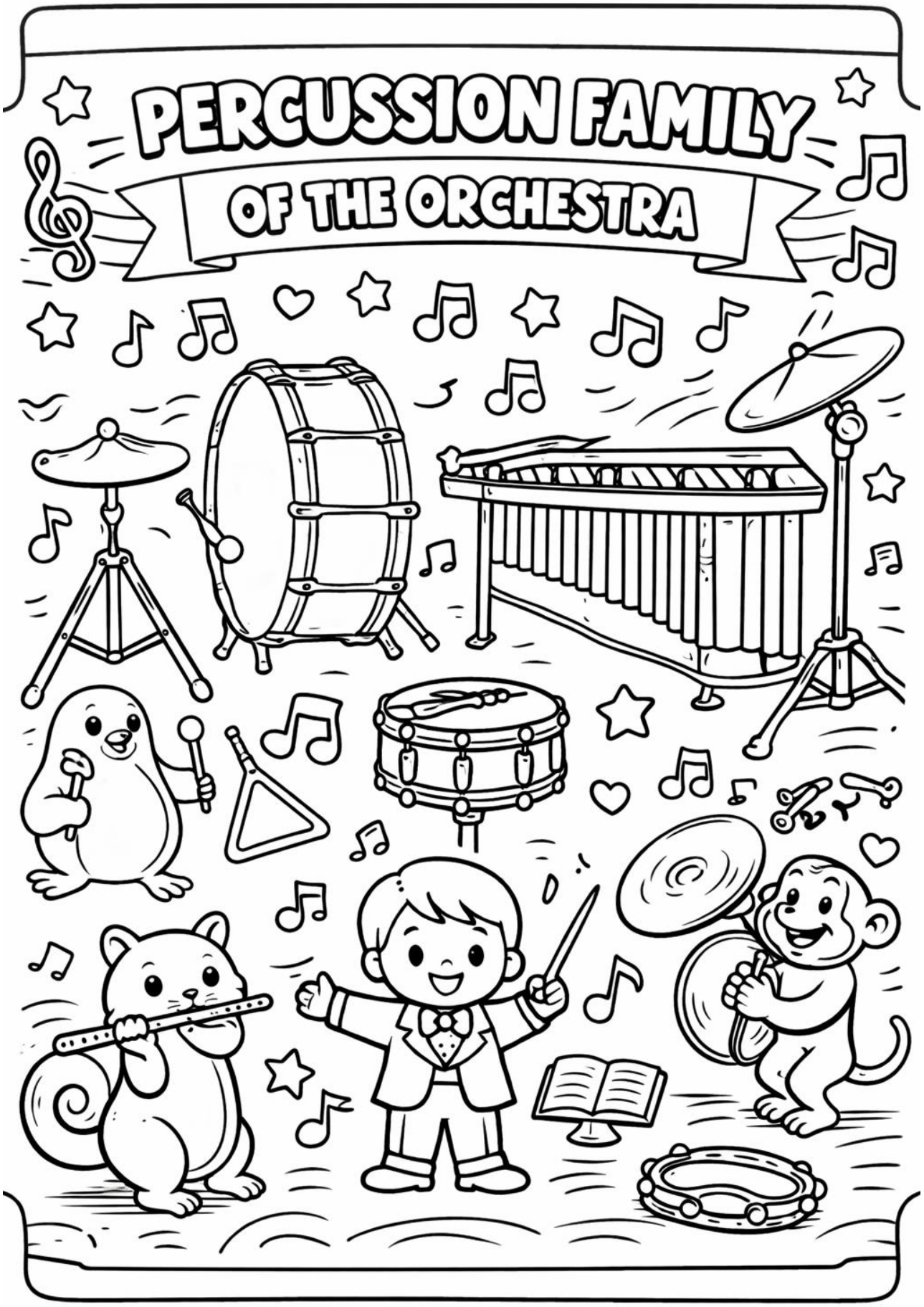
ORCHESTRA NINTH ODETOJOY FIFTH CONDUCTOR MOONLIGHT CLASSICAL

Beethoven Fun Fact: Ludwig van Beethoven was a famous German composer. Even after he began losing his hearing, he continued to compose some of his greatest music!


WOODWIND FAMILY
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BRASS FAMILY
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STRING INSTRUMENTS
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