



MY GREAT ORCHESTRAL ADVENTURE



ACTIVITY BOOK AND PROGRAMME

ROYAL ALBERT HALL
LONDON

Hi there!

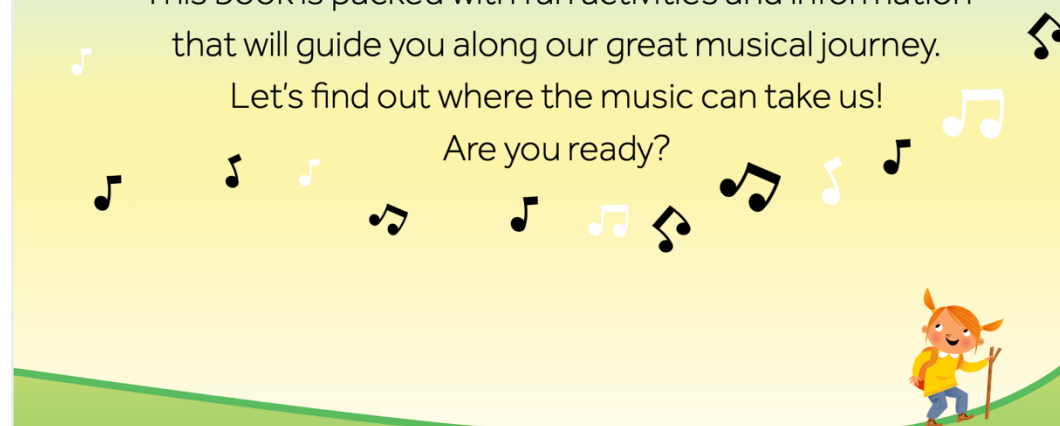
Welcome to My Great Orchestral Adventure!



This book is packed with fun activities and information
that will guide you along our great musical journey.

Let's find out where the music can take us!

Are you ready?





Welcome to the Royal Albert Hall

The Royal Albert Hall is one of the oldest concert halls in the country. It was opened in 1871 and was the idea of Prince Albert, who was married to Queen Victoria. He wanted to build a Hall where anyone could come and enjoy music, and where everyone could explore and learn. Today the Royal Albert Hall puts on over 380 shows a year on its main stage – that's more than one show every day of the year!



Where else can you go in a concert hall?

A concert hall is a very special place, where you can hear performances of all sorts of different music. If you use your imagination, going to a concert hall could actually take you almost anywhere...

You could go back in time; you could go to a desert or a forest; or maybe even into outer space! Music has the power to create different atmospheres and feelings, by using different instruments, melodies and musical ideas.

What is an orchestra?

An orchestra is a large group of musicians who all play together at the same time. Each instrument has its own special music to play. A composer writes all these different musical parts which come together to make one whole piece – a bit like how a painter uses lots of different colours to make a painting.

Each instrument has its own characteristics, which we will learn more about in this book. This means that a composer can choose which instrument would be best for each musical idea that he or she wants to include. Orchestras can contain over 100 musicians, and professional musicians travel all over the world to perform in them.



What does a conductor do?

A conductor directs the orchestra, so that all the musicians know when to start and when to stop, and what speed they should play at. The conductor also gives instructions about how to play, for instance when to play louder or quieter.

A conductor will sometimes use his hands to give these instructions, but more often uses a **baton** (a short thin stick).

They stand in front of the orchestra so that all the musicians can see them, and they always take their own bow at the end of a concert!





STRINGS

All these instruments make their sound when a bow is drawn across a string, or the strings can also be plucked. The thickness and length of the string will determine the pitch of the note (how high or low it is).

Violin

The smallest and highest of the string instruments, the violin often plays the tune in the orchestra and is particularly good at playing beautiful melodies as it produces a very expressive sound. The **leader** of the orchestra is a violinist.

Viola

The viola is a very close relative of the violin and looks very similar – it is slightly larger and can play lower notes. The tone of the viola is deeper and warmer than the violin.



Cello

Look out for the cello being played with a spike sitting in the ground! It is much bigger than the violin and viola, and has some deep low notes as well as rich high notes. The cello has a warm singing quality.

Double Bass

The double bass is like the grandfather of the string family! It is the biggest and lowest instrument, which plays the very bottom notes. It is so big, you have to play it standing up or sitting on a high stool.

Colour
me in!

WOODWIND

These instruments are cylinders or tubes made of wood or metal, with holes which musicians put their fingers over to change the pitch of the note. The “wind” is the musician’s breath, which goes through the tube to produce the sound.

Flute

The flute makes a light and high sound, which can be quite shrill at its highest pitch. A flautist breathes over a hole called a mouthpiece to pass air down the flute and produce a sound. It has a little sister – the piccolo – which is smaller and sounds even higher!

Oboe

The oboe has a powerful and rich tone, and is played by blowing into a double reed – a reed is a small flat piece of wood. The oboe is responsible for tuning the orchestra – before the beginning of a concert you can hear the oboe playing a special note ‘A’, which all the other musicians use to make sure they are in tune.

Clarinet

Like the oboe, the clarinet is a long black cylinder, and this time has a single reed. Listen out for the clarinet playing some cheerful tunes and some dramatic melodies!

Bassoon

The bassoon is the biggest and lowest of the woodwind instruments; the cylinder of the instrument is folded to make it easier to hold, otherwise it would be about 8 feet long. The bassoon also has a big brother – the contrabassoon – which is more than double its length!

Join the dots

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BRASS

Brass instruments are made of tubes of metal which are bent and curved to make them easier to hold. The end of the tube flares out into a bell, which is where the sound is produced. Just like woodwind instruments, musicians breathe through brass instruments to produce notes.

Trumpet

One of the loudest instruments in the orchestra, the trumpet is traditionally used for fanfares to welcome members of the Royal family. It is the smallest and highest instrument in the Brass family and has a very bright sound.

French Horn

The French horn has a circular shape, with the metal being twisted in lots of bends and curves. It normally has a very mellow and smooth sound.

Colour me in!

Trombone

The trombone is made of long slender tubes, and is the only instrument in the orchestra that uses a slide to change the pitch of the note. The trombone makes a very strong, sometimes funny, and powerful sound!

Tuba

The tuba is the largest member of the Brass family, and makes a very deep, low and rich sound. There is normally only one tuba in the orchestra – see if you can spot it!

Can you spot the 6 differences between these two brass playing bears?

PERCUSSION

The percussion family contains lots and lots of different instruments – too many for us to show you here! To play a percussion instrument you hit it, shake it or scrape it. Percussion instruments often play a rhythmic role, which means they keep the speed and pace of the orchestra steady.

Timpani



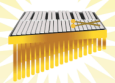
See if you can spot the timpani in the orchestra – they are big shiny drums that look a bit like upside down bowls. Timpani are tuned, which means they can play different notes. The pitch of the note is controlled with a foot pedal.

Cymbals



Unlike the timpani and the xylophone, the cymbals are un-tuned which means they do not play lots of different notes. They are two metal discs which are hit together to create a wonderful crashing sound! They are used at very dramatic moments in the music.

Xylophone



The xylophone is another tuned percussion instrument, with wooden bars in the same arrangement as the keyboard of a piano. These bars are hit with mallets to produce a bright bell-like sound.

Triangle



You might have guessed what this one looks like! It's a metal bar bent into the shape of a triangle, which hangs from a string and is hit with a metal beater to make a high-pitched ringing sound. The triangle is a very small percussion instrument, so keep your eyes out for it!

ALBERT'S BAND

The Royal Albert Hall has its very own group of musicians called *Albert's Band*. These highly skilled musicians appear in all sorts of places, from primary schools to care homes, and family festivals to the Royal Albert Hall stage! They also put on fabulously fun half term concerts, so we hope you might come and see them soon.

For more information about Albert's Band and the Hall's extensive Education & Outreach programme please visit www.royalalberthall.com/education



We've reached the end of My Great Orchestral Adventure. But remember, you can go on this kind of adventure any time you want...All you have to do is listen and let the music take you there!