

Orchestra Instruments

Here are some general guidelines we use in making the best selection for a student musician. A few of them are listed below to help you in your selection. Remember, there is no such thing as a “Girls” or “Boys” instrument!

CLICK ON THE NAME for a YouTube Video of the Instrument

Violin



The **violin** is the baby of the string family, and like babies, makes the highest sounds. You play the violin by resting it between your chin and left shoulder. Your left hand holds the neck of the violin and presses down on the strings to change the pitch, while your right hand moves the bow or plucks the strings.

Viola



The **viola** is the older sister or brother of the violin. It is slightly larger and produce a richer, warmer sound than the violin. You play the viola the same way as you do the violin, by resting it between your chin and shoulder. Your left hand holds the neck of the viola and presses down on the strings to change the pitch, while your right hand moves the bow or plucks the strings.

Cello



The **cello** looks like the violin and viola but is much larger (around 4 feet long), and has thicker strings than either the violin or viola. Of all the string instruments, the cello sounds most like a human voice. Since the cello is too large to put under your chin, you play it sitting down with the body of the cello between your knees, and the neck on your left shoulder. The body of the cello rests on the ground and is supported by a metal peg. You play the cello in a similar manner to the violin and viola, using your left hand to press down on the strings, and your right hand to move the bow or pluck the strings.

Double Bass



The **double bass** is the biggest member of the string family, with the longest strings, which allow it to play very low notes. They are so big that you have to stand up or sit on a very tall stool to play them, and it helps if you have long arms and big hands. Like the cello, the body of the double bass stands on the ground, supported by a metal peg, and the neck rests on your left shoulder. You produce sound just like on a cello, using the left hand to change pitch and the right to move the bow or pluck the string.