



## SOUND FUSION

### INSTRUMENT FAMILY CHARACTERS

In his piece *Philharmonia Fantastique*, composer Mason Bates intentionally creates music for the instrument families of the orchestra so that they each have a different sound and feel. This activity invites students to imagine the character of each instrument family as portrayed in *Philharmonia Fantastique*.

#### Set-Up:

1. Assemble students into four groups and assign each group an instrument family: woodwinds, strings, brass, and percussion.
2. Provide each group with the YouTube recording of their instrument family's movement in *Philharmonia Fantastique*:

#### Woodwinds

<https://youtu.be/lt9q2TZaUg?list=PLFKcd13rbhRHyAdAwZ9d2jH0ILkr3SR-Q>

#### Strings

<https://youtu.be/SDccsneu5Dw?list=PLFKcd13rbhRHyAdAwZ9d2jH0ILkr3SR-Q>

#### Brass

<https://youtu.be/1hWcfSHPfmc?list=PLFKcd13rbhRHyAdAwZ9d2jH0ILkr3SR-Q>

#### Percussion

<https://youtu.be/rPLtoVW4LGA?list=PLFKcd13rbhRHyAdAwZ9d2jH0ILkr3SR-Q>

3. Make sure each group has supplies to take notes and to capture their group's ideas.

#### Group Instructions:

1. Listen to your instrument family's movement in *Philharmonia Fantastique*. As you listen, imagine what you are hearing as a character in a story, TV show, or movie. Write down or draw any thoughts that come to mind as you listen. Here are some questions to consider:

## Group Instructions, continued:

- a. What does your character look like? Are they a person, an animal, an object, or something entirely new and different?
  - b. Does your character have a name?
  - c. What does your character like to do?
  - d. What is your character's personality? Silly? Shy? Adventurous?
  - e. What other words best describe your character?
2. When you finish listening, discuss your thoughts as a group. Take note of any similarities in how you imagined your character.
3. Next, build one character to represent your group. Work together to decide your character's name, what they look like, personality, and other important descriptions. Record your decisions here:

Name	Appearance	Personality	Description

4. Now, decide how you will share your character with the rest of the class. Here are some ideas of ways you could share your character:
  - a. Draw, paint, or make a collage of your character
  - b. Act out your character
  - c. Write a story or poem about your character
  - d. Create a social media profile for your character

## Reflection:

When everyone has created their characters, have each group share their character with the rest of the class. After all groups have shared, discuss the following questions:

- How do you think the four characters would interact with each other? Would they get along? Why or why not?
- Which two characters seemed most similar? Which two characters seemed the most different from each other?
- When listening to the movements from *Philharmonia Fantastique*, did you think any of the characters would be designed differently? Were you surprised by any of the choices the other groups made when presenting their character?