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STUDY GUIDE:  
MUSICAL FACTS AND TRIVIA

**Musical Instruments:**

**The musical instruments can be divided into 4 families:**

1. **Strings**
2. **Woodwinds**
3. **Brass**
4. **Percussion**

**The STRING FAMILY includes:**

1. Violin: the smallest member, which has 4 strings.
2. Viola: an overgrown violin that is more mellow.
3. Cello: larger than the viola and held between the legs of the player.
4. Double Bass: largest of the string family.
5. Harp: this instrument can play the entire string family's sounds.

**The WOODWIND FAMILY includes:**

1. Flute
2. Piccolo: a ruler sized flute that plays notes so high it can be heard above other instruments. **THERE IS ONLY ONE IN A BIG ORCHESTRA.**
3. Clarinet:
4. Oboe: A double reed woodwind that looks like a clarinet but is longer and has a different mouthpiece.
5. Saxophone
6. Bassoon: nearly 10 ft. long with a double reed. It produces a deep, husky sound.  
( ALL ARE PLAYED BY BLOWING AIR THROUGH REEDS EXCEPT FOR THE FLUTE)

**The BRASS FAMILY includes:**

1. Trombone: a sliding tube moves in and out to adjust pitch.
2. Trumpet: uses valves to change the pitch.
3. Cornet: a shorter version of the trumpet.
4. French Horn
5. Tuba: mouthpiece covers nearly all the mouth. THE LARGEST OF THE BRASS INSTRUMENTS.

( ALL SOUNDS ARE CREATED BY BLOWING AIR INTO THEM WITH THE LIPS)

**The PERCUSSION FAMILY:**

1. Drums
  - A. Bass drums: large cylinders that create low sounds.
  - B. Snare drums: the smallest of the drums used in an orchestra. They are played with drumsticks.
  - C. Kettledrums (called TIMPANI) A basin shaped copper shell across which a calf-skin head is stretched. The pitch can be changed by adjusting the tension on screws.
2. Cymbals: Two metal plates that are held in the hands and clashed together.
3. Triangle: A steel bar bent to the shape of a triangle and struck with a steel beater.
4. Xylophone: Metal bars of differing lengths that are attached to a frame and hit with beaters.
5. Marimba: A type of xylophone used in Africa and South America which is composed of wooden bars suspended in a frame, with a gourd or wooden box beneath each bar to act as a resonator.
6. Maracas: Dried gourds filled with seeds.
7. Tambourines: Rings of small metal disks that encircle the ring edge.
8. Castanets: An instrument that originated in Spain. It's composed of two shell-shaped pieces of hard wood joined by a cord that passes over the thumb. The wood pieces are struck together by the fingers.

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**OTHER INSTRUMENTS:**

**GUITAR:** This plucked stringed instrument was originally brought to Spain by the Moors during the Middle Ages. It has a flat back and 6 strings that rest on a rectangular piece of wood called the bridge. Strings can be tightened to increase the pitch.

**MANDOLIN:** This instrument is a cousin of the guitar. It originated in Italy and is played by plucking the 10 strings with quick movements.

**UKULELE:** This Hawaiian guitar has four strings that are plucked, and also has a fretted fingerboard.

BANJO: This instrument has a body composed of a shallow metal drum covered with parchment on the top, but open on the bottom. Its strings vary in number from 5 to 9 and can either be played with the fingers or a plectrum (a piece of ivory or wood that is triangular in shape and used to strike the strings of some stringed instruments.)

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#### TRIVIA QUESTIONS ABOUT INSTRUMENTS:

1. What instrument was the principal stringed-key instrument from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century? (Harpsicord)
  2. How many keys are on a piano? (88)
  3. On a piano, what name is given to the pedal at the far right (Damper, it suspends the action of the dampers and allows the strings to vibrate freely.)
  4. Where did the piano originate? (Florence, Italy by Bartholomew Cristofori in 1710)
  5. What were the two main instruments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? (violin and the piano)
  6. What master violin maker perfected the violin? (Antonio Stradivari. Because of him, many violins were called Stradivarius.)
  7. What woodwind instrument is usually made of silver, and differs from the other woodwinds because it is held horizontally, and produces its sounds by blowing across a mouthpiece at the left end? (flute)
  8. What is the lowest pitched instrument of the brass family? (tuba)
  9. What is the name of the effect that is produced by sliding the finger up or down a string or keyboard? (Glissando)
  10. What device is used to quiet and soften the tone of a musical instrument? (mute. To mute a stringed instrument, a mute is placed across the strings at the bridge. A brass instrument is muted by inserting a pear-shaped piece of wood or metal into the bell shape. A piano is muted by using the soft pedal.)
  11. How many sounds or pitches are produced by each pipe in the pipe organ? (only one.)
  12. What bar on a xylophone creates the highest pitch? (The shortest one.)
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## NAMES GIVEN TO INDIVIDUALS OR ENSEMBLES, BOTH VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL:

- 1 vocalist or instrument: solo or soloist.
- 2 vocalists or instruments: duet
- 3 vocalists or instruments: trio
- 4 vocalists or instruments: quartet
- 5 vocalists or instruments: quintet
- 6 vocalists or instruments: sextet
- 7 vocalists or instruments: septet
- 8 vocalists or instruments: octet

The standard woodwind quintet is composed of a French horn, and 4 woodwinds: the flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon.

Chamber music: This was music written for small instrumental ensembles that had one instrument per part, such as the string quartet, woodwind quintet, or piano trio. It was better suited for a room in a house, instead of a church or theatre.

Choir: a body of singers in which there are more than one voice to a part. It is often associated with singing during religious ceremonies.

A cappella: a term used to signify that a song is sung either by one person or an entire chorus WITHOUT any instrumental accompaniment.

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## MUSICAL NOTATION:

In the musical alphabet, the same 7 letters are used over and over again for the notes: A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. The notes are written on a STAFF that consists of 5 lines and 4 spaces.

CLEFS: These are found at the beginning of each staff and are signs used to determine the pitch of a particular line on the staff, and from which the pitch of the remaining lines and spaces can be deduced.

- 1) G Clef: This is also called the treble clef. The G clef is placed on the second line of the staff, with the clef's circle encircling the G.
- 2) F Clef: This is also called the bass clef. It looks like a reversed "C" with 2 dots above and below the line on which the F note is located.

FLATS: Flats are  $\frac{1}{2}$  step down from the original note.

SHARPS: Sharps are  $\frac{1}{2}$  step up from the original note.

The musical score is divided into MEASURES by BAR LINES. A DOUBLE BAR LINE is used to signify the end of all pieces of music.

The time signature is placed at the beginning of a musical piece. The top number in the time signature tells how many beats are in one measure. The bottom number in the time signature tells the type of note that is given one beat.

In 4/4 time signature, there are 4 beats to a measure and the quarter note receives one beat. Therefore:

- The half note receives two beats
- The dotted half note receives three beats
- The whole note receives four beats
- The eighth note receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a beat

In  $\frac{3}{4}$  time: there are 3 beats to a measure and the quarter note receives one beat.

- Half note: 2 beats
- Dotted half note : 3 beats
- Eighth note:  $\frac{1}{2}$  beat
- Sixteenth note:  $\frac{1}{4}$  beat

In 6/8 time: 6 beats to a measure; the eighth note: 1 beat.

- Quarter note: 2 beats
- Half note: 4 beats
- Dotted half notes: 6 beats
- Dotted quarter note: 3 beats
- Sixteenth note:  $\frac{1}{2}$  beat

#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF NOTES:

- Whole Note: an open circle with no stem.
- Half Note: an open circle with a stem
- Quarter Note: a darkened circle with a stem
- Eighth Note: a darkened circle with a stem and 1 flag
- Sixteenth Note: a darkened circle with a stem and 2 flag

A DOT written after any note, increases it value by  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

A METRONOME is a time-keeping device that can be adjusted to tick off each beat.

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## MUSICAL TERMS USED TO INDICATE TEMPO (or speed)

1. largo: very slow
  2. adagio: slow
  3. lento: slow
  4. andante: smooth and flowing at a moderate walking pace
  5. moderato: moderate tempo
  6. allegro: fast and lively
  7. allegretto: slightly faster than allegro
  8. presto: (or prestissimo) as fast as possible
  9. agitato: played in a restless, agitated manner
  10. accelerando: gradually speeding up the tempo
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## MUSICAL TERMS USED TO EXPRESS DEGREE OF LOUDNESS:

1. pianissimo: very soft
  2. piano: soft
  3. mezzopiano: medium soft
  4. mezzoforte: medium loud
  5. forte: loud
  6. fortissimo: very loud
  7. crescendo: getting gradually louder
  8. decrescendo: getting gradually softer
  9. diminuendo: growing gradually softer
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## MUSICAL TERMS THAT INDICATE THE MANNER IN WHICH A PIECE SHOULD BE PLAYED:

1. ad libitum: the piece can be played with great freedom
  2. animato: lively or animated
  3. appassionato: with great feeling
  4. cantabile: songlike
  5. espressivo: with expression
  6. legato: smoothly connected
  7. maestoso: majestically
  8. mezzo: medium
  9. staccato: with distinct tones that are sharply separated from each other, and performed rapidly.
  10. Tremolo: in a quivering, trembling manner
  11. Vibrato: a light wavering in the pitch that is performed so quickly it sounds like a single pitch.
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## CAN YOU ANSWER THESE MUSICAL QUESTIONS?

1. How many different pitches are found in an octave? 8
2. What member of the bowed string family is larger than a viola, but smaller than the string bass? Cello
3. What name is given to three or more different tones that are played (or struck) at exactly the same time? Chord
4. What Italian word means the end or concluding section of a musical work? Coda
5. What name is given to the first section of a musical composition in which the theme is presented? Exposition
6. What is the recognizable musical expression called? Melody
7. What name is given to the less distinct pitches that sound over and above the other pitches? Overtones
8. What are the keys or levers called that are operated by the feet in the piano, organ, or harp? Pedals
9. What is the name for a half-sized flute that sounds one octave higher than the standard flute? Piccolo
10. What term refers to the highness or lowness of a note? Pitch
11. Pizzicato is a term used with stringed instruments. What does it tell the player to do?  
Pluck the strings with the fingers instead of bowing them.
12. What musical symbol is used to represent silence? A rest
13. What is the name for the tabs, or knobs on the organ by which the different sounds (timbres) are regulated? Stops
14. What word refers to the musical idea? Theme
15. What is the lowest pitched instrument in the brass family? Tuba
16. What is the highest female voice? Soprano
17. What male voice lies between the tenor and the bass? Baritone
18. What name is given to a rhythmic effect produced by altering or upsetting the expected rhythm pattern? Syncopation
19. What is a musical performance called that is given by one person? Recital
20. What is a musical performance called that is given by a group? concert