

# The Family Tree

## Musical Instruments of the Orchestra Belong to "Families"

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Instruments that make up the symphony orchestra sit together as families on certain areas of the stage. Members of the same family resemble each other in the way they make their sounds. There are four families in the orchestra. They are **strings**, **woodwinds**, **brass**, and **percussion**.

### STRINGS

The members of the string family, the largest family, are shaped alike. They have curved, hollow wooden bodies with four strings running from the large end to the small end. These strings are played with a bow held in the musician's hand. The bow is a piece of wood about 28 inches long that is strung with hair from a horse's tail. When the bow is drawn across the strings, they vibrate and produce the sound we hear. The strings can also be plucked by the player's fingers, which is called pizzicato.

The **VIOLIN** and the **VIOLA** are the smaller instruments and are held under the chin. The violin is the smallest instrument of the string family and therefore has the highest sound

or voice, like the soprano in a choir. The viola is slightly larger and therefore has a lower sound than the violin.

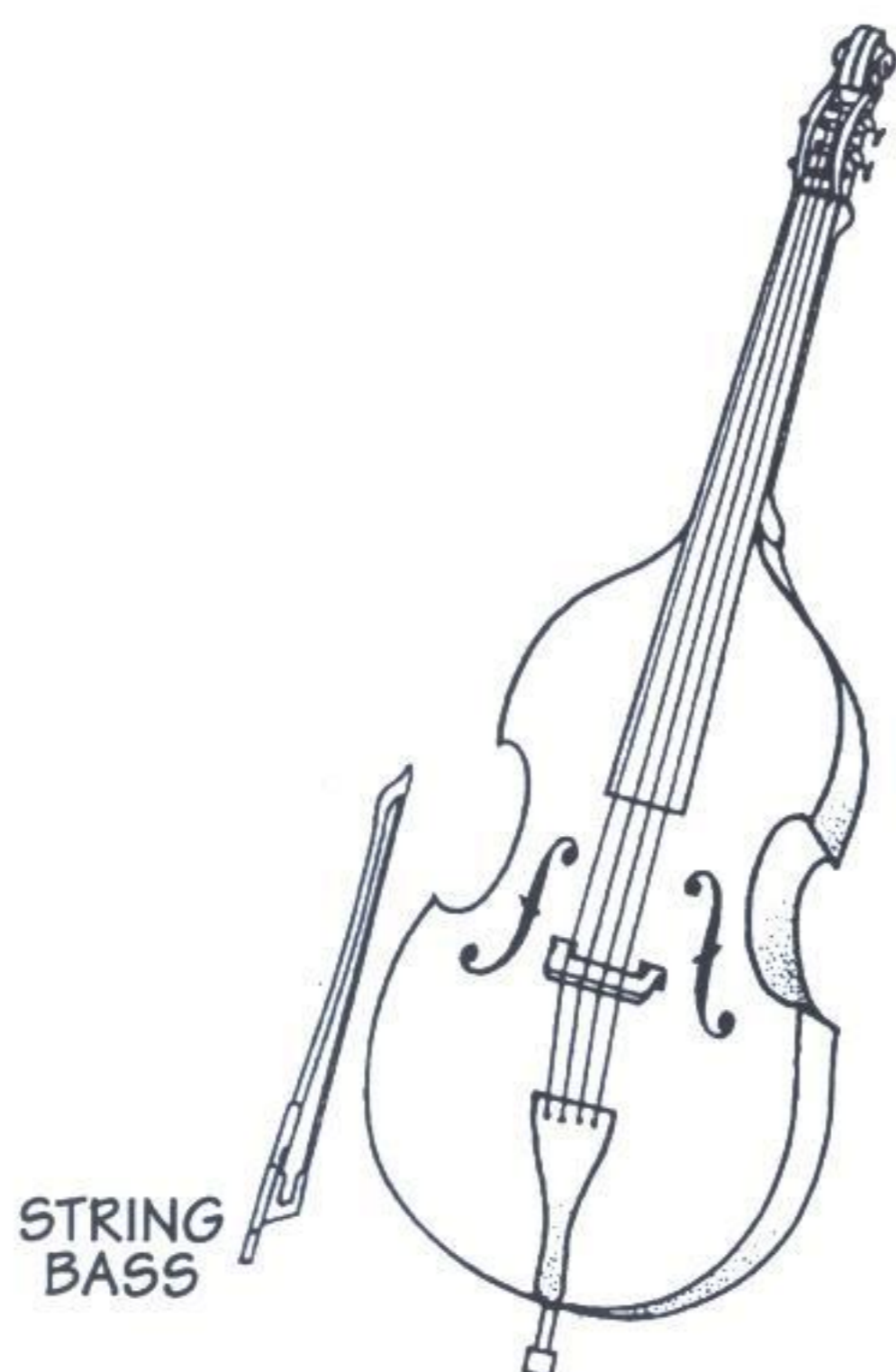


VIOLIN

The **CELLO** and **STRING BASS** are larger instruments with pegs in the bottom end so they can rest on the floor. The cellist sits on a chair and holds the instrument between the knees. The double bass player must stand or sit on a high stool to play. This instrument is 6 feet tall, the largest instrument in the orchestra, and makes the lowest sound.



VIOLA



STRING  
BASS



CELLO