

Name: _____

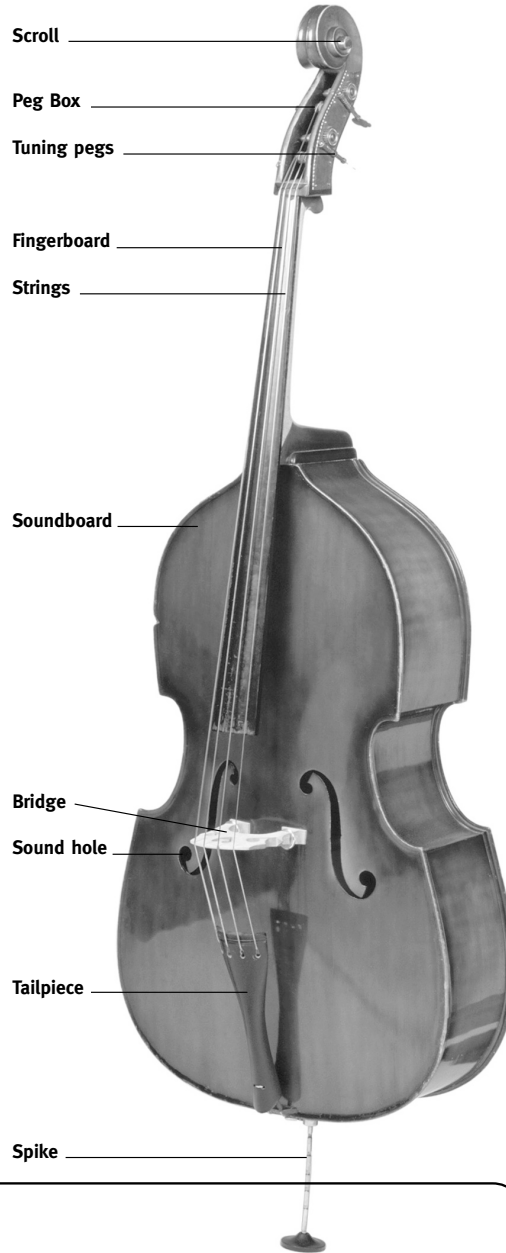
THE DOUBLE BASS - Factsheet

The double bass is the lowest sounding member of the orchestral string family. It was developed during the sixteenth century from the violone or double bass viol. Because of its size it was a difficult instrument to play and through the years several attempts have been made to make it easier to play.

There are two types of bow used with the double bass; a French bow which is held overhand like a violin bow and the Simandl bow which was named after its inventor and is held with the palm of the hand facing up.

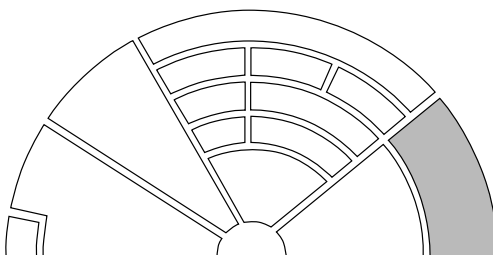
The double bass is often used in jazz and dance bands as well as in the orchestra. The average size of the double bass is 1.8m high (around 6ft), so performers have to either stand or sit on a stool to play. Most double basses have four strings although some instruments have five strings.

Double bass music is usually written using the bass clef although it does occasionally use both the tenor and treble clef. It always sounds an octave lower than written.

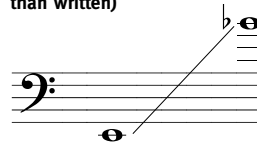


Famous works for double bass:

Trout quintet for piano & strings	Schubert
Septet Op.20	Beethoven
Also sprach Zarathustra	Strauss
The Elephant	Saint-Saens



Double bass pitch range (sounds one octave lower than written)



Famous double bassists

Charlie Mingus
Dominico Dragonetti
Stuart Knussen
Duncan McTier
Serge Koussevitsky

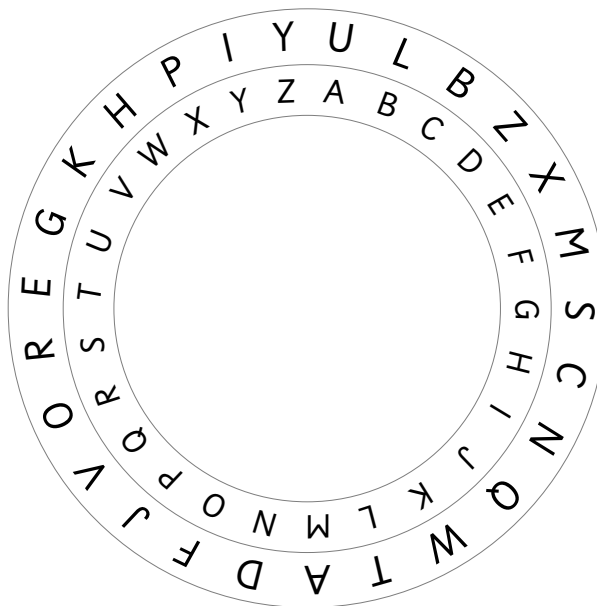
THE DOUBLE BASS - Worksheet

Use the outside of the codebreaker to help you find the name of a famous piece of music and its composer that is associated with the double bass.

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Fill in the missing word to complete the sentences below.

1. The double bass is the _____ member of the string section in an orchestra.
2. The double bass is often used in _____ music.
3. Double bass players usually _____ to play although sometimes they sit on a stool.
4. The double bass usually has _____ strings although sometimes it can have 5.
5. The double bass was developed in the _____ century.
6. The double bass developed from the older instrument the _____.
7. The double bass can be played using either a _____ bow or a _____ bow.
8. The double bass usually sounds one _____ lower than written.
9. The double bass usually uses the _____ clef although it can sometimes use the tenor clef and even occasionally the treble clef.
10. The double bass is the _____ sounding member of the string section.

Octave
Lowest
4

Largest
Jazz
Violone

Bass
French
Stand

Simandl
Sixteenth