

Range checker (Use clefs as given.)

Flute

Large difference in volume across range - bottom soft, top very bright. Agile, but complicated cross-fingerings in top octave.

Oboe

Bottom of range very resonant, top of range somewhat pinched.

Clarinet in B flat

Very even across range, though above top g' is shrill and rarely used; 'chalumeau' bottom octave is distinctive; next few notes to B flat slightly weak. Clarinet in A (for sharp keys) sounds a half-tone lower, i.e. same written range. Agile.

Bassoon

Strongest in lower register for a firm bass; higher up, a plaintive melodic tone.

Horn in F

This is the normal working compass, though range extends a 4th further both ways. Cannot play soft up high (above written e', sounding a). Moving parts ineffective down low (below written g, sounding c,) - use low only for long holding notes.

Players specialise, so 1st (& 3rd?) rarely go below sounding f, ; (2nd? &) 4th rarely above sounding g (Break this 'rule' for unison passages.)

Trumpet in B flat

Top of range (above written g', sounding f) cannot be played softly; use it only for special highlights. All trumpets keep this written range - in C sounds at pitch, in D a tone higher than written.

Violin

Becomes steadily more technically demanding as you go above e''; do not take 2nd violins much above that note.

Viola

Can go higher, but above a' is not very commonly used.

Cello

Increasingly technically demanding and musically intense as you go above a.

Bass

Most professional players would have an extension down to written low c,, . Most amateur players will not be happy above written g (sounding g,).

Piccolo

sounding: *8va.....*

written: *8va.....*

Note slightly narrower range than flute. Register characteristics as flute; delicate in lower octave, carries above full tutti in top octave.

Cor Anglais

sounding:

written:

The 'English Horn' is in F, like the 'French Horn'. Most characteristic in bottom octave and a half. Effective for solos; for inner parts, can obtrude unless orchestra is large.

Clarinet in E flat

sounding: *8va.....*

written: *8va.....*

Mostly used to extend the clarinet range upwards. The middle and lower range lack the B flat or A clarinets' warmth, so sometimes used for parody.

Bass Clarinet in B flat

sounding:

written:

Beware: transposes down a 9th! So it sounds in bass register (can be effectively used with or below bassoons, and can be soft down there!) but is written in treble register - very confusing. Exists only in B flat, not A, despite Wagner, etc.

Contrabassoon

sounding: *8vb.....*

written: *8vb.....*

A bass-strengthener; upper register poor. Not agile and not soft - don't use casually, and generally only with full tutti. Keep part simple, and with breathing spaces.

NOTE: Both the bass clarinet & the contrabassoon are very expensive instruments and not normally available.

Tenor Trombone

b (B flat)

Can go four semitones higher. The tenor clef is used most of the time, the bass clef only for the bottom 5th of the range. (N.B. CSM Wind Ensemble, use bass clef, except very top.)

Bass Trombone

There is a full chromatic octave usually available below this. Physically demanding to blow; don't use too prolonged without breathing spaces.

Tuba

Top octave generally only used for rather brutal solos. 'Double bass' to the brass section, blending well in softer music. When music is louder, tuba doesn't match hard tone of tpts. & tbns., so doubles bass line, an octave below 3rd tbn. (&/or bassoons).

Timpani

28" head 25" head

If only two drums, the outer ones. Wider range can be available - low D to high A or B flat. Best tone is always in middle of drum's range.

Glockenspiel

sounding: *15^{ma}.....*

written:

'Glocken' = bells; use for simple bell-like passages. Very resonant and bright across orchestra, so 'pick out' notes during a melody, rather than giving it the whole melody.

Xylophone

8va.....

Dry, hard tone; non-transposing.

Celesta

sounding: *8va.....*

written:

A keyboard instrument; write on two staves. Rounder, gentler tone than glockenspiel, much less penetrating.

Harp

8va.....

Write on two staves and indicate pedal settings throughout piece. Remember, seven strings per octave, not twelve, so only one 'version' of each letter pitch available at any one time.