instrument playground online

featuring
vincent karamanov
bassoon & contrabassoon

▶ Watch the following videos:

Interview with Vincent Karamanov, SLSO Bassoonist
Bassoon and Contrabassoon Demonstration

The bassoon (a.) and contrabassoon (b.) are woodwind instruments that use a double reed to produce sound. Reeds are made from a type of cane or bamboo. Single reeds use one piece of cane attached to a mouthpiece, and double reeds use two pieces of cane sandwiched together. Other double reed instruments include the oboe and English horn.

Sound is produced when a musician, with his or her lips pressed firmly around the reed, blows into the double reed. This causes both sides of the reed and then the air inside the instrument to vibrate. When you play a double reed instrument, you can feel the reeds buzz or vibrate between your lips. A bassoonist plays different notes or pitches by opening and closing holes along the body of the bassoon.

Invent an Instrument

The bassoon is an unusual instrument: large, heavy, made of wood, with lots of metal keys. Take a good look at the bassoon in the video. Can you invent your own instrument?

• What does it look like?

• What is it made of?

• What makes vibrations: lips, reed, strings, membrane, or something else?

• How does it sound, low or high? Soft or loud? Bright or dark?

• Draw a picture of this new instrument and give it a name!

Mistakes Happen

Vince makes a mistake when he plays with Lawrence. Vince says, "We all make mistakes." What does it feel like to make a mistake? What do you do if you make a mistake in class, while playing a sport, or during a performance? Can a mistake be helpful?

Sounding Together

Vince likes music because it brings people together. Have you ever sung or played music in a group? Was it easy or difficult? What did that feel like? What would it be like to make music with two or three other people? What about with 50 or 100 other people?

b.

a.

slso

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director