

A Young Person's Guide to the North Bay Symphony Orchestra **Narration Script (2018)**

Ella: Hi there, my name is Ella. And this is my cousin...

Jackson: Jackson! We like many different kinds of music—how about you?!

Ella: Today we would like to tell you a little bit about classical music, and the North Bay Symphony Orchestra that we have right here in our own city.

Jackson: Would you like to know what you'd see if you were to go to a symphony orchestra concert?

Ella: Yeah, that would be neat.

Jackson: Let's go!

Ella: First, the Concert Master comes out on stage—this person is an amazing violin player who gets to sit right at the front of the stage nearest the centre.

Jackson: The Concert Master begins by standing up and tuning the orchestra in a special way. He asks the oboe player to play a very specific note known as A440.

Ella: Why is it always the oboe instrument, and why is it *that* note?

Jackson: The modern orchestra began in the 1600s, mostly with violins but also with other instruments like the oboe. The oboe was less affected by changes in climate, so it would stay in tune better and also had a nice, clear sound for everyone to hear. The “A” note is used since it is one of the few notes that all of the stringed instruments have as an open string. A440 is the “A” note above middle “C,” and the 440 hertz part is a measure of its frequency.

Ella: Notice that the Concert Master, with the help of the oboist playing the “A” note, tunes the orchestra separately in three or four sections—usually it's the woodwinds first, then the brass, and then finally the strings.

Jackson: Next we see the Conductor come on stage and bow to the audience. The conductor uses a small stick called a “baton” that is waved in the air to help everyone keep proper time.

Ella: There are four main parts, or sections, in a modern orchestra. First, there is the strings...

Jackson: Where the musicians scrape or pluck the instruments!

Ella: The woodwind and the brass sections...

Jackson: Where the musicians blow into the instruments!

Ella: And, finally, the percussion section...

Jackson: Where the musicians bang on all kinds of neat instruments!

Ella: All symphony orchestras look a bit different, but most are arranged in a very similar way on the stage.

Jackson: Notice how the violin players sit on the left side of the conductor. The First Violins sit in the front, including the Concert Master, and they usually play the melody line in most pieces of music.

Ella: Another string group called the Second Violins sit behind them and often play different harmonies.

Jackson: The Violas are larger than violins, so they have a lower sound. They sit directly in front of the conductor. The Cellos are to his right, and behind them the largest instruments of all, the massive Double Basses!

Ella: The woodwinds—which include the flutes, clarinets, oboes, and bassoons—sit in the centre middle section.

Jackson: And the brass instruments, like, for example, the French horns, trumpets, trombones, and tubas, are positioned at the centre back.

Ella: That leaves the percussion instruments, such as the drums, cymbals, xylophones, bells, gongs, and the triangle.

Jackson: I wonder what the Conductor's sheet music actually looks like?

Ella: It must have a lot of information. Why don't we go and ask him?

Jackson: The local orchestra practices every week, and then has a few final rehearsals right before each of the four major concerts that they perform each year.

Ella: Most of the musicians are volunteers from the North Bay area. They also invite extra musicians from other cities to travel here and join them, to make the performance sound even better.

Jackson: North Bay also has a String School where you can sign up for weekly lessons.

Ella: The North Bay Youth Orchestra meets every Monday. The Symphony Conductor takes time to help us to improve our skills, and to listen carefully to the other musicians around us. Hey, there you are in the back row Jackson!

Jackson: It's a lot of work, but it really is fun too!

Jackson: Some of the members of the full orchestra help us during our practices by leading the different string sections. Here we can see the Concert Master on the left, with and three other volunteer musicians, practicing a new piece that the Youth Orchestra will learn with their help.

Ella: Well, we hope you've enjoyed this *Young Person's Guide to the North Bay Symphony Orchestra*.

Jackson: And we hope that maybe some day—if you haven't already—you'll get to come out and see the North Bay Symphony Orchestra perform right here in our city!

Ella: And now for the big finish—and don't forget to clap!

Jackson: And if you really like it, maybe even shout for an encore!!

Ella: Encore!!

