

String Instrument Vocabulary

Violin – The queen of the orchestra. The smallest of the string family. It is held under the chin and plays in the upper register.

Viola – The second highest member of the string family. Its music is written in the alto clef and is held under the chin.

Cello – The tenor voice of the orchestra. The player sits down to play. Its music is written in the bass clef.

Double Bass – The largest and lowest member of the string family. The player stands or sits on a stool to play. Its music is written in the bass clef and sounds an octave lower than is written.

Arco -play with the bow

Pizzicato - pluck the string with the right hand

Detache - play each note with a separate bow, no slurs

Loire - a series of connected notes played while the bow moves in one direction

Staccato - play each note as if a rest were between them

Slurred Staccato - a series of separated notes played while the bow moves in one direction.

Vibrato - a rapid fluctuation of pitch

Double Stop - playing on two strings at the same time

Divisi - part of the section plays the top note; part plays the bottom note

Sul - on i.e. *Sul G* = on the G string

Sul ponticello - play near the bridge

Sul tasto - play over the fingerboard

Col legno - play with the wood of the bow

Con sordini - play with the mute

Senza sordini - without the mute

Tremolo - The rapid repetition of a single note, played at the tip of the bow.