

What Instruments Do You See in Jazz Series #4?



Tell me more about the guitar.

The guitar is a musical instrument made of wood. The strings of a guitar were traditionally made from animal gut. Today, the strings are usually made of nylon or steel. Guitars usually have six strings, but there are also guitars with four, seven, eight, ten and twelve string guitars. Imagine how the sound of a guitar would change if you had more or fewer strings. Guitars are popular instruments in jazz, blues, country, rock and pop music. Charlie Byrd, Pat Metheny and Lee Ritenour are some very famous contemporary jazz guitarists.

Tell me more about the double bass.

The double bass or contrabass is the largest and lowest sounding string instrument. It is popular in orchestra music as well as jazz, blues, rock and bluegrass music. Double basses look like giant violins. When they are played, they are held vertically, with the bottom of the bass resting on the floor, and the top of the bass being held in the musicians' hand. The double bass can be played with a bow like a violin, or plucked like a banjo. The double bass has a very low sound. They are made from several types of wood, including maple, spruce and ebony.

Tell me more about the trumpet.

The trumpet is the highest sounding member of the brass family. They were first used to announce the arrival of royalty, to signal the start of a hunt, and to call soldiers into battle. Trumpets have become a popular musical instrument in many kinds of music - classical, the blues and jazz. Musicians who play a trumpet produce its sound by buzzing his or her lips while blowing air through the mouthpiece. To create higher or lower sounds, the player changes the size of the opening between his or her lips. The player can also press the three valves or buttons on the body of the trumpet to create many different high and low sounds.

Tell me more about the saxophone.

The saxophone is a woodwind instrument. This means there is a small piece of wood, called a reed, at the mouthpiece of the instrument. The reed is actually made of cane. The musician blows air, or wind, across the reed. The reed vibrates against the mouthpiece and produces a sound. Then, the musician presses on the valves or buttons that line the body of the instrument to change the sound. The saxophone is the only woodwind instrument made of brass. It is a common jazz instrument, but is only used occasionally in a symphony orchestra.

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