

## Bass Drum, Percussion Instrument

**Percussion** means, "the hitting of one body against another." Instruments in the **percussion family** are played by being struck, shaken, or scraped. In the orchestra, the percussion section provides a variety of rhythms, textures and tone colors. Percussion instruments are classified as tuned or untuned. Tuned instruments play specific pitches or notes, just like the woodwind, brass and string instruments. Untuned instruments produce a sound with no definite pitch, like the sound of a hand knocking on a door. The percussion instruments have ancestors from all over the world and represent musical styles from many different cultures.

The composer Mozart added the deep, booming, untuned sound of the **bass drum** to the orchestra in 1782. Constructed like a snare drum, but without snares, the bass drum is much larger and is played on its side, so that either head may be struck. The beater or mallet for a bass drum is large with a soft material such as sheep's wool covering the end.

