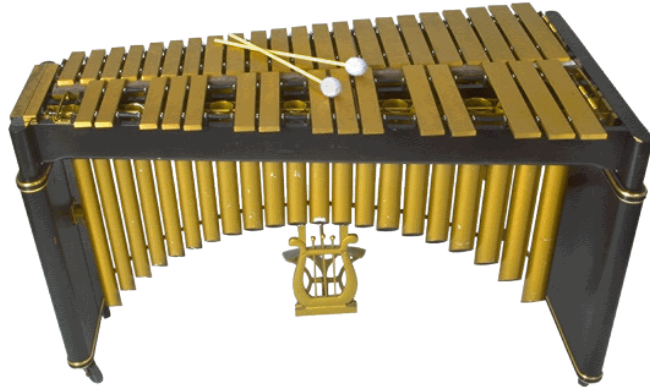


Xylophone, Percussion Instrument

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 an indefinite 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.



First used in the orchestra just over a century ago, the **xylophone** is a tuned instrument made of hardwood bars in graduated lengths set horizontally on a metal frame. With the larger, lower-sounding bars on the left, the notes of the **xylophone** are laid out much like a piano keyboard. Striking the bars with hard mallets produces a bright, sharp sound. The **xylophone** was originally modeled after an African instrument and its name is Greek, meaning "wood sound". Its cousin, the **vibraphone**, has metal bars instead of wood.