

Open Rehearsals

 The Phoenix Symphony



Did you know?

- Being a professional symphony musician is a full-time job!
- Rehearsals are just one part of their work week!

FUN FACT!

Professional musicians at The Phoenix Symphony on average have 38 to 42 weeks of concerts per year! That is a lot of playing!



What does the career of a symphony musician look like?

- Start playing an instrument at a young age
- Go to college and study music
- Get a bachelors, masters and maybe even a doctorate in music!
- Audition for many symphony orchestras
- Get offered a symphony job!



Alex Laing-
Principal Clarinet



Cassie Walck-
Associate Principal Horn

Open Rehearsals



**These open rehearsals are working rehearsals. The pieces played are at the discretion of the conductor. Pieces may or may not be played in their entirety or at all. Guest artists may or may not participate in the pre-rehearsal Q&A.*

Open Rehearsal Agenda

FIELD TRIP AGENDA (Approximately 90 minutes):

- 9:00 a.m. – Arrive to Performance Venue
- 9:15 a.m. – Q&A with Symphony Musicians, Conductor and possibly guest artists
- 10:00 a.m. – Full Symphony Rehearsal

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- As a courtesy to the musicians, please arrive early and be seated prior to the start of the rehearsal. All open rehearsals are “working” rehearsals and therefore the program or pieces may not be played in its entirety.
- Seating is general admission. Reservations are a first-come, first-serve basis.

2025-2026- Open Rehearsals

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Performance: [Mozart & Mahler](#)

Location: Symphony Hall, 75 N 2nd Street
Phoenix AZ 85004

Conductor: [Alex Amsel](#)

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Performance: [Scheherazade and Sandoval](#)

Location: Symphony Hall, 75 N 2nd Street
Phoenix AZ 85004

Conductor: [Lidiya Yankovskaya](#)

Friday, January 30, 2026

Performance: [Summer Breeze: Yacht Rock Classics](#)

Location: Orpheum Theatre, 203 W Adams St,
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Conductor: [Stuart Chafetz](#)

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Performance: [Celebrating America at 250: Gershwin, Copland & More](#)

Location: Symphony Hall, 75 N 2nd Street
Phoenix AZ 85004

Conductor: [Mélisse Brunet](#)

Friday, May 8, 2026

Performance: [Troupe Vertigo: Cirque Carmen](#)

Location: Orpheum Theatre, 203 W Adams St,
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Conductor: [Bob Bernhardt](#)

What is an open rehearsal?

An open rehearsal is where an audience is invited to watch a symphony rehearsal in progress and learn about the inner workings of music making.

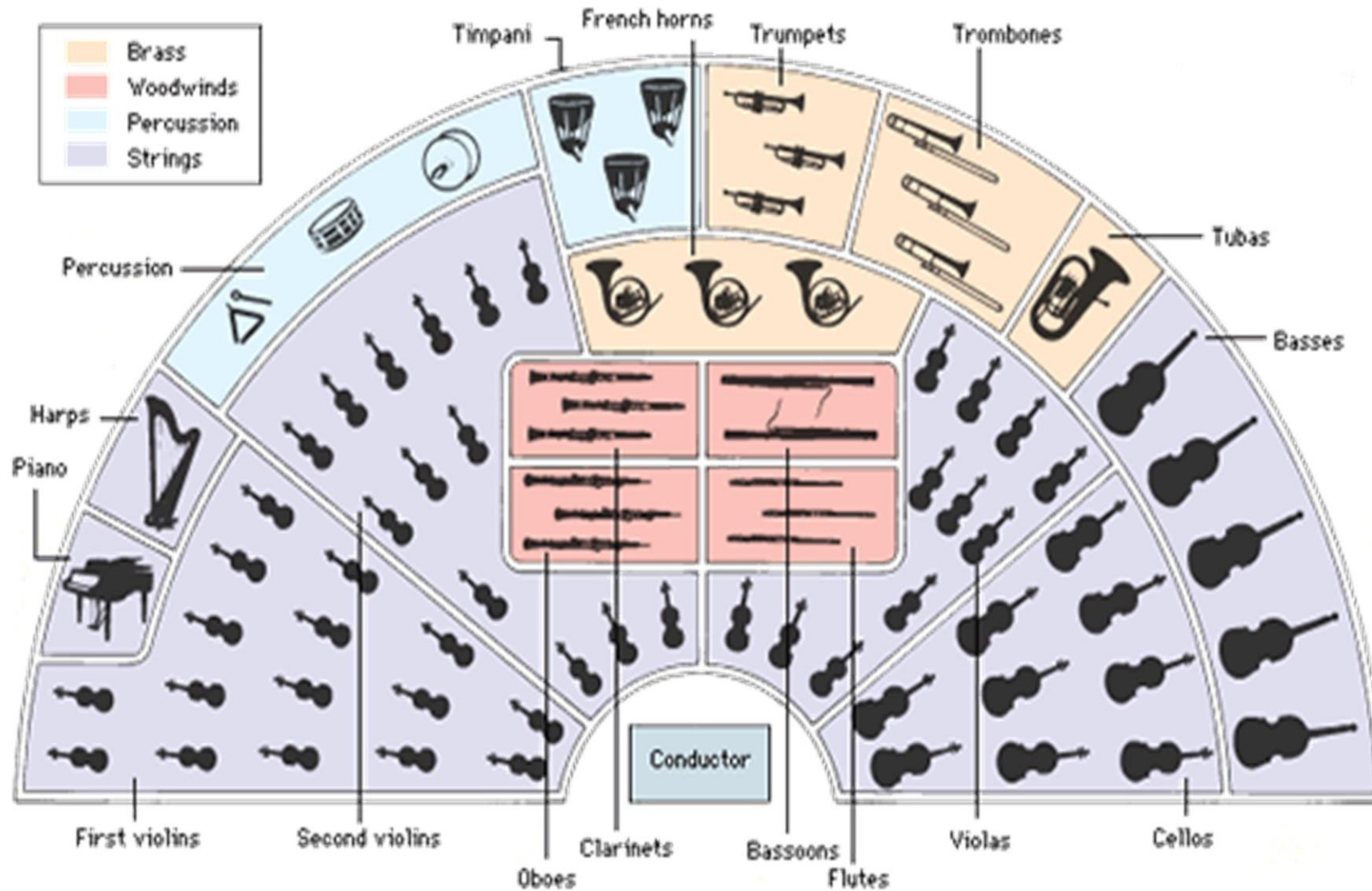


What happens during a rehearsal?

- The conductor rehearses the orchestra for the upcoming performance!
- The production crew sets up the stage and works behind the scenes to make sure technical aspects are working smoothly.
- The Phoenix Symphony staff is there making sure the musicians have everything they need.



Open Rehearsal- General





Backstage (above)



Aerial view of stage (above)



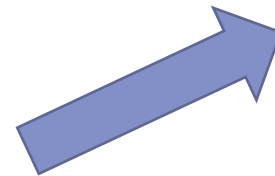
Sound mixing engineer (left)

Why is rehearsing important?

- Orchestral rehearsal is a huge part of being a symphony musician!
- Collaboration and teamwork is one of the most important parts of being a professional musician!
- Musicians practice their music on their own and then during full orchestra rehearsal, get to come together and practice as a group.
- Rehearsal is where their individual parts fit into the whole piece of music.

FUN FACT!

Some pieces aren't written for full orchestra! Some have only brass, woodwinds, or any other combination you can think of!



LEARNING CORNER:

What is a full orchestra?

A full orchestra is a large ensemble composed of wind, string, brass and percussion instruments. For us, that is 65 musicians!

How often do musicians rehearse individually vs. together?

- Full orchestra practice- The full orchestra rehearses together a few times per week before their upcoming weekend performance
- Individual musician practice- It depends! Musicians practice on their own as much as they need to feel prepared for full orchestra rehearsals

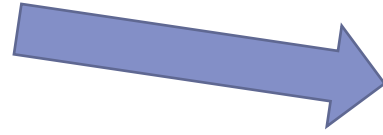
Why do they need to rehearse if they are professional musicians?

- Just like a professional athlete practices plays in a playbook as a team before the game, musicians need to practice their music together before a concert!
- Just like an athlete works out their body before a full team practice, a musician practices their music individually before coming to a full orchestra rehearsal!

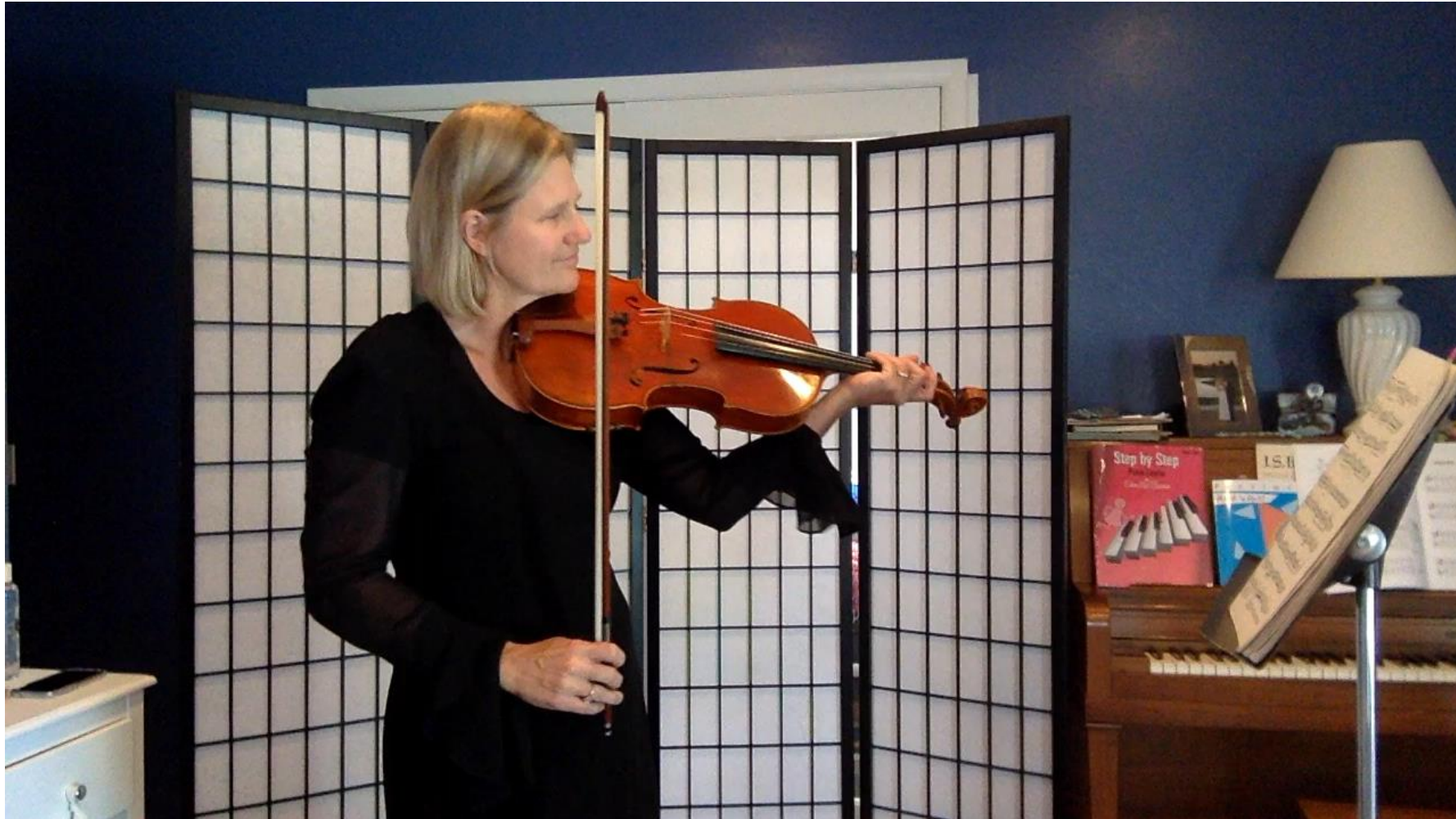


Check out one of our viola players, Karen Bea, talk about musicians as athletes on the next slide!

CLICK HERE!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_-yn015E64



What are they rehearsing?

- The musicians rehearse the music for the upcoming weekend performance.
- Each rehearsal is different. The conductor decides what the rehearsal order will be and makes notes during the rehearsal about which sections they need to work on and rehearse again.

FUN FACT!

At some rehearsals, the musicians may not play all pieces on the performance program!

What are the musicians wearing?

For performances, the musicians wear formal clothes, but for rehearsal they can wear whatever makes them feel most comfortable!



FUN FACT!

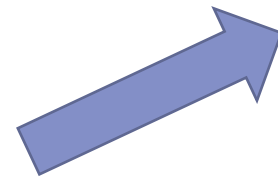
Musicians call their clothes they wear to performances “concert blacks”.



Inner workings of rehearsal

What does the conductor say to the musicians during rehearsal?

- When the conductor is speaking to the musicians, they are telling them something important about the music and how it should be played.
- *Examples of corrections: When a note should start or end, how to better play as a section, tuning, or rhythm checks.*
- The conductor comes to rehearsal with a plan, just like the coach of a sports team!



LEARNING CORNER:

What is a section?

A section refers to the instrument families in the orchestra. For example, strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion.

What does the conductor have on their music stand?

The conductor can have a variety of things on their music stand! They have the full score, a pencil, possibly a metronome for tempo checking, their baton, and more!

LEARNING CORNER:

What is a metronome?

A device used by musicians that marks time at a selected rate by giving a regular tick.

There are electric metronomes (bottom left) and mechanical metronomes (bottom right)!



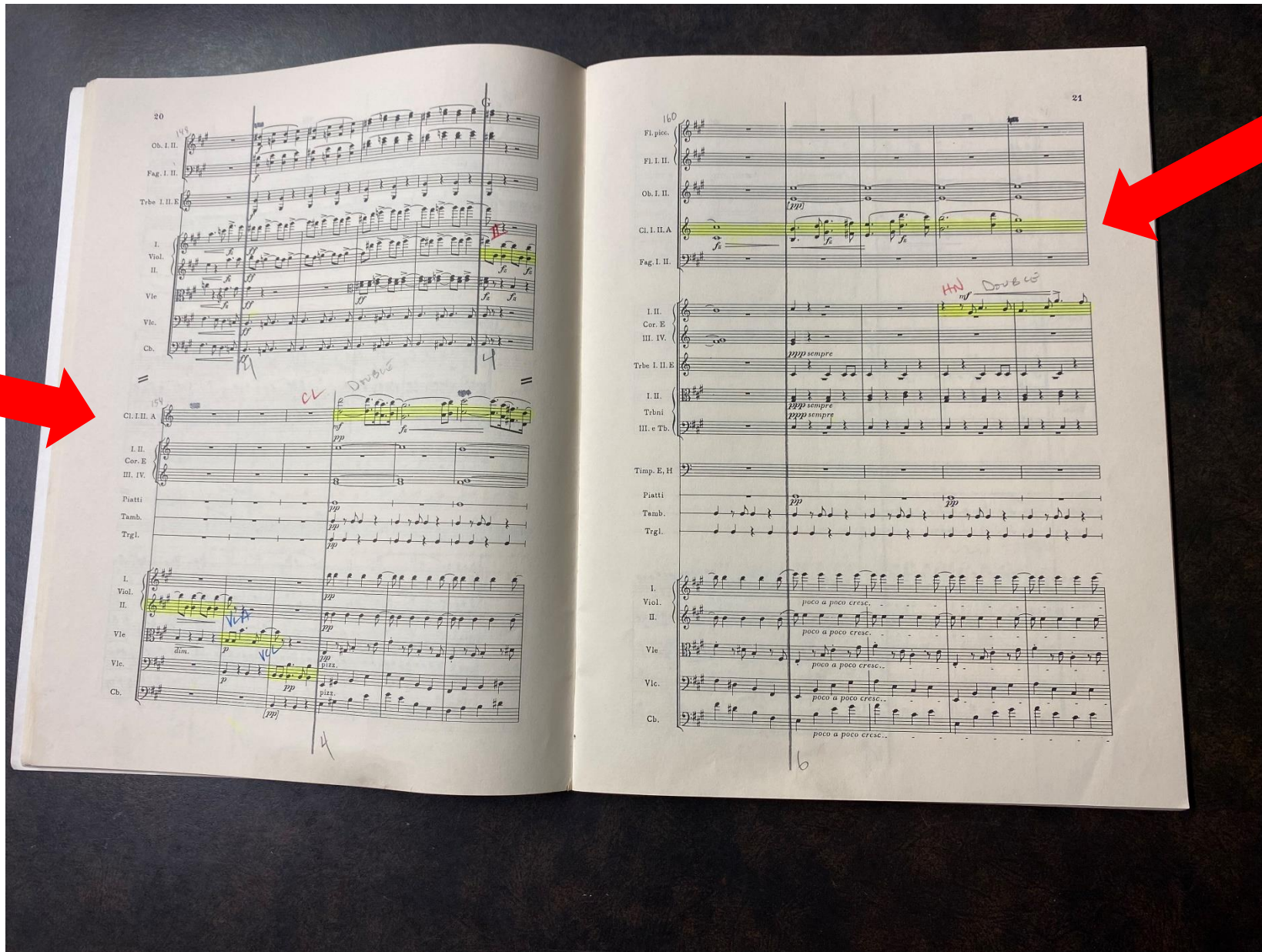
FUN FACT!

The pedestal the conductor stands on is called a podium!

Conductor's baton



Full Orchestra
Score



Highlighted
sections by
conductor



How do the musicians know where to start playing when they are rehearsing different sections of the music?

Composers use the indication measure numbers, “bars” or alphabet letters, to help the musicians and conductors quickly and efficiently find their place in the music. A measure number or “bar” refers to a specific place in the sheet music.

FUN FACT!

Each measure has a number. Some pieces of music are so long that composers will use letters for large sections to make it easier to navigate the music!



Check out more sheet music in two slides!

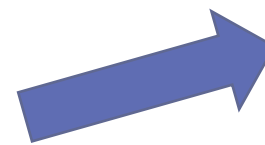
What are the musicians doing when they write something down?

- When musicians stop playing and write something down on their music, they are making a memo for themselves to improve their playing.
- They might mark a difficult passage, indicate the conductor's directions, misread notes, to play louder or softer, faster or slower, or whatever else helps them play!



FUN FACT!

Some musicians draw little eyes or glasses on their sheet music to remind them to look up at the conductor during a specific part of the music!



LEARNING CORNER:

Musicians ALWAYS have pencils with them at rehearsal!

FLUTE 1

179

High measure numbers and eyeglasses!

Alphabet letters

Musical score for Flute 1. Measure 179 is circled in red with the word "eyeglasses" written above it. A red arrow points from the text "High measure numbers and eyeglasses!" to this circle. Another red arrow points from the text "Alphabet letters" to a red circle around measures 14, 21, and G in the adjacent score.

95

203

6

200

796

801

806

= de

Musical score for Cor. III, IV, E and Ob. I. Measure 14 is circled in red with the word "eyeglasses" written above it. A red arrow points from the text "Alphabet letters" to this circle.

EDWIN F. KALMUS & CO., INC.
Publishers of Music
Boca Raton, Florida



This is a flute part! (left)



Tuning



The Phoenix Symphony

Tito Muñoz | Virginia G. Piper Music Director

Why does the first violin stand up and play one note in front of the orchestra?

- That is called **tuning!**
- When the first violinist stands up and plays an A note, they are doing two things:
 - 1) Letting the rest of the musicians know rehearsal is about to begin
 - 2) Giving the entire ensemble a reference pitch (an A) so they can each tune their instruments.

FUN FACT!

The first violin is called the Concertmaster.

What is tuning?

- Tuning means adjusting the pitch of an instrument using a tuner. In Western classical music, orchestras tune to an A at 440 hertz.

FUN FACT!

The tuning of an instrument can change because of the weather!



Electric Tuner

FUN FACT!

In other cultures around the world, musicians and musical groups use different tuning systems!



Please enjoy rehearsal!



Thank you for your interest in The Phoenix Symphony Education programs

[For more information on Open Rehearsals](#)

 The Phoenix Symphony



The Phoenix Symphony

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