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Hello and welcome to Busy Kids Love Music, the podcast that helps you discover the music of composers, cultures, and traditions from all around the world. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so glad you're joining me today!

This month, we've been celebrating *Wicked: For Good*, and in our last episode we learned all about Stephen Schwartz—the brilliant composer and lyricist behind *Wicked* and many other musicals. Today, we're going to continue that celebration with a special musical mystery game that takes us into the orchestra pit of the theater.

When we go to a musical, our eyes are often drawn to the stage—the costumes, the dancing, and the actors telling a story. But just as important are the instruments that bring that story to life. The music in a Broadway show is powered by the orchestra, and every instrument adds its own color and emotion.

So, today we're going to play *What Was That Sound?*—the Musical Theater Edition! I'll play short clips of famous songs from musicals you may already know, and your job is to guess which instrument you hear. To make it extra fun, I've created a free printable worksheet in the show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/163](https://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/163) where you can write down your guesses as you listen along.

Are you ready to put on your detective ears? For Mystery Sound #1, let's jump in with a piece from the show we've been celebrating all month! I want you to listen carefully for the instruments that make it sound like something powerful is about to happen.

What instrument family do you think was making those booms and crashes?

In *Defying Gravity*, the percussion—especially the timpani and cymbals—builds excitement as Elphaba gets ready to soar into the sky. Percussion instruments are part of the largest family in the orchestra because there are so many different kinds. Some are big and loud, like bass drums and cymbals. Others are small and soft, like

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triangles and tambourines. Some you hit with sticks or mallets, and others you shake or scrape.

In a Broadway orchestra pit, percussion players often have to switch between many different instruments during one show—keeping the beat steady, adding sparkle with jingles or bells, and creating dramatic crashes and booms at just the right moment. The percussion score for *Wicked* is fantastic and challenging, calling for 58 percussive instruments and around 14 pairs of mallets. Without percussion, the music would feel flat and lifeless. With it, the energy soars!

Okay, let's listen to a clip from another famous musical that just celebrated its 10th anniversary on Broadway for mystery sound #2!

That sound was bright, brassy, and cut through the rest of the music to emphasize the staccato vocals. Which instrument was it?

It was... the trumpet!

In *Hamilton*, the trumpet gives the music its bold, powerful energy. The trumpet belongs to the brass family and is one of the loudest instruments in the orchestra pit. Its sound can slice through the music, adding brilliance and sparkle.

Trumpets often play fanfares or melodies that need to be heard clearly over the entire orchestra. In musicals, they bring a sense of urgency, excitement, or even celebration. In *Hamilton*, the trumpet riffs emphasize the characters' determination and drive—it's like a musical exclamation point!

For Mystery Sound #3, let's listen to some instruments from a powerful opening number to a Disney Broadway musical. Listen carefully for the instruments underneath the beautiful vocals.

That one had a deep, earthy sound—like a heartbeat or the ground shaking. What instrument do you think it was?

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It was... the drums!

In *The Lion King*, traditional African drums like the djembe from the Mayan empire or the djun djun with its bass sound, set the scene of the African savanna right from the opening notes. These drums are onstage during the opening number and much of the show to really envelope the audience with the sound and have the African music leap out into the audience with the live percussionists who are visible to them as part of the show. In *The Lion King*, the drum rhythms connect the music to African culture and makes the stage feel alive with energy.

For Mystery Sound #4, let's listen to a short clip from a song from *The Sound of Music* and see if you can guess it from just a brief moment of music.

That sound was smooth and sweet, like singing voices but played on instruments. What do you think it was?

It was... **the violin!**

The violin belongs to the **string family**, which is often the heart of the orchestra pit. Violins can play high, singing melodies, and they blend beautifully with voices on stage.

In *The Sound of Music*, the violins add warmth and help carry the playful, teaching energy of Maria's song *Do-Re-Mi*. In musicals, violins often double the singers' melodies, provide lush harmonies, or add emotional intensity to a scene. Their versatility makes them one of the most important instruments in theater music.

Thanks for playing along in today's musical theater edition of What Was That Sound? Did you guess all four instruments correctly?

If you enjoyed today's music, I created a playlist with full-length versions of these songs so you can keep listening and singing along. You'll find it at [buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/163](https://www.buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/163). And don't forget—

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there's also a worksheet in the show notes to keep the guessing game going with your family and friends.

Until next time, keep listening—and loving—music. I look forward to connecting with you again in 2 weeks for a brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music. Bye for now!