

transcript.

Hey there and welcome to episode 71 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy you're joining me today for a brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music.

In past episodes of Busy Kids Love Music, we've talked about various instruments such as the trumpet or the harp. We've learned about their history, how they work, and some of the ways they're used in music. And I'm going to list all the previous episodes we've done about specific musical instruments in this episode's show notes so you can check them out if there is a particular instrument you're wanting to learn more about. Today, we're going to be adding another instrument to our list – the trombone.

The trombone is a member of the brass family of instruments, and it is derived from the Italian word for trumpet, tromba – and the suffix “-one” which means “large”. So the name trombone literally means “large trumpet.”

If you've seen a trombone before, you might notice it's a cylindrical tube that's bent into a long “S” shape. The tubing is made up of a complicated series of tapers. The trombone – as with other instruments in the brass family – makes sound when the player purses their lips and produces a vibration that creates a wave in the instrument. There is a detachable mouthpiece, similar to the ones you see on trumpets. The slide – the part of the trombone that probably comes to mind first when you think about a trombone, allows the trombonist to extend or shorten the length of the air column, which makes the pitch lower or higher in sound. So a trombonist doesn't press keys or buttons to make different notes on the scale the way a trumpeter or a pianist does – they push and pull the slide. This takes a lot of accuracy and control to do well! Listen to this clip of a trombonist working his way up the chromatic scale simply by using the slide.

transcript.

I hope you'll also check out the curated playlist of trombone songs I've put together for you at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/71 so that you can see what it looks like to play a trombone by operating the slide – such skill!

The trombone is believed to have been created in the middle of the 15th century, and was called a “sackbut” until the 18th century, perhaps because the French word “sacquer” means to draw out – like a sword – so the action of sliding the tube may have reminded people of a swordsman drawing a sword from a scabbard. The instrument later became known as the trombone when it grew in popularity in the music of Italy.

Trombones were initially seen as religious instruments and used to play sacred music in church settings. Composers such as Bach and Handel used the trombone in some of their famous liturgical cantatas and cantatas. Beethoven was the first to use the instrument in a major secular symphony – his Symphony No. 5 in C minor. He went on to use trombones again in his other symphonies, which set the stage for trombones to be a fixture in the orchestra.

Trombones are used in so many different types of settings and genres of music. During the 19th century, you would find trombonists playing in circus bands, military bands, brass bands and town bands. During the 20th century, the trombone remained an important part of the orchestra and also began to assist the bass and tuba players of jazz bands by playing the lower pitches while the higher-pitched instruments would improvise melodies over the low chords. The trombone also began to be used more and more as a solo instrument in jazz music. Artists Jack Teagarden and J.J. Johnson, whom you're listening to now, are some of the early trombone soloists of this era.

Today you'll find the trombone in symphony orchestras, marching bands, big bands, brass choirs, chamber music, swing music, jazz bands, salsa music – so many different types of bands and musical genres. I've tried to capture that variety in the curated playlist I put together for you

transcript.

show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/71. I hope you'll take the time to listen to and watch some of these performances so that you can see these incredible musicians in action. Again you can find this playlist at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/71.

Thanks so much for taking the time to learn about the trombone with me today. I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks when the next episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs. Bye for now!