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Hey there, and welcome to a brand new episode 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 thrilled to have you joining me today.

In past episodes, we've learned about many different musical instruments – the trombone, trumpet, cello, bass – and of course, the piano. As I looked through the list of instruments that we've learned about, I realized we have only done one instrument that is part of the woodwind family – and that was way back in episode 3 when we learned about the flute. So today, we're going to expand our knowledge of woodwind instruments by learning about the clarinet.

A clarinet is basically a cylindrical, wooden tube with finger holes. A sound is produced with a mouthpiece and a reed. When a clarinet player takes fingers off the instrument, the pitch of the instrument will rise.

The metal keys on the clarinet allow the player to play all the notes in between the notes of the scale you just heard – the chromatic notes.

Some of the metal on the clarinet also allows musicians to play trills – a sort of back and forth between two notes that is very quick.

The clarinet as we know it was invented by Johann Cristoph Denner, an instrument maker from the 17th century in Germany. It evolved from an instrument called the chalumeau, which was a single or double reeded instrument used in the Middle Ages. The clarinet's lower register is actually called the chalumeau! The instrument began to be used more in compositions during the Classical period of music, but 1790-1820, during the early part of the Romantic period of music was considered the golden age of

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solo wind music. In Vienna, there were more solo wind performances at concerts than solo violin performances during this time!

The instrument was known as the best imitator of the human voice and also one of the most expressive instruments. Many composers used it to convey sadness or grief in their compositions, although in this concerto by Franz Joseph Haydn, it has more of a playful, cheery sound, don't you think?

A 20th century piece of music you might be familiar with by Prokofiev, called Peter and the Wolf, uses the clarinet to represent the character of the cat. As you listen to a portion of this piece, why do you think Prokofiev might have chosen to have a clarinet play the part of the cat?

I think the cat in this symphony sounds sneaky and maybe even mischievous. The clarinet can be sneaky, too, because it can play so quietly and softly and also because it can climb up high since it has a range of over 3 octaves!

The clarinet was also an important instrument to the sound of early jazz music and the Swing Era before the saxophone took over as the dominant reed instrument in jazz.

Sidney Bechet, who you're listening to now, put out some of the earliest jazz clarinet recordings and helped to spread jazz music all over the United States in doing so. The clarinet is certainly a versatile instrument, isn't it? Listen to how different it sounds in this jazz piece than in some of the earlier classical pieces we were listening to.

As I do with all my podcast episodes, I've put together a curated playlist for you on YouTube.

You'll find the link to that playlist in this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/83. It includes the full versions of some of the music we've listened to in today's episode as well as other performances of the clarinet that I think you'll enjoy. You'll also find a

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transcript of today's episode if you'd like to read any of the information about the clarinet. So again, all that is at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/83.

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn about the clarinet. I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks for the next brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music. Bye for now!