

# Orchestral Instrumentation Nomenclature

Orchestral instrumentation is denoted by an abbreviated formulaic convention, as follows: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba. More details can be contained in brackets. A dot separates one player from another, a slash indicates doubling. Timpani and percussion are denoted tmp+ number of percussionists.

For example, 3[1.2.3/pic] 2[1.Eh] 3[1.2.3/Ebcl/bcl] 3[1.2/cbn.cbn] tmp+2 is interpreted as:

- 3 flautists, the 3rd doubling on piccolo ("doubling" means that the performer needs to play flute and piccolo)
- 2 oboists, the 2nd playing English horn throughout
- 3 clarinetists, the 3rd doubling also on E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet
- 3 bassoonists, the 2nd doubling on contrabassoon, the 3rd playing only contra
- Timpani + 2 percussionists

As an example, Mahler Symphony 2 is scored: 4[1/pic.2/pic.3/pic.4/pic] 4[1.2.3/Eh.4/Eh] 5[1.2.3/bcl.4/Ebcl.2.Ebcl] 4[1.2.3.4/cbn] - 10 8 4 1 - 2tmp+4 - 2hp – org - str.