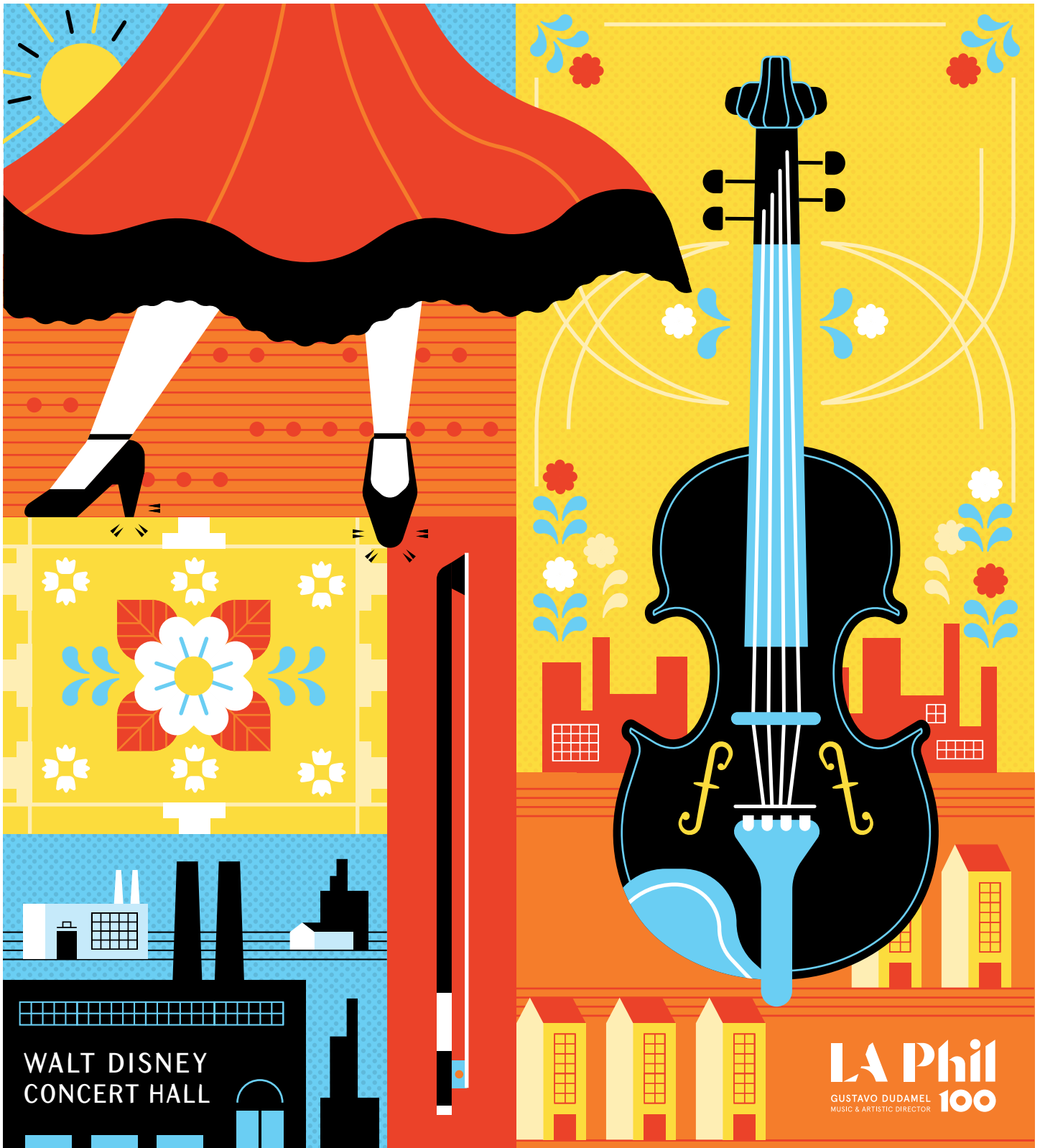


# Ravel's *Bolero*



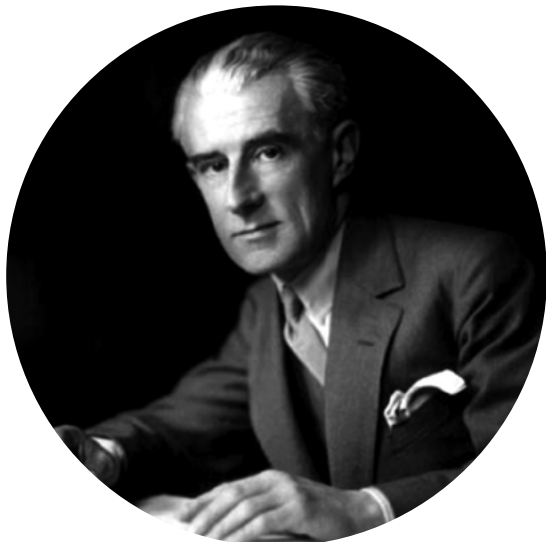
WALT DISNEY  
CONCERT HALL

LA Phil  
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL  
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 100

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# About the Composer

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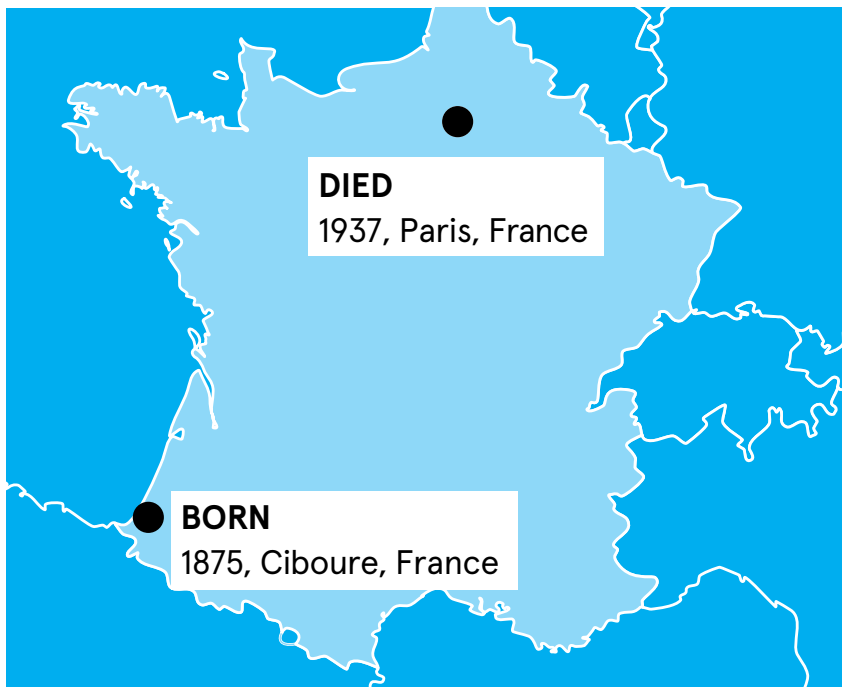
## MAURICE RAVEL

Born 1875, Ciboure, France

Died 1937, Paris, France

*“Music, I feel, must be emotional first and intellectual second.”*

Along with Debussy, Maurice Ravel was one of the pioneering musicians of the early 20th century. He, like his contemporary, was an impeccable orchestrator. His fascination with the exotic and the past can be heard in works such as the *Rapsodie espagnole* and *Le tombeau de Couperin*, the former inspired by Spain, the latter by 18th-century French music. Later in his career, Ravel was influenced by jazz, especially after meeting Gershwin in 1928. His distinctive voice was simultaneously one of the last of the Romantic era and one of the first of the modern age.



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## FURTHER LISTENING

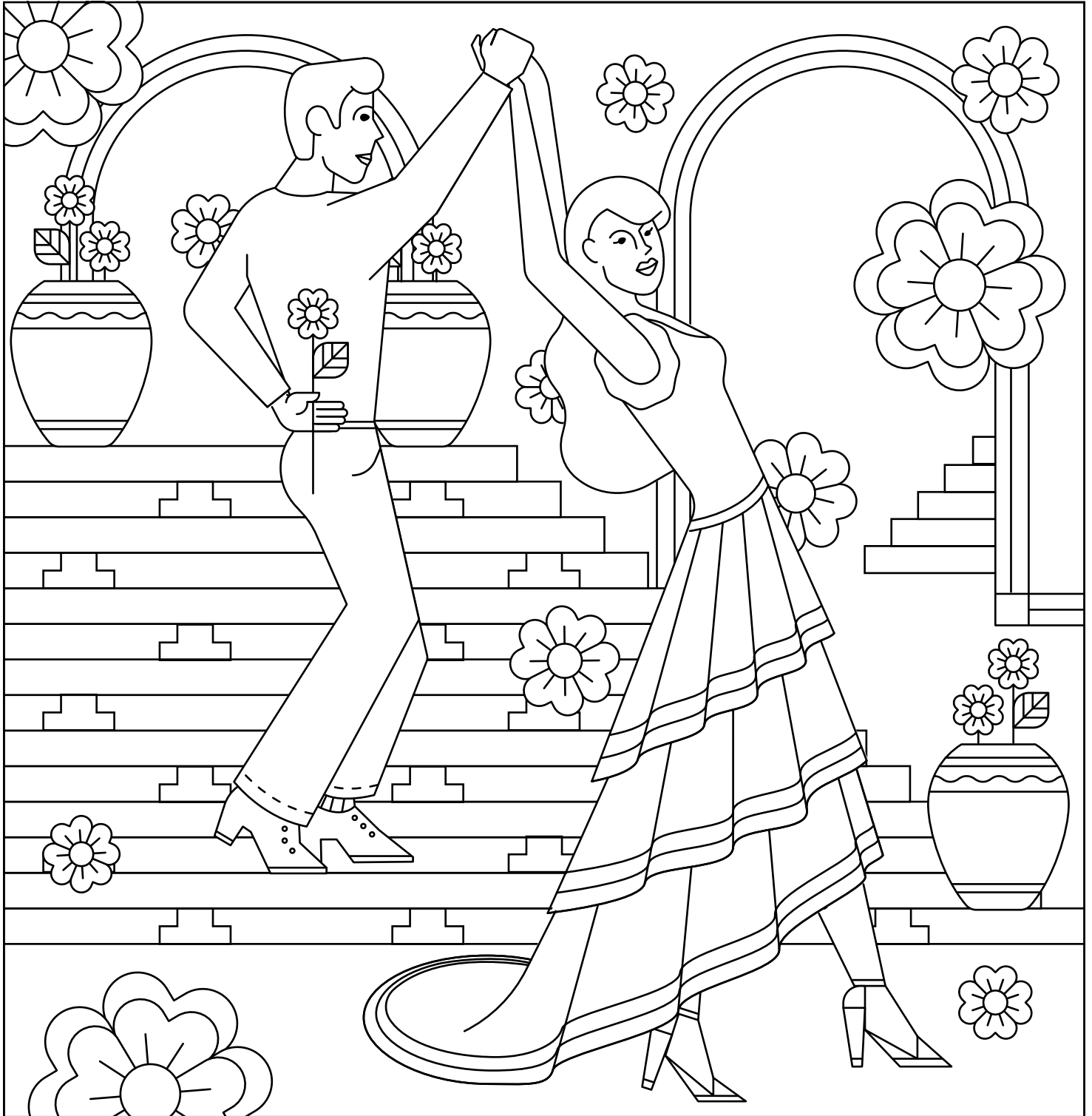
*Gaspard de la nuit*  
Pierre-Laurent Aimard, piano  
(Warner Classics)

*Daphnis et Chloé*, Suite No. 2  
New York Philharmonic,  
Leonard Bernstein  
(Sony)

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# Bolero Coloring

What does Bolero mean? It's a Spanish dance in triple time that originated in Spain in the 18th century. Boleros have inspired many pieces by classical music composers, including Ravel, Debussy, Bizet, and Saint-Saëns. Whip out your brightest color palette for this Spanish dance scene!



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# Word Search

BOLERO  
RAVEL  
OSTINATO  
DYNAMICS  
PIANISSIMO

PIANO  
FORTE  
FORTISSIMO  
DIMINUENDO  
PHILHARMONIC

VIOLIN  
COMPOSER  
DANCE  
CENTENNIAL

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E G S D Y Z R S N C U O I O O  
T Y B O K W A H R F E O N R D  
R R I D C V V J N R A A D E L  
O S E N X X E O H E I S Y L Z  
F O G E U U L S R P U G N O L  
P M K U F Z S T G E Q L A B X  
R I V N M O J I U C G N M D C  
K S M I S C E N T E N N I A L  
L S C M G X E A J G A C C Z D  
G I C I M X N T O S S E S M A  
T T K D N N J O U N Z G G E N  
A R E S O P M O C W N Z Z S C  
K O C I N O M R A H L I H P E  
D F O M I S S I N A I P F R P  
L V X G A C Q N N I L O I V O

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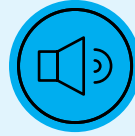
# Musical Dynamics

Musical dynamics refer to how loud the music is. Dynamics in written music, like most musical terms, are based on Italian words. They help us express emotions through music.



## Ensemble Dynamics

In an orchestra, dynamics help balance the sounds of the various instruments, so every voice can be heard properly.



## Dynamics & Volume

Dynamics are relative terms, so there is no set volume for any dynamic. Eight trombones playing pianissimo can be louder than one violin playing mezzo-forte.

SYMBOL	DYNAMIC NAME	VOLUME LEVEL
<i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i>	● very soft → wind blowing through tall grass
<i>p</i>	<i>piano</i>	● soft → whispering goodnight to a baby
<i>mp</i>	<i>mezzo-piano</i>	● moderately soft → a cat's meow
<i>mf</i>	<i>mezzo-forte</i>	● moderately loud → a dog's bark
<i>f</i>	<i>forte</i>	● loud → a motorcycle driving by
<i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i>	● very loud → a crash of thunder

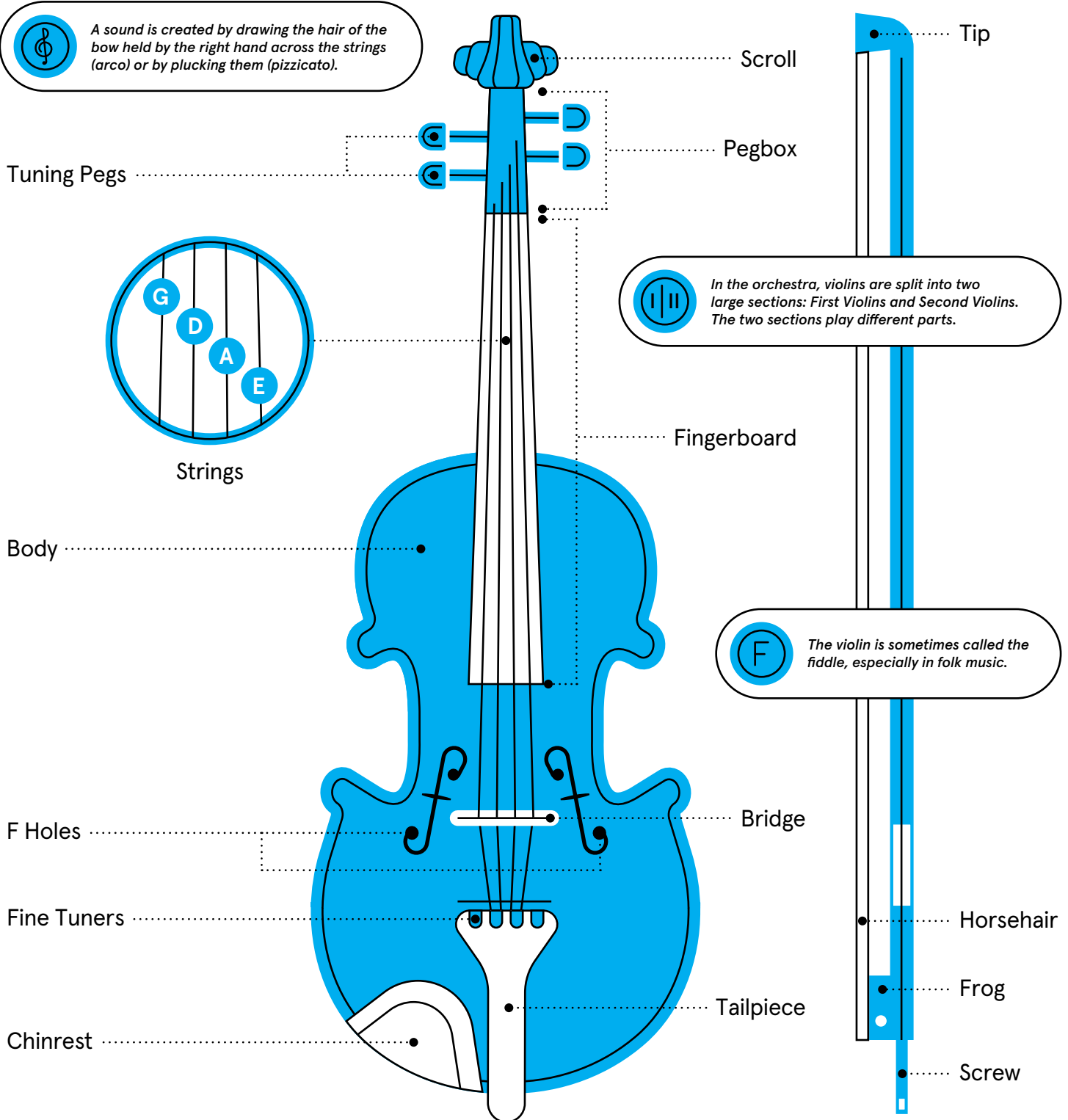
## CHANGING DYNAMICS IN BOLERO

To gradually change the dynamics, composers use crescendos and diminuendos (also decrescendo). Crescendos and diminuendos can last for a couple seconds, or in some cases, such as in Ravel's *Bolero*, they can last a very long time. *Bolero* begins at pianissimo, and gradually, over 15 minutes grows in a gradual crescendo to *fortissimo* possibile (as loud as possible).

NAME	<i>Crescendo</i>	<i>Diminuendo / Decrescendo</i>
SYMBOL		
MEANING	Gradually play <b>louder</b>	Gradually play <b>softer</b>

# Anatomy of a Violin

As one of the oldest and most important instruments in classical music, the violin plays a primary role in the orchestra. The principal violin player in an orchestra is called the concertmaster. After the conductor, the concertmaster is the second-most significant leader in an orchestra.

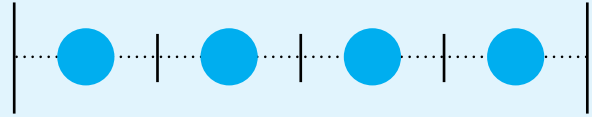


# The Bolero Ostinato

Ravel's *Bolero* features a rhythmic pattern that steadily repeats throughout the entire piece. This is called an ostinato.

## What is an ostinato?

A repeating rhythmic or melodic pattern. The term is derived from the Italian word for stubborn. Ostinati (or ostinatos) are used widely in classical, jazz, pop, and folk music.



## SPEAK THE OSTINATO

Can you sound out the pattern below to bring the ostinato to life?

Du Du-da-mel Du Du-da-mel Du Du Du Du Du-da-mel Du Du-da-mel Du-da-mel Du-da-mel

## LISTENING EXERCISE



The ostinato begins in the snare drum. Can you hear it?



Follow the ostinato as it is passed to different instruments.

Circle the instruments you hear playing the ostinato:

Trumpet

Clarinet

Horn

Violin

Viola

Snare Drum

Flute

Oboe

Timpani

Bass

Cello

Tuba

Trombone

Bassoon

Saxophone

Celesta

Can you think of other songs or pieces of music that use an ostinato? Write some examples here:

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