Boléro Scavenger Hunt

For this lesson you’ll need:
- 12 index cards to write instrument names (list in Activity 2) or a print out of these instrument cards
- Instrument (if you have one), or pot and spoon to play as a drum
- Pen or pencil
- Something to write on

Introduction
Watch a video introduction to this lesson.

In this lesson, we will explore Maurice Ravel’s Boléro. You can do one or more of the activities below, at your own pace:
1) Rhythm Play-Along
2) Exploring Instrument Families
3) Melody Scavenger Hunt

If you have trouble with any of the musical terms in this lesson, check out this musical dictionary.

Who was Maurice Ravel?
Maurice Ravel was a French composer, conductor, and pianist who lived from 1875 to 1937. He is also famous for arranging music by other composers, beautifully using the wide range of colors and instruments in the orchestra. Growing up, Ravel’s Spanish mother would often sing folksongs from her culture. This likely inspired Ravel to write Boléro in 1928 for the famous Russian dancer Ida Rubenstein. The New York Philharmonic was the first orchestra to play Boléro in the United States in 1929.

Activity 1: Rhythm Play-Along
Get ready to play! You need a musical instrument (if you play one) or a pot and spoon to use as a drum. You need to be able to view the rhythm below during the video activity.
Bolero Rhythm

![Musical notation for Bolero Rhythm]

**Watch this video** to learn the rhythm played throughout Boléro.

Now it’s time for you to try the **ostinato** rhythm with the New York Philharmonic! Play Excerpt 1, below, and listen carefully to the **snare drum** first, then join the orchestra. Can you play the rhythm while still hearing the other instruments?

**Excerpt 1**

**Activity 2: Exploring Instrument Families**

For Activities 2 and 3, print out the instrument cards PDF available on this website or make your own by drawing a picture or writing the names of each instrument on index cards. You should have 12 cards in total for each of the following instruments:

- Bassoon
- Clarinet
- E-flat Clarinet
- Flute
- Full orchestra
- Oboe d’amore
- Snare drum
- String family
- Trombone
- Trumpet
- Violin
- Woodwind family

**Watch a video** about the instrument families.

An orchestra is made up of different instruments that belong to one of the four instrument families: the string family, woodwind family, brass family, and percussion family. Which family does each instrument belong to? Why did you group certain instruments together? Is it the way they look, how they are played, what they are made of, or something else?
You can see and hear these orchestra instruments or view a full list of instruments within each instrument family on Classics for Kids.

**Activity 3: Melodic Scavenger Hunt**

Use the activity cards from Activity 2 and watch this video.

Can you follow the melody around the orchestra? Match up each card to the instrument that is playing the melody. [Hint: The snare drum starts Boléro by playing the ostinato rhythm. It never plays the melody.]

Click the link below to watch:
A Boléro from New York

Are you able to recognize all of the instruments? Listen as many times as you need. There are two tricky instruments on your list. The E-flat clarinet is a smaller and higher sounding version of the clarinet, and the oboe d’amore is a larger and lower sounding version of the oboe. Check your work: then you can find the correct order of instruments for the melody in the box below.

**Diving Deeper**

- Play a game to match rhythm.
- Learn more about the oboe d’amore.
- Listen to Jon Deak’s Concerto for Oboe d’amore and Orchestra. Thomas Stacey is playing the oboe d’amore in the premiere of this work in 1980.

If you want to share your work with the New York Philharmonic, please email your responses to education@nyphil.org.

Order of instruments in Boléro:
1) Snare drum (plays only the ostinato rhythm), 2) Flute, 3) E-flat Clarinet, 4) Oboe d’amore, 5) Trumpet, 6) Trombone, 7) Woodwind family, 8) Violin, 9) String family, 10) Full Orchestra