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## INTRODUCTION

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### PRELIMINARY

Instrumentation is both an art and a craft. As an art it is a matter of choosing, ordering, and blending timbres—one facet of the greater art of composition, which also involves choosing, ordering, and blending pitches, dynamics, and durations. As with all arts, it cannot be reduced to rules or formulas but must be learned through intuition, imitation, and painstaking trial and error.

The *craft* of instrumentation, with which this book is concerned, is a purely factual discipline, consisting of the knowledge and understanding of the capabilities, limitations, and idiosyncracies of the numerous devices that are used to transform music from dots on a page into sound. The musical devices involved include not only everything that can be called a musical instrument but also the human voice and a wide variety of electronic equipment; these are included in the term “instrument” wherever it occurs in this book.

Musical instruments have traditionally been classified into a number of broad categories, based on the manner in which the sound is produced: **winds** (subdivided into **woodwinds** and **brasses**), **voices**, **percussion**, **keyboards**,\* **strings**, and **electronic equipment**. In scores of all sorts it is the usual practice to order the instrumental lines according to these categories; the order of the categories is standardized, and the position of instruments within each category is also standardized.

\* Many writers do not recognize the keyboards as a distinct group, but instead divide them among the various other categories.