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[Interview with Gerry Pagano, SLSO Trombonist](#) [Trombone and Bass Trombone Demonstration](#)

The trombone (a.) is a brass instrument, as are the trumpet, French horn, and tuba. To make sound, trombone players “buzz” their lips against the mouthpiece, which makes the air inside the trombone vibrate. The air travels through the trombone’s twists and turns until it comes out of the bell. The trombonist uses their right hand to move the slide forward and back, controlling whether a sound will be high or low.

The bass trombone (b.) is very similar to the trombone but has extra tubing coiled up in the part of the instrument that rests on the player’s shoulder. That extra tubing means the vibrating air needs to travel further before it reaches the bell, resulting in a lower bass sound.



Sliding Around

Gerry plays “When the Saints Go Marching In” on both trombone and bass trombone. What differences do you see and hear between the two trombones? On both trombones, when Gerry moves the slide, the notes change. Why do you think this is?

Can you imitate the slide of a trombone? Try this:

- Lay down on the ground, either on your side or on your back.
- With your legs and arms stretched out in a line, sing the lowest note you can.
- Start to bring your legs and arms towards your middle. As they get closer, slide the note you’re singing higher.

Try singing a song, like “When the Saints Go Marching In,” and make yourself longer or shorter to match the pitches. Remember, longer = lower, and shorter = higher.

Honk If You Like Music

When he was younger, Gerry found his father’s trombone in the closet. He was curious and started “honking on it.” Now as a professional musician, Gerry makes beautiful sounds through the trombone—he only “honks” if he’s being funny! How do you think Gerry went from “honking” to making something beautiful? Is there something you’re curious about doing? Could you get better at it the way Gerry has?

Trombone Tribes

Gerry learned to play his trombone in his school band and continued to play in his high school and college marching bands. Now Gerry plays professionally in an orchestra. What different types of music groups are in your community and school? What instruments are in the different groups that you’ve seen? What kind of musical group would you like to play in?

