

# Study Guide For Teachers

presented by  
**Young Audiences of New Jersey, Inc.**  
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## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Phoenix Woodwind Quintet performs this classic story by Jean de Brunhoff, with music by Francis Poulenc. Through Babar, children discover the instruments of the woodwind quintet, learn to recognize instrumental sounds and moods, hear the difference between melody and accompaniment, woodwind and brass. A gifted actor-storyteller narrates the tale of Babar, a baby elephant who loses his mother to hunters. His coronation and wedding culminate in a great ball for all the jungle animals and the audience.

## LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Be introduced to the woodwind quintet, including the similarities and differences among the instruments and the instruments' distinctive tone colors.
- Learn to recognize the instrumental sounds and become aware of the differences between melody and accompaniment.
- Be acquainted with the twentieth-century classic, *Babar the Elephant*.

This program addresses the following NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard(s):  
**Visual and Performing Art**

**Audience Limit: 250**  
**Intended for grades: K-4**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The Phoenix Woodwind Quintet presents a colorful educational program featuring the classic story by Jean de Brunhoff, with music by Francis Poulenc. The entire audience is involved in telling the story of "Babar", a baby elephant who loses his mother to hunters. Babar comes to live in the city, making many friends and getting an education in the ways of city life. Upon his return to the jungle, he is made king. His coronation (and wedding!) culminates in a great ball for all the jungle animals ....and audience.

Babar  
Celeste  
Arthur  
Cornelius  
(need more)

## BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Play a narrated recording of *Babar the Elephant* for your students. Use this as a teaching tool and stop the recording frequently to ask students to name which instruments represent which characters. Have them discuss why Poulenc chose each instrument to represent their respective characters. As the story progresses and the music changes, have students discuss how the music changes and what it reflects in the story.

2. Get the music teacher involved! Have students learn to play the recorder. Along with the music teacher's instruction, this will give them a basic understanding of how woodwind instruments function.

3. Have students read the story of Babar the Elephant. Get the art teacher involved! Have each student create an image of at least one of the characters. They can draw, paint, sculpt or even make a puppet that could be used for their own performance of the story!

## AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Give students the opportunity to discuss the performance. If they listened to an orchestral version of *Babar the Elephant* prior to the performance, did they notice the instrumental differences when it was performed by the woodwind quintet? What were the differences between listening to a recorded performance and seeing it live? How did the narrator/mime enhance the performance?
2. Listen to other classical music and see if students can pick out the different wood instruments after just hearing them live.

## RESOURCES- Reading

Brunhoff, Jean de. *The Story of Babar*. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1934.

Brunhoff, Jean and Laurent de. *Babar's Anniversary Album: Six Favorite Stories*. New York: Random House, 1981.

Stoltzenberg, Mark. *Exploring Mime*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.

## VOCABULARY WORDS

**WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS** – musical instruments that are (or originally were) made of wood. They are played by blowing air into the instrument and either have no reed (flute), one reed (clarinet), or two reeds (oboe, bassoon)

**BRASS INSTRUMENTS** – musical instruments that are made of brass. They are not played by blowing air into the instruments. The players learn to buzz air on the mouthpiece so that the air inside the instruments vibrates. Lips are held tightly together, and air is forced between them to make vibrations.

**PROGRAM MUSIC** - music that tells a story or paints a picture, such as *Babar the Elephant*. Other examples: *Carnival of the Animals*, by Saint-Saens. *Peer Gynt*, by Edvard Grieg. *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, by Paul Dukas.

**PANTOMIME** - A way of telling a story or illustrating an event through movement, without using language or sound.

**THEME (MUSIC)**: The repeating melody that identifies a character or a performer. A theme can also identify a whole show, as the theme to your favorite television program does.

**MOOD**: The feeling created by a work of art, such as a piece of music.

## ARTIST INFORMATION

The Phoenix Quintet has been in existence for nearly twenty years and has entertained audiences of all ages. Currently, however, their focus is entirely on music education. Their other program Peter and the Wolf has brought fun and information to school children throughout the tri-state area.

Each member of the Quintet is a busy freelance musician in the New York area. The mime/narrator is also a performer with the Bond Street Theatre.

## RESOURCES- Listening

**Clarinet**: *On the Trail* from Grand Canyon Suite, by Ferde Grofe or *The Cuckoo* from *Carnival of the Animals*, by Saint-Saens.

**Flute**: *Irlandaise* from *Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano*, by Claude Bolling.

**Oboe & Bassoon**: *Hornpipe* from *Water Music*, by G.F. Handel.

**Woodwind Quintet**: *Trois Pieces Breves*, by Jaques Ibert