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Well hey there and welcome to episode 7 of Busy Kids Love Music, an educational podcast for music-loving kids. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and today we're talking all about the cello.

The cello is part of the largest family of instruments in the orchestra -- the string family. String instruments come in four sizes: the violin, which is the smallest, the viola, the cello, and the biggest, the double bass. The cello looks like a violin but is much larger -- about 4 feet long -- and with thicker strings than a violin. The thicker strings make the tone of the cello richer, and this is why the cello sounds more like a human voice than any of the other stringed instruments

Because the cello is too large to hold under the chin, the way a violinist or violist would hold their instrument, a cellist plays her instrument sitting down and holds the body of the cello between her knees and the neck on her left shoulder. The left hand presses down on the strings, and the right hand moves the bow or plucks the strings.

The first known maker of the cello was Andrea Amati. His version of the cello was larger than the modern cello. Cello music gained notice during the Baroque period, when composers began to give the cello small solos, meaning that the cellist would play music all by herself -- no other instruments would play along. The composer Johann Sebastian Bach wrote six very famous suites for the cello, including the one you are listening to now. This cello suite is one of the most famous pieces written for the cello, and you might hear it used often in commercials, television shows and movies.

Another famous piece for cello is "The Swan" from *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saens. The piece was originally

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written for a solo cello and 2 pianists. *The Carnival of the Animals* includes many pieces, but composer Camille Saint-Saens believed that these pieces were too silly and would damage his reputation as a serious composer if people heard them. The only movement he allowed to be played publicly from *The Carnival of the Animals* during his lifetime was “The Swan”.

What are some words that you would use to describe the music of the swan? How do you envision the swan in the piece of music moving and acting? Some have called the music melancholy. A solo ballet dance was choreographed in 1905 where the swan was injured and dying. Personally, I imagine the swan beautifully and gracefully gliding along a lake as I listen to the music.

If you are ever able to attend a live symphony performance, pay special attention to the cellists. There are usually 8 to 12 cellists in the orchestra. Notice how they hold and play their instruments. Is the cello used as a solo -- meaning it plays by itself -- or is it playing accompaniment, which means it is supporting the other instruments in the orchestra?

Just because the episode is over doesn't mean the learning has to stop. I've created a free 5 day music camp for kids that gives an overview of other instruments in the orchestra as well as a deeper look at the entire suite *The Carnival of the Animals*. You can join by visiting [busykidsdopiano.com/musiccamp](http://busykidsdopiano.com/musiccamp). Head on over to my website to download a special listening calendar that goes with this episode, and links to beautiful and varied examples of cello music. You can find that listening calendar -- as well as the show notes for today's episode --at

[busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/7](http://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/7) If you enjoyed today's episode, be sure to rate and review the Busy Kids Love Music podcast. I'll see you in two weeks for more musical discoveries -- thanks for joining me today!