

Musical Achievements

Have you ever heard a symphony orchestra play? A symphony orchestra is a large group of musicians who play the same song on different instruments. Some of these instruments are violins, cellos, flutes, trumpets, cymbals, and drums. When played together, these instruments can create loud powerful sounds, or faint, soft sounds, or any sort of sounds in between. Going to hear the symphony is an experience that few people ever forget.

Did you know that children can play in symphony orchestras? These young musicians play their instruments with **flair**, or their own personal style. They work hard to perfect their **craft**, learning to become better musicians.

No matter how old they are, all musicians have to try out for the chance to become part of an orchestra. Orchestra leaders do not always choose the best players. Instead, they look for players who are willing to work hard to become the greatest players they can be. Members must go to practice sessions every week and perform in many concerts throughout the year. Many orchestras even perform in other countries.

Youth orchestras help young musicians expand their **repertoires**. Every concert includes new pieces of music that the orchestra hasn't played before, so members learn many new pieces of music. They may even learn to play some of the most difficult pieces of music. These pieces require young musicians to **employ** all of the skills they have learned. After they have learned the piece, they can add it to the list of songs they are able to play!

In addition to playing with youth symphony orchestras, some young musicians study with a **mentor**. Mentors are like teachers or coaches who help someone learn. Professional musicians can teach young musicians how to become better at their instruments. They give them **feedback** about what they are doing right and what needs improvement. A young musician may even become an **apprentice** to a professional musician. He or she will study with this musician for a long time. The young musician's goal is to become a professional musician when he or she gets older.

These young people work hard to become the best musicians they can be. The **pursuit** of excellence, however, is only part of the reason they work so hard. Many people believe that the real **reward** is the opportunity to do what they love—play music!

COMPREHENSION What words in this passage describe how young musicians learn? How can youth orchestras help young musicians achieve their goals?



Josie Picks the Best Job

Josie rushed into the classroom. It was **Career** Day, and she was eager to meet the relatives of her classmates who had come to speak about their jobs. Last week, Josie wanted to be a poet. The week before that, she wanted to be an architect. Maybe hearing the grownups speak about their careers would give her a better idea of what she wanted to be when she grew up.

Each speaker gave a short talk. The first was an **entrepreneur** who started a company that sold skateboards you could change into scooters. "My parents taught me to not be afraid of trying new things," the entrepreneur announced. "Having this kind of **background** made it easier to start my own company. I knew I could fail and lose my money, but I still wanted to try." Josie imagined starting her own company. She could make sneakers with springs in them and everyone could bounce down the street.

The next speaker was a doctor. Her **specialty** was delivering babies. When Josie heard that, she decided that medicine might be perfect for her. The idea of bringing babies into the world made her smile.

A reporter took the microphone next. He said that reporters needed to be **efficient** at writing stories quickly in order to meet deadlines. He also said that by asking sharp questions, someone can take one big step toward **qualifying** as a reporter. Josie thought she might make a good reporter. After all, didn't her family say she never stopped asking questions?

Then a tall woman with gray hair strode to the front of the room. This woman once played baseball professionally, in the position of pitcher. She said she loved throwing the ball hard and helping her teammates win. But she also told the students that **mastering** their schoolwork was more important than winning a game. "If you want to earn good **wages** and bring home enough **income**," the woman said, "then the best advice I can give you is to work hard at school."

Josie loved to play baseball, but she had never thought of it as a career before! Her mind flashed to the future, where she stood on the pitcher's mound in a crowded baseball stadium. Maybe she could speak to kids in schools, too. She liked that idea.

COMPREHENSION Why does Josie think she would be good at each job she hears about? What words about jobs did you hear in this story?

