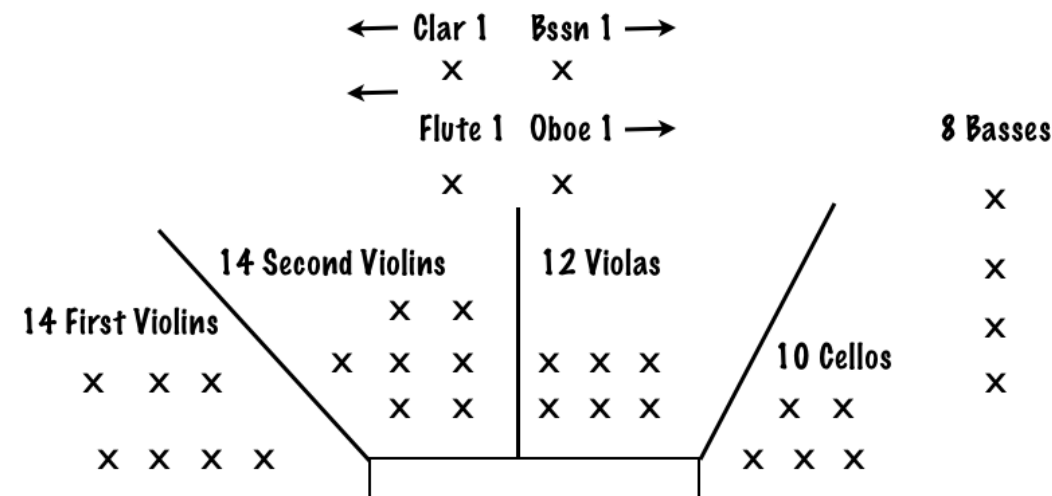


Woodwind Sections and Sample Libraries

By [Peter Lawrence Alexander](#) / August 11, 2012



This is an orchestra seating chart that a conductor fills in when planning a performance. In the strings, two players share a stand which is the basis of how divisi is planned. In the woodwinds, each player (depending on the venue) has their own stand. Thus, there is no divisi. When a sample library developer talks about “divisi” in any orchestral section outside the strings, it’s referring to there being individual parts available to write and produce for within the library.

Woodwinds in most setups are seated directly behind the strings as shown here. Flutes and Clarinets are left of center while Oboes and Bassoons are right of center.

Woodwind sections are usually planned by 1,2,3,4. A small string ensemble will be balanced with one each, usually flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon. A standard sized orchestra will have woods in 2s (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, and 2 bassoons), and the second player will usually double a second instrument (often piccolo, English horn, Bass Clarinet and Contrabassoon respectively).

A more dramatic sized orchestra (concert, film, opera) will have 58 to 60 or more strings balanced with woodwinds in 3s (Strauss, Wagner, John Williams) or woodwinds in 4s (Mahler).

Most woodwind section sample libraries are organized the single instrument covering the first chair parts, instruments that are most often doubled by second chair players, and occasionally world/ethnic instruments. To fill in the woodwind sections you must add in a second, third, or fourth library or find a library that enables you to build a section.

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