First Plus String Orchestra

Grade 1.5



# Gongs

## **Doris Gazda**

### FAS51 INSTRUMENTATION

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Violin																8
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Viola																
Cello																5
Bass																5
Piano																1

#### **Program Notes**

A gong is a musical instrument that is in the shape of a flat disc. It is usually made of bronze or brass. Gongs are commonly found in East and South East Asia. A suspended gong is hung on a stand by a cord that passes through holes at the top rim. Large gongs are struck with a padded mallet, but they may also be struck with wooden or metal sticks and can even be played with the bow of a string bass.

The Chinese used large gongs to head processions, and the gongs were struck to announce the arrival of very important people. Small gongs were used in Chinese opera to announce the entrance of players and to point out parts of the opera that were funny. The people of Indonesia use sets of tuned gongs in their Gamelan musical ensembles. Gamelan ensembles also have xylophones, drums, bamboo flutes and string instruments.

Cymbals are gongs that are raised a little in the middle. Cymbals can be very large or tiny enough to be played by two fingers. Two cymbals are used to make crashing sounds, whereas one cymbal that is suspended is struck with mallets or sticks. Gongs and cymbals are used by composers in orchestral and band music. They add tone color and variety to the music.

The sound of a gong being struck is of an accented sound with a long residual tone that seems to die away. This effect is called "decay." Try to produce the gong sound by pressing your bow into the string at the beginning of the note and then drawing the bow lightly across the strings as the tone keeps sounding. All of the tones should be played *legato*, which means smooth and connected.

-Doris Gazda

#### **About the Composer**

Doris Gazda is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Penn State University. She enjoyed many years as a string specialist in the Montgomery County, Maryland public schools, where she founded and conducted the Frederick County Youth Orchestra, and conducted the Potomac Valley Youth and Frederick Community Orchestras. Most recently, Ms. Gazda was on the faculty at Arizona State University. She has served nationally as Secretary for the American String Teachers Association, President of the National School Orchestra Association and Member-at-Large for the ASTA with NSOA.

A proponent of new music for student musicians, Ms. Gazda composes for strings and string orchestra. She is the author of *High Tech for Strings* (Carl Fischer), a set of technical studies for middle and high school orchestras, and co-author of the beginning method *Spotlight on Strings* (Neil A. Kjos). Nationally known for her leadership and expertise in string instruction, Ms Gazda presents workshops and conducts conference and regional student orchestras. She is a frequent presenter at state and national meetings for MENC (Music Educators National Conference), ASTA (American String Teachers Association) with NSOA (National School Orchestra Association), MTNA (Music Teachers National Association), regional school systems, and string workshops.





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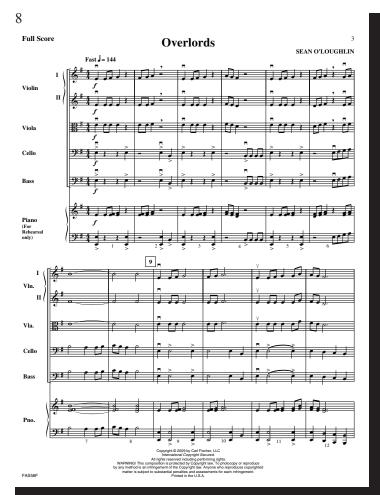














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