



# The Piano

The piano is a large musical instrument. It is played by pressing down the keys on a keyboard. When a key is pressed, it causes a hammer to strike a string inside the hollow body of the instrument. This causes the string to vibrate and a note sounds.

The first instrument to be played using a keyboard was the organ. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the harpsichord appeared, which was similar to the modern piano, though it could only be played at one volume, which was fairly loud. Another stringed instrument, popular in the Middle Ages, was called the clavichord. It allowed for more expression on the part of the musician, but it did not have much volume. Around 1700, the first piano was made by Bartolomeo Cristofori, an Italian harpsichord maker, by combining the volume potential of a harpsichord with the range of expression and control offered by the clavichord. The word piano is derived from the Italian word *pianoforte* meaning "soft and loud". With the piano, musicians can choose whether to play loudly, softly, or somewhere in between.

1. How does a piano work?

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2. True or false: The piano has been around longer than the organ.

3. Fill in the blank: The piano was invented in \_\_\_\_\_

4. In Italian, the word *pianoforte* means

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