

Whip (instrument)

In music, a **whip** or **slapstick** is a percussion instrument consisting of two wooden boards joined by a hinge at one end. When the boards are brought together rapidly, the sound is reminiscent of the crack of a whip. It is often used in modern orchestras, bands, and percussion ensembles.

There are two types of whips. The first has two planks of wood connected together by a hinge, with a handle on each. The percussionist holds the instrument by the handles and hits the two pieces of wood together, creating a loud whip noise. The other type also has two planks of wood, one longer than the other, with one handle, connected with a spring hinge so it can be played with just one hand, though it cannot produce sounds as loud as a whip requiring both hands. This second type of whip is technically a separate instrument called a **slapstick**.



A whip being used in a marching band pit ensemble

Usage in classical music

This list is alphabetical, but is by no means exhaustive.

- John Adams: Nixon in China
- Thomas Adès: Living Toys (the whip is played by the lead French horn player) and The Tempest
- Leroy Anderson: Christmas Standard "Sleigh Ride," where the instrument is meant to imitate an actual whip on a horse.
- Samuel Barber: Piano Concerto
- Benjamin Britten: The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Noye's Fludde, Sinfonia da Requiem, St. Nicolas (Britten), Spring Symphony and War Requiem
- John Barnes Chance: Incantation and Dance
- Aaron Copland: Rodeo (Buckaroo Holiday) Symphony No.3
- George Gershwin: Piano Concerto in F
- Adam Guettel: The Light in the Piazza (musical)
- Daron Hagen: Shining Brow
- Alun Hoddinott: Fioriture
- James MacMillan: The Sacrifice
- Gustav Mahler: Symphonies No. 5 and 6
- William Mathias: Vistas, Laudi and In Arcadia
- Olivier Messiaen: Des Canyons aux étoiles, Saint-François d'Assise and Éclairs sur l'au-delà...
- Modest Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition (the whip is used by the orchestrations of Maurice Ravel, Vladimir Jurowski and Henk de Vlioger's version for percussion ensemble)
- Krzysztof Penderecki: Symphony No. 1 (which begins with nine whip cracks punctuated by pauses)
- Maurice Ravel: Piano Concerto in G and L'heure espagnole (The Spanish Hour)
- Dmitri Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 2 in G (last movement), Symphony No. 13, Symphony No. 14 and Symphony No. 15
- Juan María Solare: Un ángel de hielo y fuego
- Carl Strommen: Cumberland Cross

- Frank Ticheli: Fortress
- Michael Tippett: New Year (opera and suite version), The Knot Garden, The Ice Break, The Vision of Saint Augustine, Songs for Dov and The Shires Suite
- Edgard Varèse: Ionisation
- Alexander Vustin: Devil in Love



A slap stick made by Ludwig

- William Walton: Belshazzar's feast
- Huw Watkins Piano Concerto
- Bernd Alois Zimmermann: Die Soldaten

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