

# ethos

P E R C U S S I O N   G R O U P



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## SHOW TIME for Teachers

Welcome to *Show Time*, a performing arts resource guide published for the CSB/SJU Fine Arts Education series. This edition of *Show Time* is designed to be used before or after a performance of *Ethos*.

Suggested activities in this issue include background information and ideas for integrating the performance with several subject areas. The activities may be adapted to meet your classroom time and needs. Please feel free to copy pages in this guide as needed for student use.

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# ***WELCOME TO THE ETHOS PERCUSSION GROUP STUDY GUIDE***

This study guide is an introduction to some of the topics ETHOS will discuss as well as some of the pieces and instruments that we will perform during our residency.

Enclosed is an in-class workshop for the students on making their own percussion instruments.

The students will hear the ensemble perform many pieces for percussion ensemble. Our two major programs are *Bing!Bang!Boom!* and *Drums Around the World*, both of which have description sheets included in this study guide. One work performed during the programs is *Afro-Amero*, which is based on African drumming. We have included a description sheet with an introduction to African percussion which includes a few concepts and instruments to listen for. An instrument glossary is included as well, which will be helpful in defining some of the more exotic instruments in our collection.

We hope you find this study guide beneficial and we look forward to our visit.

-Ethos Percussion Group

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## What is Percussion?

Percussion instruments are musical instruments that you shake, scrape or strike to produce a sound. Percussion instruments can be played by sticks or many different types of mallets. The mallets can be made of yarn, plastic, rubber, nylon or brass. Many other types of percussion instruments are played with the hands and fingers.

### Drums:

Drums are cylindrical (round) in shape, and have what is called a drum head stretched across the shell. The shell is usually made of wood or metal, but can also be made of plastic. The drum head is made of plastic or calf skin. The snare drum is a two headed drum with a set of metal or skin snares on the bottom head that vibrate when you strike the head, thus giving the snare drum a very unique sound. Tom-toms can be either two-sided or single headed. Tom-toms can be tuned to a specific pitch, and are used in jazz, rock music as well as classical.

There are hundreds of different drums from around the world. Some other types of drums you will see Ethos performing on include: Bongos, Timbales, Timpani

(see below), Bass Drums, Dumbek, Riqq, Tar, Odaiko, and Tablas. Sizes range from 3 to 50 inches.



### Timpani:

The Timpani are a set of two to four drums that were originally called kettle drums. In ancient times the timpani were played while on horseback, and were used to alert the troops during a battle. The modern timpani are used very frequently in orchestral music and can be altered to change the pitch. Pitch changes are produced by using a pedal attached to the drum head. The timpani

are played with yarn-covered mallets and sometimes with wooden mallets. Sizes range from 23 to 32 inches.

### Cymbals:

Cymbals come in many different sizes, and are made from a metal alloy. The metal alloy originated in Turkey, and is very hard to duplicate successfully. Cymbals can be played by holding them and striking them together, or striking them with wooden, yarn-covered or brush-type mallets. Cymbals are prevalent in orchestral music, as well as Jazz and Rock and Roll.

*For more exotic instruments in our collection please refer to the enclosed instrument glossary.*

# Partial Instrument Glossary

**Odaiko:** Giant drums ranging from two feet to five feet in diameter. These drums were featured at the head of battle formations. The drums and their performers, quite often madmen recruited from prison, were secured to wagons drawn by oxen. The frenzied performers "pounded" their instruments unceasingly with heavy clubs or whips. The sound was undoubtedly terrifying. In fact, it has been said that invariably the side which made the greatest noise won the battle even before a blow was exchanged.



Odaiko

**Gongs and Tam-Tams:** Made of bronze or similar metal, molded in a circular shape with the rim bent down, sizes of gongs and tam-tams range from six inches to four feet in diameter. Their origin in China can

be dated to as far back as the time of Emperor Hsuan Wu (500-516 AD), but its earliest use is believed to be as far back as 2255 BC, under Emperor Shun. Early Asian cultures used gongs during times of war to signal retreat, and in a hunt as a decoy. In addition, gongs were believed to have magical powers to heal sickness. Gongs have a pitch, whereas tam-tams do not.

**Chinese Cymbals:** A circular metal instrument with the end slightly curved. Sizes range from eight inches to two feet in diameter. This cymbal is believed to have been introduced to China from India and Turkey during the fifth century BC. In early Chinese warfare the cymbals were rubbed together in a night attack to signal a halt.

**Kyeezee:** A triangular shaped metal plate chime, with elaborate curved lines. Origin is from Indonesia and Burma. This instrument is sometimes referred to as a Burma bell. Its early use is related to religious ceremonies in these regions.



Kyeezee



**Chinese Drum:** This drum is smaller in size than the Odaiko. The drum's earliest function was for military use. One beat signaled the ranks must be put in order. Two beats signaled that formations must be made. Three beats signaled that food would be issued. Four beats signaled that the men should prepare for battle.

**Temple Blocks:** This is a type of wooden slit drum. It is carved from a piece of camphor wood to resemble a mythical fish. It is hollowed out through a shaped slit, representing a creature's open mouth. The body is lacquered red and gold. The wooden fish is symbolic of wakeful attention, prayers for rain, rite of death and resurrection, and the coming of wealth.

**Tambourine:** This is a small, single headed frame drum of Eastern origin. Small metal discs called jingles are arranged within the wooden frame. Early origin of this instrument is debatable. It resembles the hoop drums of China, the duff of India, the chilchiles of Peru, and the aelyau of Greenland. In Western music, the tambourine is a common orchestral percussion instrument.

**Tabla:** This is a percussion instrument of India. It is widely used in vocal and instrumental Hindustani music. The tabla is played by one person playing a drum with each hand. The right hand drum is called the daya. The left hand drum is called the baya. The daya is a thong tensioned, wooden barreled drum, measuring about fifteen centimeters in diameter. The baya is a slightly larger drum made of clay and copper.



Tabla

**Dumbek:** This is an instrument of Middle Eastern origin. It is also referred to as the darabuka. It is single headed with a shell the shape of an hour glass made of clay or metal. While playing the instrument with the right hand, the pitch changes by moving the left hand in and out of the shell of the drum.



Dumbek

**Claves:** Idiophones of Cuban origin consisting of two cylindrical hardwood sticks. In Latin American dance rhythms, particularly the rumba, the steady and unchangeable beat of the claves

constitutes a relentless ostinato. To obtain the required clear and penetrating tone, one stick rests slightly in the fingertips of one hand, with the cupped palm acting as a resonator, while the other stick (the striker) is held between the thumb and first two fingers. Western composers who have used this instrument are Varese, Chavez, Bernstein, Copland, and Cage.

**Conga Drums:** An Integral instrument in the Latin American dance orchestra. It has a long tapered shell up to about ninety-one centimeters in depth, and a single head about twenty-five to thirty centimeters in diameter. Conga drums, used as a set, come in three sizes. Quito is the smallest drum, conga is the medium drum, and tumbadora is the largest.

**Timbales:** Derived from the kettle drums (or timpani), timbales are two metal drums used with a cowbell and often a cymbal. The timbales were originally used by the charangas, a small European-style orchestra of Cuba, before the 1940's. Today, timbales are one of the main instruments of salsa.

**Shekere:** An African derived instrument made of a gourd with a net of beads covering the outside.



Shekere

**Maracas:** A pair of rattles filled with dried seeds or pebbles, used to provide rhythmic counterpoint

**Guiro:** A “scraper” used to provide rhythm in many Latin American musical styles. It consists of a notched gourd played with a short stick or metal pick. The Dominican version, called Guira, is made of metal.



Guira

**Bongo:** A small double drum used by early guitar and rhythm groups. In salsa, the bongo plays an improvisational counterpoint to the main rhythm. A bongo player is referred to as the Bongocero.

**Afuche:** The modern day version of this instrument consists of a metal notched cylinder surrounded by several strands of metal beads. Rhythms are skillfully produced by rubbing the beads with the right hand while spinning the cylinder with the left hand. The afuche is a popular instrument in a Latin percussion section.



Afuche

# The Keyboard Percussion Family

## THE MARIMBA

The marimba originated in Africa, Latin America, and South America. The modern version on which Ethos will be performing was first manufactured in the United States in the 1920's. The keys, which are called bars, are made of rosewood. The best rosewood comes from Latin American countries such as Honduras.

*\*\*Can you name some other Latin American countries?*



Hanging down from the marimba are the resonators. The resonators focus and amplify the tone of the bar. They can be made of brass or metal alloy.

An octave is a group of 8 different notes. The piano, for example, has 7 octaves, while the marimba has between 4 and 5. The marimba is played with mallets that are made of rubber, or covered in yarn. Sometimes, the marimba is played with four mallets, two in each hand.



## THE XYLOPHONE

The xylophone is the little brother to the marimba. It has 3\* octaves instead of 4 or 4\*. It also starts one octave higher, so the pitches are higher than that of the marimba.

The bars are also made of rosewood, or in some cases, a synthetic material called Kelon. The xylophone also has resonators of brass or metal. It is played with mallets made of rubber, wood, yarn or plastic.

## THE ORCHESTRA BELLS

Another name for the orchestra bells is the glockenspiel. Many great composers such as Tchaikovsky, Ravel, Respighi, Bernstein, Copland, and others have written for the bells in the orchestra. The bars of the glockenspiel are made of steel. The bells don't have resonators because the bars ring for a very long time

without them. The orchestra bells are played with plastic or brass mallets.

## THE VIBRAPHONE

The vibraphone, also called the vibes, is very popular in jazz music. The bars of the vibraphone are made of a metal alloy. The range is standard at three octaves. The name vibraphone comes from this instrument's ability to produce vibrato. Vibrato is what you hear when a violinist moves their left hand on the string, or when a singer changes the tone of their voice to produce a wavering quality. The vibes use an electric vibrato by rotating a fan inside each of the resonators. The vibes also have a pedal which allows the notes to be sustained.



Glockenspiel



# Experiment With Sound Make Your Own Percussion Section

**Drums:** Use all of the containers you can find--plastic, wooden, glass, tin, aluminum. Experiment to see how many different pitched drums you can make. Use one metal head and one plastic. Try one end with a drum head, and the other end open. Use lots of different sizes.

**Chimes:** Use various tubes of different sizes--metal pipe, plastic PVC tubes, bamboo, anything you can find. Hang each chime from a piece of strong fishing line or string. Be careful not to muffle the sound with too much string.

**Mallets and Beaters:** Make a beater with a soft end and a hard end. This way you will be able to achieve two different tones on the same instrument. Wrap some yarn around the eraser end of a pencil and cover it with a small piece of cloth.

-Now try them out. Strike both ends of the mallet. Strike with your hands, too. Compare the sounds.

**Rattles:** Find containers of various sizes and materials, such as plastic, tin, wood and cardboard. Experiment with different kinds and amounts of filler, in order to get a variety of pitches and tone colors when you shake the containers.

\*\*How does the type of mallet change the tone of the instrument?

\*\*Which type of chime rings the longest?

\*\*Which chime has the highest pitch?

\*\*Which material for a drum sounds the best?

- \* Of the three keyboard instruments, which do you think will have the brightest sound?
- \* Which will have the darkest tone?
- \* Why do you think some resonators are longer than others?  
(For a hint, look at the size of the bars and compare how each is different from the next)

# African Percussion

Drums are very important in African Music. African drums are made of many shapes and sizes. Many have skins that are stretched across the shell and vibrate; these drums are called membranophones because the heads are made of membrane, which is the skin of animals.

Membranophone drums are made from logs, ceramic pots, gourds, large shells, and various other materials.

Drums are often made from hollow logs covered at one or both ends with tightly stretched animal skins.



Membranophone drums

Often these skins are laced with strings or thongs which can be tightened or loosened to change the pitch of the drum. African drummers use their finger tips, the palms of their hands, their fists, and sometimes even their elbows to play. They strike the center of the

drumhead, the rim and also the shell. Their skill is such that the drums actually seem to talk. One kind of "talking drum" is held under the arm as it is played. Pitches are changed as the arm tightens and loosens the strings which hold the heads.

The bembe is two metal bells, which in African drum music is the timekeeper for the ensemble. The bembe player usually plays a single pattern throughout the piece. In Latin American cultures, the bembe is known as the agogo bell. Also playing a pattern is the shekere. The shekere is a hollowed out gourd which has wooden beads threaded around it. The shekere is shaken in time with the ensemble.



Agogo bell/Bembe

The piece that Ethos will perform is called Afro-Amero. It is based on the rhythms from the West-African country of Ghana. Ghana has a very rich heritage of drumming. There are many different rhythms indigenous to the many different countries, tribes and villages in Africa.

# Making Your Own Instrument...

## African Drum

This finished project should be about 9 inches long

### Materials:

- \* Drinking cups (Styrofoam, plastic or paper)
  - \*\***Recycle tip:** Hard to believe, but disposable cups can be washed and used in craft projects. It's a bit of a pain, but if you're doing a lesson on recycling, it's worth asking the children to wash a couple of McDonald's (or other) cups to get the point across that recycling takes some effort.
- \* Glue
- \* Masking tape
- \* Shoe polish
- \* Rags
- \* Permanent markers

### Alternate idea:

Instead of using masking tape and shoe polish, you can paper mache on some white tissue paper and, once dry, brush ovetop with coffee or strong tea.

- \* Paper Mache -- visit "[How to Paper Mache](#)" for the recipe

### Directions:

- \* Glue two cups together, bottom to bottom and let dry
- \* If doing the project with a large group of children, pre-do the first step using hot glue to make things flow a bit more smoothly during craft time (most "low temp" craft hot glue guns work on styrofoam cups... carpentry ones will melt them though)
- \* Have the children tear off 4 to 5 inch lengths of masking tape and completely cover the opening at the top and bottom of the cups
- \* Using 3 to 4 inch lengths of masking tape, completely cover the outside of the cups
- \* Brush shoe polish all over the masking tape covered cups and then wipe off with rags
- \* Draw geometric or other designs around the top, middle and bottom of the drums with permanent markers.

## Tambourine

### Materials:

- \* 2 paper plates
- \* Stapler or glue
- \* Hole punch
- \* String
- \* Jingle bells
- \* Crayons

### Directions:

- \* Staple or glue to paper plates together, facing each other.
- \* Using a hole punch, make holes around the plates and tie jingle bells to the holes with string.
- \* Decorate the tambourine with crayons.

### Note:

Heavy duty paper plates may be more durable for this craft.

- \* If using a stapler, an adult should do this. When finished, be sure to cover the staples with scotch tape.

## Chimes

### Materials:

- \* Ruler or stick
- \* Washers
- \* Nail polish
- \* String
- \* Mixing spoon

### Directions:

- \* Hang the washers from the ruler or stick with pieces of string by wrapping the string around the ruler or stick and securing.
- \* Strike the washers with the mixing spoon to play

### Note:

You can make this craft colorful by painting the washers first with different color nail polishes, such as red, gold, glittery, etc. Teachers should supervise this part of the activity closely.

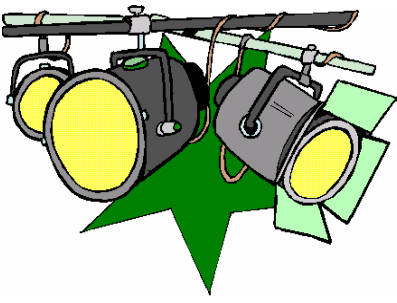


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# theatre etiquette

Each year, thousands of teachers, students, bus drivers, and parents take part in CSB/SJU's Fine Arts Education Series. Please review the **LOOKING and LISTENING** information below with your students to help make your theater experience the best it can be.

## **LOOKING and LISTENING**

Attending a live performance of *Ethos Percussion Group* will be interesting and enjoyable for everyone if you remember to...

- ~watch for facial expressions to help you understand what the musicians are feeling.
- ~listen in order to understand the meanings of the songs
- ~listen in order to understand the communication between the musicians

The performers in *Ethos Percussion Group* need help from you, the audience. You are an important part of the play. Being an audience member in a theater is different from watching a movie or television show. The performers are in the same room with you and are affected by what you do. To do their best, the performers need you to watch and listen closely. Audience members also depend on your quiet attention during the performance so that they can enjoy their theater experience as well.

Please review the **PROCEDURES** information below to help your theater visit go smoothly.

## **PROCEDURES**

- ~Please bring a minimum of one adult chaperone for every fifteen students.
- ~Please remind chaperones that the theater etiquette they model speaks volumes to your students.
- ~Prepare your students to enter the theater in single file in order of seating.
- ~Position your chaperones to maximize adult supervision of your group.
- ~Please wait until your whole group is seated before making trips to the rest room. Then students may go in small groups with the teacher's permission. Younger students making trips to the rest room will need to be chaperoned.
- ~The theater is a food, gum, drink, radio, camera, tape, and video recorder free zone!
- ~Please leave inappropriate behaviors behind when visiting the theater.
- ~Please remain seated following the performance. Your group will be dismissed from the theater by a Fine Arts Programming staff member.

**Enjoy *Ethos!***

This study guide was adapted from material provided by Baylin Artists Management, and designed by *Alison Guessou CSB '08*.