

DRUMBEAT: THE ART OF HITTING THINGS – Teachers' Notes

'Drum-beat' is a percussion program designed to inform, interest and entertain. Written and presented by two of Australia's foremost professional percussionists;

Mark Stewart and Tony Azzopardi – in Sydney

Mark Stewart and either Danny Guerrero, Rick Kugler, Delman or Alex Osorio or Gustavo Cereijo when on tour.

For biography details on performers please see the brochure.

The program features rhythms and patterns used in all types of music and includes an audience participation segment.

Instruments featured include drum-kit, congas, bongos, cow-bells, timbales, cymbals, gongs, shakers, maracas, castanets, chimes, whistles, bells, flexi-a-tone, vibra-slap, guiro, claves, triangle, cabaca, crotales, sound effects and electronic drum machines.

An entirely self-contained package, '**Drum-beat**' is sure to enthrall, educate and entertain audiences of all ages.

Working with other musicians requires discipline and teamwork. Just like in sport there are times when you have to rely on your team-mates to do their job so that you can do yours. In a percussive piece this is especially true as, when a solo is being played the underlying pattern should remain constant and strict - the security of the main rhythm giving the soloist space and freedom to move.

Music is the most universal form of communication. It bridges all language barriers and percussion is one of the oldest and most basic tools of that communication. Each and every one of us has an inherent sense of rhythm - the way our hearts pump blood around our bodies, the way we move, our breathing and of course the way we talk. There is rhythm in everything we do.

'Drum-beat' is exciting and interesting...informative and entertaining...'drum-beat' - the art of hitting things.

"THE SKILL OF STRIKING"

Percussion is the art and skill of striking, and it was an art and skill at which ancient man was very adept. His very survival depended on it. He would terrify his enemies, communicate to his friends by drumming or percussing - his most basic of tools being his bare knuckles and a patch of earth on which to beat.

The percussion family, along with the voice, is the most ancient of the musical families and as it evolved it set the scene for all sorts of situations and events...from the religious temple drums and gongs of the east to the war drums of all cultures.

Percussion can stir up the full range of emotions within all living creatures. It can be frightening or soothing depending on the players' sensitivity and mood. It's hard to imagine a happier sound than carnival time in RIO, (Brazil), where the entire population is out on the street for days on end with everyone, young and old, playing some sort of percussion....At the same time it's hard to picture a more terrifying sound than that of thousands of ZULU warriors using their spears to beat out rhythms on their shields before a battle... Psychological warfare in it's most effective form!!

Another enjoyable aspect of percussion is the visual excitement it can bring to any live musical performance. The movement of the player is noticeably more dramatic in the percussion section when compared to the rest of the band or orchestra. The swaying of a cymbal which has been struck...the physical effort involved... the variety of instruments available to the percussionist and the way in which the player selects and places his contributions all add to the visual appreciation by any audience.

Many of the drums used today have been around many thousands of years and are just as valid and just as exciting to hear and play as they ever were. These ancient percussion instruments blend perfectly with the more contemporary sounds and effects. That's because it's all rhythm. The space between sounds and the timing and interpretation of the player is the keynotes for a good performance.

Timing is the common element of the performing arts (Theatre, dance, etc) It's 'Good Timing' which determines a great performance. The highest praise one can bestow on any actor, comedian, dancer or musician is that of 'Great Timing'.

Throughout history percussion has been accessible to everyone because of the simplicity and effectiveness of percussion instruments made out of locally available materials. It's interesting and fun to make your own percussion instruments and sounds. Imagination and ingenuity is all you need to get started.

SUGGESTED GENERAL ACTIVITIES

With the help of a tape recorder, make a 'jingle' to promote your school. A sixty second advertisement for a coming school event. First make a script of the format you want, (where to have the voice over, when to have background music, when to sing the catch - lines etc.) Then rehearse and record your 'ad' with the instruments you made. Use a stopwatch to time each segment and keep any lyrical messages to a catchy, concise minimum. Try and avoid 'over playing' and 'clutter'....SIMPLE IS BEST!!

Also using a tape recorder, write and record a short story using your own sound effects.

Look at designs seen on percussion instruments from different parts of the world.

SCIENCE AND MATHS

What causes sound?

Frequencies and sound vibrations...most people these days have graphic equalizers on their sound system at home, or at the least a Bass / Treble dial. Investigate which instruments are representing the LOW, MEDIUM, and HIGH frequencies.

Research the relationships of numbers in music...e.g. the mathematics of music notation...



(4x 1/8 notes) + (1 x $\frac{1}{4}$) + (4 x 1/16 ths) (1x $\frac{1}{4}$ note) (2 x 1/8) (1 x $\frac{1}{8}$) 1/8th 1/8th Rest

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Try making your own drums and percussion instruments...

Below are basic drums and hand percussion instruments made from household items...

