



# THE BONGO BROTHERS

PRESENT

# QUEST *for the* ULTIMATE RHYTHM

TEACHER'S RESOURCE KIT

## Performance Summary

Join the crazy Bongo Brothers on a slapstick percussive journey across the planet as they search for the ultimate rhythm. Weaving world percussion with theatrical storytelling, the energetic Bongo Brothers will take students on a roller-coaster ride. Experience the music of remote Indigenous communities in the desert heart of Australia, the exotic belly dancing rhythms of Egypt, the frenetic samba celebrations of a Brazilian soccer stadium and lots of other stops along the way!

An extraordinary toe-tapping, foot-stomping, heart-racing piece of Australian music theatre!

## WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU CROSS AN ACTOR, A MUSICIAN & A CARTOONIST? THE BONGO BROTHERS!!!



### DAVE 'BONGO' HOUSTON

is an actor, musician & teacher, who trained at the Victorian College of the Arts, Australia. He has toured 4 international shows, including his own solo *Going My Way* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His improvisational work has been on radio, film & TV. He also tours with Zeal Theatre.



### BRYSON 'MONGO' MULHOLLAND

is a multi-talented musician who plays a variety of music styles & instruments. An expert conga player who plays percussion plus piano, fender rhodes, silver flute & didgeridoo. He has extensive live & studio experience & fronts his own band *Glory B* in the Byron Bay Shire.



### ADO 'DRONGO' OSBORNE

has worked as a caricaturist since 1992, during which time he has drawn over 30,000 portraits at events around Australia. Osborne's ability to draw a caricature in about 2 minutes, makes him one of the "fastest felt tips" ever - and he also plays a mean bass guitar.

## Classroom Connections

Use this performance to:

- Introduce young people to world music
- Introduce young people to detailed syncopated rhythms and develop an understanding of percussion
- Investigate the cultural background of various instruments
- Explore music and its capacity to evoke atmosphere

- Appreciate the impact of cultural, spiritual, historical influences on people's relationship to music
- Enjoy music-based narratives through the use of slapstick

### The Artform:

Percussion, Narrative, Song and Slapstick



Colour in The Bongo's Brothers

Visit The Bongo Brothers online at [www.thebongobrothers.com](http://www.thebongobrothers.com)

## **PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES**

**Aim:** To introduce children to some of the concepts/elements explored in the performance of *The Bongo Brothers*

- Percussion Instruments

Check how much students already know about percussion instruments. Use **Activity Sheet #1**

- Drama game

Play *Yes Let's!* The rules are very simple. One person makes a suggestion and then everyone in the class says, "Yes, lets!" and proceeds to enact the suggestion. This continues until a new suggestion is made.

For example: "Let's all jump up and down. Yes, let's" - Everyone jumps up and down.

Some tips:

- Have some suggestions up your sleeve in case the students get stuck, such as:

Let's all...

...Skip around the room, hop on one foot, rub our heads and pat our tummies, fall to the floor, act like a monkey, sing a Nursery Rhyme, pretend to be airplanes...

- Normally suggestions are made randomly but you could give students an order to give suggestions.

- Before you start, tell students that there are to be no rude, mean or dangerous suggestions.

- Broad Discussion Topics

What is a culture?

What makes us the same as other people?

What makes us different from other people?

- African-American Spirituals

During the program, the Bongo Brothers take us on a journey around the world. We explore the music of Africa and then see the influences of African music in New Orleans, USA.

Use *Somebody's Knocking* and **Activity Sheet #2** to introduce some musical concepts:

- syncopation. The syn-co-pa rhythm (*short, long, short* or *ti, ta, ti*) is a feature of this style (melody) and works against the straight beat of the percussion accompaniment.

- ostinato. The accompaniment can be sung or played. The repeated idea "knocking, knocking" could be described as an ostinato that returns.

- call and response/solo. There is space in the song to insert a student's name. That student could then sing the last line of the song as a solo. Alternatively the teacher could sing, "Oh Children, why don't you answer?" the class could then respond with "somebody's knocking at my door."

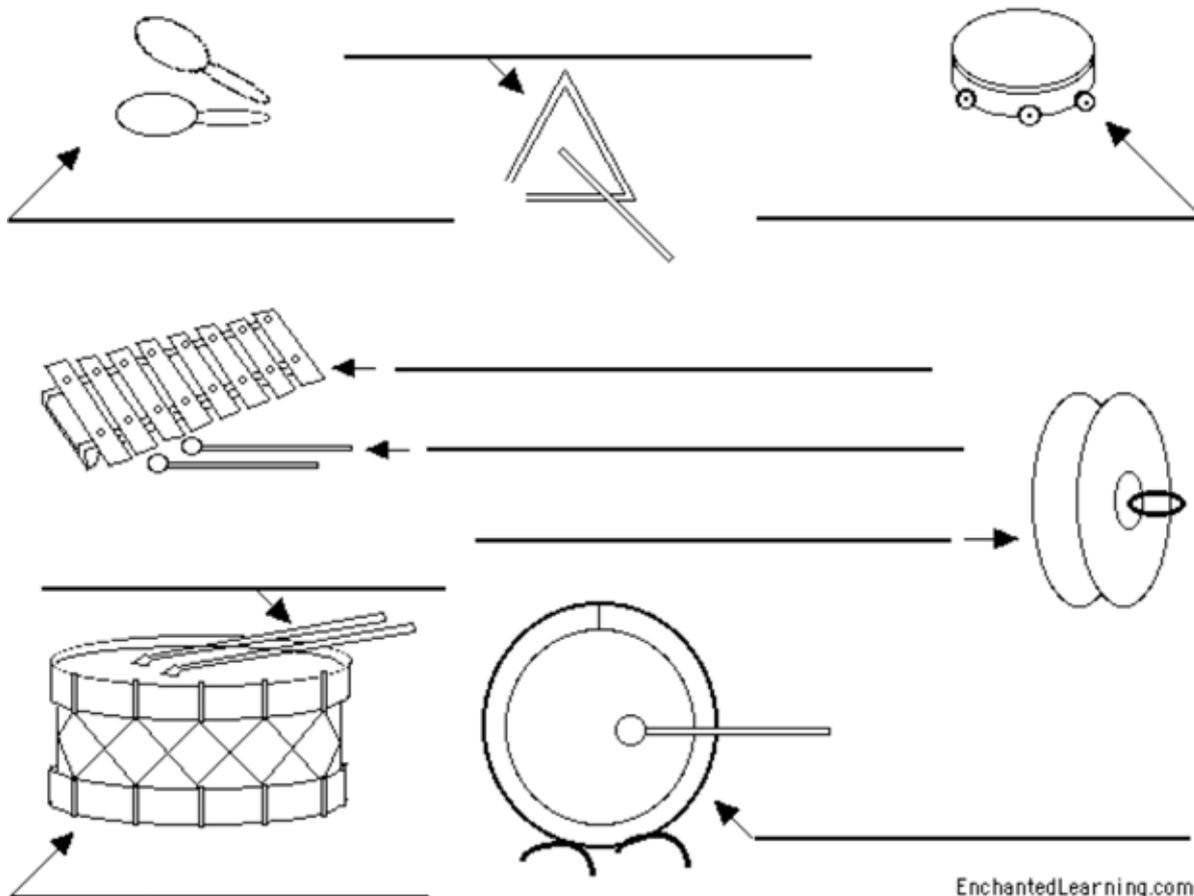
and generate discussion:

- Slavery
- Where people find hope

**ACTIVITY SHEET # 1 Percussion Instruments:**

Here are some percussion instruments that are commonly used in concert bands and orchestras.

1. See how many you can name.
2. One of them is different to the others because it plays pitched notes. Circle that one.



3. Make a list of other percussion instruments that you have heard of that are not included above:

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## ACTIVITY SHEET #2 African-American Spirituals – Singing and Percussion

### What is an African-American Spiritual?

Spirituals were influenced by the culture of Africa. Africans used songs to recite history, express feelings about each other, and was tied to all aspects of life. Influenced by the traditions of Africa, spirituals were created by individual and group contribution. Songs were constantly re-created from bits of old songs and then formed into new songs with new tunes and lyrics. They were not always created in church, but were often constructed and sung while working. Sorrow and hope of freedom were common themes.



This is a D pentatonic song using D E F# A and B

### Somebody's Knocking

NEGRO SPIRITUAL

Some-bod-y's knock-ing at your door. Some-bod-y's knock-ing at your door. O — {Josh-ua / Mar-tha} Why don't you an-swer? Some-bod-y's knock-ing at your door. knock knock

#### Related activity

To emphasise the different phrase lengths in this song, teach the following word chant to the class. Have half the class chant softly while the other half sings. Later use woodblocks instead of the chant.



Some - one's knock-ing knock-ing  
On my door knock-ing knock-ing  
Some - one's knock-ing knock-ing knock!

**Try:** Instead of Joshua or Martha, use the names of class members. That person could sing the last line: "Somebody's knocking at my (your) door."

**Consider:** The spirituals were sung by slaves who had a hard life and needed some hope.

Does this song have a religious/hopeful theme?  
Is the song literally about someone knocking on a real door?  
What do you think the song may be about?

## **POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES**

**Aim:** To further explore the concepts/elements introduced in the performance of *The Bongo Brothers*

- Cultural Background - slavery

Use **Information Sheet #1** to understand in greater detail about the impact of Slavery on the music and dance of the countries/areas that the Bongo Brothers visited.

- Percussion Instruments

Revise the instruments that the Bongo Brothers played and demonstrated in the performance. Use **Information Sheets #2a** and **#2b**.

- Modes of transport/train safety

Use the journey of the Bongo Brothers to explore Modes of Transport. Use **Activity Sheet #3**.

- Musical Geography

Use **Activity Sheet #4** to revise the journey of the Bongo Brothers and some of the interesting features that they introduced about each country/area.

- Research

Have students choose a country or musical instrument of their choice and research it in greater detail. Alternatively, you may wish for students to explore the history of slavery further.

For more information about

Slavery: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>

- Drama game 1

Play *Neverending Story*. Students take it in turns to tell an exciting story. The whole class acts out the story as if they were the protagonist.

E.g. One day I was flying my jet plane through the air...(new student) when all of a sudden it started to nose dive...(new student) I had to eject ...(new student) I pulled my rip cord for my parachute...etc

- Drama game 2

Play *One word at a time story*. All students sit in a circle and contribute one word at a time to a story.

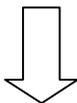
Once...upon...a...time...there...was...a...big...giant...chicken...named...Fred.

HINT: It is useful to decide upon a title before you start. Sometimes students “kill-off” the central character. You may wish to make a rule that no one dies!

## POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

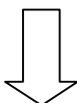
- Slapstick Warm-up

Warm-up the students with the *Imaginary Chewing Gum game*. In a circle, one student finds a piece of imaginary chewing gum and then must get rid of it by sticking/flicking placing or patting it onto the person next to them. They can distract the person or be obvious. This game helps students with facial expressions.



- Facial expressions

Play the Funny Faces game. Students work with a partner. Each person takes it in turns to pull a funny/exaggerated face. The partner must then copy it.

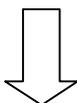


- Trust activities

Option 1: Blindfold one student and then have a partner lead them through an obstacle course or from one place to another.

Option 2: Make it more challenging by not allowing students to touch. All directions must be verbal.

Option 3: Have one person lead the whole class as they hold on the shoulders of the person in front.



- Slapstick activity

Slapstick – defined as boisterous physical comedy with chases and collisions and practical jokes. Before you do **Activity Sheet #5** make sure that you assess the safety risks for your class. Go through the main points before you start. Have the elements demonstrated before the whole class and then allow students to practice with a partner. It is highly recommended that students develop high levels of trust and communication before commencing.

- Make your own instrument

Use **Activity Sheet #6** to make musical instruments.

- STOMP Performance

Use **Activity Sheet #7** to create your own STOMP performance.

TEACHERS: The STOMP video is a great resource and is available in Australia.

To give students an idea of a **STOMP Performance**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRUdnu3Qo-E>

Image Sources:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/world/outlinemap/map.GIF>

## INFORMATION SHEET #1

Slavery and its impact on the music and dance of the world

### *West Coast of Africa*

What did it all start?

When European traders brought slaves from West Africa to the Americas they had little concept of the impact they were beginning on the development of music and dance.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century as South America was being colonized by European powers (primarily Spain, Portugal, France and England) slaves were taken from the West African coast – Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin and Congo – as a source for sugar cane, tobacco and cotton plantations.

Africans were taken from their rich cultures with elaborate rituals to a foreign land. Drumming, dancing and singing were all part of their lifestyle and religion in Africa. The slaves tried to maintain and adapt these practices despite transportation to other continents.



In North America, slaves were mostly banned from traditional African drumming as an attempt to destroy their cultural history. White slave owners feared that Africans could communicate across great distances using drumming, as they do in Africa, potentially organising a revolt against their captors. Hand drums were banned and the law “you play – you lose your hand” was put into practice. Drumming became a secret activity; drums were made of makeshift materials that could be easily dismantled. These restrictions probably paved the way for the evolution of tap dancing as an expression of rhythm that does not require any instruments.

Meanwhile, in South America, the slaves were restricted in a slightly different situation. Slave owners realised that the slave who was allowed to maintain his/her traditional ways was more likely to be subservient and this more productive.

In Brazil, an Angolan martial art was turned into the non-contact dance form of ‘Capoiera’, enabling the practice to continue uncensored. As slave owners watched slaves dance with one another they were oblivious to the fact that it was a martial art being performed.

In many ways the African people were understandably reluctant to give up their culture. Often times though, what they did was adapt their cultural expressions, mixing them to create whole new forms. This fusion of ideas led to a whole range of styles in various regions of the Americas: Afro-American, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Latino and Afro-Caribbean, bringing us Salsa, Rumba, Merengue, Funk, Blues and Jazz and, in fact, much of the music that we hear today.



## INFORMATION SHEET #2a Musical Instruments

### Djembe

This drum is classified as a goblet or chalice drum due to its shape. The drum is hollowed out from a tree trunk and traditionally covered with goatskin.

Traditionally there are three basic sounds generated by the djembe'. First, the "tone" produced by striking the drum with just the closed fingers. Second, the "bass" produced by striking the drum with just the palm. Finally the Third, the "slap" produced by striking the drum with open fingers and about one half of the palm in such a way that the palm hits first snapping the fingers on to the head making a sharper sound than the "tone".



### Darbuka (can be spelt and pronounced in different ways)

Darbuka drums are goblet shaped Arabic drums that originated in the Middle East and are very prominent in belly dancing. Darbuka drums have been a popular instrument in the Middle East for around a century and are now the most common percussion instrument for that part of the world. Due to the hand-made nature of these instruments, designs may vary. Played under the arm in a slapping and clicking mode it evokes many different tones and sounds.

### Triangles



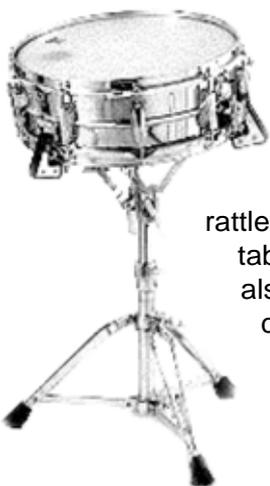
A metallophone, or metal instrument in the shape of an equilateral triangle. It is played by striking it with a small metal bar and is used in many styles from classical to samba.

### Floor Tom



The floor tom is borrowed from the drum kit. It is usually the largest of all the tom-toms and has three legs to stand it on the floor.

### Snare Drum



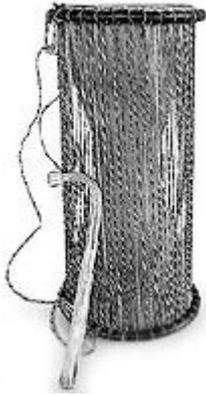
Originally used in marching bands, the snare drum is made from a cylindrical piece of wood or plastic. The instrument is hit on the top and there are small pieces of wire that rattle to make the distinct snare sound. The first version of the snare drum was called a tabor and was invented in the 12th century. It is used a lot in orchestral music, and is also part of the *drum set*. The head is where the player hits his drum sticks, which creates the sound. The snares are pieces of wire stretched across the bottom of the drum and are tightened or loosened by the snare switch. The stand holds the drum in place.

### Body Percussion

This is one of the most accessible forms of percussion. From clapping and stamping to tapping and slapping Body Percussion is used in many different cultures.

Image sources: [www.themusicedge.com/.../percussion.shtml](http://www.themusicedge.com/.../percussion.shtml)

## INFORMATION SHEET #2b Musical Instruments



### Dun-dun (or djun-djun)

The dun-dun, from West Africa, is the largest of the talking drums family – all hourglass shaped pressure drums. Others include the gan-gan (the smallest member of this drum family). The drum heads at either end of the drum's wooden body are made from hide, fish-skin or other membranes which are wrapped around a wooden hoop. Leather cords or thongs run the length of the drum's body and are wrapped around both hoops. When you squeeze these cords under your arm, the drum heads tighten, changing the instrument's pitch.

### Junk/Everyday Objects

This form of percussion uses found objects or junk from everyday life. It has been made popular by the English performance group **STOMP** who use everything from matchboxes to ten-gallon drums in their show. Junk composition has also been used by many major composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These include John Cage and Karl Stockhausen who used large metal sheets, tin cans and iron chains in their compositions.



### Other instruments



Shaker (or cherkre in Portuguese).  
Made out of hollow gourds  
(a vegetable from the marrow family)



Agogo bells are a form of cow bell used in Africa.



Tambourine  
(or pandeiros in Portuguese) a hand  
drum with a row or rows of jingles  
(small metallic disc shape objects)  
placed around the rim.

Splash cymbal is a small cymbal that has been  
cast, hammered and lathed from a bronze disc.



### ACTIVITY SHEET #3 Modes of Transport



The Bongo Brothers used lots of different methods of transport to go from place to place.

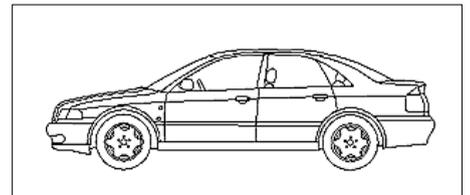
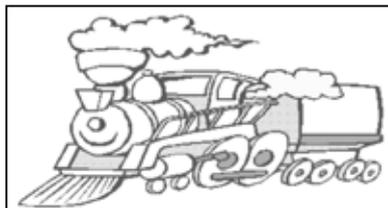
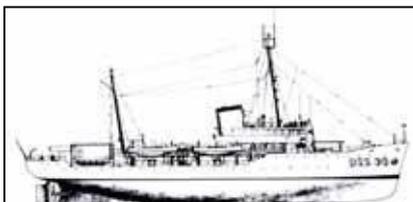
WATER	AIR
Paste the picture that belongs in the water here.	Paste the picture that belongs in the air here.
FOOTPATH	STREET
Paste the picture that belongs on the footpath here.	Paste the picture that belongs in the street here.
TRACKS	<p>Tracks are <b>only</b> for trains. It's not safe to ride a bike or to walk on train tracks. Look for these signs to tell you where train tracks are.</p> <p>This sign means the road you are on crosses a train track. Be careful and look both ways to see if trains are coming before you cross the track.</p>
Paste the picture that belongs on the tracks here.	

This sign has lights to tell you when the train is coming. If the lights are flashing, wait for the train to go by before you cross the tracks.



Always be careful around train tracks. Remember that tracks are only for trains, not for playing.

CUT THESE PICTURES OUT AND STICK THEM IN THE RIGHT PLACE ABOVE.

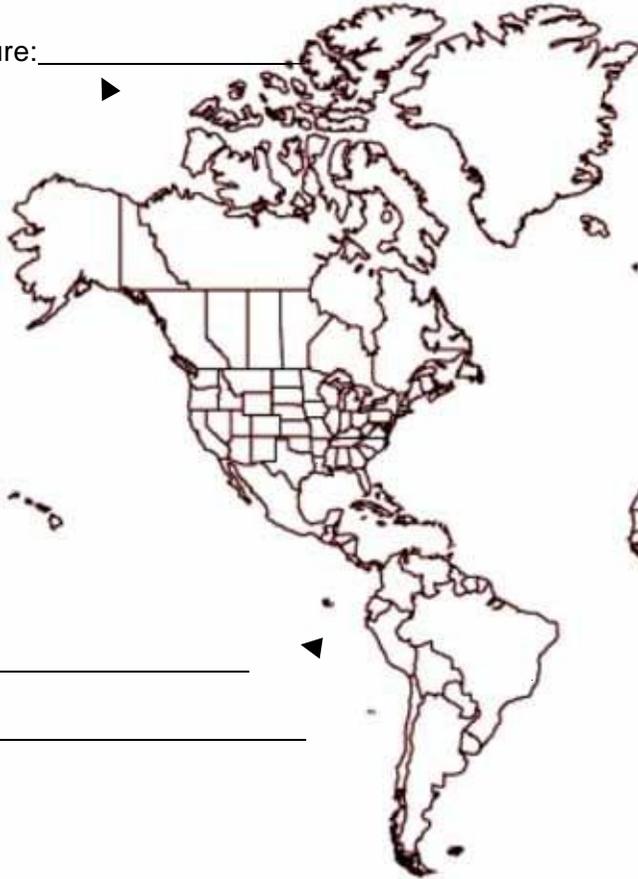


**ACTIVITY SHEET #4 Musical Geography**

During the performance of *The Bongo Brothers* they went on a journey to a number of countries/areas. Name each country with an arrow and add a feature of that country: (instrument, sport, activity)

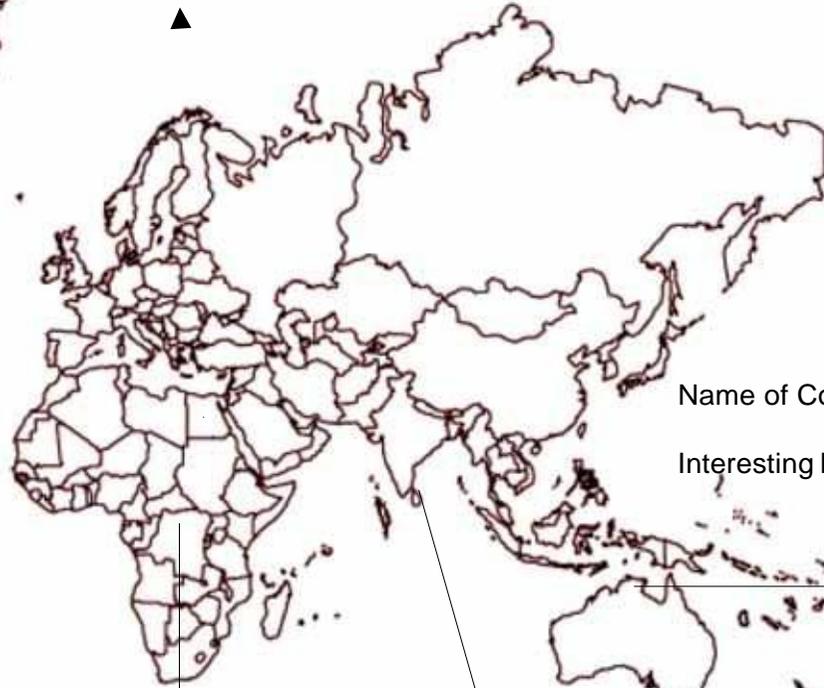
Name of Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Interesting Feature: \_\_\_\_\_



Name of Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Interesting Feature: \_\_\_\_\_



Name of Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Interesting Feature: \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER INFORMATION for ACTIVITY SHEET #4 – Musical Geography

Possible responses from top left hand working clockwise

GEOGRAPHY:

**New Orleans** in the state of Louisiana in the country of the USA.

FEATURES:

Centre of Slave trade, sea port, birth place of Jazz music, big funeral processions

GEOGRAPHY:

**Egypt** in the Middle East

FEATURES:

Belly Dancing, the instrument called a Darrabukka

GEOGRAPHY:

**Darwin** in the Northern Territory in Australia

FEATURES:

Home to the Aboriginal People, the instrument called the didgeridoo

GEOGRAPHY:

**Sri Lanka**

FEATURES:

Cricket is a very popular sport

GEOGRAPHY:

**Rio de Janeiro** in Brazil

FEATURES:

Festival called Carnival, Dance forms including the Samba, Soccer

## ACTIVITY SHEET #5 SLAPSTICK ROUTINES



Remember: Slapstick is the illusion of pain NOT real pain. Make sure that you and your partner have:

**TRUST** – All these exercises rely on a high degree of trust. Without this trust, these exercises will not work and may become dangerous.

**PACE** – Energy control and timing are very important. Speed is not always the governing factor. Control is the key.

**SIGNALLING (COMMUNICATION)** – Partners must give each other clear signals about what is to come. Always ensure your partner is prepared.

### The Foot Stomp

Step 1 Stand side by side. The receiver presents the inside foot. The giver distracts the receiver and raises their inside foot.

Step 2 The giver brings their foot down in front of the receiver's foot – masking the receiver's foot from the audience – thus appearing to have stomped on their foot.

Step 3 Instantly, the moment the giver's foot hits the ground, the receiver reacts.

Note: This is generally only successful when the audience is head on.

### The "Bottom" Kick

Step 1 The receiver stands side-on to the giver. The giver draws their inside foot back.

Step 2 The giver swings their foot through and LIGHTLY connects with the receiver's "bottom".

Step 3 The receiver reacts by arching forward, springing in the air or by being bowled over. Receiver controls reaction.



### The Hair Pull

Step 1 Stand facing each other. The grabber reaches towards the forehead of the "receiver"

Step 2 The palm lands on the forehead and the figures close to make a fist without actually grabbing any hair.

Step 3 Immediately the receiver should clasp both hands around the hand of the grabber to mask the fact that are not actually holding any hair.



These are the basic slapstick ideas but you can add to these or vary old ideas such as "the Slap", "the Stomach Punch", "the Chair Pull" and many more. Remember to always **be careful** and have fun!

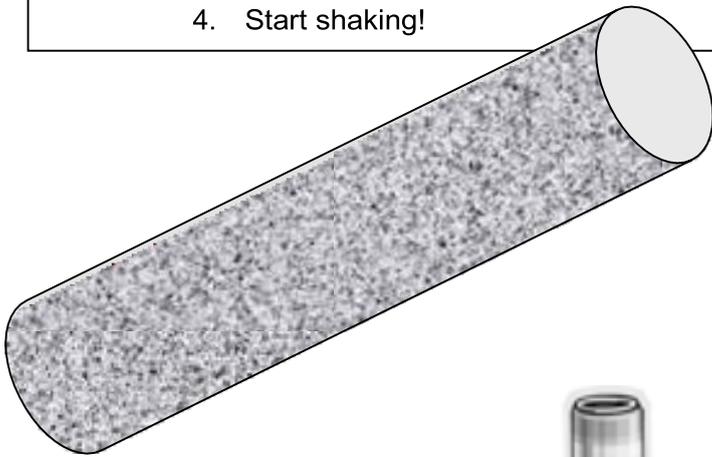


## ACTIVITY SHEET #6 – CREATE YOUR OWN INSTRUMENTS

### Shakers

You will need:

- Long tin cans, with lids (no sharp edges), film canisters, plastic yoghurt containers, any cylindrical container.
  - Small round objects: Beans, grains, legumes, peppercorns, peas, pebbles to go inside.
  - Strong cloth tape, non-toxic paints, glue or fabric to seal shaker together.
1. Fill the containers with the objects.
  2. Secure the ends.
  3. Decorate.
  4. Start shaking!



### Rainsticks

You will need:

- Long cylindrical cardboard tubes – postpacks work really well because they come with ends.
  - Toothpicks or skewers
  - Small round objects: Beans, grains, legumes, pepper corns, peas, pebbles to go inside.
  - Strong cloth tape, non-toxic paints, glue or fabric to seal shaker together.
1. Insert toothpick into tube from the outside, in several spirals along tube. More spirals will give a longer sound.
  2. Fill the containers with the objects.
  3. Secure the ends.
  4. Decorate.
  5. Start shaking!

### Big Drums

All you'll need is clean plastic buckets and bins and solid sticks with felt wrapped around one end.



### Found Objects Percussion

- Square or round bits of metal
- Old pots and pans, lids, anything bigger than a saucer, metal lids from jars.
- Try hanging them up from a clothes rack or similar support to create a percussion orchestra.

For more complex drum making check out: <http://www.tsmg.org/elementary/specialists/drums.htm>



# Word find !

H	A	N	D	R	U	M	S	S	F	S	B	E	L	P
E	Q	E	J	S	R	A	G	O	G	O	E	E	R	E
W	F	W	E	E	R	L	G	R	L	O	L	R	E	R
S	G	A	M	T	F	L	H	D	K	Q	T	W	F	C
S	A	M	B	A	H	E	M	Z	X	P	F	S	M	U
U	I	O	E	W	S	T	I	C	K	S	U	C	H	S
R	U	P	E	R	T	K	K	L	V	M	J	A	L	S
D	Y	E	Q	Q	O	M	J	A	Z	Z	L	R	I	I
O	T	R	D	G	M	O	P	P	X	Z	U	N	Y	O
L	B	O	D	Y	P	E	R	C	U	S	S	I	O	N
M	E	U	I	O	P	S	O	E	D	A	Y	V	F	G
H	L	Y	T	R	F	D	U	K	A	L	J	A	G	H
F	L	E	B	R	U	S	H	E	S	S	E	L	D	O
R	S	R	D	T	N	S	F	L	L	A	S	S	C	T
D	S	T	A	L	K	I	N	G	D	R	U	M	S	G
W	H	S	R	E	G	G	A	E	A	Q	W	W	V	N
Q	A	D	A	H	Y	U	J	U	N	K	E	R	B	N
N	K	Q	B	S	S	S	G	G	C	Y	M	B	A	L
U	E	W	U	E	R	T	Y	U	E	D	F	G	H	M
I	R	A	K	A	D	E	F	G	G	R	Y	E	W	Q
P	S	N	A	R	E	D	R	U	M	D	B	H	G	W
M	A	S	D	S	D	A	A	O	I	O	B	F	G	G

IN THIS PUZZLE, THE FOLLOWING WORDS ARE HIDDEN HORIZONTALLY AND VERTICALLY. CAN YOU FIND THEM?

- DJEMBE
- SAMBA
- HAND PERCUSSION
- TALKING DRUMS
- BELLS
- SHAKERS
- DRUMS
- JAZZ
- RAP
- STOMP
- FUNK

- PERCUSSION
- AGOGO
- STICKS
- REGGAE
- CYMBAL
- CARNIVAL
- BODY PERCUSSION
- DRUM
- DANCE
- CLAP
- SNARE DRUM



## INFORMATION SHEET #3 – Rhythms

### Samba

Samba originated in Brazil, but was popularised in the 40s. It comes from African music and was introduced to the Americas by the slaves from Angola and Congo. Samba is internationally known because of the Rio Carnival where Escolas de Samba (drumming schools/groups) form blocos of up to 500 percussionists to compete annually in a 24 hour parade one of the most famous Samba songs is 'The Girl from Ipanema'.

### Jazz

Jazz composer and trumpeter *Winston Marsalis* calls jazz the 'American Art Form', due to its heritage in the USA. Jazz has its origins in African music mixing with European harmony and other band instruments. Jazz has become a highly refined idiom that has spread around the world, gathering many diverse and eclectic influences. Jazz is best known for the energetic, skipping jazz beat or 'swing'. This jazz feel is found in hip-hop, rap, funk and New Orleans music. 'Scatting' was developed as a way of vocalising the rhythms and expressions of the instruments in a jazz band. Jazz bands traditionally consist of a rhythm section including piano, bass, drums and guitar with a front line of trumpet, trombone, saxophones and clarinet. A contemporary ensemble can be a mix of any instruments from around the world.

### Rap

Rap is spoken word with very rhythmical song and usually a funky drum and bass riff. Rap rhythms and dance are derived from jazz and other influences in Afro-American music and dance. Originally a street dance form, rap was popularised through artists like *Michael Jackson* in his song 'breakdancing' and *Blondies* 80s hit '*Rapture*'. Rap is related to Hip-Hop, House, and Drum and Bass.

### Reggae

Reggae started off in Jamaica but has spread worldwide. One of the most popular reggae artists was *Bob Marley*. Reggae is recognised by its strong off-beat rhythm and is related to ska and dub.

### Drum and Bass

Drum and Bass came out of electronic dance music. It is usually mixed and/or performed by DJs (or 'disc jockeys') who use music technology i.e. turntables, samplers, effect units and computers, to create their music. London is seen as the major hub for Drum and Bass artists. Some well-known artists are *Aphex Twin*, *Grooverider* and *Photek*.

### Funk

Typically, funk is when the electric guitar meets strong, syncopated rhythm that makes you want to dance. The Bongo Brothers play the opening djembe rhythm in a funk style. Again, this groove has its origins in Afro- American music.

### Use of ritual in New Orleans

Jam sessions are a big part of New Orleans social life.

A party can be thrown for many reasons - even to raise money to collect the rent but most of all to play music and dance.

'Second line drumming' is a style of playing that developed from the bands who would accompany mourners in a funeral procession. Walking behind the family the band would play dirges and slow marches. After the funeral, the band would play an 'up-tempo' strut to rejoice in the spirit of the departed.