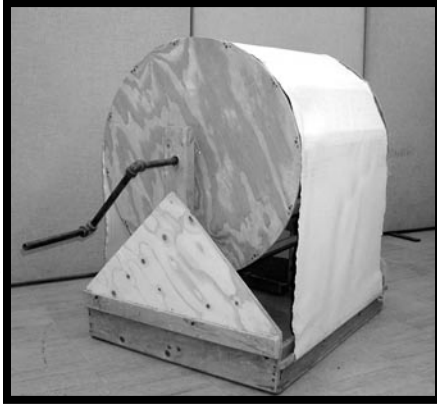


photo courtesy Rob Graff



WIND MACHINE

A wind machine is an unusual contraption. It has a cylindrical spool with wooden blades and draped over the top of this cylinder is a heavy piece of canvas. When the spool is cranked by a handle, the blades rub against the canvas and this friction results in a “wind” effect. There is a great wind machine part in the last movement of Grofé’s “Grand Canyon Suite.”

World Percussion Instruments

You don’t have to be world percussion expert to add the following instruments to your pit. You should, however, try to learn enough about these instruments to feel comfortable teaching or performing on them. Our hope is to familiarize you with the instruments and discuss their application. Discussing technique on each of these instruments could fill another 5 books! Fortunately for all of us, there are literally hundreds of instructional videos available today. Start by checking out the Steve Weiss or Lone Star Percussion catalogs.

All of the following instruments are associated with one or more traditional styles of music. Besides the music that these instruments are usually associated with, there are also **non-traditional applications**. Sometimes it’s all about getting a specific sound into your musical score. You don’t have to play samba music to apply the powerful sounds of surdos, or African music to use a talking drum. Be creative and let your own good taste guide you.

Hand Drums

CONGAS



Congas are an essential part of Afro-Cuban music as well as many other styles of Latin music. The drums come in **three sizes**: (from smallest to largest) quinto, conga, and tumba. The shells are made of either wood or fiberglass, and the **heads** are made from skin (calf, mule, or water buffalo) or are synthetic. Maintaining skin heads outdoors can be very difficult. This is why most marching bands and drum corps prefer synthetic heads (made by Remo or Evans). For outdoor use, it will also be important to invest in good quality **stands** for the drums. This will allow for maximum tone and projection.

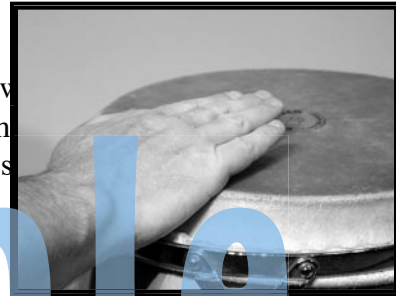
For non-traditional applications, you can play congas with virtually any kind of **stick** or **mallet** to achieve your desired sound. In fact some mallet companies, like Vic Firth, have created mallets specifically for this. Though, traditionally, these drums are played with hands.

When playing the conga with your **hands**, remember that the strokes should be initiated from the **wrist**. Many young hand drummers will make the mistake of playing the drums with a lot of arm motion. This can cause *severe damage* to your wrists and hands. Realize that even with good technique it will take a while to develop calluses and to play “pain free.”

Here are a few sounds that all hand drummers should be able to create on their drums:

Open tones

Strike the edge of the drum with the base of the fingers (vs. palm) and allow the fingers to relax and hit the drum. This is a rebounded stroke. Remember to play from the wrist. This is a good mix of overtones from the drum (highs and lows).



For open tones, relax fingers and let them rebound off the head.

Muffled tones

Use the same stroke style, just don't rebound off the head. The stroke should still be relaxed and smooth.



For muffled tones, fingers don't rebound from head.

Heel and Tip

This is usually a time-keeping device. These are usually muffled sounds and are not that loud. For heel sounds, strike the drum with the heel of the hand, for tip sounds use all of your fingertips. Try rocking back and forth between the heel and tip sounds.



Heel stroke.



Tip (toe) stroke.

A few notes on playing maracas:

There are a multitude of techniques for general playing and several effects that can be achieved with some practice. If you hold the maracas **perpendicular to the ground** and play them with a quick wrist flick, you'll create two attack sounds (as the beads hit each side of the chamber). This can be good for general purpose playing. For more volume you can hold two maracas in each hand.



For softer playing, hold the maracas **parallel to the ground**, with the finger tips on the chamber. With a controlled wrist flick, you can get a soft, single attack sound.



Another **traditional style of playing** is to hold the maracas perpendicular to the ground and lift them up and down as if they were on pulleys. This takes advantage of the double attack sound and creates an interesting, continuous rhythmic sound. Here's a rhythm to experiment with this sound.

♩ = 154

4/4

r l r l r l r l r l r l

For a “**swirling**” roll sound, as in John Barnes Chance’s *Incantation and Dance*, hold the maracas perpendicular to the ground with the chamber facing down. Now swirl them as if you were stirring a bowl of soup. Again, for more volume, add more maracas.



Another important aspect to keep in mind when playing maracas is the delay in sound. The delay is even worse than the tambourine! Combined with the “double attack” this can make maracas a very demanding instrument to play. Make sure the performer stays on top of the pulse!