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Introduction

A low-pitched rattle filled the classroom as a third grader gave a vigorous shake to a plastic bin filled with wooden blocks. Back at the chalkboard, I added the contribution to the growing list. Students were on the hunt for tone-producing objects as I led another found sound workshop. While serving as a teaching artist with several Young Audiences chapters in Texas, I had the opportunity to facilitate hundreds of those sessions—collecting and organizing students’ sonic discoveries into a composition (complete with a class performance) in about thirty minutes.

The multitude of workshop experiences (along with my general percussion curiosity) has shaped me into a found soundologist, providing ample inspiration and ideas for this book. With *Found Soundology*, classroom music teachers wishing to start an instrumental ensemble (but perhaps without a large equipment budget) can assemble the necessary items at little or no expense. Band directors will find pieces in this book suitable for novelties in a percussion ensemble concert. General music teachers, even those with large assortments of instruments, will find that these pieces lend themselves to facilitating student arranging and ensemble skills. And everyone is sure to have a blast.

Part of the fun is the flexible instrumentation which allows the students to take an active role in choosing/creating the sound sources, giving them more ownership of and enthusiasm for the music. Many of the compositions are groove-based with plenty of repeated material to facilitate quick learning, easy memorization, and loads of fun.

Choose an ensemble and introduce your students to the joys of some very old-school music-making as they plunge into the exploration of found sound.

Instruments and Options

Determining the appropriate found sounds for an ensemble can be both educational and enjoyable. The class may experiment with several different sounds, thus “auditioning” the objects to determine which tones will best fit the character of the piece.

If planning to use an ensemble in an actual performance, give consideration to found sounds that have enough volume and resonance to project to the folks seated in the back of the performance space. A piece of corrugated cardboard might be an interesting scraped tone while rehearsing in the classroom, but a plastic ice tray would be a better choice for the show.

A bass frequency is needed in a few of the pieces. One suitable option is a thirty-five-gallon plastic trash can. This size provides sufficient bass frequencies without taking up too much space. The trash can should be positioned horizontally with the playing surface toward the audience. Rest the instrument on the floor with the player seated or lay the bucket on top of an inexpensive keyboard X-stand so that the musician may stand.

You will also note the suggestions of a beads box/can. Technically speaking, the beads box/can is not a found sound. It requires some easy construction. Simply pour beads into a container such as a tin can, water bottle, or milk carton. Your students can experiment with the container materials along with the size and amount of beads to achieve the desired tone.

As the composer, I grant you permission to substitute or mix conventional instruments in an ensemble. It’s really okay to have a girl on djembe playing the bass part along with the four guys playing the aforementioned thirty-five-gallon trash cans. If the musical-purist police show up and want to know why you are using a frame drum in a found sound composition, show ‘em this paragraph. I’ll fade the heat.

Table Jam

1

You know this guy. He comes into class and starts laying down a bass-n-snare beat using his fist and knuckles on the desk – or maybe he has advanced to the “heel of palm and pencil” technique. Yeah...that guy. This one’s for him (or her).

Teaching and Performance Tips

- This ensemble can be performed with everyone seated behind a table or at desks. You probably have almost everything you need in your office supplies drawer.
- You can easily inject some theatrical elements into the performance of “Table Jam.” Imagine students writing at a table or desks when suddenly, spontaneous music breaks out. Your class will be glad to help bring out the drama.

Paper with Pencil

- Hold the sheet of paper suspended with one hand so that it can vibrate freely. Strike the paper with the eraser end of the pencil.
- Experiment with different sizes and weights of paper.

Pencil Holder with Pencil

- There are many pencil holders on the market. Find a tone that will cut through the pounding bass of the table and the flopping paper. After searching through my house and doing some experimentation, I chose just the right one for the recording. It is made from a tin can with tightly rolled magazine pages glued to the outside. I constructed it at Vacation Bible School sometime last century. Exquisite tone!

Table

- Find the spot on the table or desk that will produce a resonant bass tone. You want to hear the low end along with a firm attack. The recording provides a good example.
- Try to remove all rattling elements. Duct tape might help quiet loose hardware.
- Note that students will be striking the table with their knuckles (like knocking on a door) and also with the fleshy side of their closed fists.
- Maybe that guy from the first paragraph should handle the opening and closing solos. Go ahead and give him a cadenza.
- Note the addition of players as the piece builds.





Table Jam

Mark Shelton

$\bullet = 124$

Paper w/Pencil

Pencil Holder w/Pencil

Table w/Knuckles w/Fist

One player Freely

f

5

P

PH

T
K
F

f

9

P

PH

T
K
F

Add one or two players

13

Musical score for measures 13-16. The score is written for three staves: P (Piano), PH (Percussion), and T K F (Timpani, Kettle Drum, and Bass Drum). The P staff contains rests. The PH staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 14, with a *mf* dynamic marking. The T K F staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 13, with a *mf* dynamic marking. A bracket labeled "All players" spans measures 14-16.

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is written for three staves: P (Piano), PH (Percussion), and T K F (Timpani, Kettle Drum, and Bass Drum). The P staff contains rests. The PH staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 18, with a *mf* dynamic marking. The T K F staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 17, with a *mf* dynamic marking.

21

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score is written for three staves: P (Piano), PH (Percussion), and T K F (Timpani, Kettle Drum, and Bass Drum). The P staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 22, with a *f* dynamic marking in measure 22 and a *mf* dynamic marking in measure 23. The PH staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 23, with a *mf* dynamic marking. The T K F staff contains eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 21, with a *mf* dynamic marking.

25

P

PH

T
K
F

p

mp

29

P

PH

T
K
F

mf

f

33

P

PH

T
K
F

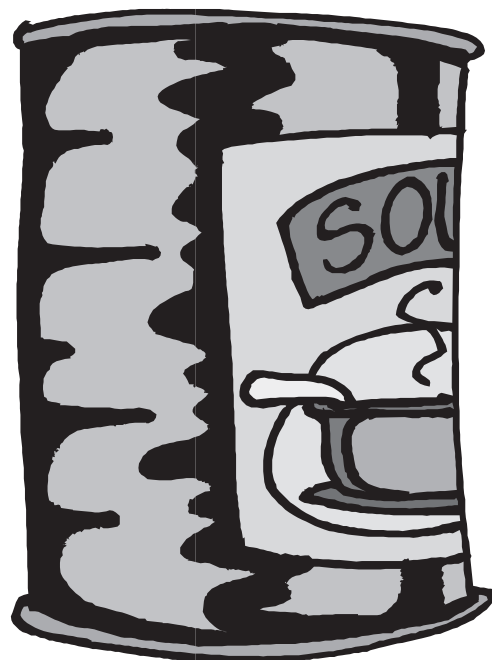
Cantiphonal

2

Portable and powerful, “Cantiphonal” is an easy-on/easy-off ensemble. With a can in one hand and a stick in the other, musicians can “hocket” their parts back and forth while walking, standing, or dancing. This would be a good time to explain the centuries-old practice of antiphonal composition and performance for choirs and brass groups (and still in use today – for cans).

Teaching and Performance Tips

- Two sizes of cans with a wide pitch interval are needed. Make sure that no jagged edges remain on the cans. A couple of layers of tape around the rim will make certain there is no risk of cut fingers.
- Either a rhythm stick or standard drum stick should be used for the Small Can and Large Can parts.
- Side of Can should be played with bundled rods such as Rutes™, Acousticks™, Bundlz™, or Blasticks™.
- Rock it with some attitude at measure 21.
- Consider keeping the Side of Can players backstage until their entrance at measure 25.
- To allow more players to improvise, repeat measures 25 through 32.



2

Cantiphonal

Mark Shelton

Allegro

Small Can w/Stick $\frac{4}{4}$ *f*

Large Can w/Stick $\frac{4}{4}$ *f*

Side of Can w/Bundled Dowels $\frac{4}{4}$

The first system consists of three staves. The top staff, 'Small Can w/Stick', has a 4/4 time signature and a dynamic marking of *f*. It contains a sequence of quarter notes. The middle staff, 'Large Can w/Stick', also has a 4/4 time signature and a dynamic marking of *f*. It contains eighth notes with accents. The bottom staff, 'Side of Can w/Bundled Dowels', has a 4/4 time signature and contains rests.

Sm C $\frac{4}{4}$

Lg C

Side

The second system consists of three staves. The top staff, 'Sm C', has a 4/4 time signature. The middle staff, 'Lg C', contains eighth notes with accents. The bottom staff, 'Side', contains rests.

Sm C $\frac{4}{4}$ *mp*

Lg C *mp*

Side

The third system consists of three staves. The top staff, 'Sm C', has a 4/4 time signature and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The middle staff, 'Lg C', also has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The bottom staff, 'Side', contains rests.

12

Sm C

Lg C

Side

f *mp* *mf*

f *mp* *mf*

16

Sm C

Lg C

Side

p *mf*

p *mf*

20

Sm C

Lg C

Side

f

f

Look, Mom! One Stick

3

Most bucket compositions require the players to be stationary while performing. That's not the case with this mobile ensemble. All the rhythms can be played with one stick while holding the bucket under the free arm. Take advantage of this portable percussion opportunity to let your bucketeers stroll through the audience or bust a few choreographed moves.

Teaching and Performance Tips

- A standard five-gallon plastic bucket and one stick is all that your players will need for this piece.
- Bucket 1 players will utilize three playing surfaces: the rim, side, and head.
- Bucket 2 players will use only the rim and head.
- Use a rhythm stick or the butt end of a standard drum stick to strike the bucket.
- Unison playing and repeated rhythms can get boring without dynamics. Keep it interesting with good contrasts.
- At m. 34, you will see the expression marking *niente*, this literally means "nothing." In a musical sense, percussionists have the unique ability to decrescendo to virtually no sound. Challenge your kids to see how quietly they can play.
- The section from measure 48 through 55 just might be cool enough to repeat.



3

Look, Mom! One Stick

Mark Shelton

Allegro con energico

Bucket 1
Rim
Side
Head

Bucket 2
Rim
Head

B1
R
S
H

B2
R
H

B1
R
S
H

B2
R
H

B1
R
S
H

B2
R
H

mf

mf

p

p

mf

mf

B1 16
R S H
B2 R H

p

B1 20
R S H
B2 R H

f

B1 24
R S H
B2 R H

mp

f

B1 27
R S H
B2 R H

f

B1 30
R S H
B2 R H

decresc.