

Body Electric

2.0

A Symphony of Sounds for Body Percussion

Mark Burrows

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Foreword

A bass drum. A scratch record. A cello. A lion's roar. A dog's bark. A gamelan. All of these sounds and millions more are right at your fingertips. No, I'm not talking about the latest program or electronic gadget. I'm talking about the human body—the greatest and most diverse instrument on the planet.

Imagine all the possibilities just using the “big four” of body percussion—stomps, pats, claps, and snaps.

You can stomp with the whole foot, or just with the heel.

You can tap your toes, or slide your foot across the floor.

You can pat your tummy, or pat your chest.

You can pat your thighs, or pat your shoulders.

You can clap with flat palms, or clap with cupped hands.

You can clap with two fingers, or rub your hands together.

You can snap with one hand, or with two.

The list goes on and on.

Now imagine all the possibilities when you use vocal percussion and other mouth sounds.

You can whistle, sing, hum, click, pop, beat-box, or rap.

You can imitate barnyard animals, jungle animals, mechanical sounds, a rock band, or an orchestra.

Combine body percussion with vocal percussion and mouth sounds, and the possibilities are endless.

Body Electric 2.0 explores some of these possibilities in the form of grooves and other rhythm activities that are accessible, educational, and wildly fun. And the best part of all is that you don't need to spend hundreds of dollars on expensive musical instruments for the class. Each student brings his or her own unique instrument to class every time.

For each piece I offer a suggested form for performance. But for goodness sakes, it's not Beethoven or Bach. It's Burrows. Feel free to reshape each piece so that it best meets the needs of you and your students. Use your music teacher super powers! You know what works best in your learning environment.

Above all, have fun! Sure, our students need to learn about quarter notes, eighth rests, djembes, snare drums, and such. But remember—*If they love it, they'll learn it.* The reverse isn't necessarily true.

—Mark Burrows



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Body Jam

Since this piece starts with stomps, there was some temptation to call this piece *Toe Jam*, but wiser minds prevailed.

Body Jam uses four great forms of body percussion—stomps, thigh pats, claps, and lip pops.

SUGGESTED FORM

- For Section A, layer in the parts one at a time, every 4 measures.
- Start with the top line (stomp) and work your way down.
- Once all the parts are in, have them play together for 8 measures.
- Then have all parts play Section B for 8 measures.
- Next have all the parts return to Section A.
- Conduct the whole group through crescendos and decrescendos.
- Close by having the group crescendo to very loud, then end on a strong downbeat.

Body Jam

Section A

Stomp

Pat Thighs

Clap

Lip Pop

Section B

Stomp

Pat Thighs

Clap

Lip Pop

Walking Rhythms

In each of the *Walking Rhythms*, the stomp part is the same: a steady walking beat. The top line for each is different, with each successive rhythm getting slightly more complex. All three *Walking Rhythms* are designed so that one individual can perform both parts of each rhythm. The walking rhythms are also fun to play in the classroom. The students can perform the rhythms while walking in a circle around the room.

SUGGESTED FORMS

1. Each walking rhythm may be performed by itself.
2. Or the three rhythms may be performed in succession.
3. Yet another option is to mix and match the different rhythms to create all-new forms. For example, you could create a *Walking Rhythm Rondo* by performing:
 - *Walking Rhythm 1* for four measures.
 - *Walking Rhythm 2* for four measures.
 - *Walking Rhythm 1* for four measures.
 - *Walking Rhythm 3* for four measures.
 - *Walking Rhythm 1* for four measure.

Walking Rhythms

Walking Rhythm 1

Pat chest
tummy
Stomp
L - R - L - R *sim.*

Walking Rhythm 2

Clap
Stomp
L - R - L - R *sim.*

Walking Rhythm 3

Snap Clap Pat
Stomp
L - R - L - R *sim.*

Cuban Groove

Cuban Groove uses body percussion to imitate some traditional Cuban instruments:

- The tummy pats represent the congas.
- The claps represent a 2+3 clave pattern.
- The thigh pats represent the bongos.
- The stomps represent a steady cowbell pattern.

SUGGESTED FORM

- For Section A layer in the parts one at a time, every 4 measures.
- Start with the bottom line (stomps), and work your way up.
- Once all the parts are in, groove for 8 measures.
- Then go to Section B. This section is set up as a call and response between solo tummy pats and the other parts.
 - Options include:
 - The soloist can perform four calls to which the other parts respond.
 - The soloist can make up original calls, or use some of those provided.
- After four passes through Section B, return to Section A for 8 measures.
- Close with a strong downbeat.

Cuban Groove

Section A

Section A musical notation for four parts: Pat tummy, Clap, Pat Thighs, and Stomp. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of 8 measures. The Pat tummy part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Clap part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Pat Thighs part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Stomp part uses quarter notes and eighth notes.

Section B

Section B musical notation for four parts: Pat tummy, Clap, Pat Thighs, and Stomp. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of 8 measures. The Pat tummy part is labeled 'Call:' and the other parts are labeled 'Response:'. The Pat tummy part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Clap part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Pat Thighs part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Stomp part uses quarter notes and eighth notes.

Additional Calls

Additional Calls musical notation for two parts: Pat tummy and Clap. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of 8 measures. The Pat tummy part uses quarter notes and eighth notes. The Clap part uses quarter notes and eighth notes.