

Study Guide for Teachers

Exit 9
Beyond the Beat
presented by
Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern PA
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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This incredible percussion ensemble offers a high-energy, tightly choreographed performance infused with fine musicianship, humor, variety, instruction, and audience participation. One surprise follows another as the musical genres flow from classical to ragtime to improvisation and more—and rusty brake shoes, garbage cans, and wooden stools supplant traditional instrumentation. Topping it all off is the group's astonishing teamwork, a steady source of visual delight.

- LEARNING GOALS**
- To introduce percussion instruments from various world cultures.
 - To illustrate the ways percussion can be used as a form of communication.
 - To show how individuals cooperate and collaborate effectively in a music group.

RESOURCES

Benjamin Britten, "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra."
Evelyn Glennie, "Greatest Hits."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Hearing a percussion ensemble play without other instruments is a rare event, as percussionists are usually one part of a larger ensemble. Whether part of a rock band or an orchestra, percussionists are usually considered the backbone of the rhythm section or the flourish to add drama to a larger-scale symphonic piece. However, the percussion section of any ensemble can be the most exciting and invigorating part of the group—just listen to the drumline in a marching band!

Exit 9 shows students that with a little bit of creativity, many common objects can become percussion instruments. From stools and garbage cans to an old rusty brake drum, anything that makes a good sound can become part of a vibrant percussion ensemble.

Exit 9 is a leading percussion ensemble in the contemporary music scene, tapping diverse percussion expertise to create a fresh, unconventional sound. Whether performing ragtime xylophone, steel pan calypso, West African drumming, or exciting newly commissioned compositions, Exit 9 is devoted to exposing invigorating and innovative percussion works.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Discuss percussion with your class. Make a list of all the percussion instruments students can name and make predictions about what instruments they will see in the performance.
2. Because these performers are classically trained, talk about how classical percussion might differ from contemporary percussion. What kind of percussion instruments are in a symphony orchestra? A rock band? A hip hop group?
3. How are the rhythms you hear in classical music different from or similar to those you hear in contemporary music?
4. Get the music teacher involved! Gather recordings of traditional music from around the world. Have a listening session where students can notice the differences between the percussion instrumentation and rhythms.
5. Discuss student preferences when it comes to music. What is the music they most often listen to and why? What kind of music would they not want to listen to and why?

VOCABULARY WORDS

Agogo bells: From Ghana, two metal bells of differing pitch that are played with a mallet.

Djun djun: A cylindrical drum with two heads, which is played with a mallet.

Djembe: A drum from Guinea, in West Africa, played with your hands.

Melody: The tune.

Percussion: Musical instruments whose sound comes from striking, scraping, or shaking.

Pitch: The highness or lowness of sound made by an instrument.

Rhythm: A repeated pattern in music.

Squeeze drum: Also called a “talking drum,” a West African drum whose pitch can be adjusted by squeezing the sides while striking it with a mallet.

Xylophone: An instrument made of metal or wooden bars, played with a mallet, which can produce a scale.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Discuss what was surprising about the performance. What happened that students did not expect? Did students’ perception of music change at all? Which instruments were familiar and which were unfamiliar?
2. Create your own instruments using household materials. Drums can be made from buckets, garbage cans, empty water bottles, etc. Shakers can be made from oatmeal containers, soda bottles, and small cans filled with rice, beans, sand, etc. Have students choose and collect materials themselves.
3. Listen to the same world music recordings as you did before the performance. Notice if students hear anything more or anything different this time. What sounds are similar to ones they heard in the performance? Can they imitate the rhythms by clapping, playing an instrument, or using their voices?
4. Break up into groups and research accomplished percussionists from different parts of the world. Report back to the class on each artist’s contribution to the world of music, and how musicians in other countries differ.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Exit 9 is comprised of former music graduate students from Rutgers University. Members Peter Saleh, Kenneth Riehman, and Mike Ramsey are committed to the culture of music from across the globe, including Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean. Exit 9 members have traveled worldwide, not only as performers, but also as students of music, constantly exploring the musical traditions of new cultures.

Formed in 2002, the group has taken its unique contemporary percussion sound to tens of thousands of people around the world.