

PERCUSSION DISCUSSION

Musicplay Live with Artie, Denise and JJ 2023
Clinician: Artie Almeida, Ed.D.



Kids love percussion instruments, and you'll love these lessons that utilize non-pitched percussion, hand drums and floor drums, as well as non-traditional percussion instruments like Pop Toobs and Firestix. Our focus will be on the building blocks of music, including beat, rhythm, form and phrasing.

1. Tony Chestnut: A Hoop Group Lesson (Song, Hand Motions & Non-Pitched Perc. Transfer)

Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins (& Percussion Parade)* books by Almeida

Focus: *Four tempi (Adagio, Moderato, Allegro, Presto), Timbre, Steady Beat, Audiation, Accelerando*

Materials Prep: After teaching the song and hand motions version of the piece (Experience #1), transfer to Hoop Groups for the non-pitched percussion lesson below (Experience #2). Set the four hoop groups up in the following non-pitched percussion order: (1) Woods (2) Shakers (3) Metals (4) Skins

Note: The non-pitched percussion transfer works best with your intermediate students, rather than primary-aged children.

Process: Experience #1 – Singing with Hand Motions: Teach song (a few lessons in advance is best). Display visual and add motions a few at a time (see below). When song and motions are secure, sing the song three times increasing in speed for each repetition.

MOTIONS:

- “Tony” - touch toes, then knees.
- “Chestnut” - touch chest, then head.
- “knows” - nose.
- “I love you” - touch eye, cross arms across chest, point away from yourself.

Experience #2 – Non-Pitched Percussion Transfer: Display the Visual (6 pages) and prep before adding instruments.

Page 1 – All sing the song without using instruments.

Page 2 – All sing; woods play on their highlighted notes.

Page 3 – All sing; woods & shakers play on their highlighted notes.

Page 4 – All sing; woods, shakers & metals play on their highlighted notes.

Page 5 - All sing; woods, shakers, metals & skins play on their highlighted notes

Page 6 – Display page 6 and discuss “audiation”. Audiation means to sing a song in your head, without letting the lyrics come out of your mouth; to “internalize the lyrics.”

Invite the children to find their highlighted parts and be ready to perform the piece while *audiating* the song, except for the last three notes (“Chestnut knows.”).

Audience Participation Event – This piece makes for a very entertaining audience participation event in a concert or assembly setting! Students can lead the adults (or fellow students) through the motions, and you can have some of the audience members add the rhythm instrument parts, if desired.

2. Rhythms & Rhymes

Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins* book by Almeida

Focus: *Timbre, Rhythm Patterns, Rondo Form*

Materials Prep: Set the four hoop groups up in the following non-pitched percussion order: (1) Woods (2) Metals (3) Shakers (4) Skins

Process: Discuss Rondo Form. Display the visual and note the rondo form layout. Bring attention to the parts that are the Teacher Solos and the parts that are Student Solis – and are labeled by the timbres of Woods, Metals, Shakers and Skins. Ask students to follow the A-Section lyrics while you speak them and then have them join you in that part. Details below:

1. Speak through each of the five rhythmic nursery rhymes with the children. If you only prefer one verse for Hot Cross Buns, advise them of that. If you choose not to do "Lucy Locket" (there are some researchers who say that perhaps Lucy Locket was not a person of good character . . . I included this poem before discovering that information) simply skip that poem and move on to the students' favorite – the bedbugs! ☺
2. Point out the coda to the children and practice through it once, noting the excitement that the increasing dynamics brings.
3. NOTE: For each poem I have listed a performance order of:
 - (1) **Voices only**
 - (2) **Voices & NPP** – with each non-pitched percussion section playing only on the measures indicated for them – Woods/Metals/Shakers/Skins
 - (3) **NPP only** – no voices
 - (4) **Everyone play all parts**

Do as MUCH or as LITTLE of this 4-step process as you wish. Perhaps some of the iterations can be done in a preparatory class, and the big production in a later lesson!
4. Remember to add the Coda for the children's and audience's enjoyment. ☺

3. The Syncopated Clock (Leroy Anderson)

Source: *Woods, Metals, Shakers, Skins* book by Almeida

Focus: *Timbre, Rhythm Patterns, Rondo Form*

Materials Prep: *Set the four hoop groups up in the following non-pitched percussion order: (1) Woods (2) Metals (3) Shakers (4) Skins*

Process: Display the instrumental score and discuss the details below. Utilize a laser pointer for this analysis.

1. Draw attention to the following:
 - The Form of the Piece (including the large and small sections):
Introduction/A/B/A/Interlude/C/A/Coda
 - The term for this type of section organization: Rondo Form
 - The color-coded timbre labels above all notes to be played: Woods/Metals/Shakers/Skins
 - The 4/4 time signature
 - The combined timbres in the B and C Sections
 - The roll markings in the C Section
 - The tricky rhythm in the final four measures (Coda), played by all timbres.
 - The accent marks found on the final two notes
2. In preparation for playing, use a pointing device to lead the children through the score while singing the melody.
3. Move students to the Hoop Groups and circulate, helping with any playing technique issues.
4. Get your pointing device ready and encourage the children to check their posture, as we are looking for an *Attitude of Energy*, to make our music performance the best possible!
5. Encourage the children to download this piece at home to share with their families. Perhaps a "Family Kitchen Band" would be fun! ☺

4. Meter Mash-Up! Using Large Drums (or Hand Drums) to Focus on Meter & Accents

Source: *Percussion Parade* book by Almeida

Focus: *Steady Beat, Meter, Accents*

Materials Prep: *Two Visuals are provided: (1) Accents & Conducting Patterns for Meter in 2, 3, & 4. Large drums (or Hand Drums) for each student, or enough to share between students. Consider sharing with other teachers and rotating the large drums between schools to use. I used Tubanos, Congas, Djembes, Doumbeks and Bongos (some on stands, some on floor), etc. For my larger classes I supplemented the large drums with hand drums and had children take turns using the "beloved" large drums. To play some of the lessons on the hand drums with two hands, children sat on the floor and placed the hand drums partially on their lap at an angle touching the floor.*

Process for Meter Exploration:

1. Consider beginning with the Conducting Patterns Visual and starting with just the duple and triple meter patterns. Sing some simple songs while conducting. See the *Suggested Children's Song List* below.
 2. Display the Meter Mash-Up visual and discuss meter: "How the beats are organized into sets . . . sometimes in sets of 2, sets of 3 or other combinations." Spend a moment demonstrating some patterns in 2 and 3 on your leader drum.
 3. Discuss the first beat (downbeat) of each set being a bit stronger. Practice with the visual provided.
 4. Demonstrate how to produce low and high pitches. Center & Edge strikes. Palm on the center, fingers on edge. Low sound = Bass, High Sound = Tone. For my youngest students I use the terms Low & High.
 5. Practice the patterns for showing meter in 2, 3, & 4. As the year goes on, increase the song difficulty while playing.
- ♪ **Songs in 2:** Mary Had a Little Lamb, Yankee Doodle, London Bridge, Bobby Shaftoe
- ♪ **Songs in 3:** Have You Ever Seen a Lassie, Down in the Valley, My Bonnie, On Top of Old Smoky (or Spaghetti), Fish & Chips & Vinegar, America, Rock-a-Bye Baby.
- ♪ **Songs in 4:** Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Baa Baa Black Sheep, Frere Jaques, Old MacDonald, This Land is Your Land, Alouette
6. For a fun extension as the year progresses, help students change the meter of familiar songs and feel the extreme difference the meter makes. ☺ For example, play and Yankee Doodle or Mary's Lamb in the normal meter of 2, then stretch each measure into meter in 3. The children are also fascinated by how different the pieces sound! Finish by playing and singing the song in the original meter – as it really locks in the influence of meter on the "feeling" of a piece.

Process for Accents Exploration:

1. Prepare simple flash cards (I have a set of 10) with the numbers 1-8 on the bottom and accent marks above some of the notes. Make each card a different pattern of accented and unaccented notes.
2. Instruct the children to speak rhythmically and clap the 8 beat patterns, making the accented notes more strongly clapped, and voices distinctly louder on the accented notes.
3. Move on to having them perform two, three and even four patterns in a row. Bring students to the front to be the card holders for these fun accent practices, or display them on the board.
4. Transfer the clapping to large drums, hand drums or other non-pitched percussion that might work well with this activity.

5. Lemonade, Crunchy Ice: A Clapping & Hand Drum Game:

Source: *Percussion Parade* book by Almeida

Focus: *Steady Beat, Rhythm, Interlude.*

Materials: *Hand Drum for every student, Download 2-page score*

Process: Teach clapping/stare-down game first, then transfer to hand drums. You can display the visual if you wish, or simply teach the game by rote. Consider designating a "Leftie Land" where those children can quickly find a partner. On the Drum Game version of the "Freeze!" students flourish their drums up, then down to an 8-note phrase. Then you immediately begin the Interlude (see below), with students stepping off to find a new partner. A tempo increase on the last round is fun!

Interlude:

Get a partner, off you go. Get a partner, don't be slow.

Please do not procrastinate, four more notes and you're too late!

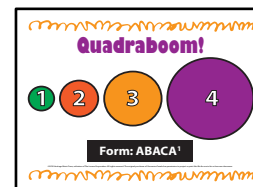
One! . . . Two! . . . Three! . . . Four! . . .

6. **Quadraboom: A Piece for Graduated Sizes of Hand Drums**

Source: *Percussion Parade* book by Almeida

Focus: *Rondo Form, Rhythm Patterns.*

Materials: This piece works well in your intermediate music class lessons, or as a performance piece for your ensembles. Prepare with body percussion a lesson before adding drums. In the projectable provided, I have included a score for you to study, but I teach the parts to the students from the picture visual first – representing the four sizes of graduated drums.



7. **Rocky Mountain: Hand Drum Note Value Game** (American Folk Song)

Source: *Percussion Parade* book by Almeida

Focus: *Note Values, Rondo Form, Science of Sound truism: Size determines pitch.*

Materials: This lesson can be done with large drums that stand on the floor: Tubanos, Congas, etc. or hand drums played horizontally with a mallet.

Process: It is best to prep this lesson a week before adding the drums. Teach students the A Section pattern, showing the direction with hand levels. Discuss the four note values to be reviewed (whole, half, quarter, eighths). Clap whole notes while singing the A section. Ask students how many occurred. Repeat with the other three note values. Perform entire song with clapping game: Pat the value on your own lap, move one leg to the right, then your own lap again, then one leg to the left. **(If this is not comfortable in a post-covid world, simply have the children use the floor on each side of them for the game, rather than another student's leg.)**

During each B section sing only, with no movement. Transfer clapping to drums. It is helpful if teacher displays a visual of each note value as it is performed.

About the Clinician

Dr. Artie Almeida has 38 years of public-school teaching experience and was the music instructor at Bear Lake Elementary in Orlando FL, where she taught 1200 K-5 students. Her dynamic performing groups have performed for Florida Music Educators Association, American Orff-Schulwerk Association, Music Educators National Conference, Walt Disney World, American Express International, many educational organizations and on the NBC Today Show. For the last 35 years she has traveled to provide elementary music symposia to teachers around the country, as well as in Canada, Singapore and Taiwan. Each year she presents workshops for many state music education conferences, Orff chapters, school districts and other education organizations.

Artie's accolades include Florida Music Educator of the Year, Runner-Up for Florida Teacher of the Year, Seminole County Teacher of the Year, International Educator 2006 (Cambridge UK Biographical Society), school-level Teacher of the Year six times, and University of Central Florida Alumni of the Decade. Artie is included in the publications *Who's Who in American Education* and *Great Minds of the 21st Century*.

Artie's 31 music education publications celebrate innovative delivery systems for K-5 music instruction. Her themes in teaching are "Heavy Academics: Delivered Joyfully!" and "Where There's Passion, There's Retention!"

Artie was an adjunct professor of music education at the University of Central Florida for 34 years, the saxophone instructor at Valencia State College, the music and movement instructor at Seminole State College and a saxophone performer and teacher. Additionally, she performs early music with *Ars Antiqua* and the *Halifax Consort*.