

HOMEMADE BAND

Original songs and adaptations of traditional favorites by Hap Palmer

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project is to provide opportunities to experiment, explore and create with instruments you can make. The activities help to develop a wide variety of skills such as body awareness, gross and fine motor coordination, auditory discrimination, rhythm, relaxation and freedom of movement. Because these instruments can be made so easily and at such a low cost, every child can have his own instrument. Every child can be involved in both the making of the instruments and the music activities. Every child can experience success!

The approach is informal and relaxed, encouraging creativity in rhythm and movement. It is effective with a wide variety of age and skill levels. Initially some children will simply experiment and explore - making sounds with their instruments. Others will feel the pulse of the music and play with it, and some might even create their own rhythm patterns. All of these are valid. Let the child participate and grow at his level - it's more fun that way and, when an activity is fun as well as challenging, the children will want to do it more, will put more into it, and in the long run, learn more.

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CREDITS

Jim Gordon
John Raines
Bill Perry
Hap Palmer
Tom Perry
Sherlie Matthews and Patrice Holloway

Kathy, Bobby and Patty Flaherty
Kristie Kelly
Peter Tavis

flute, electric piano, clarinette
drums, percussion
bass
vocals and guitars
engineer, co producer
Vocal background ("Homemade Band" and
"Make a Pretty Sound")
children's chorus
art direction, design and illustrations
photography



1. **HOMEMADE BAND** (*Hap Palmer*)
When you hear your instrument described, stand up, dance and play. A group is added each verse and by the end of the song, everyone is dancing and playing. The bolts are first, then the tambourines, sticks, shakers and blocks.
2. **BEAUTIFUL DAY** (*Hap Palmer*)
See if you can play, and at the same time do the following:

Tap your foot	Turn around
Nod your head	Stamp your foot
Bend your knees	Shake a leg
Sway from side to side	Wiggle your hips

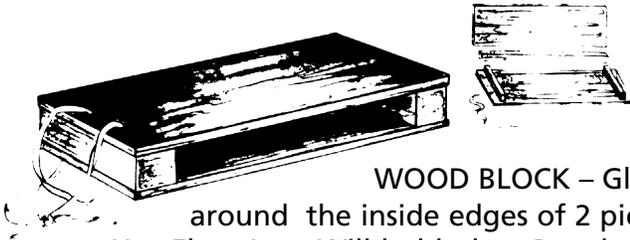
 Create your own ways to move and play.
3. **PLAY** (*Hap Palmer*)
Form yourselves into circles of 15-20. First we are going to walk around the circle and play very softly. Then see if you can solve the following challenges:
Play your instrument:

above your head	behind your back
below your knees	in front of you

 Play anything and move any way.
4. **I'M A LITTLE WOOD BLOCK** (*Traditional, adapted by Hap Palmer. Based on "I'm a Little Tea Pot"*)
This is an adaptation of an old favorite. Instead of singing "I'm a Little Teapot", we're going to sing "I'm a Little Wood Block". In this song we play by groups. The wood blocks go first, then the bolts, tambourines, sticks, shakers and everyone at once. When its your turn to play do your own thing - make sounds, create rhythms - whatever.
5. **STICK DANCE** (*Hap Palmer*)
Form a circle with everyone sitting down holding their instruments. One person stands inside the circle and creates a dance using a 2'-3' stick. When the person is ready to stop, he hands the stick to someone else sitting around the circle, and trades places with that person. When someone hands you the stick, go into the circle, move with the music, and see how many things you can create with the stick. When you are sitting around the circle with your instrument, see if you can create a rhythm that goes with the music.
6. **PLAY YOUR STICKS**
(*Traditional, adapted by Hap Palmer*)
This is based on a folk song called "Clap Your Hands" which was taught to me by the students at Wilsie School, Braxton County, W. Va. In this song, we also play by groups starting with the sticks. The song is easy to learn and you can sing as well as play.
7. **MAKE A PRETTY SOUND** (*Hap Palmer*)
When you hear soft music, play softly. When you hear loud music play loudly.
8. **OLD MacDONALD**
(*Traditional, adapted by Hap Palmer*)
Old MacDonald had a farm, but instead of animals he had rhythm instruments. You don't make much money on this kind of a farm but you sure have fun. Once again we play by groups when it's your turn do your thing!
9. **KNOCKING ON THE DOOR** (*Hap Palmer*)
Sit down and place one of each homemade instrument in front of you. Using these instruments see if you can make the following sounds we find in the world around us:
 Someone knocking on the door
 Keys jingling in your pocket
 A Kitty cat scratching on the door
 A carpenter pounding in a nail
 A baby playing with a rattle
 A dinner bell calling people to eat
 Horses running very fast
 A tired horse running very slowly
 Your heart beat thumping in your chest
 Sticks dropping on the floor
 A rattlesnake shaking his tail
 There is more then one way to make these sounds, so you don't have to watch your neighbor to find the "right way". Do it your way and enjoy yourself.
10. **WILDWOOD FLOWER**
(*Traditional, adapted by Hap Palmer*)
Here's some good old mountain music for pounding and shaking.
11. **WILDWOOD FLOWER, Start and Stop**
When you hear the music, play. When the music stops, stop playing.
12. **BRING YOUR STICKS**
(*Traditional, adapted by Hap Palmer*)
This is the same tune as "Play Your Sticks", but this time we sing "Bring Your Sticks". We bring our instruments in by groups in the following order: Sticks, Shakers, Blocks, Tambourines, Bolts. In this way we can collect the instruments and eliminate the chaos of everyone coming up at once.

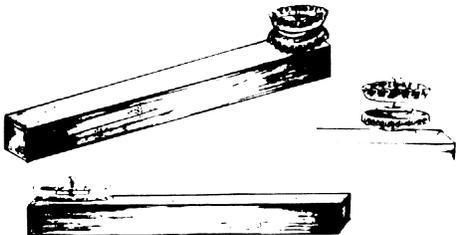
HOMEMADE BAND

Making your own instruments



WOOD BLOCK – Glue pieces of 3/4" square pine between and around the inside edges of 2 pieces of 1/4" plywood. Leave one side open. Use Elmer's or Will-hold glue. Put the block under weight (books, rock, etc.) or pressure (rubber bands, C-clamp) and allow to dry overnight. Then drill holes or put screw eyes in one end and hang the block on a shoe lace. Use rubber tipped mallet or pencil with slip-on erasers to hit the block. There is no exact size the block should be. Generally, the larger the block the lower the sound. The smaller the block, the higher the sound. I made my block 4" x 8".

TAMBOURINE – The tambourines are made with bottle caps. There are two things I have found to improve the sound.



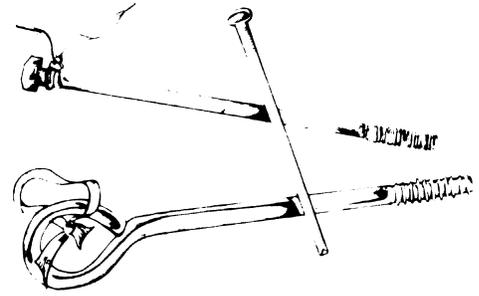
1. Hold the bottle caps in a pair of pliers, over an open flame (candle or stove burner) and burn the paint, plastic and cork off. This gives them a better ringing sound.
2. Place metal washers between the bottle caps.

The bottle caps can be flattened, but it's not necessary. The flattened caps have a thinner, sweeter sound, and the non-flattened sound a bit louder and fuller. Make holes with a drill or by pounding a nail through the bottle caps.

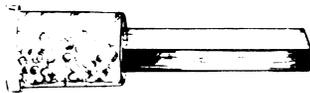
STICKS - Saw up an old broom handle into 1" lengths or go to the lumber yard and get some hardwood dowels between 1/4" and 1" in thickness. (Any thickness will do.) The thinner sticks have a thinner lighter sound; the thicker sticks have a fuller sound.



BOLTS - Use large eyebolts, machine bolts, or carriage bolts. Tie a piece of shoe lace, string, or ribbon around the end of each bolt so they can hang freely. Use large nails as strikers. For safety, file down any sharp points or cut them off with a hack saw.

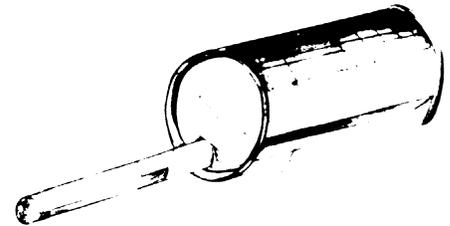


SHAKERS - Here are four easy-to-make "ecology shakers" made from materials that would otherwise add to the earth's growing mountain of refuse.



(1) **PILL BOTTLE SHAKER** - Put dried peas or beans in a pill bottle, and glue the top on. If a handle is desired, drill a hole in the bottom and screw the bottle to a 3/4" dowel. The length can be 3 to 5 inches. Add a dab of Elmer's glue to strengthen.

(2) **BEER OR SODA CAN SHAKER** - Drop sunflower seeds, dried peas or beans in the can and tape the opening closed. If you like a handle, push a dowel all the way through the pop top opening until it touches the end of the can. Put a screw or nail through the end of the can into the dowel. Tape up cracks in the opening.



(3) **EMPTY TOILET SPOOL SHAKER**- This is the easiest of all to make. Flatten one end of the spool and tape it shut. Drop in dried peas or beans. Flatten the other end and tape it shut. Unflatten the middle and put another piece of tape length-wise.

(4) **FILM CAN SHAKER** - Tape two film cans bottom to bottom. Drop some tiny dime store beads in each side. screw caps on each end. This shaker has a light clear sound which records so well that it is sometimes used by studio percussionists in preference to commercially made shakers.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: The ideas in this guide are suggestions. Don't be afraid to adapt and change them to fit your environment and meet the needs of the children you are working with.