

Introduction to Ethnic Percussion

UNCP Percussion Festival

Saturday March 20, 2010

11:00 a.m.

Dr. Don Parker – Clinician

Fayetteville State University

Importance of Ethnic Percussion Instruments

1. Use in traditional and non-traditional ensembles
2. Useful in identifying musical characteristics in students
3. Provide skills that go beyond the traditional areas of Percussion
4. Most instruments have cultures based upon several components (rhythms, construction, and playing technique)

The following areas will be discussed during the workshop:

Metal

1. Triangle
 - a. Tradition dates to 18th Century from Janissary Music of the Turkish Soldiers
 - b. Construction - Steel rod (diameter can vary as well as length)
 - c. Method of Playing – use of steel/brass rods
 - d. Additional considerations
 - 1) Traditional triangle (Grover vs. Alan Abel)
 - 2) Pel w/ grooves
 - 3) Brazilian approach
2. Cowbell
 - a. Tradition (location of cows and ward off evil spirits)
 - b. Construction - in Africa use of empty fruit hulls (seed pods) and with ore mining, bells of forged steel were created (Gangkui)
 - c. Conical bell construction originated in Africa, then moved to Spain and Latin America (concerro)
 - d. Other cultural – Switzerland (Almglocken - Alpine Herd Bells), Brazil (Agogo), Cuba (mambo, cha-cha, bongo)
 - e. Method of Playing –use of sticks and hard mallet, use of open and closed tones

Wood

1. Woodblock
 - a. Tradition dates to WWI for Dance Bands-creates a lighter sound and African beginnings from Bamboo Slit Drums
 - b. Construction - made of hardwood such as maple
 - c. Additional construction – Temple Blocks (China, Indo-China, & Japan)
Note: mouth of fish before each block creates darker sound
 - d. Method of Playing – similar to Snare Drum, but surface is much harder so a variety of sticks and mallets can be used
2. Guiro
 - a. Construction - resembles shape of fish (African based but has Cuban roots)
 - b. Additional Construction - Hollowed out gourd (plant based) with ridges or plastic (durability)
 - c. Method of Playing – Scraping stroke (short and long)
3. Claves
 - a. Construction - made of hardwood such as rosewood and plastic
 - b. Additional construction – Hard conical pieces (pitched high and low depending on the culture)
 - c. Method of Playing – Set them in motion against each other (son, rumba, brazilian, etc...)

Skin

1. Frame Drums
 - a. Tradition – Babylonian/Egyptian Civilizations
 - b. Construction - no jingles, but some with strand of wire or gut for buzz
 - c. Additional construction – skin or plastic head on circle or square frame and a variety of tension methods
 - d. Method of Playing – parts of the hand (fingers, thumb, palm) and incorporate snare drum technique without stick
2. Panderio
 - a. Tradition - Brazilian tradition based in Samba
 - b. Construction - heavier than Frame drum w/jingles
 - c. Method of Playing – same as above and use frame to articulate rhythms
3. Conga/Djembe/Bongos/Dun-Dun
 - a. Tradition - African, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Haitian, etc.
 - b. Construction - Conical shape with skin/plastic head with a variety of tuning systems as well as innovative products.
 - c. Method of Playing – parts of hands (fingers, thumb, & palm) to produce open, muffled & slap tones as well as stick/hand combinations (Cuban based tumbao & martillo, African based – Gahu, and Ewe drumming)

Rattling Instruments

1. Cabasa/Shekere
 - a. Tradition – Cuban vs. African
 - b. Construction - Beads (plastic, metal) surrounding gourd or metal surface
 - c. Method of Playing – sound produced by beads hitting against the frame surface with the use of the hand.
2. Contained rattles (Maracas, Caxixi, & shakers)
 - a. Tradition – African, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Haitian, etc.
 - b. Construction - Beads (various materials) striking the inside of bowl like surface (a variety of types)
 - c. Method of Playing – Use of figure 7 , wrist , and bead position to control sound .

Dr. Don N. Parker serves as Associate Professor of Music-Percussion and Music Coordinator at Fayetteville State University. Over the years he has appeared as an adjudicator, clinician, and guest artist throughout the country. Most recently he was featured at the 10th Annual Tarleton State University Percussion Festival in Stephenville, Texas with the Third Coast Percussion Ensemble and Jeff Moore. He performs with the Fayetteville Jazz Orchestra and Fayetteville Symphony Orchestra since 2003 as a featured soloist and serves as principal percussionist. He also has performs with his jazz vibes and piano duo, The Haydon/Parker Duo, and his trumpet/percussion duo, Double Take, which has released its second CD entitled “Atmospheres” featuring commissioned works. He is the director for the Summer Music Camps @ FSU.

Prior to FSU, Dr. Parker taught at the University of Missouri - St. Louis, Chadron State College (Nebraska) and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Dr. Parker has a B.M. in Performance and Music Business from DePauw University and a M.M. and D.M.A. in Percussion Performance from the University of Texas in Austin. Dr. Parker has endorsements with Sabian Cymbals, Mapex Drums, Mike Balter Mallets, Regal Tip Sticks, Remo World Percussion, LP Music Group, Majestic Percussion, and Dynasty Marching Percussion. For more information, contact Dr. Parker at:

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