

CRAIG WOODSON

A World Orchestra

Art Form: Music

Style: Classical to Contemporary

Culture: Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas

MEET THE ARTIST:

Dr. Craig Woodson, an educator, author, musician, consultant, and musical instrument maker, holds a doctorate in music from U.C.L.A. His career as a musician includes playing drums with Elvis Presley and Linda Ronstadt. In 1974 he founded Ethnomusic, Inc. as an outgrowth of his specialization in instrument making, African drumming, and ethnomusicology. Later these interests took him to Ghana, West Africa for three years as an invited researcher. In the 1980's, he began school presentations on world music, African drumming, and percussion from around the world. He has facilitated drum circles and has presented workshops on world drumming in many places.

As a consultant to the Remo drum company, he has had input on several products especially Connecting Sound Shapes. He has published many articles and recently completed the *Roots of Rhythm*, a K-8 curriculum with two CDs that introduces fifteen percussion instruments from around the world through geography, history, culture, and musical styles. He has received several grants the most recent being from the International Music Products Association (NAMM) to teach his *Roots of Rhythm* curriculum in the Cleveland area. (See websites below.)

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:

In *A World Orchestra*, Dr. Woodson uses simple tools and materials to build twelve easy-to-make musical instruments based on children's ideas from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. He begins by having the audience play body music that represents the musical families -- string, air, drum and idiophone -- like a cheek drum, lip buzz or a hair plucker. These are sounds our ancestors may have tried ten thousand years ago! Then students watch as Dr. Woodson shows them how instruments evolved from those first early sounds. For example he demonstrates how a pole used for fishing became a musical bow, then transformed into a guitar or a violin. Using simple tools and available materials such as a Styrofoam cup, fishing line, plastic tubes, coat hangers, dental floss, tape and thumb tacks, Dr. Woodson assembles homemade versions of folk instruments like a coat hanger harp, a garden hose slide whistle, a bobby pin "thumb piano" and a picture frame drum. By assembly's end, Dr. Woodson has children and teachers on stage, ready to perform as a World Orchestra in a fun-filled improvisation.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:

The music and instruments introduced in Dr. Craig Woodson's performance are part of four broad musical cultures studied by ethnomusicologists. These include: Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. On each of these continents, there exists music which is based on an *oral tradition*; that is, music learned by listening and then imitating what is heard. This is a different approach than the one traditionally taken in Western art music. In this tradition, the music is often written down with symbols and students begin their study by learning the written musical language.

Music based on an oral tradition is typically passed on from master to student and from one generation to the next. This imitative process provides the student with a clear model to guide his or her own musical development. Oral transmission is not only used in folk music, it is also found in Asian countries with highly refined artistic traditions. Historically the music of the royal court, the high priests and the upper classes was often learned by listening rather than reading. An oral tradition also exists in the folk music of Western countries and other nations of the world also dominated by high cultures.

In music passed on orally rather than in written form, change is common. These subtle evolutions help to make the music a living art. The music also changes when people add their own musical ideas to the traditional melodies and rhythms. This can help account for the many versions of certain popular songs. This view of music-making, as something everyone can do, is different from our traditional idea of Western: that is, music as an art which is performed by highly skilled professionals for an audience whose only function is to listen.

(For information on musical instrument classification, please see Page Three.)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What most impressed or surprised you about this performance?
- What is the difference between noise and a musical sound? (noise is irregular and usually is not created for a listener while musical sound is regular and meant for expression and listening)
- Can you recall the classification of musical instrument families talked about in the performance? (air, string, drum and self-sounding)
- What is an oral tradition? Can you think of songs, dances, nursery rhymes or stories that have been passed on by the oral tradition in your own family?
- What are things that you learned about making instruments from the performance? What instruments would you choose to make for yourself to enjoy? Why?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS - SCIENCE:

All sounds are vibrations. To see, as well as hear, a vibration place a thin ruler on a table so that about nine inches sticks out beyond the edge. Hold it firmly with one hand near the table edge and with the other thumb pull down and quickly release the free end. The vibrations can be seen, heard, and felt. To make a change in the pitch (higher or lower sound), gradually pull the ruler back from the edge, shortening the length that is off of the table. Pull down and release the free end every half- to one-inch. As the free end gets shorter, the pitch will rise.

The sound of the human voice is also a vibration. To feel the vibrations, place the finger gently on the Adam's apple (cartilage at the middle of the throat) and sing. Not only can the vibrations be felt, but also the up and down movement of the cartilage as the pitch is changed. Discuss your experience and what you learned about sound.

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

⇒ Music which demonstrates the concept of high and low pitches can be improvised on classroom tone bells. Begin with a pentatonic (five tone) scale using the bells D E F A B from the lowest octave. Strike the bells in any order using any rhythm pattern. Repeating patterns will help give the music form. To add the contrast of low and high pitches, alternate patterns played on the D E F A B bells with patterns played on the A B C E F# bells from the higher octave. Add variety by making the music louder or softer.

☼ Create a Word Web on Musical Instruments. Ask students to name musical instruments they know and write these on the board. When all answers are listed, remind students about the four families of instruments they

Legend:

- ☼ Artistic perception
- ❖ Creative expression
- ▶ Historical & cultural context
- ⇒ Aesthetic valuing
- * Connections, Relations, Applications

learned about in the show: string - produced by bowing, plucking or strumming; winds - produced by blowing into or across a mouthpiece; drums - sound produced by striking, shaking or scraping a membrane; self-sounding - sounds produced by using the instrument body itself. Then, write these categories on the board and challenge students to place the instruments from the word web into the four categories. Discuss self-sounding ideas that they may not have thought of originally.

❖ Encourage students to list sounds they hear around them. This might include such things as door bell, phone, clock, water dripping or falling, people laughing, traffic sounds such as horns beeping, keys jingling. Ask students to think about how they could make an ordinary sound into a musical sound. What could they do to make it sound musical (give it a rhythm, organize the sounds into a composition or musical idea, clap a steady, continuous beat and purposefully add the sounds in chosen or improvised way). Ask students to experiment with ordinary sounds using some of the ideas above. Have one group keep a steady beat with snapping or clapping and the other group improvise sounds over the top. Discuss the ideas and what made them work or not.

▶ Create some simple rhythm patterns that can be done in a traditional Call and Response manner. This is one of the ways that music is learned in traditional cultures. Here are a couple of examples to try: Pattern #1 - Clap hands (counts 1,2), slap knees (count 3) rest (count 4). Repeat several times moving back and forth between the leader and the group. Then try in unison several times. Pattern #2 - Clap (count 1), stamp (counts 2,3), slap knees (count 4). Then challenge students to create their own original patterns. Ask some to be the leader or caller and the group will respond by repeating the pattern. Then, again try in unison 4-8 times.

* Ask students to think of something they know how to do, such as make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, play handball, set the table, play the violin or fish. Ask each student to select one idea. Combine students into partners and ask each one to tell/teach the other how to do the specific thing. Encourage them to also use miming of gestures or sounds and have the person being taught demonstrate the activity or skill and name/describe the steps. This is an example of learning something in the Oral Tradition. Discuss the differences between learning something in a book and learning it directly from another person without diagrams or written directions.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Randel, Don Michael, ed. *Harvard Dictionary of Music, Fourth Edition*. Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 2003.
www.WorldDrumming.net
www.CraigWoodson.net
www.ihobf.com (International House of Blues Foundation)
www.playdrums.com

DR. CRAIG WOODSON PRESENTS: MUSICAL INSTRUMENT FAMILIES

Idiophone - An instrument that produces sound using the material of the instrument itself as the source of vibration.

Self Sound



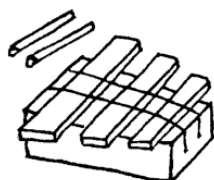
hand clap
BODY

Shaker



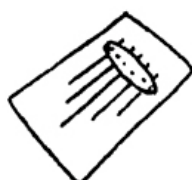
chocalho
SOUTH AMERICA

Xylophone



ranatek
SOUTH ASIA

Plucker



sanza
AFRICA

Membranophone - An instrument that produces sound by means of vibrating a stretched membrane.

Drum Sound



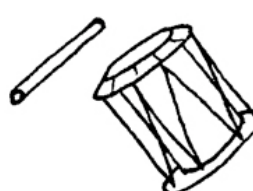
cheeks
BODY

Friction Drum



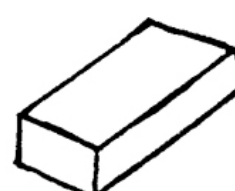
cuica
SOUTH AMERICA

Double Head



dundun
WEST AFRICA

Frame Drum



tamalen
WEST AFRICA

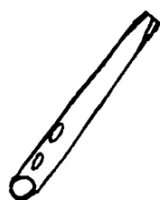
Aerophone - An instrument that produces sound primarily using an air column for the source of vibration.

Air Sound



lip buzz
BODY

Double Reed



p'iri
ASIA

Cup Mouthpiece



bugle
EUROPE

Flute



slide whistle
NORTH AMERICA

Chordophone - An instrument that uses a string to produce sound, whether bowed, plucked or struck.

String Sound



hair
BODY

Musical Bow



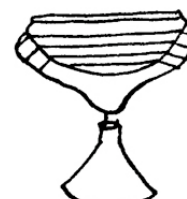
berimbau
SOUTH AMERICA

Lute



er-hu
SOUTH AMERICA

Harp



kani
AFRICA