

DrumatiX:

Rhythm Delivered: Audible Dance, Visual Music Educational Guide, Grades K-12



About the Performance

An energized and well-crafted performance that blends tap dance, body percussion and drumming on and with various drums, found objects, invented instruments, technology, and audience interaction. This show is an intersection of genres, presenting “audible dance” and “visual music.” Students will enjoy following the antics of a group of friends as they discover objects in cardboard boxes and creatively turn each one into a musical or rhythmic device. Full of humor and plot twists, the last box reveals a surprise...



About the Artist

DrumatiX is a novel tap dance and percussion group with locations in Boston and in San Diego, created by award-winning choreographer, dancer, and musician, Noa Barankin. DrumatiX creates a brand-new blend of dance and drumming using: tap dance, everyday objects, large drums/barrels, body percussion, technology, audience interaction, and tons of humor!

The company's mission is to bring audiences closer to the traditional art of tap dance and its roots in body percussion and drumming, thus making a connection between these three genres while showcasing how we can creatively transform and blend them into new, original, imaginative creations.

DrumatiX has performed in venues such as Lincoln Center and Symphony Space (NYC), Clayton Opera House (NY), Broadwater Main Stage (LA), Rochester Fringe Festival (NY), and in New England in many venues, events, schools, and festivals, including the Mosesian Center for the Arts, Strand Theatre, Arts at the Armory, and the lucrative Beantown Tapfest.

Program Learning Goals

1. Learn through demonstration and interactive participation about different rhythms and forms of rhythmic expression;
2. Explore how we can creatively make music and rhythm with different objects;
3. Learn through reading, viewing and discussion about the roots of tap dance and its importance.

Essential Questions

1. How can we use our surroundings as a resource for our creativity?
2. What is tap dance? What is body percussion? How did they start?
3. In what way is tap dance's story important today? What has changed since then?
4. How do you think tap dance, body percussion, and drumming are similar? How are they different?
5. What are some other forms of percussive dance that exist? How are they different or similar to tap dance? (referring to Irish Dancing and Flamenco, in particular to this study guide).
6. Can there be room for a relationship between dance and music? How do they intersect?
7. What kind of materials can we find around us that vary in tone and timbre? Describe the sound qualities of a few objects around you. What else can they be used for?
8. What are some other ways that we create rhythms and music?

Important Vocabulary

- **Tap Dance:** a type of dance characterized by using the sounds of metal taps affixed to the heel and toe of shoes striking the floor as a form of percussion, coupled with both characteristic and interpretative body movements.
- **Body Percussion:** The art of using hands, feet, fingers, skin and bone to create rhythm like an instrument.
- **Improvisation:** the act of composing, executing, or arranging anything without any previous preparation.
- **Choreography:** the art of composing dance and planning and arranging the movements, steps, and patterns of the dancers.
- **Timbre:** the character of a musical sound as distinct from its tone (think - guitar vs. violin).
- **Tone:** a musical sound with reference to its pitch, quality, and strength (think - high and low).
- **Canon/Ripple:** a technique that employs a melody or rhythm with one or more imitations of said melody or rhythms, played after a given duration.
- **Counterpoint:** the relationship between two or more musical lines that are interdependent, yet independent in rhythm and melody.
- **Call-and-response:** is when someone shouts something and gets a response back.
- **Oppression:** prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control.
- **Resilience:** the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

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Key Facts and Cultural Context for Students

Tap dance - a Black American art form, that originated in the United States during the late 18th century, out of and evolved to become a form of entertainment through street shows. It originated mainly due to the oppression of Black slaves, as their drums were taken away from them, and their resilience to keep their spirits up caused them to create rhythms using their body and feet. It is suspected that a mixture of cultures such as Irish stepping and English clogging that were imported to the US through immigrant communities also contributed to the art form.

Read this: [History of Tap Dance | History and Development of Dance/ Brockport](#)

Body percussion - known to be the first human musical instrument, body percussion is the art of using your body as a drumset to create different rhythms, beats, and movements. Body percussion exists in many cultures; in each culture, it is developed into a specific style of its own. Some examples of body percussion include collegiate Stepping, Indonesian Saman, Ethiopian armpit music, and Spanish Palmas.



Drumming - Drumming, the act of beating on a drum with hands and sticks is commonly viewed as the root of music, and is a form of expression of emotions, communication (almost like a language), spiritualism, and for purposes of entertainment.

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Pre-Show Activity: Tap Dance & Body Percussion

Watch Video: [How tap dancing was made in America](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y60nqyhwYoM)

Activity:

- Learn these few basic tap steps: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y60nqyhwYoM>
- Now, create your own combination of tap steps using what you learned from the video.
- Can you find more ways in which to make sounds with your feet? Try a few different combinations.
- We are going to improvise to this song, using as much movement and footwork as we can: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3g3RkcYYZWU>

Watch Video: [Hands and feet | STOMP | TEDxWhitehallWomen](#) (watch from 04:00 to 07:00)

Activity:

- Try to clap your hands and produce 3 different tones with them. Can you find more ways to create sounds using your hands?
- Can you find the LOW sounds on your body? How about the HIGH ones? Try to find at least 6 different tones you can produce with your body, and categorize them into high, medium, and low.
- Create your own combination of body percussion.

Post-Show Activity: Create your own percussion instrument out of found objects!

**Before you begin this activity, make sure you are permitted to use the items that are part of this exercise, and ask whether you can borrow them or use them permanently. If you are borrowing an item, please make sure to return it in the same condition in which you took it, and place it back where it belongs. I encourage you to find items you can use permanently and which you can alter and manipulate so that you can create something that you can display and use at later times!*

- Explore your surroundings (home/garden/classroom) and try to locate at least 3 different objects that are made out of different materials.

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- Explore the possibility of making sounds with the objects you found. Try to find objects that can generate high, medium, and low tones, and that have different timbres.
- Arrange your items together in any way you like - you can connect some pieces together (straps, glue, etc), or adjust them in any way you like. Get creative! Can your instrument be carried around? Think of ways to make that happen!
- Find an additional item that can be used as a drumstick, or - use your hands to play your instrument.

Team up with a partner and try these following exercises:

- One person plays their invented instrument while the other attempts at doing body percussion at the same time! Perhaps you can integrate playing your instrument with some of the tap dance moves you learned.
- Both of you can play your instruments and at the same time while trying to create a dialogue - perform a call-and-response with each other; give a steady beat while the other improvises. Take turns. Think of other ways to create a dialogue between you. You may also create a story around your instruments and use them as part of the narrative.
- Invent a drumming pattern that has a beginning and a clear end. Now, try to make a ripple out of it (each one starts the same pattern but at different times).
- Finally, create two distinct beats that are different but can be played at the same time. Think how the two beats complement each other. Now, play the two beats at the same time. That is a counter-point!

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- After having seen the show and reflecting on the essential questions, discuss - how are tap dance, drumming, and body percussion similar? How are they different?
- Thinking about the history of tap dance, as an example of a genre that has changed and grown over the decades. Do you have a family story that changes each time someone tells it?

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- How has tap dance evolved from the video clips in this guide, to what you saw us perform in the show?
- How does using different items while dancing change tap dance and body percussion?
- Were you able to identify a moment of improvisation vs. a moment of choreography in the performance? How about a call-and-response moment? Did you notice a counterpoint and a canon/ripple?
- Which “invented” instruments do you remember seeing? How were they used in the performance? What kind of sound did they make? Which instrument was of a high tone? Medium? Low? How is their material related to their timbre?
- Compare Irish Stepping ([Irish Dance Group - Irish Step Dancing \(Riverdance\) 2009](#)) to Flamenco ([Ballet Flamenco Andaluca - Flamenco Festival at New York City Center](#)) and Tap Dance: (*for tap, use the videos below in the Further Resources section).

Discuss similarities and differences.

Further Resources

- A short history of tap dance: [History of Tap Dance | History and Development of Dance/ Brockport](#)
- Tap Dance History from the Library of Congress - [Article Tap Dance in America: A Short History](#)
- Famous tap dance videos:
 - [Bill "Bojangles" Robinson Stair Dance, 1932](#)
 - [Early Tap Dance](#)
 - [Gregory Hines - "Tap" The Challenge Scene](#) (all improvised, danced by some of the best and most important tap masters of our generation) - start at 1:30
- Gene Kelly and Donald O'Connor in [Moses supposes \(from "Singin' in the rain"\)](#)
- Fred Astair and Ginger Rogers in ["Swing Time"](#)
- ["Too Darn Hot"](#) - Kiss Me Kate | Ann Miller
- A dedicated YouTube channel with more tap dance videos - [What the Eye Hears](#)
- Body Percussion:
 - Stomp Live - [Part 3 - Just clap your hands](#) (start at 4:50)
 - Stomp - [newspapers](#) (start at 2:15)

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Curricular Connections

Dance K-12

Creating: 1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Use a variety of props when exploring movement. (D.Cr.01)

Performing 4. Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation. (D.P.04)

- Music Connection: Students select a rhythm instrument to represent the sounds a chosen creature makes and choreograph appropriate motions to represent it. (PK-K.M.P.04)

Responding:

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work. Analyze how cultures are reflected in a diverse range of dance works. (D.R.07)

8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Explain how a dance is connected to the particular cultural, historical context where and when it was created. (D.R.08)

Connecting:

11. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. Identify different styles of dance (e.g., tap, hip-hop, ballet, square). (1-2.D.Co.11)

--HSS Connection: Students study the influence of West African dance traditions and African American/Caribbean slave dances on the evolution of modern hip-hop dance (HSS.5.T1.07).

Dance Foundations:

Responding

8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Identify elements from a dance work that connect it to a specific genre or style. (F.D.R.08)

9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Compare and contrast different rubrics or criteria for evaluating dance work. (F.D.R.09)

Connecting:

11. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. Identify the connections between historical and cultural context and defining stylistic elements of dance movements (F.D.Co.11).

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Curricular Connections

Music K- 8

Creating

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Generate interdisciplinary musical ideas using a variety of non-traditional sound sources (e.g., found sounds, digital technology, unusual voices). (M.Cr.01)

Performing

5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. Demonstrate beat competency by using a steady beat when performing pieces that incorporate simple rhythmic patterns (e.g., body percussion, classroom instruments, or movement). (M.P.05)

Responding

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work. Analyze how cultures are reflected in a diverse range of musical work. (M.R.07)

Connecting

11. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. Identify how musical ideas and traditions migrate with the people who originated them to affect other cultures, historical periods, and musical genres and styles (e.g., immigrant European folk music). (M.Co.11)