Presenting Recycled Percussion: a band that has been making rock ‘n’ roll music out of a pile of junk for 20 years. Their high-energy performances are a dynamic mix of rock drumming, guitar smashing and DJ spinning, all blended into the recyclable magic of what the band calls “junk rock.” Recycled Percussion’s immersive show expands the boundaries of modern percussion, combining the visual spectacle of marching band-style beats with the rhythmic musical complexity of the stationary drum set. They give their music a truly wacky twist by using everyday objects like power tools, ladders, buckets and trashcans, and turn them into rock instruments.

Recycled Percussion is more than just performance — it’s an interactive show where each audience member has the chance to get in on the act. If you’ve even clapped your hands to the beat of a song, or picked up a pencil and tapped out a rhythm on your desk, then you’ll know what to do.

Recycled Percussion began in 1995 when drummer Justin Spencer formed the band to perform in his high school talent show in Goffstown, New Hampshire. Justin was looking for a way to be really creative and decided to riff on the idea of playing on plastic buckets like he’d seen in the subways of New York City. For his own band, Justin kept adding more and more instruments, expanding on the New York style of street percussion.

Since its humble beginnings, Recycled Percussion and their “junk rock” music have become a national phenomenon, starting with the band’s smash hit performances on America’s Got Talent in 2009. The four-man band was featured on the cover of USA Today and voted National Act of the Year a record-breaking six times. Since then, Recycled Percussion has gained worldwide recognition, performing over 4,000 shows and events in more than 15 countries. Along with their nightly performances on the Las Vegas Strip at The Quad Resort and Casino, the band has appeared on Last Call with Carson Daly, The TODAY Show, China’s Got Talent, the Latin GRAMMY® Awards and at the 2017 Super Bowl.

Current members of Recycled Percussion include:
- Justin Spencer | “Mr. Red” Lead Percussionist, Group Founder.
- Ryan Vezina | “Mr. Blue” Lead Percussionist, Body Percussion Specialist.
- Matt Bowman | “Mr. Black” Guitar player, Percussionist, ‘80s Primal Screamer, Slinky Master.
- Jason Davies | “Mr. Green” DJ, Percussionist, Dancer.

Beyond their intense and inventive musical style, Recycled Percussion is committed to social responsibility. They give back to their community through outreach to the homeless, and bring their positive message to children to pursue their dreams.

Whatever you may have thought about percussive music before, be ready to have your mind expanded by the explosive, kinetic and brain-rattling excitement of Recycled Percussion.
Inspired Ideas in the Classroom

### Teacher Focus

**Prepare for the Performance**

Provide students with a few various recycled items in a bag, such as soup cans, plastic bottles, toilet paper or paper towel rolls and cardboard snack or tissue boxes. Any and all recycled materials will work! Challenge them to create a percussion instrument using only the materials in their bags. Define percussion instruments as those that make sound when they are struck, shaken or scraped. It is suggested you set a timer of five minutes to enforce this as a preparatory exercise. Follow the activity by informing students that the brand Recycled Percussion also uses recycled materials to create percussion instruments — on a much larger scale!

**Experience the Performance**

Before the show: Watch the "Recycled Percussion Theater Experience" trailer. Direct students to consider the following questions while watching.

- What aspects of music and performing do you think keep them going at such a high-energy pace?

After the show: Facilitate a discussion surrounding the interactive nature of the show. Include the benefits of listening to and performing music.

**Reflect, respond and read**

**Focus**

Introduce students to Recycled Percussion's popular performance called Chaos and Kindness by watching the short clip. Lead a brief discussion comparing Recycled Percussion's performances to their mission of Chaos and Kindness and ways in which students might show kindness through music and otherwise. To prepare for their project, show students Chaos and Kindness 54-Ein-The Story of Roy and provide the accompanying activity sheet. After reviewing the activity sheet answers with students, facilitate a discussion on empathy, kindness and music. Highlight the ways that Recycled Percussion showed empathy and kindness through the vessel of music.

**Originate**

Share with students that they will be incorporating all aspects of what they've learned so far into a "junk rock" performance project. They will be finding nontraditional instruments and choosing a popular song from the 1950's or 1960's to accompany. Their final performances will be directed to senior citizens thus encapsulating the spirit of the Chaos and Kindness movement. Ask students to reflect on the nontraditional instruments in Recycled Percussion's performances. A helpful extension may entail introducing younger students to the classification of percussion instruments (i.e. membranophone/idiophone). A resource to help can be found here: Classifying Musical Instruments: OpenCurriculum

**Rehearse**

Guide students musically, yet allow room for creativity! You may find that adding accompanying songs down to approximately go seconds (as opposed to their original full-length) is helpful for younger students and/or non-performance classes. Depending on the timeframe you're working within, you could incorporate the engineering design process as students create their "junk rock" instruments. More information about the process can be found here: Engineering Design Process. This would be a worthwhile cross-curricular endeavor.

**Make magic**

Final performances can take place in person, either with students traveling to a local nursing home to perform or senior citizens traveling to the school. Another option is to record (video) the performances and coordinate with the Activities Director of a local nursing home for a viewing party for their residents. If performing for a nursing home is not a possibility in your situation, consider traveling to the school. Another option is to record (video) the performances and coordinate with the Activities Director of a local nursing home for a viewing party for their residents. If performing for a nursing home is not a possibility in your situation, consider traveling to the school.

### Student Activity

**Before the show:**

1. What unexpected items do the performers utilize as percussion instruments?
2. In addition to performing with percussion instruments, in what other ways do the performers entertain the audience?
3. Which elements from the trailer video are you most looking forward to seeing live?

**After the show:**

1. How did it feel to be an active participant in the music of the show?
2. In what ways does music (either listening to or performing) enrich and benefit your life?
3. Can you recall a time you've beenwowed by a performer or performance?
4. What about the performance stuck with you after the show?

**Activity Sheet**

- **Classifying Musical Instruments: OpenCurriculum**
- **Recycled Percussion Theater Experience**
- **Chaos and Kindness**
- **Drum Beats Bring Seniors Together**
- **Inspired Ideas in the Classroom**

### NJ Student Learning Standards

**Visual Performing Arts Anchor Standards**

- Anchor Standard 1
- Anchor Standard 2
- Anchor Standard 3
- Anchor Standard 4

**English Language Arts**

- NJELA.R3
- NJELA.R6
- NJELA.R7

**Mathematics**

- NJSLSA.R7.

**Social Studies**

- S9.4.5.CI.3
- S9.4.5.CI.4

**Relationship Skills**

- NJ SEL Competencies

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills**

- NJELA.R7.
- NJELA.R6.
- NJSEL Competencies

**Visual & Performing Arts**

- Anchor Standard 1, 2, 3
- Anchor Standard 4

**Anchor Standard 6**

- Anchor Standard 6

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills**

- NJELA.R7.

**Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 11**

- Anchor Standard 11
**National Core Arts Anchor Standards**

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2. Refine and complete artistic work.
3. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
4. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
5. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
6. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
7. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

**Common Core State Standards**

**English Language Arts**

- **NJSLSA.SL1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **NJSLSA.SL2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**Social Studies**

- **6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.c** Determine the influence of multicultural beliefs, products and practices in shaping contemporary American culture.

**Visual & Performing Arts**

- **Anchor Standard 1** Generating and conceptualizing ideas.
- **Anchor Standard 2** Organizing and developing ideas.
- **Anchor Standard 3** Refining and completing products.
- **Anchor Standard 4** Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
- **Anchor Standard 5** Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
- **Anchor Standard 6** Conveying meaning through art.

**FIND THE STANDARDS**

For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:

- NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy](http://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy)
- NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS [socialstudies.org/standards](http://socialstudies.org/standards)
- NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS [nationalartsstandards.org](http://nationalartsstandards.org)

**NJ SEL Competencies**

- **Social Awareness** Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others.
- **Relationship Skills** Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- **Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills**
  - **9.4.5.CI.3** Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one’s thinking about a topic of curiosity.
  - **9.4.5.CI.4** Research the development process of a product and identify the role of failure as apart of the creative process.
  - **9.4.8.CI.2** Repurpose an existing resource in an innovative way.
  - **9.4.12.CI.1** Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas. (12th grade benchmark)
Podcast Show Notes

Part 1: About | Pre-show audio, 6 minutes
Includes: An introduction to the performance, artists and venue, welcome message.
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos.

Additional content written by Sharon Adarlo and the team behind Recycled Percussion.

Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino.

Theme and extra music by Slim Beats from NJPAC Hip Hop Arts and Culture Program.

Additional music from Recycled Percussion promotional videos.

Welcome message voiced by Randal Croudy.

Additional voiceover by Michael Aquino.

Part 2: Connect | Post-show audio, 9 minutes
Includes: Reflection questions, a look at the history of percussion, brief selection of vocabulary words.
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos.

Additional content written by Sharon Adarlo and the team behind Recycled Percussion.

Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino.

Theme and extra music by Slim Beats from NJPAC Hip Hop Arts and Culture Program.

Additional music from Recycled Percussion promotional videos (links below), Michael Aquino, Lara Gonzalez, William Ruiz, and Christopher White.

Share-out prompt voiced by Randal Croudy.

Part 3: Spotlight | Post-show audio, 25 minutes
Includes: An exclusive interview with an NJPAC staff member, discussion starters.
Written and hosted by Dania Ramos.

NJPAC staff member interviewed: Randal Croudy.

Sound editing and design by Michael Aquino.

Theme and extra music by Slim Beats from NJPAC Hip Hop Arts and Culture Program.

Additional music from Recycled Percussion promotional videos.

Vocabulary

Bar
A bar (or measure) is a segment of time corresponding to a specific number of beats in a piece of music. In music notation, the boundaries of the bar are indicated by vertical bar lines.

Beat
In music, the beat is the basic unit of time. The beat is often described as the rhythm that listeners would tap their toes to when hearing a piece of music.

Downbeat
The first beat of a measure in music.

Drumhead
A drumhead or drum skin is a membrane stretched over one or both of the open ends of a drum. The drumhead is struck with sticks, mallets, or hands so that it vibrates, making the sound resonate through the drum.

Membranophone
Any musical instrument which produces sound primarily by way of a vibrating stretched membrane like animal skin.

Metronome
A device that produces an audible beat—a click or other sound—at regular intervals. It can be adjusted to different beats per minute (BPM) to help musicians practice playing to a regular pulse.

Percussion
The striking of one object against another with some sharpness; impact; a blow.

Pitch
The degree of height or depth of a tone or sound, depending upon how quickly a vibration is produced relative to the other tones or sounds.

Syncopation
A variety of rhythms which are in some way unexpected which can make part or all of a piece of music off-beat.

Time Signature
A notation in music that tells you how the music is to be counted. Time signatures consist of two numbers written like a fraction. For example, 4/4 time signature means that there are 4 beats in a measure and the quarter note gets the beat.

Upbeat
The last beat of a measure in music.

Resources

Websites
Recycled Percussion | recycledpercussionband.com/
Interview with Recycled Percussion’s Justin Spencer
rmcmusic.com/usa/ny/g 례/한국어/리사이클드 펑셔-정수-스파크-다이렉트-하-리스의-원-어시드-
Drum Corps International dci.org/
A Brief History of Drums
sonicx.com/education/a-brief-history-of-drums
Drum Sounds and their Meanings – from Smithsonian Folkways
folkways.edu/drum-sounds-their-meanings/world/music/article/smithsonian
How to Play Drums
wikihow.com/How-to-Play-Drums
History of Drums: The Oldest Musical Instrument
historyofdrums.net/drum-history/oldest-musical-instrument
Slim Beats from NJPAC
Sala Music: What Is Talking Drum
salamuzik.com/blogs/news/what-a-talking-drum-how-to-play
American History: Native American Drums in Indigenous Culture
theamericanhistory.org/native-american-drums-indigenous-culture
Vibe Music Academy: A Concise History of the Drumset
vibemusicacademy.com/blogs/a-concise-history-of-the-drumset
Herman Bennett: Washboards
hermanbennett.com/washboards
About NJPAC
njpac.org/about
Recycled Percussion NJPAC resources
njpac.org/arts-education/teacher-resources
NJPAC’s Arts Education programs
njpac.org/arts-education

Videos
Recycled Percussion (from Season 7) ROCK
The Results Show | America’s Got Talent 2016
youtube.com/watch?v=CkISxAC51BQ
Recycled Percussion Promo Videos
recycledpercussionband.com/videos/
Chaos and Kindness Episode 1: Recycled Percussion rehearse for their Super Bowl 2017 appearance and brings a deserving guest to the game
vimeo.com/97599545
Recycled Percussion performs for Super Bowl crowd
youtube.com/watch?v=C7HL5wYqAbU
Recycled Percussion Halftime Performance
(Texans vs Patriots 12/13/15)
youtube.com/watch?v=6dFtlcqGW50
NYC Street Percussion Artist
youtube.com/watch?v=xhLh9oWs0dY
Recycled Percussion promotional music
vimeo.com/232509828 | vimeo.com/300622170

International Drumming Examples
Kodo – “O-Daiko” Japanese Drummers
youtube.com/watch?v=C7HL5wYqAbU
Ghana, West Africa - Kusun Djembe Drum circle
youtube.com/watch?v=6dFtlcqGW50
Jigu! Thunder Drums of China
youtube.com/watch?v=kRi5zUSc4E

Books
In-School Residencies: NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school — online — to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible virtual residencies are designed to meet your needs, and you’ll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It’s the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development: Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC’s forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school, and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something…you’ll also have fun and be inspired.

Saturday Programs: NJPAC’s Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at artseducation@njpac.org. Visit njpac.org/education

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