teacher resource guide  schooltime performance series  recycled percussion
Get ready for a musical experience that will have you clapping your hands and stomping your feet as you marvel at what can be done musically with some pretty humble materials. Recycled Percussion is a band that for more than 20 years has been making rock-n-roll music basically out of a pile of junk. Its 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 music.”

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. Then they give their music a truly wacky twist by using everyday objects like power tools, ladders, buckets and trash cans, and turning them into rock instruments.

Recycled Percussion is more than just performance. It’s an interactive experience 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. Grab the drumstick or unique instrument you’ll be handed when you come to the show and be ready to play your own special beat with Recycled Percussion.
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 its 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 6,000 shows and events in more than fifteen countries. Along with performances in Las Vegas, the band has appeared on Carson Daly, Today, China's fifteenth countries. Along with performances in Las Vegas, the band has appeared on Carson Daly, Today, China's Jamboree in West Virginia with over 40,000 audience members from more than 150 countries. Whatever you may have thought about drum music before, be ready to have your mind expanded by the explosive, kinetic and brain-rattling excitement of Recycled Percussion.

How did you and your group members get together? We wanted to take typical street performing to another level, so we entered our high school talent show. In our performance, we took some ideas from the New York City street performers and embellished them. It was something that our hometown hadn't seen before. We thought it was going to be a one-time deal, but then we got a gig, then another and another. It's been like that for over twenty years.

What are your musical backgrounds and influences? Justin's dad is a drummer, so he grew up with music around the house. After attending his first concert, The Ramones at age four, his parents bought him his own drum kit. As a kid, he wanted to be like his dad; and his dad was in a band. Justin practiced so that he could also be in a band, too. Aside from his typical “man crushes” on bands like Rush, Van Halen and Led Zeppelin, it was all about being just like his dad. Ryan's father was also a drummer, and he followed that path, too.

Beyond its intense and inventive musical style, Recycled Percussion is committed to social responsibility. The band gives back to its community through outreach to the homeless, and brings its positive message to the world. Recycled Percussion is dedicated to creativity and supporting those in need. The band has opened in Laconia, New Hampshire in order to win $1,000 for the charity of their choice. Since then, Recycled Percussion and its 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 6,000 shows and events in more than fifteen countries. Along with performances in Las Vegas, the band has appeared on Carson Daly, Today, China's Jamboree in West Virginia with over 40,000 audience members from more than 150 countries. Whatever you may have thought about drum music before, be ready to have your mind expanded by the explosive, kinetic and brain-rattling excitement of Recycled Percussion.

Tell us about your commitment to social responsibility. What charities and other activities are you involved with and how do you use your band to support them? We have our own Recycled Percussion Foundation, which is focused on creating a more positive environment by making a difference within communities across the country. When the chaotic world of a rock and roll band meets kindness, incredible things happen. The foundation has helped families and children from all over by constructing the world's largest anti-bullying sign, facilitating an insane toy drive across four states, delivering cookies to patients with cancer, our organic acts of kindness, and much more.

We are dedicated to creating insanely cool life experiences for those in need, and we highlight our mission on our self-produced TV Show, Chaos & Kindness. Our ultimate goal is to inspire people everywhere to give back within their own communities and to make the world a more prolific place.

What do you want your young audiences to take away from the performance? What can they learn from your wild-and-crazy approach to music-making? Don't let anyone convince you that you have to conform to society. Whatever your dreams are, pursue them and never waver until you achieve them. Just don't over think the process. Go for it and believe in it. If you believe, you'll keep going. Nothing is guaranteed, but don't give up.
## Inspired Ideas in the Classroom

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<tr>
<th>Teacher Focus</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
<th>NJ Student Learning Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare for the performance</strong></td>
<td>Introduce students to junk percussion with the NPR audio of The New Junjman Opera ‘Odin’. Play only the first 5 minutes of this interview and use questions in the student section as a springboard for discussion.</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.2 History of Arts &amp; Culture 1.4 Aesthetic Response &amp; Critique</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experience the performance</strong></td>
<td>During the performance, ask students to make a mental note of which elements of junk rock took them by surprise. Ask them to remember the various ways Recycled Percussion uses junk percussion in their show.</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.4 Aesthetic Response &amp; Critique 1.2 History of Arts &amp; Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reflect, respond and read</strong></td>
<td>Offer the students a chance to discuss the questions asked in the ‘Experience the Performance’ section. Reflect on how Recycled Percussion repurposed everyday objects into junk percussion instruments. Reflect on how they found their junk percussion instruments, and what the rehearsal process was like. Ask them to remember the various ways Recycled Percussion uses junk percussion in their show.</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.4 Aesthetic Response &amp; Critique</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Re-introduce students to bucket drumming through the NPR audio of Drum Beats Bring Seniors Together. In small groups, have students interpret the article and discuss the benefits of drumming, particularly for elders. Have students write a brief summary advocating for bucket drumming in their school and school community.</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.1 The Creative Process 1.4 Aesthetic Response &amp; Critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Originate</strong></td>
<td>Create a new beat or song using recycled percussion. Develop a plan for acquiring recycled objects and decide how each band member will play each instrument. Grades 9-12: Decide if you will include body percussion and/or vocals (DJing, lyrics or sounds). Continue to practice your song with your group. Review the following questions to ensure you have a successful performance: Does each band member play at the same time or are there varied entries? What time signature are you using? How will the audience know when your performance is concluded? Did you submit a completed Creating a Junk Percussion Band activity sheet?</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.1 The Creative Process 1.2 History of Arts &amp; Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rehearse</strong></td>
<td>Share with students that they will be creating their own junk percussion band. Divide students into small groups and provide them with the activity sheet Creating a Junk Percussion Band. Ask students to develop a plan for acquiring recycled objects for their band. Who will play what instrument and how will the object be played? Grades 5-8: Create a rhythm or beat to be played with various recycled percussion instruments. Grades 9-12: Create a song to be played with recycled percussion instruments and/or body percussion that also includes vocals (DJing, lyrics or sounds).</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.4 Aesthetic Response &amp; Critique 1.2 History of Arts &amp; Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Make magic</strong></td>
<td>In a formal or informal setting, have students present their creations to one another. Provide students with time to share their band name, how they found their junk percussion instruments, and what the rehearsal process was like. If possible, see if songs created in the same time signature can be performed together. Extension: Similar to the band Recycled Percussion, allow students to perform their song creations in a school talent show.</td>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts 1.1 The Creative Process 1.2 History of Arts &amp; Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NJ Arts Standards

1.1 The Creative Process
All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.2 History of Arts & Culture
All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

1.3 Performance
All students will synthesize skills, media, methods, and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique
All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

National Arts Standards

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

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.SL.2
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL.4
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

NJSLSA.W2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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

NJ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela

NJ SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss

NJ WORLD LANGUAGE STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl

NJ ARTS STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2009/1.pdf

NATIONAL ARTS STANDARDS
nationalartsstandards.org
Excavations in Mesopotamia unearthed small cylindrical shell like a pottery water vessel or hollowed out wood. Today China started experimenting with membranes, Neolithic cultures living along the Yellow River in what is now China may have been mankind’s earliest musical instrument. Most scholars believe that the original purpose of drums was simply by banging on an object with a stick. Historians and anthropologists believe that the drum evolved directly from simple wood hunting bows that people started to drum and pluck when they were not busy looking for their next meal. The single string in the bow was enough to make a tune. Eventually, people started making dedicated music bows with multiple strings, with each string carrying a different note depending on its length and position along the curved wooden outline of the bow. You can still see these simple instruments called bow harps in parts of Africa. From bow harps, people started making string instruments that became more complex in structure and sound. Historians consider that the earliest recorded string instrument to be the lyre, u-shaped body with strings stretching between the two prongs and attached to a soundboard. Records of their existence have been found in Ancient Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 2,500 to 3000 B.C.E. From there, string instruments evolved further into classical harps and eventually developing into what we recognize as violins and similar strings in 16th Century Italy.

The washboard is basically a percussion instrument where the player works on the ribbed surface of the cleaning device in order to make a sound. He or she employs spoons or bottle openers to elicit music by scraping, tapping, rolling and strumming the ribbed surface. The washboard’s roots go back to Southern plantations, where slaves were not allowed access to musical instruments. So they took whatever was on hand, from spoons to washing boards or bottle openers to elicit music by scraping, tapping, rolling and strumming the ribbed surface. Didgeridoo

Didgeridoo This wind instrument has a distinctive sound, kind of a rhythmic droning resonating sound that sets it apart from other winds. Indigenous Australians developed this instrument - shaped like a stick - more than 1,000 years ago, and it has become synonymous with Australia. The traditional way of making a didgeridoo is to find a eucalyptus tree where termites have eaten away the heartwood, leaving a hollow column inside the trunk. People would knock these trees with the blunt end of an axe to see if the hollow produced the appropriate resonance. If the tree is deemed a worthy candidate, a crafts person would fell the tree, trim off the bark, and apply beeswax at the mouthpiece end. An artist would paint traditional designs on the exterior. A musician would then play the didgeridoo by blowing into the hollow, creating that distinctive sound. Didgeridoos are now made from a variety of other materials such as plastic and carbon fiber.

Synthesizer

When you are dancing at a club, often times the thumping, rhythmic music playing out of the speakers was created in a special device called a synthesizer. Basically it’s a machine that electronically makes music. The sound coming from a synthesizer can replicate a piano, drums, violin and other traditional instruments used in concert halls, but it can also make sounds that resemble lapping ocean waves, the wind, or the whistle of song birds. Often times, deejays, producers and song writers use synthesizers to make audio that sounds distinctly computer generated, artificial and beyond the reach of most handmade, traditional musical instruments. It’s as if the sound is from the future or from another planet. An example of a band heavily relying on synthesizers is Daft Punk, a futuristic electronic music duo from France. The history of the synthesizer starts with electrical engineers developing circuits that made unique sounds in the late 19th century. Engineers kept on tinkering with more electronic devices, creating proto synthesizers made from vacuums, electromagnetic strips and other technology. During the 1960s and 70s, synthesizers started to penetrate mainstream music such as in songs by bands like The Monkees and The Doors. The synthesizer is now an ubiquitous presence in many music productions and has even been shrunk from large table-size panels to digital apps on computers and smart phones.
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.

B.C.E. and C.E.
B.C.E. means “Before Common Era,” meaning any date prior to the year 1 C.E. (Common Era). BC (Before Christ) means the same thing as B.C.E. AD (Anno Domini, which is Latin for “in the year of the Lord”) means the same as C.E.

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.

Deejay or DJ
Person who plays records for a live audience.

Downbeat
The first beat of a measure in music.

Drums
Percussive instrument made consisting of a hollow container with a membrane pulled over one end. You can elicit sounds from a drum by either tapping the membrane with your hands, feet, drum sticks or another tool. Drums can be round, rectangular or another shape.

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 (also called drum sticks), mallets or hands so that it vibrates, making the sound resonate through the drum.

Drum kit or set
A collection of different size drums and other percussion instruments such as cymbals (thin round metal discs used to make a shimmering metallic percussive sound) that are played by one person. The drums and cymbals are on stands. The drummer plays the instruments using drum sticks held in both hands and his feet on a pedal to simultaneously pound the bass drum, the biggest drum in the kit, which is placed on the floor.

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.

Percussion
The striking of one object against another with some sharpness; impact; a blow. This is where we get the term percussion instrument - an instrument that a person strikes in order to make a sound.

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.

Riff
A short line of rhythmic music played on instruments and repeated in the song, setting the tone or feel of the song.

String instruments
Instruments featuring strings. A player plucks, strums, rubs with a bow, or hits with a small hammer the strings on the musical device and the strings vibrate to make a sound. Within the string family are violins, cellos and even guitars made with cigar box bodies.

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

Wind instruments
Instruments that are usually hollow inside and have a mouthpiece where the player blows. Sound is made when the player blows into the device and air vibrates inside the hollow and escapes outside. Wind instruments can be flutes to horns made from a ram, conch shells or reed pipes.
Websites
Recycled Percussion
recycledpercussion.com

Recycled Percussion’s Chaos & Kindness
recycledpercussion.com/chaos-kindness

Interview with Recycled Percussion’s Justin Spencer
 cows.com/australia/australian-your-best-performing-musicians-2017

Recycled Percussion performs at World Scout Jamboree
wemo.com/article/recycled-percussion-performs-at-world-scout-jamboree/880a12a7

Recycled Percussion prepares to open Chaos and Kindness store
wemo.com/article/recycled-percussion-prepares-to-open-chaos-and-kindness-store/105443a4

Drum Corps International
dci.org

A Brief History of Drums
sciencehe.com/a-brief-history-of-drums

Drum Sounds and their Meanings
(Smithsonian Folkways)
talkwaysstudio.com/drum-sounds-their-meanings/world/music/article/smithsonian

How to Play Drums
windows.com/Play-Drums

A Brief History of String Instruments
skopemag.com/august/2012/a-brief-history-of-string-instruments

Stringed Instrument
smthsonian.com/art/stringed-instrument

7 Unconventional Music Instruments from Around the World
ophwebmaster.com/article/7-unconventional-music-instruments-from-around-the-world/

The 13 Weirdest Musical Instruments Ever
classicfm.com/discover-music/factfile/world-music/article/smithsonian

These 20 Unorthodox Instruments Are Making the Music of the Future
vice.com/en/article/libraries/these-20-unorthodox-instruments-are-making-the-music-of-the-future

Washboard History
hermanbennett.com/washboard.html

This is the Early History of the Synthesizer
rebound.com/dis/dis-electronic-music-early-history-of-the-synth

Videos
Recycled Percussion Promo Videos
recycledpercussion.com/videos

Chaos and Kindness Episode 1: Recycled Percussion rehearses for its Super Bowl 2017 appearance and brings a deserving guest to the game
youtube.com/watch?v=yw5jDw_HZ5s

Recycled Percussion performs for Super Bowl crowd
youtube.com/watch?v=7enWspWxuf

New York City Drums & Buckets
youtube.com/watch?v=22aQwGowuA0

Kado - "O-Delka" Japanese Drummers
youtube.com/watch?v=CCjFjowrJBU

Jigu: The Thunder Drums of China
youtube.com/watch?v=MzLEq0iwUPo

How do string instruments make a sound
youtube.com/watch?v=cIG3SarIFhE

The Didgeridoo
youtube.com/watch?v=xnt7jihVUJk

Mountain Music—washboard rhythm and percussion
youtube.com/watch?v=VQ7xGQgF7E

Daft Punk—Derezzed
youtube.com/watch?v=5F5z1JjZtf

Books
Percussion Instruments and Their History
by James Blades

Bald Strummer Ltd; 4th ed.; 1992

Junkyard Jam Band: DIY Musical Instruments and Noise Makers
by David Erik Nelson

No Starch Press; 2015

Sticking It Out: From Juilliard to the Orchestra Pit, A Percussionist’s Memoir
by Patti Niemi

ECW Press; 2016

The Percussionist’s Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams
(Eastman Studies in Music)
by Steven Schick

University of Rochester Press; HAR/COM edition; 2015

resources

njpac.org/education

the arts in your school

In-School Residencies: Drama + Social Studies. Dance + Math. It all adds up in NJPAC’s In-School Residencies in which professional teaching artists partner with educators to bring the arts into the classroom. Each 7- to 10-week program culminates in a student performance or an interactive family workshop. All programs address state and national standards. NJPAC is the regional provider in New Jersey for international arts programs like the NJ Wolf Trap Program and Dancing Classrooms Global.

Assemblies: NJPAC presents engaging school assembly programs that are presented by professional artists that invite students into the enchanting world of live performance. NJPAC’s assembly series promotes cultural awareness and ignites learning by presenting works that are connected to your school’s curriculum.

Professional Development: NJPAC Professional Development engages classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists as integrated teams that combine arts pedagogy, content, classroom management and social behavioral strategies to ignite and inspire arts-rich classrooms. Working as a team empowers teachers to share practice and strategy. Our goal is to inspire artistic and intellectual capacities in students, build competence and confidence in both students and teachers.

the arts at njpac

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 film, contemporary modern dance, hip hop, jazz, 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.

njpac.org/staff

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