

teacher resource guide

**schooltime
performance
series**



**recycled
percussion**

**arts
education
njpac**

about the performance

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.

njpac on the mic podcast *Recycled Percussion*



About NJPAC On the Mic

NJPAC On the Mic is an audio resource that takes SchoolTime performances to the next level. This podcast series features three exclusive, curriculum-aligned episodes for all of NJPAC's 2022-2023 SchoolTime performances. On the Mic offers students the opportunity to engage their listening skills, deepen their understanding of the performance and learn about the process of bringing a live or recorded production to life. This immersive audio experience features a theme song by students in the NJPAC arts education program.

NJPAC Arts Education performances team:

Randal Croudy, Natalie Dreyer, Rosa Hyde, Danielle Vauters. On the Mic is an NJPAC Arts Education production, produced in partnership with CM Studios. NJPAC and CM Studios are located in Essex County, New Jersey, situated on the traditional territory of the Leni Lenape people.

How to listen to this episode of NJPAC On the Mic

Scan the QR code above or visit: njpac.org/education-program to access the **podcast** and the following show notes:

Before the performance: Part 1: About (6-9 minutes)

This segment provides an introduction to the performance, the artist, the company and the venue.

After the performance: Part 2: Connect (10-12 minutes)

This segment includes reflection questions on the performance, a closer look at the cultural and historical context of the art form, and a selection of vocabulary words relevant to the performance.

Part 3: Spotlight (14-16 minutes)

This segment provides an exclusive interview with an artist from the production or an NJPAC staff member followed by discussion prompts.

(full length show notes continue on page 8)

inspired ideas in the classroom

Teacher Focus

Student Activity

NJ Student Learning Standards

P

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 band Recycled Percussion also uses recycled materials to create percussion instruments — on a much larger scale!

Use your creativity and work with your group members to create a percussion instrument using only the materials provided. Experiment with different ways to play the instrument, discover how changes in your design affect the sound and consider how your nontraditional instruments are both like and unlike traditional, orchestral percussion instruments.

Visual & Performing Arts
Anchor Standard 1, 2, 3, 4
Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills
S9.4.5.Cl.3
9.4.5.Cl.4
9.4.8.Cl.2
NJ SEL Competencies
Relationship Skills

E

Experience the performance

Before the show: Watch the “[Recycled Percussion Theater Experience](#)” trailer. Direct students to consider the following questions while watching.
After the show: Facilitate a discussion surrounding the interactive nature of the show. Include the benefits of listening to and performing music.

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 been wowed by a performer or performance?
4. What about the performance stuck with you after the show?

English Language Arts
NJLSA.R7.
NJLSA.SL1.

R

Reflect, respond and read

Reflect: Facilitate a discussion about the passion and dedication of Recycled Percussion’s band members who have devoted their lives to performing “junk rock” music.
Respond: Have students make a list of songs they heard during the performance. If possible, instruct students to expand their lists to include the style or genre of each song. Then, compare the lists as a whole class activity. Transition into a discussion about how music becomes popular and how music can have great meaning for people in unique ways.
Read: Compare the central themes of the following quotes: “*I think it’s a hunger in people for anything to come together and make sounds, and nobody is looking down their nose at you, you know, so we make that happen and we try to make it happen more often.*” Share Justin Spencer’s quote from the article [RECYCLED PERCUSSION: Justin Spencer Discusses His One of A Kind Band!](#): “*Don’t let anybody or anything derail you from what you want to do. Don’t let anyone convince you that you have to conform to be a part of the society we live in. I was told I was crazy for dropping out of law school to pursue my passion. Don’t waver from pursuing your dreams — ever!*”

Reflect: Consider how you felt after the show concluded. Speculate how the performers feel at the end of each show. What aspects of music and performing do you think keep them going at such a high-energy pace?
Respond: Make a list of styles/genres of music you heard during the performance. If possible, write down artists and/or titles of songs you heard and recognized. Your peers or teacher may be able to help with this task.
Read: Read the NPR article [Drum Beats Bring Seniors Together](#). Reflect upon the closing quotation in the article, “*I think it’s a hunger in people for anything to come together and make sounds, and nobody is looking down their nose at you, you know, so we make that happen and we try to make it happen more often.*” What do you think members of Recycled Percussion would say in response to this quote?

English Language Arts
NJLSA.R7.
NJLSA.SL1.
NJLSA.SL2
Visual & Performing Arts
Anchor Standard 11

F

Focus

Introduce students to Recycled Percussion’s positivity movement called *Chaos and Kindness* by watching the following [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 S3 E20- 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.

Consider similarities between the feel and magnitude of Recycled Percussion’s performances and the mission of their *Chaos and Kindness* movement. While watching the episode about Roy, complete the [activity sheet](#).

English Language Arts
NJLSA.R7.
Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
2.1.5.EH.3

O

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 items to be used as percussion instruments and choosing a popular song from the 1950’s or 1960’s to accompany. Their final performance will be directed to senior citizens thus encapsulating the spirit of the *Chaos and Kindness* movement. Remind students to reflect on the nontraditional items in Recycled Percussion’s performance. 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](#)

Find nontraditional items with which to create a percussion instrument and choose a popular song from the 1950’s and 1960’s to accompany. Step-by-step instructions can be found on the activity sheet.

Visual & Performing Arts
Anchor Standard 1, 2, 3, 4
Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills
S9.4.5.Cl.3
9.4.5.Cl.4
9.4.12.Cl.1
NJ SEL Competencies
Relationship Skills

R

Rehearse

Guide students musically, yet allow room for creativity! You may find that editing accompanying songs down to approximately 90 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.

Before beginning to practice and perform, sit down with your group members and brainstorm on the provided [activity sheet](#). Use the sheet as a guide to help you break down the parts of the project. Your teacher will help to keep you on track timewise. Practice your performance until you feel comfortable, confident and ready to share with an audience! A good idea would be to share your performance with another group and ask their feedback for improvement.

Visual & Performing Arts
Anchor Standard 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10
Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills
9.4.12.Cl.1
Relationship Skills

M

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 other audiences and venues for whom and where your students could perform.

Be proud of your performance and consider how meaningful the music will be to your audience of senior citizens. Reflect upon Roy’s story in the *Chaos and Kindness* episode and know that you are bringing the same joy of music to those listening to your performance. Bravo! What other ways can you spread kindness to others through music? Keep going!

Visual & Performing Arts
Anchor Standard 6
Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills
9.4.12.Cl.1
NJ SEL Competencies
Social Awareness
Social Studies
6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.c



curriculum standards

National Core Arts Anchor Standards

- 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- 3:** Refine and complete artistic 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.

common core state standards

English Language Arts

NJLSA.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.

NJLSA.SL2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJLSA.R7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

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

NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

socialstudies.org/standards

NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS

nationalartsstandards.org

Anchor Standard 10

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard 11

Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

Phys Ed

2.1.5.EH.3

Identify different feelings and emotions that people may experience and how they might express these emotions

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)

njpac on the mic podcast

(continued from page 3)

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 outro 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 outro 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, 15 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 outro 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 resonates 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 iconvsicon.com/2013/07/23/recycled-percussion-justin-spencer-discusses-his-one-of-a-kind-band/

Drum Corps International dci.org_

A Brief History of Drums

scienceofrock.com/a-brief-history-of-drums

Drum Sounds and their Meanings – from Smithsonian Folkways

folkways.si.edu/drum-sounds-their-meanings/world/music/article/smithsonian

How to Play Drums

wikihow.com/Play-Drums

History of Drums: The Oldest Musical Instrument

historyofdrums.net/drum-history/drum-oldest-musical-instrument

Sala Muzik: What Is Talking Drum

salamuzik.com/blogs/news/what-is-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/blog/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 rehearses for their Super Bowl 2017 appearance and brings a deserving guest to the game

vimeo.com/206599125

Recycled Percussion performs for Super Bowl crowd

youtube.com/watch?v=f7dW_HRSZIs

Recycled Percussion Halftime Performance

(Texans vs Patriots 12/13/15)

youtube.com/watch?v=xhLhgoWsdY

NYC Street Percussion Artist

youtube.com/watch?v=ZL7DQuomchg

Recycled Percussion promotional music

vimeo.com/278072890 | vimeo.com/59191605

International Drumming Examples

Kodo – “O-Daiko” Japanese Drummers

youtube.com/watch?v=C7HL5wYqAbU

Ghana, West Africa - Kusun Djembe Drum circle

youtube.com/watch?v=6dFtlcqGW5o

Jigu! Thunder Drums of China

youtube.com/watch?v=cWoZsYF5l4w

Books

Blades, James. *Percussion Instruments and Their History*. Bold Strummer Ltd; 4th ed.; 1992.

Nelson, David Erik. *Junkyard Jam Band: DIY Musical Instruments and Noisemakers*. No Starch Press, 2015.

Niemi, Patti. *Sticking It Out: From Juilliard to the Orchestra Pit, A Percussionist's Memoir*. ECW Press, 2016.

Schick, Steven. *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams (Eastman Studies in Music)*. University of Rochester Press; HAR/COM edition; 2015.

njpac staff

Steven M. Goldman, Esq.
& **Barry H. Ostrowsky**
Co-Chairs, NJPAC Board of Directors

John Schreiber
President & CEO

Jennifer Tsukayama
Vice President, Arts Education

Mark Gross
Director, Jazz Instruction

Rosa Hyde
Senior Director, Performances &
Special Events Operations

Jennie Wasserman
Project Director, City Verses

Demetria Hart
Project Coordinator, City Verses

Victoria Revesz
Senior Director, Arts Education Operations

Roe Bell
Senior Manager, School &
Community Programs

Ashley Mandaglio
Assoc. Director, Professional Learning
& Programs

Kristine Mathieson
Senior Manager, CRM & Business Operation

Daniel Silverstein
Manager, Onsite Programs

Kimberly Washington
Manager, Marketing, Sales,
Recruitment & Retention

Rene Velez-Torres
Manager, Youth &
Emerging Artist Development

Randal Croudy
Coordinator, Arts Education Performances

Steven Hayet
Coordinator, Business Operations

Angela Peletier
Coordinator, Professional Learning
& Training

Antonella Sanchez
Coordinator, Program Operations

Natalie Dreyer
Arts Integration Faculty Lead

the arts in your school

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.

study 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 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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+ deceased