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**You Can't Have Good Music Without Percussion**

**By Lavinia Snider**

Percussion instruments are very old and have quite a history. Often used in folk music, these instruments add variety and a rural charm to music. In India for example, two pieces of flat metal are struck to form a bell like sound. This form of instrument is used in temples and prayer places across the country. Other popular percussions instruments include the drum, piano and xylophone.

All percussion instruments can be divided into two major and broad categories. Membranophone, which add tambour to the sound of being struck like drums and idiophones, which sound of themselves like triangles. The division can also be made on tuning basis and other sub groups. For example, some instruments can be tuned while the others can not.

Percussionists are also called upon to play other instruments that may not be percussive in nature. These instruments include police sirens, glass harmonica, lion's roar and wind machines. As percussionists play such a wide variety of instruments generating so many different types of melodies, they are usually the most skilled in the music industry.

Percussive instruments are the heart of a musical performance. It is difficult to name 3 or 4 songs from the classical or pop charts, which do not use percussive instruments. Since the times of the earliest composers like Mozart, all compositions include at least one pair of timpani's playing in the background.

Some instruments like the xylophones are a pleasure to listen to. They sound like tinkling fountains in beautiful gardens. Bringing out the romantic side in us. There is another instrument where you strike at bottles filled with different levels of water that give forth delightful sounds.

If we talk of jazz, the high hats are easily associated in our minds. The ride cymbals are another percussion based instruments we look for in a jazz song. Even in military bands, soldiers can not keep time with out a bass drum.

No rock group today is complete without percussive instruments. All the bands a complete drum kit and several other percussive instruments. Pink Floyd used percussive instruments to great effect in their

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songs dealing with sci fi worlds and fantasy music.

Various cultures have their own percussive instruments. As I said earlier, the Indian bells are a classical example. In the west, gongs are untuned percussive instruments used in churches and other important occasions. As cultures have evolved, so has this category of instruments.

Through their diversity and wide choice, percussion instruments are the back bone of every musical ensemble. The players are brilliant and multi faceted people who can take up and play different instruments at will. The piano experts like Yanni are percussionists after all. An ensemble with full percussion is a pleasure to watch and a pleasure to hear. Chances are good that you have never heard music with out some sort of percussion accompaniment. They are the finishing touch on a great sound.

Lavinia Snider is the editor of Drums And More. A meeting place for music enthusiasts with forums, shopping guide, and reviews.

<http://www.drumsandmore.info>

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**By Knut R. Enebak**

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