

# Musical Games and Drum Play

In addition to using musical instruments to re-create, compose, and improvise music, we may also use the myriad of instrumental options as play objects to both inform and embellish our experiences. Two categories of musical activity that are more about intra- and interpersonal experiences, as opposed to creating musical outcomes, are Musical Games and Drum Play.

**Musical Games** are any experience that employs play rules and the use of music or musical instruments as play objects. When used in this way, the focus is not on developing instrumental techniques or a culmination performance, but rather on the in-the-moment experience of engaging in the play experience. Games have structure and rules that are known by the participants. Many musical games can also be played without the use of instruments.

**Drum Play** is a sub-category of Musical Games that employs drums and percussion instruments within experiences, often to provide an element of novelty that serves to increase participation and provides participants with accessibility and options. Instruments in these experiences are often used to reference ideas and events, as art objects, and as sound effects, rather than within a traditional musical framework.

Musical Games and Drum Play can help to:

- Provide an accessible entry point into musical experiences.
- Serve as pre- and/or extra-musical experiences.
- Provide an alternative means of expression.
- Level the playing field and unite a group.

*Unless noted, players will have a variety of drums and percussion instruments for the following.*

## Where's Froggy?

1. Choose someone to hide Froggy somewhere in the room.
2. Choose someone to find Froggy. (They will wait outside until froggy is hidden.)
3. The group plays louder and softer as the seeker gets closer and farther from Froggy. (as in the game hot & cold).
4. Continue until Froggy is found. Choose new players.

## Rumble Ball

1. Model bouncing, tossing, and rolling a small ball. (Invite players to respond musically.)
2. Pause and ask players to describe the action of 'bouncing' by providing adjectives.
3. Ask players to connect the adjectives to instruments, choosing one or two types to play 'bounce.' (Model bouncing with the 'bounce' instrument group.)
4. Repeat steps 3-4 with 'toss' and 'roll.' Play with the ball as the group responds.
5. Invite other leaders, or two leaders at the same time. Try this with an 'invisible' ball.

## Musical Compass\*

1. Invite one player to come to the center of the circle and face their chair.
2. Invite them to close their eyes and listen to the sounds of the instruments as everyone plays. (*Let them know that they will need to listen to the location of each instrument.*)
3. Ask the person in the center to close their eyes and turn around several times.
4. Invite the group to play as the center player tries to find and point at their chair without opening their eyes. (They are using the sounds to guide them, like a musical compass.)

\* This game is said to be created by drummer, Arthur Hull.

## Let's All Play Our Drum

1. Invite everyone to play one note on the word "Drum" as you say out loud "Let's all play our DRUM!" Make sure your words are rhythmic: Ta-te Ta-te **Ta**.
2. Change the tempo and volume of your prompt, eventually mirroring the rhythm on a bell or block. Continue to cue the group with a instrument using the rhythm: Ta-te Ta-te **Ta**.
3. Change to "All play our DRUM." te Ta-te **Ta**. Explore variations in rhythm.
4. Change to "Play our DRUM." Ta-te **Ta**. Explore variations in rhythm.
5. Invite other players to Lead.

## Pieces of Eight

1. Invite players to choose a number from 1 to 8 (or 1 to 4 as a simplification)
2. Explain that you will count from 1 to 8 and that each player is to play one note on their number. Continue to count as players enter on their number.
3. Invite players to find others who have their number.
4. Fade your voice and invite the group to play on their own.
5. Gradually increase the tempo. See how fast they can play.
6. Slow down or speed up to end. *Option: Choose two numbers.*

## Foley

1. Ask someone to volunteer to pantomime an action, such as a sport or hobby that uses large body movements. Invite them to show the group their action and to repeat it as an ostinato.
2. Invite players to mirror the leader's movement using their instrument. Suggest they choose one part of the overall movement rather than playing the entire time.
3. Pause to examine the movements of the leader and sounds that could mirror them.
4. Add another leader with a movement that matches the first. (Same tempo and phrase.)
5. Invite the leaders to create complementary movements that overlap in some way.

## Sound Machine

1. Invite players to form groups of three or four.
2. Using FOLEY as a foundation, explain that players will be creating a 'sound machine' with interlocking parts, like a clock.
3. To create your machine:
  - a. Start with one player making a repeating action.
  - b. Player 2 joins and plays player 1's instrument.
  - c. Player 3 joins and plays player 2's instrument, etc.

## Ships in the Night

1. Form partners and have each pair choose a unique instrument.
2. Explain that each pair will consist of a 'ship' and a 'navigator.' The navigator will play one note to guide the ship, who will set a course in the direction of the sound.
3. Model how to guide a ship through the water, playing only to change the ship's direction. (Note that navigators can be far away from their ship.)
4. Invite ships to form a bow with their hands to help keep them safe. Ships close their eyes.
5. Invite all ships to set sail and move around the ocean. Continue for a couple minutes, then invite all ships back to their 'docks.' Switch roles and repeat.

Fun Fact: Ships are guided by buoys, which sometimes feature bells, horns and gongs!

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