

# Hand Drums on the Move

by Chris Judah-Lauder

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People of all ages love to play hand drums! Simple, creative, and rhythmic, playing hand drums is FUN. People are naturally drawn into playing hand drums. Drums provide and reinforce endless opportunities for rhythm, improvisation, meter, form and timbre. Powerful, driving, and expressive, hand drums encourage movement, yet provide a safety net where movement becomes less embarrassing, inhibitions are reduced, and music comes alive in both sound and movement. Hand drums allow students to build from the simplest performance to the most complex ensemble, from the easiest exercise to those demanding much discipline and work. In either case the outcome is exciting and the rewards build teamwork.

When teaching hand drums, two elements are essential: students must hold the drum correctly and they must play with the proper technique. Instruct students to hold the drum vertically, about waist high in their non-dominant hand while playing with their dominant hand (the one they write with). For many activities in this book, use open tones. Other strokes can be used as students grow in technique. Lots of imitative examples, using short two- and four-beat rhythmic patterns, are helpful when introducing the hand drum.

With younger children, use soft yarn mallets to replace the hand. Several pieces in this book use mallets while playing both the skin and the rim of the drum. With older, more experienced students, explore more complex sounds and rhythms: individual fingers on an open tone, brush strokes, circular strokes, and muted tones. (See glossary). In "Two in One," one person holds two hand drums in one hand, a fun and rewarding challenge!

I have been experimenting with hand drum pieces for over twenty years and find that my most successful songs are those created through the students' cooperative group music making settings. In this book I am sharing a few pieces my students love to play. I have discovered that once I present "my" composition, students will add, change, and edit to make it "their" composition. And so, look at these pieces as "models" from which your students can build. Your songs will become their compositions.

- Chris Judah-Lauder, 2001

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# Drum Beat

## Materials Needed

- One 8" or 12" hand drum per student.

## Formation

- Students are seated in a circle, facing in.

## Teaching Process

- Talk about the different sizes of hand drums.
- Teacher signals are explained:
  - A one-hand clap in the air is used when the teacher demonstrates when the patsch and clap are to be played simultaneously.
  - Clap is used to signal small drums.
  - Patsch is used to signal large drums.
- Teacher demonstrates the A section using signals and speech.
- Students play the A section, responding to the teacher's signals.
- Use the B section to rotate positions so each student can learn all the parts.
  - On "down," the students place their hand drum on the floor, skin side down in front of them (for some, it will take two measures to get this accomplished, hence the repetition).
  - On "one," the students point to their own drum and continue to move counter-clockwise and then stop on "four."
  - On "now," the students pick up the new drum and begin the song again.

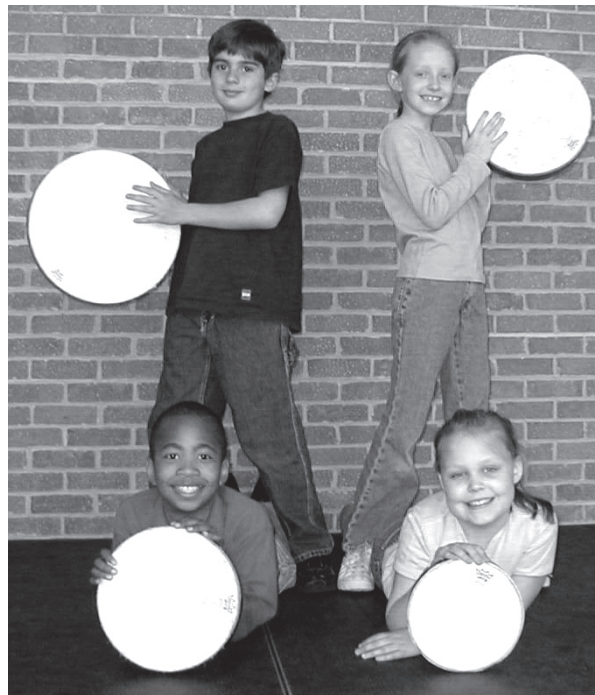
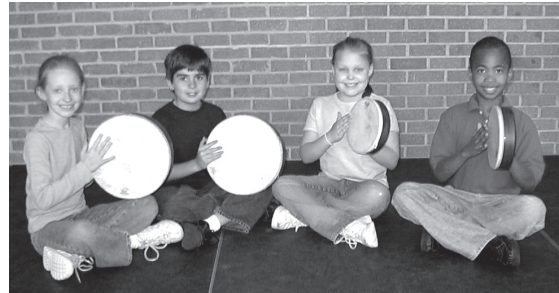
**Note:** Remind your students that when placing the drum on the floor, the skin side should be facing down.

## Form

A B

## Extension Possibilities

- All students can play the teacher's part in the last two measures.



# Drum Beat

Chris Judah-Lauder

(A)

Teacher

Play the drum beat! Play the drum beat! Big ones!

Small Hand Drum

Large Hand Drum

Teacher

Lit - tle ones. Big ones! lit - tle ones! Play the drum beat!

Sm HD

Lg HD

*pp* *ff*

Teacher

Play the drum beat! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Beat!

Sm HD

Lg HD

(B)

Chant

Down on the floor, Down on the floor. 1, 2,

3, 4, Now we're rea-dy to play some more!



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