

Celebrations Around the World

Bring It Home: Shakers

The shaker is an ancient percussion instrument that has evolved over time. A shaker is a hollowed container that is filled with a variety of small materials. When shaken it makes a unique rhythmic sound. Cultures throughout the world have some form a shaker among their collection of instruments.

In some African cultures the shaker is made from a dried plant called a gourd. When a gourd is hollow and then filled with beans or seeds it makes a great sound. Other cultures actually wear their shaker around the ankle while dancing. The shaker accentuates the rhythm of the dancer's movement. In Latin America the shaker is known as a maraca. The maraca is also made from a hollowed plant filled with beans, pebbles and seeds. The maraca is shaken or tapped on one's hand, leg or foot to create a unique rhythm.

Create your own shaker by following these simple steps!

Materials:

- Container with a tight lid
- Beans, popcorn seeds, rice
- Tissue paper
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Sequins, ribbon
- Glue
- Scissors

Get Started:

1. Fill your container with a variety of beans, seeds and rice. Close and test the sound.
2. Try adding or taking out a few beans for a different sound. Once your shaker has a sound that you like, close tightly.
3. Cut construction and tissue paper in small confetti size piece.
4. Decorate your shaker by gluing on confetti pieces sequins and ribbon.
5. Allow time for your shaker to dry. Give it a shake!!

Keep it Going

Playing your shaker can be quite fun. You get the best sound out of your shaker by moving it up and out and then back down. The shaker



can also be played slowly by sliding it back and forth allowing beans to glide along the inside. This technique creates a complex sound.

Resources for learning more about the history of African and Latin Music:

Childrens books:

Latin American and the Caribbean by Solway Andrew

Grandma's Records by Eric Velasquez

Cool Latin Music: Create and appreciate what makes music great! By Mary Lindeen

Roots and Blues: A Celebration by Arnold Adoff

Black Music in America: A History through its People by James Haskins

Hush Little Baby by J. Brian Pinkney

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