

Untuned Percussion At Home [at Leeds ArtForms]

Lesson One

by Victoria Jaquiss [Head of Steel Pans, teacher of steel pans, mixed percussion and piano keyboards] and Chris Greer [Percussion teacher]

Make and Play Your Own Djembe

In many of our steelpan and mixed percussion lessons we include djembes or barrels or wood blocks. These instruments are unpitched/untuned. They play beats; they can't play melodies or chords. These percussionists [the djembe, barrel and wood block players] help the melody and chord players stay in time, and they strengthen the sound and add extra interest to the music.

And because they don't play tunes [melodies] they are the easiest instruments to make at home. **Yippee!** But, before you start assembling the contents of your house's kitchen we must start with our homemade djembe. You need to find two sounds to replace bass and slap /tone. An upside down waste paper basket, or bin. Perhaps a table top and a book on the table. Whatever!

First read and copy out onto paper this chart of symbols and sounds:

Symbol	Name	Sound	How played
■	Bass	Low thump	Thump table or bin top with one hand
/	Slap/tone	High hit	Lightly tap the other sound with one hand
	Caterpillar	4 quick repeated bass notes [thumps]sounds	Play 4 quick sounds on top, alternating hands
.	Pace/rest	A silence, a space between sounds	Wait

You may find the sound is too quiet playing with hands, so maybe it's time to raid the wooden spoon drawer. Then copy out or just read and play the two lower charts [which have the percussion line to the two upper songsheets, which are either up already on **Play It At Home** on the **Foxwood Panyard** website, or will be soon.

Baa Baa Black Sheep has 2 beats in each box [bar]

This Old Man has 4 beats to the bar*

Here are the easy djembe sequences for you to play for these two tunes

Worksheet to follow on **Beats to the Bar** Songsheets copied by permission of Victoria Jaquiss [from **Foxwood Songsheets**] See and hear the song played on **Play At Home** [from **Foxwood Panyard** website]