



TORQ

PERCUSSION QUARTET

“From Far And Wide”

Percussionists’ Journey Through Listening and Sound

Have you ever heard the sound a cactus makes? Have you ever heard music made with a ratchet, or a moose call, or a xylophone made out of wood and gourds?

From Far and Wide is a real “show-and-tell” from TorQ’s vast collection of unusual instruments, whether beautiful, bombastic or bizarre!

This presentation brings together sounds from all over the world. Whether they be traditional instruments from different continents (balafon, gongs, frame drums) or more modern instruments invented to fulfill a purpose or mimic nature (squeaky toys, waterphone), watch as the members of TorQ gets inspired by these sounds and use creativity (and sometimes a little humour!) to combine them to create their own unique style of music.

Opportunities for student participation include choosing some of the instruments that TorQ will play on, singing along using vocal percussion, or even getting a chance to play on some of the instruments themselves. By teaching key listening skills, exploration and improvisation techniques, TorQ demonstrates the endless possibilities of percussion!

PROLOGUE 50 
to the Performing Arts
• aux arts de la scène •

“From Far and Wide: Percussionists’ Journey Through Listening and Sound” Resource Guide

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the TorQ Percussion Quartet Resource Guide! We are excited that you have chosen to have us share our music with you. We can’t wait to open up your students’ minds to the incredibly diverse world of percussion instruments and the creative ways in which you can make music. The goal of our school concerts is not only to entertain but also to encourage creative thinking among your students and provide opportunities for discussion and enrichment.

In order to help you connect this performance to your classroom curriculum, we have included related teaching activities with this guide. Please pick and choose activities that best meet the objectives of your classroom and the learning needs of your students. We also enjoy receiving feedback and answering any further questions that might arise before or after a performance; please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us at info@torqpercussion.ca with any questions you (or your students) might have.

Enjoy the show!

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from left: Daniel Morphy, Adam Campbell, Richard Burrows and Jamie Drake

Introducing... TorQ Percussion Quartet

Described by the Ottawa Citizen as “Outstanding - no, make that astonishing!”, Canada's premiere percussion ensemble TorQ Percussion Quartet continues to bring new vitality to percussion repertoire and performance in every situation and opportunity. Renowned for their engaging performances, members Richard Burrows, Adam Campbell, Jamie Drake, and Daniel Morphy are committed to making percussion music accessible to audiences that span generations and geographies.

Since coming together in 2004, TorQ has performed extensively throughout Canada and abroad. TorQ has made appearances at the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, Indian River Festival, MusicFest Canada, and the Open Ears Contemporary Music Festival. They have been featured soloists with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra, and wind ensembles from the University of Saskatchewan, Memorial University, and the University of Toronto. As collaborative artists, the quartet has performed with the Larkin Singers, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Elora Festival Singers, Grand Philharmonic Choir and the Hamilton Children's Choir, as well as soloists Kristztina Szabo, Rivka Golani, Beverley Johnston and composer Nicole Lizée, amongst others.

Selected by the three major Canadian touring organisations, Jeunesses Musicales Canada, Prairie Debut and Debut Atlantic, TorQ has performed throughout every province, in 10 U.S. states, and in Germany (with the Stuttgart Chamber Choir) and Luxembourg. In 2012, they launched their first annual concert series in Toronto where they collaborated with invited guest artists, composers, and dancers.

Helping to create and promote new Canadian music is an important facet of TorQ's work. In addition to the compositions and arrangements written by each member of the ensemble, TorQ has commissioned over 70 chamber works and three concertos, including Dinuk Wijeratne's *Invisible Cities*. This commitment to Canadian music creation is equally evident on their three solo recordings: "TorQ Percussion Quartet" (2009), "two + two" (2011) and the double album "Without A Map" (2014). Upcoming projects include an album of commissioned Canadian music for mallet instruments.

Strong advocates for music education, TorQ has performed for more than 125,000 students across North America. In addition to their performances as an artist with Prologue to the Performing Arts, they regularly present masterclasses at universities and colleges (including the Colburn Music School, San Francisco Conservatory of Music and University of Toronto). They are also regular faculty members for the Durham Integrated Arts Camp. In 2012 they founded the TorQ Percussion Seminar, a weeklong chamber music seminar for university-level percussionists that has since been run in conjunction with Acadia University, Stratford Summer Music and the Lunenburg Academy of Music Performance.

TorQ proudly endorses Yamaha Percussion, Innovative Percussion, Dream Cymbals, Black Swamp Percussion and Remo Percussion.

TorQ Percussion Quartet - Goals for Educational Performances

- Share the incredible variety and vitality of percussion with teachers and students
- Encourage young percussionists (and other musicians) to become more engaged in music
- Learn to seek out and appreciate different types of musical experiences
- Be creative by thinking “outside the box”
- Find your passion
- Appreciation of musical structure in terms of the elements of rhythm, pitch and melody

What to expect?

This concert features pieces of music that are either written for, arranged by, or composed by the members of TorQ, using a variety of different instruments from traditional to “found” objects. The percussion family encompasses an enormous amount of instruments, found in every culture across the globe. Some are also invented to fulfill a purpose or mimic the sounds of animals and nature. Our program is designed to engage the listener to think creatively about questions like “What is sound?”, “What does it mean to make music?” and “How can music be created?” In *“From Far and Wide...”*, we explore the idea that music can be made in non-traditional ways, on both established and newly-invented instruments, and that the possibilities for combining these instruments are limitless. The percussion family encompasses an enormous amount of instruments, found in every culture across the globe. Some are also invented to fulfill a purpose or mimic the sounds of animals and nature.

The performance will be approximately 55 minutes long with no intermission. Near the end of the performance there will also be a question and answer session. Any information given during the show is tailored to the grade and interest level of the audience.

Pre-show Discussion

1. What types of musical events have you attended?
2. Discuss behavioural expectations for attending a musical concert.
3. What instruments do you think TorQ will have on stage?
4. What are different ways to make music?

Watch and listen!

Attending a music performance is a chance for students to look, listen, think and feel.

Ask students to:

Look...

- What did you notice about the performers body language as they play?
- What are some of the different ways they get sound out of the instruments?
- What are different tools they used to create sounds? (i.e. hands/sticks/mallets)

Listen...

- Listen to different sounds. Where are the sounds coming from?
- Do the instrument sounds remind you of something?
- Do the instruments sound you might have expected based on what they look like?
- Do instruments made of the same materials (wood, metal, plastic, etc), sound the same? Different?
- Which instrument is the loudest? Softest? Highest pitch? Lowest pitch?

Think...

- What skills must musicians possess in order to successfully contribute to the group?
- What emotions do you feel when you listen to music?

Some of TorQ's Instruments used in "*From Far and Wide...*"

Balafon

A melodic instrument of African origin. resembles the western Xylophone and Marimba and all part of the wooden idiophone family. Can be tuned in a variety of ways depending on the culture of the musician, but generally in a 4, 5 or 7 note scale.



Cactus

Typically not a musical instrument, but thanks to the "outside the box" thinking of composer John Cage, by applying a contact microphone, you can hear a pitch and create little melodies by carefully plucking the needles.



Waterphone

Invented by artist Richard Waters in the late 1960's, this eerie sounding instrument has been featured in many sci-fi movies, as well as used to communicate with whales! It is played by bowing, plucking or hitting the tines, and its pitch can be slightly altered by pouring water into the instrument.



Quijada (Jawbone)

Made from the jawbone of a donkey, horse or mule. The bone is dried which makes the teeth loose, allowing them to rattle and buzz when struck on the side with a fist or a stick. Used in music of most Latin American Countries including Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Cuba. It is the precursor to the popular instrument known as a Vibraslap.



Some other unusual instruments used by TorQ

The instruments below are grouped according to the type of material of which the main part of the instrument - that is, the part that produces sound - is made. What are some other ways you could organize instruments into different groups or families?

Wood

- Log Drums
- Vibrapslap
- Guiro

Metal

- Chinese Gongs
- Indonesian Gamelan
- Cymbals and Tam-tams
- Kalimba

Skin

- Frame drum(s)
- Indonesian Kendang (double headed drum)
- Talking Drum

Miscellaneous

- squeaky toys / noise makers
- ratchet

Vocabulary

The following terms connect with this musical experience. Use these words in discussion of the group.

- **Compose** : to write a piece of music
- **Conductor** : one that controls the tempo and musical output of an ensemble
- **Dynamics** : how soft or loud one plays
- **Ensemble**: a group that performs together
- **Forte** : an Italian word which has become the musical term for “loud”
- **Found (instruments/sound/music)** : music created from objects not traditionally thought of as “music instruments”
- **Improvise** : to make something up on the spot. In music, it usually means to create a piece of music simply by playing, without any pre-planning or writing things down. It’s like composing on the spot!
- **Mallet** : the beater we use on percussion instruments. Often covered in yarn or cord.
- **Mezzo forte** : Italian for “medium loud”
- **Note** : a tone of definite pitch; can also mean the written symbol on a sheet of music instructing the player to make a sound
- **Piano** : a keyboard instrument, but also Italian for “soft”
- **Pitch** : any various standards that establish a frequency for each musical tone, used in tuning an instrument; in other words, the “highness” or “lowness” of a note
- **Resonator** : any part of an acoustic instrument that amplifies the sound
- **Rhythm** : the division of time in music
- **Roll** : to make a continuous, relatively smooth sound on a drum or other percussion instrument, usually by combining a series of very quick, shorter strokes

- **Timbre** : The characteristic quality of a sound that distinguishes it from other sounds of the same pitch and volume
- **Tone** : The sound of a particular instrument or voice; a general term that encompasses dynamics, pitch and timbre

Post-show discussion

- How does TorQ play without a conductor?
- Is there anything that surprised you about the instruments on stage?
- What was your favourite/least favourite piece? Favourite/least favourite instrument?

Why?

- Did this concert change your perception of what music “is”, or how you think about it?
- Can you think of any “non-musical instruments” that could create some interesting sounds?
- Did you notice any cultural influences in the music that TorQ played? What were they?

Exercises on creativity and improvisation

Time Signature Exercise

Have the students count different time signatures such as 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, etc while stomping their feet or clapping on the first beat. Try mixing up the time signatures splitting the class into more than one group and playing different time signatures at the same time. You could also have each group come up with a different rhythm for each time signature and combine them to create a “mini-composition”.

Junk percussion

Have the students create a junk orchestra in class. Each student is encouraged to bring in a piece of junk that makes a sound. Have the students name their instruments and show the class how the instrument works. Put the students in groups and have them come up with a groove using the instruments which they have “created”.

Improvisation in the music room

Encourage your students to explore different sounds then what is required on the page of music. Have each student come up with five different sounds other than what one would traditionally sing or play on their respective instrument. Use these sounds in combination with a spoken narrative to create a sonic journey where the students will play the sounds a certain moments with the story line.

Additional Resources

Books

- Cook, G. (2006). Teaching Percussion (Third Edition). Belmont, CA: Shirmer Books.
- Kalani. (2004). Together in Rhythm: Book & DVD. Los Angeles: Alfred Publishing Inc.
- _____. (2005). The Amazing Jamnasium: Book @ DVD. Los Angeles: Alfred Publishing Inc.

Recordings

- TorQ Percussion Quartet, "TorQ Percussion Quartet" (2009, Bedoint Records BR001)
- TorQ Percussion Quartet, "two + two" (2011, Bedoint Records BR002)
- TorQ Percussion Quartet, "Without A Map" (2014, Bedoint Records BR003)

Internet

Black Swamp Percussion: manufacturers of top quality auxillary percussion instruments
<http://www.blackswamp.com>

Dream Cymbals: manufacturers of beautiful cymbals and gongs
www.dreamcymbals.com

Innovative Percussion: manufacturers of an amazing variety of sticks and mallets
www.innovativepercussion.com

NEXUS Percussion Ensemble: TorQ's mentors and teachers - percussion pioneers
www.nexuspercussion.com

Oddmusic: a source for unique, unusal, ethnic, or experimental music and instruments.
www.oddmusic.com

Percussion Arts Society: an extensive website devoted to all things percussion
www.pas.org

Remo Percussion: manufacturers of drum heads and recreational percussion instruments
www.remo.com

Yamaha Canada Music Inc.: manufacturers of a full range of percussion instruments
www.yamaha.ca