

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

Music of the Battlefields: Fife and Drum Music of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars

Artist: Tri-Percussion

Performance Description

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Contact KCYA for more information on this and other programs.

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Before the advent of high-tech communications, there was the music of the fife and drum. This music was used to signal soldiers in battle, to set the mood for ceremonies, and to raise the spirits of soldiers and citizens alike. Tri-Percussion (with fifer!) brings history to life through music with stories, characters, and replica instruments of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

Music of the fife and drum played a vital role in the military operations of the American Revolution and the Civil War. The camp musicians sounded out “duty calls” throughout the day to direct the soldiers in their daily



responsibilities. The general’s orders were communicated to his men by musicians while practicing maneuvers or in actual battle. The sound of the largest drums could be heard from distances of up to two miles!

Snare drum music is made up of individual sticking patterns called rudiments. When played in various combinations, rudiments form musical phrases called signals.

Tri-Percussion will demonstrate these signals emphasizing the communicative functions of music. Students will actively participate in the identification of various battle calls.

Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Explore American history through authentic period music
- Recognize the role of music in communicating specific messages
- Develop listening skills

History:

- Understands the events that contributed to the outbreak of the American Revolution and the Civil War

Music

- Identifies (by genre or style) music from various historical periods and cultures

Special Points of Interest:

Tri-Percussion offers two other music performances through KCYA: *Music Around the World* and *Imagination: Where the Music Begins*.

Special REQUIREMENTS:

Two microphones with stands; PA system; chalk; chalkboard with eraser.

Artist Bio: Tri-Percussion

Percussionist **Mark Lowry** is timpanist for the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra and is a frequent percussionist with the Kansas City Symphony. In 1993, he helped create NewEar, Kansas City's only professional, contemporary chamber music group.

Raymond De Marchi is a founding member of the Kansas City Percussion Quartet. He is Director of Percussion at William Jewell College.

John Currey, the music director and an arranger for Marimba Yajalon, has over ten years experience as an in-school presenter and clinician. He has toured extensively throughout the US, Mexico, and Western Europe.

Fifer **Emily Smith** is a freelance flutist & flute teacher who performs regularly with the Radio Days Orchestra and the Silverwood Quartet.



Tri-Percussion

Vocabulary

Bass drum: a very large drum that makes a deep, loud noise.

Duty music: official military music played throughout the day to give soldiers specific messages about their next duty (from reveille, to call to arms, to battlefield calls.)

Fife: a wooden, open-holed flute played transverse (to the side of the face.)

Reveille: morning musical wake-up call for soldiers.

Rope-tension drum: a drum with a head made tight through ropes that zigzag up and down the drum's sides.

Secede: to formally withdraw -- as in 1861, when 11 Southern states seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America, starting the Civil War.

Snare drum: a kind of drum with strings or wires stretched across its base that produces a rattling sound when hit.

Post-Performance Activities

1. Discuss in class the three kinds of music used in the military and their purposes: (a) Duty music—official military music from wake-up reveille to breakfast call, assembly call, call to arms, battlefield calls, and of course, taps in the evening. (b) Patriotic music—meant to stir the spirit and lift morale of soldiers (e.g. *Yankee Doodle Dandy*), and (c) Ceremonial music—played for different kinds of ceremonies, from funeral marches to the rogue's march.
2. Discuss what it might have been like for the Civil War drummer boys (aged 12-16) who often lied about their ages to enlist in the Army. Would students today be willing to go out onto a battlefield without any weapons to protect themselves? What did the drummers do that made them so important during the war?
3. Have the class make up a drum signal using the rudiments introduced in the program. Decide how this signal would be used; what would it communicate to their classmates? Students could develop their own rudiments and name them.

List of Resources

MUSIC

[The Civil War - Traditional American Songs And Instrumental Music Featured In The Film By Ken Burns: Original Soundtrack Recording](#)
Nonesuch ASIN: B000005J00

BOOKS

[Songs of the Civil War](#) by Irwin Silber
Dover Publications (March 1, 1995)
ISBN: 0486284387

[Percussion Instruments and Their History](#)
by James Blades, Faber & Faber;
(April 1, 1984) ISBN: 0571180817

[Handbook of Percussion Instruments](#)
by Karl Peinkofer, Fritz Tannigel
European Amer Music Dist Corp
(June 1, 1976) ISBN: 093044809X