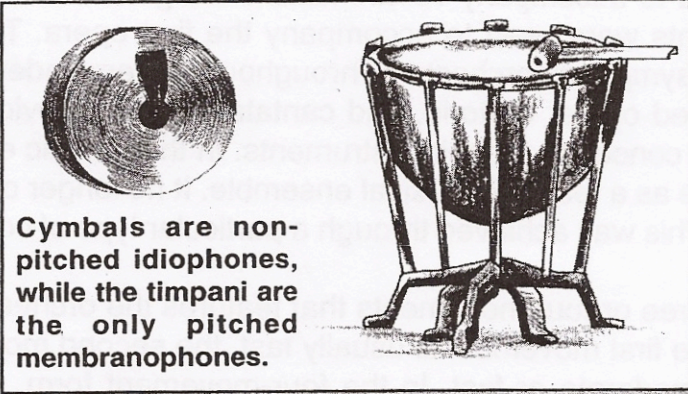




# Chapter 12: All in the Family—The Percussion

The European percussion family contains instruments from both the idiophone and the membranophone groups. The most popular non-pitched idiophones are the cymbals, block, tambourine, and triangle. Among the most prevalent membranophones are the timpani, bass drum, and snare drum. The timpani are the only membranophones that can achieve specific pitches by tightening and loosening the drum heads with foot pedals on each drum. The bass drum and snare drums are both struck with either sticks or soft mallets, and are generally considered non-pitched. The non-pitched idiophones are struck with either a wooden stick or a metal beater.

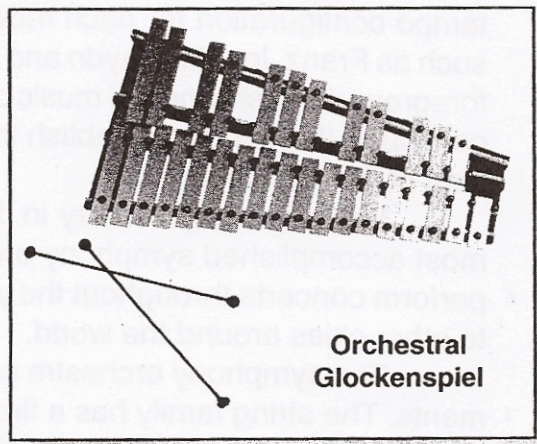


**Cymbals are non-pitched idiophones, while the timpani are the only pitched membranophones.**

The pitched idiophonic instruments include the xylophone, marimba, chimes, celesta, and vibraphone. The pitched idiophones are struck with either yarn mallets or rubber mallets. In the case of the chimes, these are struck with a special chime hammer.

The celesta looks and plays like a very small upright piano. The piano, or pianoforte, is also considered a percussion instrument, because the strings of the piano are struck by hammers when the keys are depressed.

A new type of percussion instrument, the trap set or drum set, appeared in the early 1900s. It is used primarily in jazz and popular music ensembles. The drum set consists of a bass drum played with a foot pedal, a snare drum played with sticks, one to three tom-toms, a floor tom-tom, and a variety of cymbals, including the high-hat cymbal, which is a cymbal that has two cymbals that are caused to open and close by the use of a foot pedal, thus striking against each other.



**Orchestral Glockenspiel**



**Trap Set**

Percussion instruments are used in virtually every large ensemble: marching bands, concert bands, and symphony orchestras, as well as jazz ensembles and some smaller chamber ensembles.



## Word Scramble

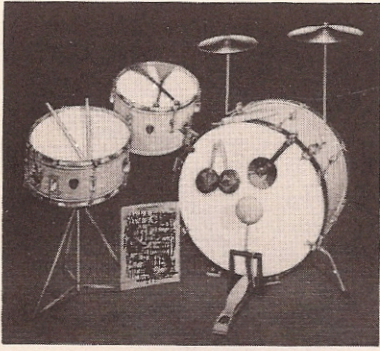
Unscramble the following terms from the chapter.

1. HIOPEDNIO \_\_\_\_\_
2. MNOPMEHORANBE \_\_\_\_\_
3. IPITANM \_\_\_\_\_
4. SALBMCY \_\_\_\_\_
5. PLEXOHNOY \_\_\_\_\_
6. AMARBMI \_\_\_\_\_
7. HECIMS \_\_\_\_\_
8. TEALLM \_\_\_\_\_
9. SSKTIC \_\_\_\_\_
10. AEIOUTNRMB \_\_\_\_\_
11. OINPA \_\_\_\_\_
12. TEESCLA \_\_\_\_\_
13. CROPSUNSIE \_\_\_\_\_
14. NSERA RDMU \_\_\_\_\_
15. SBSAMRUD \_\_\_\_\_
16. GIHH-AHT \_\_\_\_\_
17. RGCNMAHI SNDBA \_\_\_\_\_
18. MTO-OMT \_\_\_\_\_
19. OTFO LEDPA \_\_\_\_\_
20. ZAZJ EBEENSMLS \_\_\_\_\_



# Percussion

As far as we can learn, people of ancient civilizations, before the birth of Christ, showed a love for music. Even among the savages of today, authorities say, there is found some attempt to sing or to produce some kind of musical sound. Music seems to be a part of man's nature, a sort of universal language, by which he can express his thoughts without speak-



ing, writing, or employing the art of painting, sculpturing, etc. According to the Chinese, music began in their country three thousand years before the birth of Christ. Unfortunately, many records of the music of the ancient Far East civilizations have been lost, and most of our knowledge comes from carvings on walls and statues which indicate that both instrumental and vocal music were known in Arabia, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, India and Persia. Old manuscripts have been unearthed in Central America, particularly Mexico, and in South America, especially in Peru, which would indicate these people from about 700 A.D. had musical instruments of the type found in China, India and near vicinity. This would lead one to believe that at one time these countries were either invaded or accidentally discovered by peoples of these ancient Eastern countries. Indications would lead one to assume that the first music employed by people was Vocal music and then the normal desire to use Rhythm (to tap time regularly) led them to the making of instruments of wood, stone, metal, skin or clay.

We find reference to the percussion instruments (drums of all types) all through mythology. However, as far back in history as we can find, drums of various kinds were used. The percussion instruments used today are merely refinements and improvements on these ancient models. If we look at the drums used by the Egyptians, Hebrews and other ancient civilizations, we find that our snare, bass

and tenor drums are based on the very same principles. Triangles, cymbals, woodblocks and the like are as old as China; and bells, marimbas and xylophones were known of for centuries.

Most historians tell us that drums were introduced into Western Europe by the Crusaders during the Twelfth or Thirteenth Centuries. They are of the belief that the Crusaders brought these ideas back with them, and that they learned of the tympani from the Arabians. Chaucer, the famous English poet, wrote of "nakers" in his works. "Nakers" is the old name used in referring to tympani. Drums of all styles were found in military bands throughout Europe from the Fourteenth Century on, but were not introduced into the orchestras (to the best of our knowledge) until the Seventeenth Century. They seem to have first been used in the orchestra, along with trumpets, for various martial effects.

Because the tympani can be tuned to sound different pitches, these instruments were accepted quite early by musicians writing for and conducting orchestras. They were used in pairs and were tuned to the tonic (do) and dominant (sol) of the key in which the orchestra was playing. However, Beethoven started to tune the instruments to various notes and later three and four instruments were used and composers wrote any note which they wished to have sounded. It is generally believed that Berlioz was the first composer to write for more than two tympani.

According to the historians, the xylophone and marimba became quite popular during the Middle Ages . . . especially in Poland and in Russia. However, it was not until the latter part of the Eighteenth Century that orchestral composers made much use of these instruments. In England (about 1770) they had an instrument called the "sticcado pastrole" which was much like a dulcimer (a small shallow box upon which wires are strung to be struck by hammers).

Chimes were first constructed for use in Cathedrals only. It is said that the first set was constructed for the Cathedral of Canterbury in the year 988. Composers many years later introduced a smaller version into the orchestra to get this church effect. Eventually, toward the end of the Nineteenth Century, we find all kinds of "traps" (percussion equipment) being introduced into the orchestra.

1. The percussion instruments used today are merely \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on ancient models.
2. Triangles, cymbals, wood blocks and the like are said to be as old as \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Most historians tell us that drums were introduced into Western Europe by the \_\_\_\_\_ during the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ centuries.
4. Many authorities believe that the Crusaders learned of the tympani from the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Drums were first used in the orchestra, along with \_\_\_\_\_, for various \_\_\_\_\_ effects.
6. Because the tympani can be \_\_\_\_\_ to different \_\_\_\_\_, these instruments were accepted quite early by \_\_\_\_\_ writing for orchestras.
7. It is generally believed that \_\_\_\_\_ was the first composer to write for more than \_\_\_\_\_ tympani.
8. Historians tell us that the xylophone and marimba became quite popular in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ during the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. It is said that the first set of chimes was constructed for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
10. We find all kinds of \_\_\_\_\_ (percussion equipment) being introduced into the orchestra toward the end of the \_\_\_\_\_ Century.

Drums played a big part in our early American History. They were used to give the signal to charge in many battles of the Revolutionary War. A drum used by one Timothy Church of Connecticut in the battle of Saratoga in 1778 is in the possession of his relatives to this day.