

AN ANCIENT SOUND THAT STILL RESONATES TODAY

by: Ed Lettner



Just as the arrival of spring gives rise to the rebirth of nature, it gives each of us the opportunity to approach life with a renewed sense of purpose. This combination of the growth found in nature and of one's own spirit brings us musically to one of the oldest instruments known to humanity – the hand drum.

The hand drum is a traditional instrument of many cultures around the world and today represents the World Music movement which is becoming increasingly popular in Western countries. The hand drum is typically made of wood and comes in many forms. The following are a few examples: the West African djembe (pronounced: gem-bay), which is perhaps the most common hand drum; the doumbek, which originated in the Middle East; and bongos and congas, which originated in Africa and are now associated with Latin American music.

Two of the many appealing aspects of the hand drum are that it is relatively easy to learn the basics and it is affordable. No previous musical experience is required; simply a desire to try your hand at something different and to explore a new aspect of personal growth. With the guidance of a knowledgeable teacher, you will learn the basic patterns that are the foundation of hand drumming. These patterns will allow you to experience the joy that comes with playing the drum by yourself or with other hand drummers. There are hand drumming ensembles and drum circles available in the community, some of which are offered in parks around the city.

The benefits of hand drumming are many. The hypnotic rhythms of the drum are calming and help to release stress and anger. They energize your body and help you to focus on being in the moment as you connect with nature through the drum.

Whatever your reason for taking up hand drumming, you will be part of a growing international musical community that speaks the same language; the language of the drum.

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