

Junk Percussion

a guide for schools



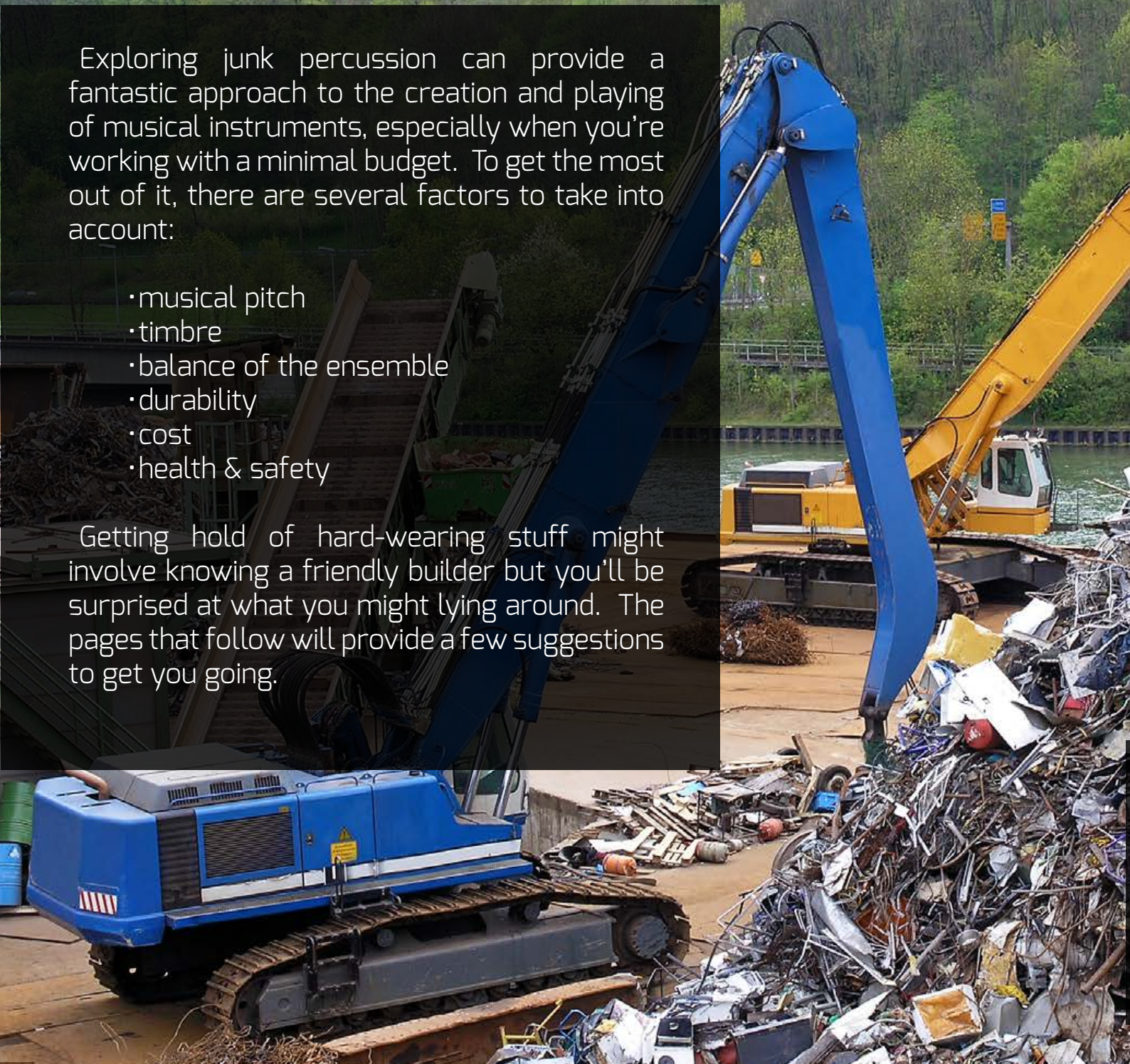
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Introduction

Exploring junk percussion can provide a fantastic approach to the creation and playing of musical instruments, especially when you're working with a minimal budget. To get the most out of it, there are several factors to take into account:

- musical pitch
- timbre
- balance of the ensemble
- durability
- cost
- health & safety

Getting hold of hard-wearing stuff might involve knowing a friendly builder but you'll be surprised at what you might find lying around. The pages that follow will provide a few suggestions to get you going.



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Stuff to Hit

Large Plastic Oil Barrels

Large plastic oil barrels – played with beaters made of lengths of hammer handles or lengths of broom handle wrapped in gaffer tape (let's call them 'gaffer sticks').

Ideal for playing pulse based rhythms, and keep a solid groove. Here's an example:

1	e	&	a	2	e	&	a	3	e	&	a	4	e	&	a
B			B			X		B			B			X	

B = Bass tone, in the middle of the drum

X = High pitch, on the edge of the drum



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Stuff to Hit

Plastic Office Water Bottles

Played with hands or gaffer sticks (hitting the base of the bottle).

Great for playing djembe or other hand drum lines, such as:

1	e	&	a	2	e	&	a	3	e	&	a	4	e	&	a
B			O	B		O		B			O	B		O	

B = Bass tone, on the middle of the bottle

O = Open tone, about an inch from the edge of the bottle



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Stuff to Hit

Plastic or Metal Bins

Play the bottom (with the lid off) and tilt the drum to allow the sound to travel.



Try a hip-hop groove combining the bass and high-pitched (X) edge sounds:

1	e	&	a	2	e	&	a	3	e	&	a	4	e	&	a
B		B		X			B		B	B		X			



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Stuff to Hit

Pots and Pans

Different sizes will create a range of pitches. Using metals serving spoons can sound good but can create metal splinters if hit with an edge. Try holding the bowl of the spoon and lightly tapping surfaces with the handle.

Clave rhythms can work well here:

1	e	&	a	2	e	&	a	3	e	&	a	4	e	&	a
X			X			X				X		X			

Stuff to Hit

Plastic Pipes

Long lengths of wide plastic-piping hit with flip-flops, or similar. Create a scale using a set of different length pipes.

Stuff to Shake

Filled Plastic Bottles

Filled plastic bottles – try a range of fillings. Assess differences in sound and durability (some natural materials will disintegrate fairly quickly).

Here are a couple of rhythms to try (and alternate to and from) for shaker. Hold the shaker horizontally for the smoothest flowing rhythm:

1	e	&	a	2	e	&	a	3	e	&	a	4	e	&	a
X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	X	x	x	x
x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x

X = emphasised pulse beat

x = unemphasised beat

A man in a dark shirt is leading a group of children in a workshop. The children are wearing red jumpers and are clapping and cheering. The man has his arms raised in the air. The background is a room with blue curtains and a window.

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