

PIECES FOR XYLOPHONES AND MARIMBAS GRADES 4 - 8

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# WOOD SONGS

BRENT M. HOLL

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# SEE DEES

Teach the soprano xylophone part first. Use imitation. Play a measure at slow to moderate speed and have students imitate you exactly. Continue measure by measure; then try grouping two measures, then four, until all measures can be played at the moderate tempo. Gradually increase the tempo before adding the accompaniment parts.

Let two players play the alto xylophone part, one playing the top note and the other the bottom note. With the Orff instruments you can also switch the C' and D' bars so one student experienced with four mallets can play the whole part easily.

The "upside down" nature of the bass xylophone part and the use of the Lydian mode gives this piece a light-hearted spirit. Using the 5<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale on the strong beat is a "silly" sound. The effect is more like an ostinato than a bass part. If you want a strong bass part, make some boom pipes or use a bass bar or roto tom to add the tonic on the first beat of each measure.



Make this a concert piece by playing it as a refrain between selections of silly poems or limericks to make a rondo. For example, try chanting "Mary Had a Little Lamb" at the same tempo as the piece. Try some funky percussion with the interludes, too. On the CD, I've used everything but the kitchen sink. We literally cleaned out the shed to come up with saw blades, planks of wood, tin cans, and other assorted hardware to add spice to the interludes.

# SEE DEES

BRENT M. HOLL

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes four staves: Soprano Xylophone (treble clef, eighth notes), Alto Xylophone (treble clef, chords), Jingle Bells (square notes), and Bass Xylophone (bass clef, eighth notes). The second system includes four staves: SX (treble clef, eighth notes with first, second, and third endings), AX (treble clef, chords with first, second, and third endings), Jng. BLS. (square notes with first, second, and third endings), and BX (bass clef, eighth notes with first, second, and third endings). Below the second system is an 'INTERLUDE' section for Conga Drum, consisting of a single staff with a series of eighth notes and rests.

# THE HEY HEY JAM

This piece is fast, energetic, and easy to learn. Make sure you hand out a set of ankle shakers to each student. They will all be tapping their feet to the rhythm anyway, so take advantage of their exuberance.

Teach the soprano xylophone part first. Start with the first measure, making sure the syncopation is correct. In the second measure, point out the change of pitch in the three syncopated notes at the end of the measure. Add the third measure followed by the half scale in the fourth measure. Shouting "Hey" on the last beat of the fourth measure helps cement the phrase structure and also fits right in with the name of the piece.

Teach the alto and bass xylophone parts by plugging in the new notes using the student's familiarity with the soprano rhythm.



Carefully work out the rhythm in the contrabass part. Note the complementary rhythms and the extended use of syncopation. Set your bass bars out in a semicircle, and the player can do a 360-degree turn to get in on time in the second and fourth measures. This can be a real show stopper!

## The Arrangement

- ◇ Play the alto xylophone part once.
- ◇ Add the bass xylophone part and play once.
- ◇ Add the soprano xylophone part and play once.
- ◇ Add the contrabass xylophone part and the shakere and play once.
- ◇ Each part gets to play as a solo one time through with no repeat. Play once all together between soloists.
- ◇ After the contra bass xylophone solo, play the B section.
- ◇ Play twice all together and shout "Hey" on the last beat of the last measure.

# THE HEY HEY JAM

BRENT M. HOLL, TANYA MAY, JENNIFER HOPSON, AND HEATHER CLAYTOR

**A**

SOPRANO XYLOPHONE

ALTO XYLOPHONE

BASS XYLOPHONE

CONTRABASS XYLOPHONE

**B** 5

SX

AX

BX

CBX

*pp* CRESCENDO

9

SX

AX

BX

CBX

**ff**

# JEWEL

Jewel (pronounced "Jay-way") is a great 6/8 groove with polyrhythm and polytonality. The parallel fourths and sevenths give the piece a primitive, haunting quality. Jewel is perfect for developing mallet technique. The suggested arrangement should only be a starting point. The CD arrangement includes an exciting call and response section between the percussion and the marimbas. You can customize the percussion parts to the skill level of your ensemble.

Use imitation to teach the soprano xylophone part first. Work hard to get the accents on the first and fourth beats of each measure. The 6/8 rhythm in the first three measures must contrast with the 3/4 feeling of the fourth measure.

When the soprano part is secure, also teach the alto and bass parts by imitation.

Make a drum circle and give everyone a hand drum or conga. Learn to make the open and closed tones on the drum (see Drumming, p. 28). Let half of the students play just the strong beats (1 and 4) and the other half the written rhythm. Let the students switch parts until everyone is secure with the 6/8 groove. Now add the drum part to the ensemble parts.

Play the shakere by accenting the first beat of each measure with a down stroke and the fourth beat with an up stroke (see Playing the Shakere, p. 30).

## The Arrangement

- ◇ Play the soprano xylophone part once.
- ◇ Add the alto xylophone part and play once.
- ◇ Add the bass xylophone part and play once.
- ◇ Add the contrabass xylophone part and the percussion and play twice.
- ◇ Each part plays once alone as a solo alternating with once through all together.
- ◇ Play one or two times all together.

# TEWE

BRENT M. HOLL

$\text{♩} = 120$

1. 2.

SOPRANO  
XYLOPHONE

ALTO  
XYLOPHONE

BASS  
XYLOPHONE

DJEMBE

SHAKERE

GANKOGUI

CONTRABASS  
XYLOPHONE

5X

AX

8X

DJE.

SHK.

Gnk.

CBX

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# DRUMMING

- ◇ Closed Tone - strike the drum leaving hands or fingers on the drum head instead of bouncing off.
- ◇ Open Tone - strike the drum letting hands or fingers bounce off.
- ◇ Bass Tone - strike the drum in the center. On the Djembe, play as an open tone letting hand bounce off; on the congas, play as a closed tone leaving hand on the drum head.
- ◇ Slap - strike the drum on the outer half always with a closed tone.



## DRUM NOTATION



Stems down: play with left hand.

Stems up: play with right hand.



h = closed bass tone using the heel of the hand.  
t = closed bass tone using the fingers.

# MARIMBAS OR ORFF XYLOPHONES?

The music in this book is written for full-size marimbas or Orff xylophones. If you have made your own marimbas or if you have concert-style marimbas, these songs come alive with the same power and energy heard



in the balifone and marimba music from Western Africa. These pieces become strong and rhythmic, more like percussive drumming than the melodic folk music normally associated with Orff instruments.

I've had a wonderful time with my students creating and playing these "Wood Songs" on our homemade marimbas. The songs work equally well with marimbas or xylophones, and in our ensemble we combine them successfully.

Care should be taken with orchestration. Marimbas roughly equal the soprano, alto, and bass designations in the written scores. One 3-1/2 octave marimba can usually accommodate the three pitch ranges and sometimes three players. On the pieces where the parts cross over, adaptations should be made. Some doubling of parts at the octave is possible to build a richer ensemble sound. My arrangements on the CD recording use this technique frequently.

## PERFORMING THE SONGS

The choice to use marimbas or Orff xylophones is just one of the artistic choices you can make in using this book with your students. Also, let the students help create new arrangements of these songs. My students love changing the order of entrances, combining parts in different ways, and suggesting new parts or adaptations of the written parts. We've even combined two or three of the tunes in medley style and worked out segue parts leading one piece directly into another. Here are some other things we've tried with great success:

- ◇ change the order of the solos;

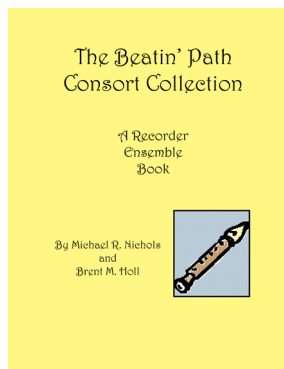
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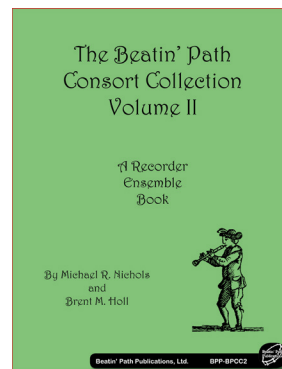
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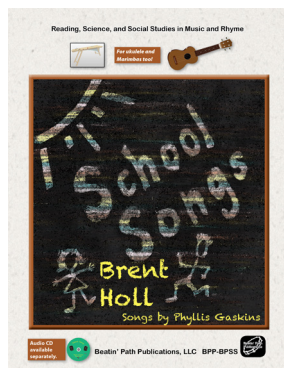
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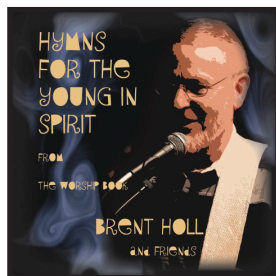
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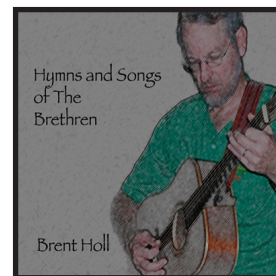
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# THE RECORDING

The audio tracks were recorded at Electric Arts Studio in Singers Glen, Virginia, with recording and mixing by Bart Reardon. All of the songs were played on marimbas made at Stewart Middle School. All instruments were played by the author with the help of Noel Holl on drum set. An instrument and track list follows:

1. See Dees - marimbas, saw blades, wood planks, congas, foot bells, guiro, maracas, cabasa, gankoqui, cowbell, vibraslap, claves, and shakere.
2. Noyce - drum set, marimbas, congas
3. The Hey Hey Jam - marimbas, foot bells, shakere
4. Jamaica Jazz - drum set, marimbas, congas, maracas, claves
5. Cooking Light - drum set, marimbas, bongos, cabasa
6. Halloween - marimbas, rain stick, wind chime, Udu
7. Jewe - marimbas, Djembe, dumbek, shakere, hosho, gankoqui, foot bells
8. Swishy Feet - marimbas, shakere
9. Abudah - marimbas, shakere
10. Orange Juice - marimbas, congas, claves, maracas

Bonus Tracks: Live performances by the Stewart Orff Ensembles.

11. Noyce
12. The Hey Hey Jam
13. Jamaica Jazz
14. Abudah
15. Orange Juice

Audio tracks are available for purchasers from a secure web page. Copy and paste the following URL into your computer browser to download the tracks.

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**JEWEL**

**SWISHY FEET**

**ABUDAH**

**ORANGE JUICE**

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