STOMP

SEE WHAT
SEE WHAT

ALL THE NOISE
ALL THE NOISE

IS ABOUT
IS ABOUT

A STUDY GUIDE

from the creators of STOMP...

"People drum their fingers on table tops when they are waiting for something to happen. They tap their feet when they are bored. They walk in rhythm quite naturally when they walk down the street...and jangle keys in their pocket...Yes, everything has a rhythm to it. Everything has music to it!"

- Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas

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INTRODUCTION

Although **STOMP** doesn't have a narrative in the manner of a traditional play, it *does* take the audience on a journey. After the opening sequence, which introduces the audience to the ensemble, one of the performers leads the audience in a very simple clap and response session. As the performance progresses, both the rhythms and the instruments become more complex.

At the end of the evening, the audience and performers collaborate on much more complicated rhythms--rhythms which might not have been possible earlier in the course of the performance. The audience has learned to listen on **STOMP**'s wavelength, finding music and pleasure in what was once noise and confusion.

This new level of sensitivity continues after the house lights have come up and the audience has exited; street noises, the steps of passers-by, and the sounds of cars and busses passing all combine to create and continue the presence of **STOMP** and their rhythm of life.

What is STOMP?

What does the word **STOMP** make you think of? It is very difficult to classify the show STOMP. Do you put it under the heading of theater, dance, music or performance art?

STOMP is performed in theaters, but it is not a play, musical, or opera. It is not theater in the traditional sense of the word. There is no speech, dialogue or plot. However, it does have two characteristics of traditional theater: mime and characterization. Each performer has an individual character which is distinct from the others. These characters are brought out through the mime and dance in the show.

STOMP started out as two "buskers" on the streets of Brighton. Busking is the British term for a street performance where people are encouraged to stop, listen and watch. It is a very old custom, dating back to booth theaters erected at village fairs in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The street busker of today also echoes back to the wandering minstrel of the medieval fair. Thus, it seems that STOMP's roots are in theatre, but can it really be called "theater"?

The entire show is highly choreographed, interweaving dance into all of its aspects. In STOMP, there is a symbiotic relationship between dance and music. The music is created within the dance, but the dance itself is dependent on the music for its rhythm and character. STOMP shows a true marriage of movement and music, where both

create and enhance each other.

STOMP, however, cannot be described purely as a "dance," for dance is only one of the three elements which are combined to create the show - **music, theater and dance**.

The marriage of these three elements, means that even though STOMP does not contain the traditional features, it does create an interesting and innovative show. It breaks all customary boundaries of the performing arts by inviting the audience to participate in the show, not only demonstrating that anyone has the ability to STOMP, but also encouraging us to take what we have learned about sound and rhythm and apply it to our own everyday lives.

The ideas behind STOMP- of finding music in noises which we usually try to block out and ignore - are not traditional ideas. Often, when a show defies all customary conceptions of music, dance and theatre or combines and alters the concepts in a new and unusual way, people categorize the piece as "performance art."

Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas, the creators of STOMP, reject the idea that the show is performance art. Performance art often has the connotation that it is a performer or a group trying to make a political statement through the piece. STOMP makes no such claim; it is **the exploration of rhythm in everyday things**. To quote Luke, "at the end of the day, STOMP is what it is." There are no hidden meanings, it's just entertainment.

PART ONE

This section of the STOMP Study Guide is recommended for younger students

SOUND AROUND ACTIVITIES

This section contains simple activities on sound that can be done in the classroom. First, here are some **simple definitions:**

Vibration: the back and forth movement of an object.

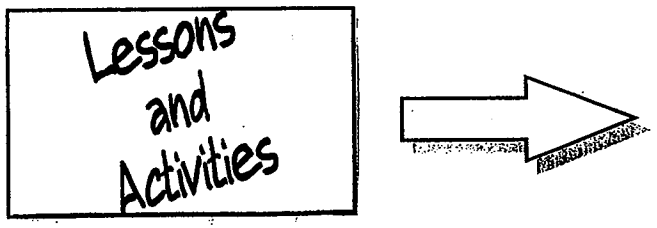
Volume: the loudness or softness of a sound

Amplification: making the sound louder

Pitch: the highness or lowness of a sound

Frequency: the rate of vibration.

(For example, the lowest sound that a person can hear is a frequency of roughly 16 to 20 times per second and the highest sound is at a frequency of about 20,000 times per second, although other animals have different hearing ranges.)



What can you hear?

Lesson: **Sight is the most dominant sense in most humans. When our vision is limited, our other senses can gain dominance and become stronger.**

Directions: Have students sit quietly in the room with their eyes closed. Have them listen for subtle sounds in the classroom and the surrounding area. What can they hear? Discuss why closing your eyes helps you to hear better.

What kinds of sounds are there?

Lesson: **The four basic sounds are: high, low, loud, soft**

Materials: gong
drumstick

Directions: Bang on the gong and listen for all four sounds. Have each child say his/her name high, low, loud, soft. Change the order of the sounds so that the children realize that they can come in different orders or combinations.

Amplifying sounds

Lesson: **Soft sounds can be made louder by bouncing them off of different items. Placing a music box on hard surfaces, such as walls, tables, floors, etc., will make the sound louder. Soft surfaces, such as carpet, absorb sound making it softer.**

Materials: wind up music box
hard and soft surfaces
cardboard box with hole

Directions: Place music box on outside of a cardboard box with a hole cut in it, and the sound is amplified (sounds bounce around inside the box and come out focused through the hole). Ask kids to think of musical instruments that are basically big boxes with holes (Violin, guitar, piano, etc.).

Lesson 4

Are there sounds we can't hear?

Lesson: **Discuss communication in bats, whales, dolphins, etc.**

Materials: dog whistle

Directions: We can actually hear some of the sounds emitted from a dog whistle, but others are too high for us to register. Experiment by blowing different tones into the dog whistle. Some students may be able to hear a higher range than others.

Lesson 5

How sounds are made...

Lesson: Sound makes molecules of air vibrate (wiggle), which causes each air molecule to knock against the next until the sound travels in wave-like ripples like you would see in a pond. These sound waves travel through the air and are collected by the outer ear. It will be helpful at this point to discuss the anatomy of the ear.

Materials: gong
signs
giant model of ear

Directions: Have ten children line up shoulder to shoulder between the gong and the giant ear model. The child nearest the gong has a sign saying SOUND, the child nearest the ear has a sign which says HEAR. The remaining eight children in between have signs saying AIR. When the gong is struck the first child wiggles back and forth, the next child wiggles when he/she feels the first child, and so on down the line. The last child holds up the HEAR sign as they feel the wiggle of the child next to them.

Discuss the concept of the voice box (vocal cord wiggle). Have children make high sounds. They can feel the upper part of their vocal cord wiggles by putting their fingers on their throats. Now have children make low sounds which will wiggle the vocal cords further down in the throat.

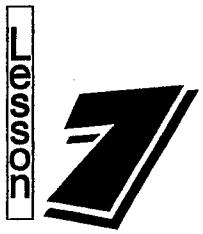
How sounds get where they are going

Materials: tuning forks
ping pong balls glued to pieces of string

Directions: Have kids play with tuning forks. They should hold the fork by the "stem" and tap sharply on their shoe. By placing the fork stem on various surfaces in the room, sounds can be amplified or muffled. If the stem of the vibrating fork is placed on elbow and index finger of hand is inserted in ear, the sound can be heard through the BONES! (This explains why our voice on a tape recorder doesn't sound right to us. We can hear our own voices through our bones and ears.)

After a few minutes of playing, hand out ping pong balls on string. By dangling the ball next to the vibrating fork so that it is gently tapped, one can see the "wiggle" of the vibrating fork transmitted to the ping pong ball.
The final activity after class is to

take the children out into the hall and have them lean one ear against a long metal hand railing. Place the music box at one end of the rail and have the children listen. Even the last child at the end of the hall will hear music through the metal rail!



Salt Voiceprints

Lesson: **When you sing a note, the vibrations of your vocal cords cause the surrounding air to vibrate. This excercise is very effective in showing this principle.**

Materials: empty coffee can
elastic band
salt
large balloon

Directions: Cut off the end of the balloon about 2 inches down from the nozzle. Stretch the balloon over the open end of the coffee can and fasten it with an elastic band. Don't be frustrated if it takes a couple of tries. Sprinkle some salt on top of the balloon covered can. Without

actually blowing on the salt, have the students "sing" at the can. Start with low notes and slowly raise the pitch of the sound until the salt starts to bounce around on the balloon. Observe the pattern of the moving salt. You can also have the whole class sing the same song together, while keeping their mouths close to the can.

What happens if they change the pitch? What happens if they change the volume of the sound?

When you sing, the vibrations of your vocal cords cause the surrounding air to vibrate, which, in turn, causes the stretched balloon to vibrate. There are certain notes that will cause the balloon to vibrate more than others. These notes are called the **resonant frequencies** of the balloon.

When the balloon is vibrating, there will be parts of the balloon that vibrate quite strongly and some that will not vibrate at all. These areas are called **nodes.** The salt will tend to collect on the nodes.

Note: Please be aware that this activity can get fairly noisy and slightly messy.

Sound Scavanger Hunt

You can go on a sound scavenger hunt at school or at home. Different students might come up with various answers to each of these questions, and you can encourage discussion about their differences in opinion.

Try to find a different sound for each answer.

1. Find a musical sound.
2. Find the loudest sound you can.
3. Find a sound that makes you feel relaxed and calm and sleepy.
4. Find a sound that makes you feel like moving a lot.
5. Find a sound that makes you feel happy (or sad , scared, excited, etc.).

As a group, you might want to discuss the sounds you found in a quiet place.

Were there any sounds where the group agreed completely? Which ones?

Which question led to the greatest amount of

variety and discussion of answers? Where did you hear the greatest number of different sounds. Where did you hear the least number? Why? Can you come up with any other categories of sound to find?

Why Two Ears?

Lesson: Two ears enable us to more effectively locate the source of a sound. Because human ears are located on the sides of our heads, we can easily distinguish the direction of sounds that come from our right or left. If a sound is coming from your left, it means that your left ear hears the sound slightly sooner than your right ear. If a sound comes from directly in front of you (or from behind you), then the sound hits both ears at the same time and is more difficult to locate.

Materials: One clicker

Directions: Show the clicker to the class and make a few sounds with it so that the students can recognize it. Have

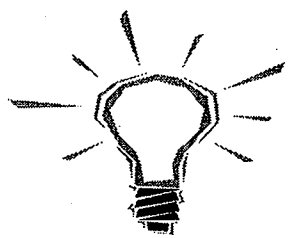
all of the students sit in a circle with one student in the middle (Student A) with his/her eyes closed.

Have the students in the circle pass around the clicker. Signal silently (by tapping them on the head or by pointing) to one student (Student B) when you want him/her to make a sound. That student should click twice.

Student A should point in the direction of the sound. Once Student A has pointed, Student B clicks twice more, giving Student A another chance to find the source of the sound. Have Student A open his/her eyes to determine the actual location of the clicker.

Student B then goes into the center of the circle and Student A takes his/her place in the circle. Continue the activity for as many students as you would like, varying the location of the clicker relative to Student A (sides, back, front).

The students may notice that when the sound is coming from either right or left of Student A, s/he can point to the location of the clicker fairly easily. However, when the sound comes from either directly in front of or directly behind student A, it is more difficult to identify the location.



Owl and Mouse Echolocation Activity

This activity shows the process of echolocation that is used by some nocturnal and underwater predators, such as bats, owls and dolphins. Because the light is very dim when these animals do their hunting, they rely on sounds to find their prey.

Materials: 2 clickers

Directions:

•Have students stand in a circle holding hands. This circle will set the boundaries for the activity.

•Choose two students to stand in the middle of the circle. One student will have the role of the Owl (the predator) and the other will have the role of the Mouse (the prey).

•Put a blindfold on the Owl. Give both the Mouse and the Owl a clicker.

•Start by having the Owl click once. Whenever the Mouse hears the sound, s/he must click back. The Owl tries to determine the location of the Mouse and walks in that direction. The Mouse can also walk away from the Owl to avoid being "caught".

•The Owl clicks again, the mouse clicks in return, and the Owl again moves in the direction of the sound. Sometimes the Owl will bump into the students forming the circle. If this happens, the students should stay quiet and gently tap the Owl away from the edge of the circle.

Continue until the Owl finds or "captures" the Mouse. When the Owl has touched the Mouse, the Mouse should squeak loudly so that the Owl knows that it has caught its prey.

At first give the Owl as long as s/he needs to find the Mouse. After the students get used to the activity, challenge them by giving the Owl only a set amount of "clicks" to find the Mouse. With practice, the Owl should be able to find the Mouse in six or fewer clicks.

When a bat is searching for food, it emits very high pitched sounds that are too high for human ears to hear. This sound echoes off surrounding objects (including moths, insects, and other bat food) and bounces back towards the bat. The bat can distinguish different shapes by the echoes, so it can tell the difference between a leaf or a moth. The bat can them locate the position of its food by the echoes it receives.