

2013

Marimbas for Schools

MARIMBA MAGIC ENT.

RICHARD PALMER

1437 TAUNTON STREET,

VICTORIA, B.C. CANADA

PHONE: (250) 370-0739

SALES@MARIMBAMAGIC.COM

MARIMBA MAGIC:

COMMUNITY, CONNECTION, AND EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH MELODIC PERCUSSION MUSIC



The Brockton World Music Ensemble in concert

Playing together, speaking without words through sounds and movement; joyful, ecstatic, playful, transformative, Marimbas engage students in a powerful way to realize and express their passion and creativity. Marimba music inspires group cooperation, artistry, and self expression.

‘Kids say “I feel like I am part of a team where everybody is important.” ’ *(Paul Nichols, teacher at Charles Dickens School, Vancouver, BC)*

For teachers and students...

The educational goals of any school music program are to provide exposure and opportunity for all kids, independent of expensive private lessons. Music is historically and culturally revered around the world as an essential part of community life.



Members of the Brockton World Music Ensemble in concert

What Teachers Say...

(Brockton School World Music Program website) There are five Zimbabwean Marimba Ensembles in the World Music Program at Brockton School. These ensembles perform a diverse range of repertoire including traditional Shona tunes from Zimbabwe, newly composed Zimbabwean songs, arrangements of Western popular songs and student-driven compositions and arrangements. Our audiences have consistently commented on the high energy, engaging performances from each ensemble and have described our sound as “vital”, “vibrant”, “energetic”, “warm”, and “friendly”. The North Shore News reported that the World Music Program Marimba Ensemble “is developing into a force to be reckoned with...The sound created by these traditional wooden African marimbas is almost otherworldly!” The instruments used by the WMP students were hand made on Vancouver Island by [Rick Palmer](#) whose skill in making these wonderful instruments is unmatched. He creates them from a variety of woods including Padauk (West African hardwood), Mahogany, Wenge and Western Yew.”

(Paul Nichols: music teacher, Charles Dickens School) “The impact statements from kids are unbelievable... Like kids talking about like they practically feel omnipotent almost when they do performances. The way they describe how they feel from performing, how they describe the sound and they talk about how much they love the sound of the instruments and they like working together to make the sound. And kids say I feel like I am part of a team where everybody is important. There is pretty amazing stuff in it. They are very successful instruments. This is one of the reasons we are doing the video. We need to get people to know how successful they are... The kids totally love them. “They are extraordinary successful instruments. You making the instruments is very important for us. There is a real need for more sets. I would like to see 5 more sets in Vancouver alone.”

Origins of the instruments and the music

'Marimba' literally means voice of wood. Both percussive and melodic, wooden bars are struck with mallets to produce beautiful sounds. Each bar has its own note. A combination of bars is arranged to create between 1 and 3 octaves. Played sitting or standing, marimbas are kinesthetic instruments that involve lots of upper body movement. In short, they are fun to play!

This type of instrument originated in Zimbabwe, in Africa. The instrument is capable of playing a wide range of musical styles like jazz, modern, etc. Traditionally, the music ranges from complex fast driving polyrhythms to slow trance-like pieces. Some characteristics of traditional Zimbabwean music include call and response form, interlocking melodies that repeat in circular fashion, double metric patterns and rhythmic cross patterns played by shakers and drums. The music is highly infectious, joyous, upbeat, and wonderful to dance to!

In the Fall of 1968, Abraham Dumisani (Dumi) Maraire, was hired by the University of Washington in Seattle as an Artist in Residence to teach this music. Very quickly, the music of Zimbabwe became a hit in the University's music department and all around Seattle. Subsequently during the '70's, '80's and '90's, Dumi and his bands created excitement by performing and teaching this music up and down the West Coast. A ripple effect was created when many of Dumi's students began teaching this music to others. From its inception in Seattle in the early 1970's, it has spread all over North America. Many people can be found playing marimba music in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Scandinavia and Japan.



Rick Palmer (center) performing with Marimba Muzuva

Links

Brockton Preparatory School, North Vancouver World Music Program
Videos of school ensemble playing on Marimba Magic's instruments:

<http://www.worldmusicprogram.com>

"Marimba Embryonic Journey"

Video of Charles Dickens School students performing on Marimba Magic instruments:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttsHVhqxCeg>

Charles Dickens School Marimba Program Introduction

Paul Nichols Video Interview:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6U2DK_P6XVk

Marimba documentary "Soul Resonance"

(About the story of Marimba Music in North America)

Preview of the DVD:

<http://www.sacredpathexplorations.com/preview.html>

National acclaim for seniors marimba project:

A project where seniors in Oceanside learn how to play the marimbas has been recognized by Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), as a national success story. Arrowsmith Community Enhancement Society (ACES) received the money from HRSDC to fund a set of custom marimbas [built by Marimba Magic] which were designed especially for seniors.

<http://www.pqbnews.com/entertainment/131366308.html>

Seniors Celebrate Life Through Music:

Members of the Arrowsmith community of Coombs, British Columbia, have encouraged seniors to get involved with their community and interact with local youth through the Life is a Celebration: Marimba Music for Seniors project. Through this project, seniors participated in the construction of seven marimbas, attended classes to learn to play the instrument and took part in a performance group.

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/success_stories/seniors/28/index.shtml



Contact

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