



Paul Watson

“Steel Sound”

Grades: 3-8

Assembly Performance

Performance Length: 45 minutes

Audience Limit: 300

About the Artist

Paul Watson, who lives in Tyler, has been playing music for over 20 years. He has experience playing in all the families of instruments: brass, string, woodwind, and percussion. In addition to his steel drumming, he is known for his bagpiping, which he studied in Scotland. He teaches bagpiping and has been Pipe Major of Texas Highland Pipes and Drums in Lubbock. Mr. Watson became interested in ethnomusicology, the study of other cultures’ music, while attending college.

Before the performance:

- Ask students if they have ever heard the sound of a steel drum. What does the sound remind them of? Do they like the way a steel drum sounds?
- Listen to steel drum music on the internet or a music CD.

After the performance:

- Ask students which songs they enjoyed the most. If they hear the sound of a steel drum in the future, will they be able to recognize it?
- The steel drum is often associated with the Caribbean Islands. Can the students think of other instruments that are associated with specific countries?

About the Program

In this performance, Mr. Watson will educate students about the structure, science, and history of steel drums. The only acoustic instrument developed in the twentieth century, the steel drum originated in Trinidad in the 1930s. One of the most popular instruments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the steel drum is played solo or in orchestras for musical compositions ranging from jazz to calypso to classical.

Performance Set-up Requirements:

Please clear a performance area of 10’ x 10’ minimum. Provide a table to be used to hold instruments during the performance.

Classroom Management

Please note that Young Audiences' policy mandates that the classroom teacher is to be present during the entire program or residency. Should the teacher leave, the artist is instructed to

Word List

Steel drum ("pan"): an instrument made from a 55 gallon barrel. "It's hard to believe what we normally use for trash cans can make such beautiful music," Mr. Watson says.

Ethnomusicology: the study of cultures' (ethno) music (musicology)

Percussion: a family of instruments that produces sound through striking

Vibration: motion that produces sound

Volume: the "loudness" of a sound

Pitch: how high or low a musical sound is

Caribbean: an area of islands in the south Atlantic, a culture, the birthplace of steel drum music

TEKS:

Social Studies TEKS: 3.4A-D, 3.5A-C; 4.7A-C, 4.22F; 5.6A-B, 3.12A-B, 3.16A, E, F; 4.22D, 4.20B-C; 5.10B, 5.11A, 5.23B-C
Science TEKS: 4.5A-B; 4.7B; 5.7A, 5.8D
Language Arts TEKS: 3.14A-D; 4.15A, C-D; 5.15A, C-D.

Thank you for allowing Young Audiences of Northeast Texas to share these artists and performances with your students. The students' written thank you notes may be sent to:

Young Audiences of Northeast Texas
200 East Amherst
Tyler, Texas 75701

Classroom Connections

Geography:

1. Invite your students to find the Caribbean and Trinidad on a world map. Use geographic tools to discover more about the lifestyle of people in Trinidad (geography, food sources, customs).
2. Ask your students to discuss the customs and music of people in Trinidad. How have they influenced the United States and its music?

Science:

1. Invite your students to take a plastic straw and cut a "V" into an end. When they blow on the "V", it will make the two parts of the "V" vibrate and produce sound. Sometimes the students will need to position the straw at different depths in their mouth to produce sound. Invite the students to feel the vibrations on their straws and on their lips.
2. Invite your students to use a spoon to tap on a variety of materials such as paper, plastic, metal, wood, and steel. Which material conducts sound the best?
3. Ask your students to determine if sound can be perceived without matter through which it can vibrate.

Math:

Invite your students to discuss what relationship mathematics has to the sound that steel drums produce, based on Mr. Watson's explanations.

Language Arts:

1. Compare and contrast wooden and steel drums. Ask your students what they have in common and how they are they different. Invite your students to write a paragraph stating these differences and similarities.
2. Ask them to write an explanation of how sound is produced by the steel drums and why its sound is different from that of wooden drums.
3. Ask them to write a humorous poem about a steel drum, assuming the steel drum can take on a human personality.