Caribbean Drum Circle
with Joseph Peck

A QUICK HOW-TO
Learn about “The Engine Room,” the rhythmic percussion section of a Steel Drum Band.

1 Tap a steady beat, beginning with 4 counts. Using the Rhythmic Drum Scale (shown below) introduced in The Rhythmic Scale lesson, combine patterns together in different ways (improvise).

2 Use your legs as the drums and tap out the rhythms with your hands, or use a shaker, water bottle, pot, or any object you have available.

The steel drum (Pans) originated on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies (Caribbean). Trinidad is the Southern-most island of the Caribbean, a collection of 7,000 islands between the state of Florida and South America. Dr. Ellie Mannette created the first full size steel drum out of a 55-gallon oil barrel in 1946.

Three Purposes of the Engine Room:
1. Keep a steady beat.
2. Create Syncopation - sub-division - is shifting the accent.
3. Provide a rhythmic feeling - all the other percussion instruments come together to make rhythm.

NEW WORDS

The Engine Room
A rhythmic percussion section of a steel drum band consisting of non-pitched instruments. Everyday objects, such as a brake drum, can be used.

Rhythmic Drum Scale
THOM - 1 sound/half note.
TA  - 1 sound; quarter note.
TA KA - 2 sounds to every 1 beat; eighth notes.
TA KA DI MI - 4 sounds to each beat; sixteenth notes.

Steady Beat
A repeated, even pulse.

Rhythmic Pattern
A combination of beats that forms a pattern.

Improvise
Making things up on the spot.

Accent
An emphasis on one, or more beats.

Pitch
The degree of highness and lowness of a sound.

THINK ABOUT IT
Why did the people of Trinidad use everyday objects to create music? How can you create music with things around you?

DIG DEEPER
To learn more about rhythm, check out The Music Center’s Artsource Curriculum, Chuck Davis “African Roots in American Soil” and Johnny More “Japanese Festival Sounds.” www.musiccenter.org/education/

Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/

TRY THIS CHALLENGE
Invite someone to join you in making a Caribbean Drum Circle. One of you sets a steady beat; the other creates different rhythmic patterns over the steady beat. Switch roles. Find instruments you can make from everyday objects from around the home.