

## Musical Instrument in Seventh-day Adventists Worship Services

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### Abstract

*There are many kinds of musical instruments recorded in the Bible. One of most important instruments found in the Scriptures is drum. In the Old Testament times, the drum or timbrel is an instrument used for religious and social celebrations that gives people opportunities to express joy, delight, cheerful and even courage, in social and religious festivals. The use of drum in worship and religious services of Christian denominations has been very common. Nevertheless, whether or not this should be used in church worship services is still an ongoing and unending debate. In Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) Church, most of church members disagree, but some considered drum can be used in supporting praises and worship services. Those who support the use of this instrument in the church argue that there is nothing wrong in it. On the other hand, some of church members think that drums must be excluded from worship activities and religious celebrations because this musical instrument annoys the solemnity of worship. Culture aspect in the use of drums among SDA Church could be an important point of consideration.*

**Keywords:** church service, cymbal, drum, musical instrument, percussion taboret, tambourine, timbrel, worship service.

### Introduction

Genesis 4:21 records that musical instrument is already existed since antiquity. There are many kinds of musical instruments recorded in the Bible. Musical instrument was not only used but also authorized by God for acceptable worship in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Korangeng-Pipim assures that the scriptures are full of musical instruments, and so, when the Lord instructed the Israelites on how to worship in the Torah, he instructed them to play instruments. King David appointed special Levites dedicated to playing music in the temple (1 Chronicles 15:16, 19; 16:5, 42; 25:1, 6).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Waggoner, "Why Instruments of Music should not be used in Christian Worship," (revised 2004); Available from: <http://www.thebible1.net/biblicaltheism/0402insturments.htm>; (accessed January 7, 2021).

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Koranteng-Pipim "Applause, Hand-Waiving, Drumming, & Dancing in the Church Some Preliminary Reflections on Some Current Issues on Worship." Available from: <https://musicaeadoracao.com.br/recursos/arquivos/ingles/applause.htm>; (accessed May 1, 2021).

Musical instruments are important, needed, and accepted because these medias of praises have been part of Christian worship which help worshipers to express their thankful heart and joy. For this reason, White counsels, “In the meetings held, let a number be chosen to take part in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted; for it is the praise of God in song.”<sup>3</sup>

Drum musical instrument has widely been used in Christian worship services. The use of drum in worship has been the most controversial issues of all instruments.<sup>4</sup> The use of drums in worship activities of Christian denominations, in fact, are divided in two groups. Those who accept the use of drums in worship services reason that Christians use drum because God commanded them to praise Him with the sound of the timbrel and the cymbals. Those who reject the use of drums in worship argue that drumming lift ups devil in worship, inviting evil spirit, annoys the calm of worship atmosphere, and creating a noise that shakes the senses and harms the solemnity of worship.<sup>5</sup>

The same situation is seen in SDA Church, even among Black Seventh-day Adventists are fragmented in their perceptions of music that is appropriate for the worship of God. Cultural differences within families, dissimilar opportunities for musical training and exposure, varying musical traditions within local churches, and wide diversity in the degree to which our clergy, musicians, and members have dedicated themselves to the study of church music all contribute to the fragmentation that we are now experiencing.<sup>6</sup>

### Methodology

The purpose of the research is to identify the biblical-theological support of the use of drums in Seventh-day Adventist worship services. To meet this, the steps will be followed. First, describing the types of Old Testament musical instruments, rhythmic musical instruments which covering drum as percussion musical instruments family, cymbals, tabret, timbrel, and tambourine. Second, presenting the use of drums in the Bible. Third, describing drums in Christian worship. Fourth, drums and Seventh-day Adventist Church, including

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<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1973), 507.

<sup>4</sup>Jeff Todd Titon, note 1, p. 64, in Eurdyce V. Osterman, “Rock Music and Culture,” chapter in Samuele Bacciocchi, ed. *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music*. Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2000, p. 328.

<sup>5</sup>The similar reason is discussed by Greg Holt in his “Do Drums Have a Place in the Christian Church?” Online article; Available from: <https://www.inspirationalchristianblogs.com/2013/03/16/do-drums-have-a-place-in-the-christian-church/>; internet; (accessed October 3, 2020).

<sup>6</sup>Alma Montgomery Blackman, “Perspective.” On-line Journal; *Black Seventh-day Adventists and Church Music*, 186; available from [http://www.oakwood.edu/additional\\_sites/goldmine/ldoc/perspectives/perspective21.pdf](http://www.oakwood.edu/additional_sites/goldmine/ldoc/perspectives/perspective21.pdf). Internet; (accessed October 3, 2020).

reasons for rejecting and accepting. Fifth, discussing the cultural consideration on the use of drums, and followed by summary and conclusion.

### Types of Old Testament Musical Instruments

There are some types of musical instruments used in the Old Testament to accompany singing, especially in the temple worship. Osbeck divides those instruments of music into three groups: strings, wind, and percussion.<sup>7</sup> He explains that *String*, consists of harp or kinnor [1 Samuel 10:5; 26:23; 1 Kings 10:12], psaltery or nebel [Daniel 3:5; 1 Kings 10:12], sackbut [Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15], and dulcimer, [Daniel 3:5, 10, 15]. *Wind* instruments consist of pipe [1 Samuel 10:5; Isaiah 30:29; 1 Kings 1:40], flute [Daniel 3], and organ. This term was used for all wind instruments, such as horns, trumpets or shofar, and cornets [Psalm 150:3].<sup>8</sup> He continues that the fourth type of Old Testament is *Percussion*. This type consists of bells [Zacharia 14:20], cymbals [Psalm 150:5; 1Chronicles 15:16], cornet, sistrum/castanet, meneanim [2 Samuel 6:5], and timbrel/tabret which is known in Hebrew as Tof [Psalm 150:4; Genesis 31:27; 1 Samuel 5:12; 1 Samuel 18:6].<sup>9</sup>

### Rhythmic Musical Instruments

This part reviews the Drum: a percussion musical instrument family, cymbals; Tabret, Timbrel, and Tambourine. These instruments used in the Old Testament times are classified in rhythmic musical instruments.

#### Drum: a Percussion Musical Instruments Family

Drum is the most famous member of the percussion group of musical instruments, and is one of the oldest musical instruments that was ever used by mankind.<sup>10</sup> It is found in nearly every culture of the world and have existed since before 6,000 BC. They have ceremonial, sacred and symbolic association.<sup>11</sup> The rhythmic musical instruments such as drum, cymbal and tabret which grouped in percussion family are very common in the Old Testament times.

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth W. Osbeck, *The Endless Song* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 1987), 42-43.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>“Drum - The Oldest Musical Instrument.” *History of Drums 2021*. <http://www.historyofdrums.net/drum-history/drum-oldest-musical-instrument/> (accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>11</sup>Aladesami Omobola Agnes, “Colonization and Cultural Values of Yorùbá People: A Case of Traditional Drums in Yorùbá Land.” *Journal of Language and Literature.*; pdf, 151).

The sound of these musical instruments is produced by hitting the instrument.<sup>12</sup> Carina explains that timpa, cymbals, tambourine, gong, snare drum, and bass drum, are classified in percussion family of musical instruments.<sup>13</sup>

Drum is a percussion instrument consisting of a hollow shell or cylinder with a drumhead stretched over one or both ends that is beaten with the hands or with some implement, such as a stick or wire brush.<sup>14</sup> The first drums were very rudimentary in nature, involving any items that could be hit to make a sound. Slowly, drums changed and became more detailed. With a strong connection to sacred and ceremonial celebrations in Africa, percussion instruments often symbolize tribal royalty, and they have also been used to send messages over long distances.<sup>15</sup>

Since the drums, cymbals, gongs, and tambourines are categorized in percussion family,<sup>16</sup> it is assured that drum had been one of musical instruments used in Old Testament worship and religious celebrations. The Bible gives an example, “Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister took a drum (tambourine) in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing” (Exodus 15:20).<sup>17</sup> This is the musical performance to celebrate the victory given by the caring almighty God, a God who made Israelites able to cross the Red Sea.

The drum, described in terms of its construction and function as a membranophone which obviously belongs to the class of percussion instruments produces rhythm, and rhythm can be seen as the chief energizer and chief organizer.<sup>18</sup> In the Hebrew music of Old

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<sup>12</sup>Immanuel Benzinger, “Timbrel and Tabret: Musical Instrument.” <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/arti> (accessed December 10, 2020). See also Carlos Kalmar, “The Percussion Family of Instrument,” Oregon Symphony; <https://www.orsymphony.org/learning-community/instruments/percussion/>; and *Gasbanter Journal*, 2021, “Klasifikasi Instrumen Musik Perkusi Beserta Contoh.” Available from: <https://gasbanter.com/instrumen-musik-perkusi/>; (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>13</sup>Carina J. “History of Percussion in Music and Theatre.” Available from: <https://seatur.com/blog/history-percussion/>; (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>14</sup>“Meriam Webster Dictionary.” *On-line dictionary*; Available from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/drum>; (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>15</sup>Carina J. “History of Percussion in Music and Theatre.” Available from: <https://seatur.com/blog/history-percussion/>; (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>16</sup>Kenneth Osbeck, *The Ministry of Music*. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1961), 155.

<sup>17</sup>Michael Aubrecht, “Drums in the Bible.” Off Beat. Online article; <https://maubrecht.wordpress.com/2016/03/23/drums-in-the-bible/> (accessed December 25, 2020).

<sup>18</sup>Rudolph De Wet Oosthuizen, “The drum and its Significance for the Interpretation of the Old Testament from an African Perspective: Part two.” *Verbum Eccles. (Online) vol.37 n.1 Pretoria 2016*; original from Spencer 1988:72; available from <https://verbumeteclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/1553>; (accessed December 10, 2020).

Testament times, as indeed in Oriental music to-day, rhythm was of much greater importance, in comparison with the melody, than it is in modern Occidental music. Accordingly instruments like the drum and tambourine, which serve principally to accentuate the rhythm, played the greatest part.<sup>19</sup>

The drums were many varieties, some of them resembling modern drums. The Egyptians had a long drum, of wood or copper, 2½ feet long, resembling the tom-tom of India, and beaten by the hand.<sup>20</sup> Regarding the way of using or sounding these instruments, Newton explains that percussion instruments are strictly defined as instruments that are played primarily by striking them.<sup>21</sup> Whaley agrees the way these instruments are played.<sup>22</sup>

### Cymbal

Cymbals are mentioned 16 times in Old Testament (2 Samuel 6:5; 1 Chronicles 13:8; etc.), and once in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 13:1).<sup>23</sup> One of them is found in Psalm 150: 5, "Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals." The text speaks of drums being played along with another instrument. Cymbal is also used for religious celebration of praise in temple worship. Parrott assures that the earliest music used in Synagogues was based on a system used in the Temple in Jerusalem. The orchestra consisted of twelve instruments, including a harp, drums and cymbals.<sup>24</sup>

There are two kinds of cymbals: loud cymbal, a big and wide plate, and high sounding cymbal, a smaller plate held by thumb and middle fingers.<sup>25</sup> Hinks explains that loud cymbal is known as 'meziltayim,' and 'selzelim' is high sounding cymbal, and these cymbals varied

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<sup>19</sup> Immanuel Benzinger, "Timbrel or Tabret." Available from: <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14399-timbrel> (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> William Smith; revised and edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet, *Smith's Bible dictionary* [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997.)

<sup>21</sup> Kevin Newton, "Musical Instruments: Types & History." Available from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/musical-instruments-types-history.html> (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Vernon M. Whaley, *Understanding Music & Worship in the Local Church*. (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 1995), 94.

<sup>23</sup> Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (SDABD)*, rev. ed. (1979), s.v. "Cymbals").

<sup>24</sup> Ruth Parrott, "The Importance of Music in Different Religions," Online journal, July 2009. Available from <https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/mypad.northampton.ac.uk/dist/8/5781/files/2016/04/WR70-1psuxta.pdf> (accessed March 7, 2020).

<sup>25</sup> Carol Smith, *Bible From A to Z*, (Yogyakarta: ANDI, 2009), 97.

greatly in size, shape, and sound, and types, however, both are used in the same context (Psalms 150:5),”<sup>26</sup> and these instruments were used in temple services (1 Chronicles 15:16, 28) to mark the beginning, end, and pause in the singing and playing (Judges 11:34).<sup>27</sup> This musical instrument is also mentioned by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:1, he said, “If I speak with the tongues of mankind and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” (NASB).

#### Drums: Tabret, Timbrel, and Tambourine

Hebrew word for drum is תֹּפ, *tōp* or *tof*, means tabret, timbrel, a tambourine.<sup>28</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* informs that in Scripture the word ‘tuppim’ plural form of ‘top’ (tambourine)” are indeed “frame drums,” and these musical instruments were commonly used in ancient Israel and surrounding areas.<sup>29</sup> This Hebrew word is variously translated as either tabret, timbrel or tambourine. The King James Version uses both tabret and timbrel, while the English “tabret” which derived from an Old French and Spanish word, *tabor* (or *tabour*), is a small hand-held drum.<sup>30</sup>

In West Papua, Indonesia, *tabor* is called ‘tambur.’ The materials consist of wood and kangaroo skin (Jabbar Ramdhani),<sup>31</sup> while in Minahasa Region of North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, this musical instrument is called ‘tambor.’ This traditional rhythmic musical instrument is made of wood and animal skin, and is used to accompany cultural dances.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Dennis Hinks, “Journal on Musical Instrument of the Old Testament.” Available from: <https://www.journal33.org/other/html/otinstr.html> (accessed March 7, 2020).

<sup>27</sup>Immanuel Benzinger, “Timbrel or Tabret.” Available from: <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14399-timbrel> (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>28</sup>Strong's Concordance, Hebrew Dictionary. “תֹּפ, *tōp*.” Available from: <https://www.quoteskosmos.com/bible/bible-concordance/H8596.html#source> (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>29</sup>Michael Aubrecht, “Drums in the Bible.” *Off Beat*. Available from: <https://maubrecht.wordpress.com/2016/03/23/drums-in-the-bible/> (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>30</sup>Hebraic Dance. “Promoting Biblical Praise and Worship. Information about the Biblical Tabret?” Available from: <http://www.hebraicdance.com/what-is-a-tabret.html> (accessed March 7, 2020).

<sup>31</sup>“Begini Proses Pembuatan Tambur, Alat Musik Khas Raja Ampat.” Available from: <https://travel.detik.com/domestic-destination/d-3579627/begini-proses-pembuatan-tambur-alat-musik-khas-raja-ampat> (accessed December 25, 2020).

<sup>32</sup>Ivan R.B Kaunang. “Filosofi Musik Minahasa.” May 17, 2015; Available from: <https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/bpnbsulut/filosofi-musik-minahasa/> (accessed December 25, 2020).



Benzinger describes, “Timbrels musical instruments were very common in religious celebration of the Old Testament times. These instruments were used in temple service (1 Chronicles 15:16, 28) to mark the beginning, end, and pause in the singing and playing (Judges 11:34).”<sup>33</sup> He continues, that the Egyptians and the Assyrians possessed this instrument, and among the Hebrews it was usually played by women, as an accompaniment to joyful dancing (Judges xi. 34; I Sam. xviii. 6; Jer. xxxi. 4) and to songs (Gen. xxxi. 27; Ex. xv. 20; I Sam. xviii. 6).<sup>34</sup> In additional information he adds that although these instruments were only in the hands of women, nevertheless, it was also played by men among Assyrians.<sup>35</sup>

The timbrel in its whole character is inappropriate for mournful occasions, being in keeping only with cheerful songs and games, such as accompany weddings (I Mace. ix. 39), popular rejoicings (e.g., the reception of a victorious general; I Sam. xviii. 6 et seq.), banquets (Isa. v. 12), and religious festivals of a joyful and popular character (Ex. xv. 20; Ps. lxxxii. 2). It is more rarely found in the hands of men. All the prophets who speak at length of music refer to the hand-drum (I Sam. x. 5).<sup>36</sup> Following the song of Moses, timbrels were used for worship by Miriam and the women of the Exodus (Exodus 15:20-21).<sup>37</sup>

Another meaning of Hebrew word “top” (tof) is hand-drum, and among the instruments of percussion, the timbrel or hand-drum ("tof") as the oldest and most popular.<sup>38</sup> The timbrels and tambourines could be of any size and shape, yet most of them were small hand-drums. Some were made from a wooden hoop covered with two skins. Others were made with a single drum-head; two of which were sometimes put together, back- to-back. Many were light enough for women to use while dancing (Exodus 15:20). They were used during joyous occasions and religious celebrations (2 Samuel 6:5).<sup>39</sup>

Historically, the tabret is a finger drum, the timbrel a tambourine. Both were held in one hand and beaten with the fingers in the back ground. The larger "Beta" drums were a very common instrument in Egypt and the lands around Israel, yet God never asked to be worshipped with them, nor do we see him worshipped with them in Scripture.<sup>40</sup> The

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<sup>33</sup>Immanuel Benzinger, “Timbrel or Tabret.”

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>Ron Graham, “History of Instrumental Music in Worship-and its implications.” *Biblical Interpretation and Authority*. <https://www.simplybible.com/f85q-authy-history-of-music-in-worship.htm> (accessed October 3, 2020).

<sup>38</sup> Benzinger, *op cit.*

<sup>39</sup>Dennis Hinks, “Journal on Musical Instrument of the Old Testament.” <https://www.journal33.org/other/html/otinstr.html>. (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>40</sup> “*Babylon Forsaken Ministries.*” *Molekh of Christian Rock*. Available from: <http://www.babylonforsaken.com/christianrock.html>).

tambourine is singled out for its association with dancing (Ex 15:20; Jdg 11:34; 1 Sm 18:6), and often played by women.<sup>41</sup> Drums in Western music, have two categories: pitched (timpani, steel drums, tom-toms, etc.), and non-pitched (snare, bongos, drum kit often referred to as a trap set, etc). The drum kit (bass, tom-tom, snares, suspended cymbals, he-hat) descends from European military and marching-band instruments and is the source of contention today.<sup>42</sup> In the 1920s, as technology and techniques improved over the ensuing years, the kit drum became one of the main components of popular music, rock bands, jazz ensembles, and even gospel music. It is important to note that these drums are mostly played with sticks or mallets, while African drums are played with the hands. In light of this, the ensuing discussion on drums is in reference to the drum kit, and the principles cited also apply to electronic instruments – synthesizers, drum machine, and all others that produce the sound of acoustic instruments.<sup>43</sup>

### **The Use of Drums in the Bible**

People may say that since drum is not mentioned as part of Old Testament worship, and so the Christian is not encouraged to use drums in worship services. Nevertheless, some other Christian groups argue that drums had already been used at the time. “The reason that the word ‘drum’ was not found in the bible is because the first modern-day version of the drum was not common until around the 1540’s A.D. About 4,000 years ago, these instruments were not called ‘drums,’ they had different names but had the same basic purpose and function. Just as dinosaurs in the Bible were once called dragons, behemoth and Leviathan; nowadays, the timbrel, tabret and drum are called percussion, drum or tambourine.”<sup>44</sup>

### **The Purpose of the Use of Drum**

The tabret is a kind of drum. This rhythmical musical instrument was used for religious services (2 Samuel 6:5), celebrations (1 Samuel 18:6), prophesying (1 Samuel 10:5), praise (Psalm 150:4), and for worship (Jeremiah 31:4). Korangteng-Pipim states that drum is

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<sup>41</sup>Anderson 1972:587; Human2011:7). In (Rudolph De Wet Oosthuizen, “The drum and its significance for the interpretation of the Old Testament from an African perspective: Part two.” *Verbum Eccles.* (Online) vol.37 n.1 Pretoria 2016; online journal; available from: <https://verbumeteclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/1553>.

<sup>42</sup>Jeff Todd Titon, note 1, p. 64, in Eurdyce V. Osterman, “Rock Music and Culture,” chapter in Samuele Bacciocchi, ed. *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music*. Berrien Springs, (MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2000), 328.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 329

<sup>44</sup>Armored Saints, “Biblical Guide to the Drums.” Available from: <http://saintsinarmor.blogspot.com/2012/03/biblical-guide-to-drums-and-christian.html>; (accessed December 10, 2020).



one of prominent musical instruments mentioned in the Bible, and in Scripture, whether it is referred to as *tambourine*, *timbrel* or *tabret*, it simply means a “hand-drum.”<sup>45</sup>

The Old Testament Scriptures record some various events in which the drums are used for particular purposes, and one thing which needs to be noticed, there is no evidence in the following texts showing the use of drums in the temple worship:

1. In the story of Laban and Jacob, drums (tabrets) are used in farewell celebration. (Genesis 31:27).
2. After crossing the Red Sea, Miriam takes timbrel, leading the women singing the Moses’ song of victory (Exodus 15:20)
3. The prophets playing prophets various musical instruments including drums or tambourine, after Saul’s anointment (1 Samuel 10:5-6).
4. The women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines (drums) and lutes. This was happened when the men returning home after David killed the Philistine (1 Samuel 18:6)
5. Job describes about the children of the wicked dance joyfully with timbrel and harp in their hands (Job 21:11-14)
6. The timbrel used for the celebration of the exodus and the Lord’s victory over the Egyptians described by Asaph in Psalm 81:2 is תוף toph, some kinds of drum or tom tom.<sup>46</sup>
7. The mirth of the tambourine ceases as described in Isaiah 24:8—refers to the sound of music ceasing at the desolation of the earth.
8. “O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice” (Jeremiah 31:4). The text shows God’s promise of restoration and a description of the celebration that would be expressed by the children of Israel upon their return from the Babylonian captivity to their homeland.

### Drum in Christian Worship

The Bible informs that instrumental music was not only used but was also authorized by God for acceptable worship in the Old Testament.<sup>47</sup> This can be seen in 2 Chronicles 29:25, “And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed

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<sup>45</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim “Applause, Hand-Waiving, Drumming, & Dancing in the Church Some Preliminary Reflections on Some Current Issues on Worship.” Available from: <https://musicaeadoracao.com.br/recursos/arquivos/ingles/applause.htm>. (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>46</sup>Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Psalms 81:2". "The Adam Clarke Commentary." Available from: <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/acc/psalms-81.html>. 1832. Accessed October 10, 2021.

<sup>47</sup>Robert L. Waggoner, “Why Instruments of Music Should Not Be Used in Christian Worship.” Available from: <http://www.thebible1.net/biblicaltheism/0402instruments.htm>; Accessed October 3, 2020.

instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets."

It is undeniable that drums have widely been used not only in secular musical performances, but also in religious ceremonies and festivals of Christian denominations. Nevertheless, whether or not these should be used in church worship services and praise is still an ongoing debate. Those who support the use of drums in the church argue that there is nothing wrong in it, as long as these musical instruments are handled with gentleness, soft and calm touch. They say that the drum is importance and value in celebration is undeniable as it has an irreplaceable sound effect. Boschman emphasizes that even though man said that drum is from Satan, but God commanded us to praise Him with the sound of the trumpet! Praise Him with the timbrel, praise Him with string instruments and organs, and praise Him upon the cymbals, praise Him with high surrounding cymbals."<sup>48</sup>

Drumming is widely used in the church for various religious ceremonies and festival, and because of this, the use of drums in worship is considered as important aspect. Some reason the beats that are created with a drum cannot be created with any other instrument.<sup>49</sup> The drum is considered a powerful musical instrument since its sound creates a mesmerizing, spiritual and soul-awakening effect, and as part of celebration drum helped people to express their emotions.<sup>50</sup> Most of Christian denominations consider drums have a place in the Christian worship for some reasons: Drums is heartbeat that build community, unite congregation, and draw people to worship,<sup>51</sup> it can be a great addition to services, and bring a brand new element into church's music, and a great way to refresh and modernize, whilst still keeping true values.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, those who want drums to be excluded from religious services are of the opinion that the instrument hampers the calm environment which is an essential aspect of worship. Some go to the extent of suggesting that the beat of the drums invites evil spirits and it is, therefore, the music of the devil."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>LaMar Boschman, *Musik Bangkit Kembali* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pekabaran Injil, 2001), 52.

<sup>49</sup>Jam Addict Staff, "Are Drums Mentioned in the Bible?" Available from: <https://jamaddict.com/are-drums-mentioned-in-the-bible/> (accessed December 10, 2020).

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Joan Huyser-Honig. "Drumming in Worship: Experiencing God's heart-beat." Available from: <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/drumming-in-worship-experiencing-gods-heartbeat/> (accessed December 25, 2020).

<sup>52</sup>Greg Holt, "Do Drums Have a Place in the Christian Church?" Available from: <https://www.inspirationalchristianblogs.com/2013/03/16/do-drums-have-a-place-in-the-christian-church/> (accessed December 25, 2020).

<sup>53</sup>Jam Addict Staff, "Are Drums Mentioned In The Bible?" Available from: <https://jamaddict.com/are-drums-mentioned-in-the-bible/> (accessed December 10, 2020).

### Drum and Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Bible is not opposed to the use of musical instruments in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Regarding the use of drums in worship, Seventh-day Adventists Church is divided in two views. Most of members of this church disagree about the use of drums in worship, on the other hand some particular members welcome them enthusiastically. Personal observations of researcher in Jakarta, Philippines, and Amsterdam – Nederland show that some of SDA Church members use drums in worship. They say that many texts of the Bible encourage congregation to worship God with drums. Cottrill describes that for others, drums are an unnecessary distraction at best, something to be endured. Still others are appalled at what they see as a worldly intrusion, and reject their use altogether.<sup>54</sup>

#### Reason for Rejection

Some people who reject this musical instruments believe drums and drum beats invite evil spirits and are the music of the Devil. They believe that these worldly instruments do not have a place in Christian culture, and therefore should not have a place in the church.<sup>55</sup>

Another reason indicated in bible text shows that drum is associated with disobedience. This can be seen in Isaiah 5:11-13, informing the disobedience of Israel. The same attitude toward God is seen in David disobedience to God's commandment in 1 Chronicles 13:7-10. Drum texts associated with the battle in the following accounts have also been reason of rejection to the use of drum in worship services: The victory over the Egyptians when crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-5, 20-21); the celebration of victory in the battle of Ammonites (Judges 11:34); celebration for the Lord's victory over Assyrians (Isaiah 30:31-33); and drums used in celebration of God's victory over all his enemies (Psalm 149).

The impact of the use of drums toward the sense has also become strong argument to reject its use in the church as warned by White: "In the future, just before the close of probation, there will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time"<sup>56</sup> Satan chooses to make drums prominent in false worship is their hypnotic potential. Drum beats can cause "switching" to occur in the brain as it loses symmetry between left and right sides. This makes difficult for a person to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is

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<sup>54</sup>Robert Cottrill. "Drums in Worship—Appropriate or Not?" *Wordwise Hymns*; Available from: <https://wordwisehymns.com/2010/12/05/drums-in-worship-appropriate-or-not/> (accessed October 3, 2020).

<sup>55</sup>Greg Holt, "Do Drums Have a Place in the Christian Church?" Online article; Available from <https://www.inspirationalchristianblogs.com/2013/03/16/do-drums-have-a-place-in-the-christian-church/>; accessed October 3, 2020.

<sup>56</sup>Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, vol. II*. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 36.

harmful. In this condition the body usually chooses that which is destructive over that which is therapeutic.<sup>57</sup>

Further, though God allows the use of percussion instruments in worship, yet God never asked to be worshipped with them, nor do we see him worshipped with them in Scripture.<sup>58</sup> Fahy confirms this stand, “Some Psalms (such as 150) mention these additional instruments for use outside the temple in national events. Psalm 150 is not an apologetic for bands in the church today; indeed, it does not even refer to instruments used in the temple, but to national events outside. These instruments would not be used in temple services.”<sup>59</sup> The study shows that in every reference of its use in the Bible, drums were used outside the sanctuary service.<sup>60</sup> People may conclude that since drums were not used in the temple, it should not also be used inside the church.

One of the most strongest reasons to reject the use of drums in worship is because this musical instrument is partly due to their traditional association with conjuring up evil spirits, and partly because the way they are used in rock music to produce its relentless beat.<sup>61</sup> Phil Jones,<sup>62</sup> once mentioned that some Adventists are very critical of the use of drums, either in India or American contemporary Christian music. They refer to drums as “of the devil” and denounce all usage of drums as devilish.”<sup>63</sup>

The similar impact of the use of drums is shared by Burton Wade. He noticed that numerous groups of people scattered all over the campground conducted the services in the large pavilion, they worked themselves up to a high pitch of excitement by the use of musical instruments, such as: trumpets, flutes, stringed instruments, tambourines, an organ, and a big

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<sup>57</sup>Babylon Forsaken Ministries.” *Molekh of Christian Rock*. Available from: <http://www.babylonforsaken.com/christianrock.html>; (accessed October 3, 2021).

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>Paul Fahy. “A Catechism on Instrumental Music in the Church.” *Understanding Ministries*, 2006; Available from: *Understanding Ministries*, 2006; <https://sites.google.com/site/understandingministries/instrumentalmusicinthechurch>. (accessed May 3, 2021).

<sup>60</sup>Samuel Koranteng-Pipim “Applause, Hand-Waiving, Drumming, & Dancing in the Church Some Preliminary Reflections on Some Current Issues on Worship.” Available from: <https://musicaeadoracao.com.br/recursos/arquivos/ingles/applause.htm>; (accessed October 3, 2021).

<sup>61</sup>Jeff Todd Titon, note 1, p. 64, in Eurdyce V. Osterman, “Rock Music and Culture,” chapter in Samuele Bacciocchi, ed. *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music*. Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2000, p. 328.

<sup>62</sup>Phil Jones is a retired SDA Church pastor, and he was a professor of Theology Department of Mount Klabat College (now Universitas Klabat) Airmadidi, Manado, North Sulawesi Province during the period of 1975-1978.

<sup>63</sup>Phil Jones, “Beat the Drums for Jesus.” *Adventist Today Periodical* (January-February, 2012):12, Online Issues, pdf; [www.atoday.org](http://www.atoday.org); (accessed October 3, 2020).

bass drum. They shouted and sang their lively songs with the aid of musical instruments until they became really hysterical, and after the morning meetings, as they came to the dining tent fairly shaking as though they had the palsy.<sup>64</sup>

It is assured that the Bible is not opposed to the use of musical instruments in the SDA church, however, it is better never to have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to create “a bedlam of noise” that shocks the senses and perverts the worship.<sup>65</sup>

### Reason for Acceptance

The strong theme of the use of percussion instruments is clearly seen in the Old Testament. The text shows that women were more often playing these instruments. Exodus 15:20 states that Miriam leads the rhythmic band. Although this is only scratching the surface, we can clearly see drums appearing throughout the Old Testament and can conclude that, Miriam and others were in fact drumming in the act of worshipping God.<sup>66</sup>

The use of rhythmic musical instruments such as drums is based on biblical evidence. In Psalm 150:1, 5 the psalter encourages to praise the Lord in His sanctuary with cymbals. The place of worship is clearly mentioned. It is noted that most of Bible versions such as New International Version, King James Version, New American Standard Bible, American Standard Version, New Living Translations, etc., inform the place of worship is “Sanctuary.” This should be one of reasons the church can use drums in church services.

Furthermore, when instruments are tuned, in good condition, prepared for services, and dedicated to ministry, they are a blessing to God and the kingdom. However, when things go wrong, they can become a nuisance and distraction.”<sup>67</sup> The Bible is not opposed to the use of musical instruments in the Seventh-day Adventist church.<sup>68</sup> The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services.<sup>69</sup> Heize says, “we can clearly see drums appearing throughout the Old Testament

<sup>64</sup>Burton Wade account to A. L. White, January 12, 1962. In T.S. Shim, *And Worship Him: Music Ministry* (Singapore: Department of Church Ministries Far Eastern Division of SDA, n.d.), 82.

<sup>65</sup>White, *Selected Messages*, Vol 2, p. 36.

<sup>66</sup>Lyell V. Heise, “Ministry.” *Music and Worship*. October 1991, p. 23. Online magazine. Available from <https://cdn.ministrymagazine.org/issues/1991/issues/MIN1991-10.pdf>; Accessed October 3, 2020.

<sup>67</sup>J. Nathan Corbitt. *The Sound of the Harvest: Music’s Mission in Church and Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Bake Books, 1998), 313.

<sup>68</sup>Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “Applause, Hand-Waiving, Drumming, & Dancing in the Church.” *Some Preliminary Reflections on Some Current Issues on Worship*. Available from: [www.drpipim.org](http://www.drpipim.org). <https://musicaeadoracao.com.br/recursos/arquivos/ingles/applause.htm>. (accessed May 10, 2021).

<sup>69</sup>E.G. White, *Evangelism*. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1970). 500-501.

and can conclude that, Miriam and others were in fact drumming in the act of worshipping God.”<sup>70</sup>

Jones witnesses and counsels, “I have heard some Adventists be very critical of the use of drums, either in India or American contemporary Christian music. They refer to drums as ‘of the devil’ and denounce all usage of drums as devilish. I thoroughly disagree with such a position. Good or evil depends entirely on the way drums are used. All music has melody, harmony, and rhythm. The rhythm comes from percussion, usually drums. But remember, even our body has rhythm; it is called a heartbeat. Drums and percussion become a tool of evil only when they take away the message of a song by overpowering the melody and harmony, thus appealing only to our baser human emotions.”<sup>71</sup>

The use of drums is good when this musical instrument is played properly, with soft and careful strike of the instruments. Music of course has its beats, and the beats make music good to hear. The negative associations that seeing a set of drums often raises – which are intensified if the percussion overpowers the vocal lines – make it difficult for even the most dedicated Christian percussionist to gain acceptance and involvement in worship music. Careful orchestration, sensitive presentation, and the use of electronic percussion, which does away with the look of the regular drum set, can allay (to calm or reduce) much of the offense. This could be understood as soft striking.<sup>72</sup>

Holt gives a good instruction when using this rhythmic musical instrument. “The way you use them – carefully, you and your church can really benefit from their use.”<sup>73</sup> “To keep ceremony’s traditional though, proper, and fit to the need, recommendation is given: (1) sticking to handheld drums and percussion instruments such as tambourines. There is no real risk of over-playing and making too much noise. Their natural sound will also fit much better with the traditional music of the church.” (2) Before making any decision though, everyone in the church needs to be involved and offer an opinion, (3) Come to an executive decision based on these opinions, and do the best you can to please the majority. After all, you may find that in your particular church the use of drums is still frowned upon).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Lyell V. Heise, “Ministry.” *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>Phil Jones, “Beat the Drums for Jesus.” *Adventist Today Periodical* (January-February, 2012):12, Online Issues, pdf; Available from [www.atoday.org](http://www.atoday.org); Accessed March 7, 2020.

<sup>72</sup> Lyell V. Heise, *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Greg Holt, “Do Drums Have a Place in the Christian Church?” Online article; Available from <https://www.inspirationalchristianblogs.com/2013/03/16/do-drums-have-a-place-in-the-christian-church/>; (accessed May 10, 2021).

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*



### Cultural Consideration

Music has well been known fact in the past, as an important cultural resource and practice for religious communities.<sup>75</sup> Music consists of vocal sound and instrumentals. Drum is a rhythmical music instrument, and as a musical instrument the drum or 'drumming' enables the individual and the community to participate and express their experience and understanding of the presence of God in an audible manner.<sup>76</sup>

There are some reasons the use of drums has to connect with the culture. Quoting John Meulendyk statement, Huiser-Honig-says that “90 percent of cultures have a drum beat.”<sup>77</sup> Music is made for the glory and honor of the Lord. Musical instruments can only be a blessing to God when they are tuned, in good condition, and dedicated for services. Dedication and culture are related to each other, and the church needs to understand the appropriateness of culture. Oosthuizen emphasizes that understanding the cultural appropriateness and spiritual timeliness, whether intra-culturally or cross-culturally, is part of dedication.<sup>78</sup>

Johansson explains that the church is, of course, part of culture, and the only way the church can get its work done is through culture. Language, architecture, and music are cultural forms.<sup>79</sup> Farhadian stresses that worship is a social act embedded in cultures and societies, rather than an individual alone.<sup>80</sup> The characteristics, and forms of music differ in each ethnic group and society based on their respective cultural experiences. Every human

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<sup>75</sup> Lynch 2006:482). (Lynch, G., 2006, 'The role of popular music in the construction of alternative spiritual identities and ideologies', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45 (4), 481-488. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2006.00322.x>), in Rudolph De Wet Oosthuizen. “The drum and its significance for the interpretation of the Old Testament from an African perspective: Part two.” *Verbum et Ecclesia*; On-line version. *Verbum Eccles.* (Online) vol.37 n.1 Pretoria 2016; Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v37i1.1553>; (accessed May 10m, 2021).

<sup>76</sup>Rudolph De Wet Oosthuizen, “The drum and its significance for the interpretation of the Old Testament from an African perspective: Part two.” *Verbum Eccles.* (Online) vol.37 n.1 Pretoria 2016; online journal; (accessed May 10, 2021).

<sup>77</sup>Joan Huyser-Honig. “Drumming in Worship: Experiencing God's heart-beat.” <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/drumming-in-worship-experiencing-gods-heartbeat/>; (accessed December 25, 2020).

<sup>78</sup>J. Nathan Corbitt. *The Sound of the Harvest: Music's Mission in Church and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bake Books, 1998), 313.

<sup>79</sup>Calvin Johansson, *Discipling Music Ministry*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 20.

<sup>80</sup>Charles E. Farhadian, ed. *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), x. in David Williams.

being knows about music and its uses, and every ethnicity and culture places the art of music as an important cultural element.<sup>81</sup>

For instance, SDA musical programs in Bangladesh and Pakistan are made alive of their use of drum of percussion in the worship services.<sup>82</sup> As long as the use of musical instruments is part of their culture and custom, percussion is considered as formal worship musical instrument to accompany the singers and worship services. Percussion instrumental music is also used in worship services of the Adventist University of the Philippines, Silang Cavite.<sup>83</sup> Another group of young people in Amsterdam also indicating the same need, they sing in the church youth program and accompanied by the musical band consists of electric guitar, drums (snare drum and bass drum), and cymbal.<sup>84</sup> This is not their own culture, it is only imported and adopted from other Christian denominations tradition, but the members considered the use of drum in worship as proper instrumental music to fill the need.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Annual Council approved and voted the SDA music guidelines. The guidelines containing nine principles of Seventh-day Adventist music for the internal church need. Guideline number nine emphasizes that “Seventh-day Adventist Church should recognize and acknowledge the contribution of different cultures in worshiping God. Musical forms and instruments vary greatly in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family.”<sup>85</sup> This should be understood that when the use of drum in the church is part of cultural musical instrument of a nation or tribe to furnish the beauty of musical performance in accompanying singers or worship services, the wise consideration is letting them enjoy the musical performances according to the culture.

SDA music guidelines indicates that since music drawn from one culture may sound strange to someone from a different culture,<sup>86</sup> the church does not need to adopt the different style of music which is not fit to her cultures. In this case, when drum is still considered as

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<sup>81</sup>M. Th. Mawene, *Gereja Yang Menyanyi*. Yogyakarta: PBMR ANDI, 2004),10.

<sup>82</sup>The author’s interview with Myun Ju Lee through email on April 14, 2021. Myun Ju Lee was appointed as president of Bangladesh Adventist Seminary School and College in October 1, 2005 (Available from <https://basc.edu.bd/pages/history.html>; accessed April 1, 2021); Nowadays he is President of Pakistan Union Section of Seventh-day Adventists.

<sup>83</sup>Based on writer’s personal observation when attending worship service during 6<sup>th</sup> International Scholars’ Conference in Adventist University of the Philippines, October 27-30, 2018.

<sup>84</sup>The writer’s personal observation when visiting an Adventkapel, one of SDA Churches in Amsterdam, Nederland, during sabbatical leave program of 2019. Visit is made on Sabbath, October 26, 2019.

<sup>85</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music.” Guidelines; Annual Council on October 13, 2004. Available from: <https://www.adventist.org/guidelines/a-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music/>; (accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

strength rhythmical musical instrument to one culture of the church or congregation, the church has right to reject the use of drums in worship services.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Drums is very common in the life of the Old Testament times. It is used both in religious and social life celebrations. This rhythmic musical instrument has widely been used in Christian worships and religious celebrations of Christian denominations. These Christian groups, in fact, are divided in two views. Some are familiar and agree to use drums in worship services, while others still disagree.

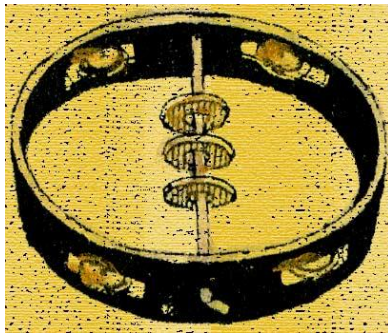
The similar view is found in Seventh-day Adventist Church. In this denomination, the use of drums in worship is still considered as something strange. Most of church members are still reluctant to accept drums as part of acceptable musical instruments for worship. On the other hand, there are many members enjoy using drums as part of praises to God in worship services.

Music plays an important role in bringing church members into the spirit of unity and encouraging the spirit of worship. Awareness is needed so that members will not be trapped into controversy and divisions. Those who employ drums as part of musical instrument whether it is because of cultural consideration or another possible reasons, they do not need to use drums in worship where the members of those who still reject it are involved in corporate worship. Those who are not using drums in worship or in any religious events and celebrations, they do not need to blame their fellow members. Apostle Paul counsels in 1 Corinthians 8:9 "But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak," is good to ponder on. Counseling and learning to and of each other should be lifted up higher.

## Appendix

### Rhythmic Musical Instruments

#### TAMBOURINE



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Tambourine- <https://www.bible-history.com/sketches/ancient/tambourine.html>



<https://www.timbrepraise.org/tambourine-theory/tambourine-parts/>



Tambourine – Wikipedia



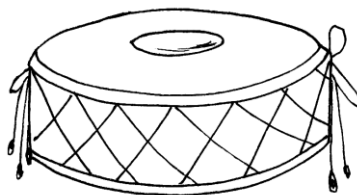
Tambourine

<https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/tambourine-hand-percussion-musical-instrument-20139142773.html>



Tambourine: [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

### HAND DRUM



Handrum (Old Testament)

Dennis Hinks © 1976

<https://www.journal33.org/other/html/otinstr.html>



Handrum: shutterstock.com



Woman playing hand drum: dreamstime.com

### MINAHASA TAMBUR



Tambur Minahasa: fotoberitasulut.blogspot.com



## CYMBAL



Cymbal: kindpng.com



Cymbal: pngwing.com

## Hand Cymbal



Cymbal: by paiste.com

### TABRET



Tabret: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

### TIMBREL

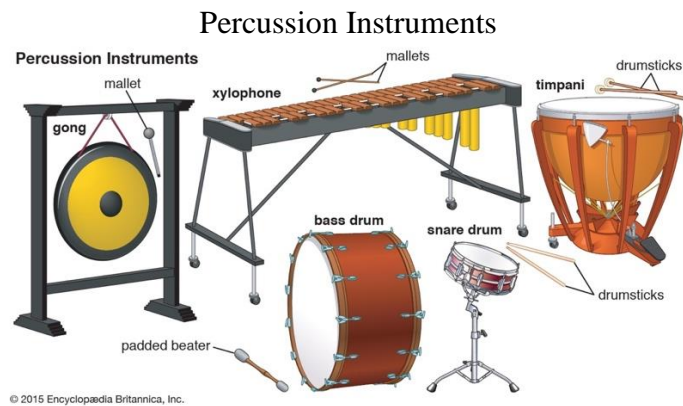


| [shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com) • 1135914422

### DRUM TIMPANI PERCUSSION



Drum Timpani Instrument: [pngwing.com](https://www.pngwing.com)



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