



## **The Instrument Hospital ER Repair and Care for Orff Instruments**

**Lissa Ray**

[LRay123@aol.com](mailto:LRay123@aol.com)

[Teachingwithorff.com](http://Teachingwithorff.com)

### **LABEL EVERYTHING**

- Label each barred instrument (resonator box) and all of the bars, including the F#s and B<sup>b</sup>s.
- Create a code for each instrument so students can easily match up extra bars with the right instrument. Differences in tuning may be a problem if you mix up the bars.
- Put a sign (name tag) on the outside of the instrument so students know what instrument they're playing.
- Always have students line up bars in order when they are removed. This makes it easier to put them back in the right place.
- Teach your students to remove bars using two hands. The demonstration using a pencil is dramatic.
- Get your instruments up off the floor if you can. This promotes better playing position, better technique and it's more comfortable for your students.

### **STORAGE**

- To store instruments for the summer, roll the bars up in towels to protect them.
- Make an attempt to get the instruments out of the summer humidity and heat.
- Wrap the boxes in paper or place on covered shelves to keep them from collecting dust.

### **XYLOPHONE CARE**

- Put down a cheap drop cloth (available at paint and hardware stores), plastic on one side and absorbent paper on the other, to protect your table or floor.
- Goo Gone removes stickers, masking-tape residue and gum. Let it sit so it does the work instead of you.
- Clean the bars with Old English Scratch Cover for Dark Wood. It stains so wear gloves and protective clothing.
- Use a gold Pilot Fine Point or fine point metallic Sharpie marker to re-label the letters on the bars. This makes it easier for students to identify the bars.

### **CARE OF THE RESONATOR BOX - GLOCKS, XYLOPHONES, AND METALLOPHONES**

- Vacuum dust bunnies and dirt from inside the box.
- Clean the outside with Scott's Liquid Gold or other furniture polish.
- For rattles and buzzes in the box, caulk with clear silicone caulk. The buzz source can be found by applying pressure to the various panels of the box while striking the bar that seems to set off the buzz.
- If you are transporting the instrument a short distance to a performance area, strap down the bars with elastic straps.
- For big moves remove the bars and roll them up in towels, fasten with rubber bands or bungee cords.

### NAILS AND TUBING/ELASTIC CORD

- Replace bent nails. Slight bends can be bent back with pliers.
- When replacing tubing, consider using cloth-covered elastic, which lasts longer.
- Drill out broken plastic pins. Replacement parts for just about anything can be ordered.
- Broken plastic resonator boxes can be repaired with Bondo. Follow the instructions on the container and work quickly before it sets.
- Send in a picture if you're not sure what to order.

### DRUMS

- Loosen the heads everyday of tunable hand drums and timpani.
- Dimples in plastic heads can be removed by heating the dent with a hair dryer and then applying ice. A couple of repetitions will take the dent right out.
- Know the range of your timpani to prevent tuning beyond their design which can lead to split heads and collapsed shells. Post the range on each timpani.
- Rattles in conga or timpani hardware, use thread locking compound on the screws which attach the hardware to the body of the drum. Do not use thread locking compound on the tension rods.
- Clean plastic heads once a year with mild soap and water.
- Use paraffin wax on the rim of the timpani to allow the head to glide more easily during tuning.
- If you have fiberskin on hand drums and small rough spots begin to develop in the head, cover the rough spot with Elmer's glue. It makes a great patch and doesn't seem to affect the sound.

### CYMBALS

- Clean cymbals with Brasso polish. Spray with clear coat of acrylic.

**Tools:** hammer, pliers, scissors, drill, caulking gun, hairdryer, clamps, small shop vacuum

**Cleaning Products and Materials:** Elmer's glue, Goo Gone, Scott's Liquid Gold, Bore Oil, Silicone Caulk, bee's wax, paraffin wax, Brasso polish, Old English Scratch Cover for Dark Wood, wood putty, wood glue, clamps or straps, gloves, drop cloth, rags, steel wool, wooden matches, drinking straws

*For more information on instrument care and repair, see video tape #14RR "Caring For Your Orff Instruments" By Peggy McCreary, 2001. Available through the AOSA Video library. Go to [AOSA.org](http://AOSA.org) and click on Teacher Tools for details. Additional videos of instrument repair may be found at [teachingwithorff.com/category/instrument-repair/](http://teachingwithorff.com/category/instrument-repair/)*

