

Suggested Assignments for Module Two: Instrument Histories

Using the article written by Edmund Bowles, create a timeline of the evolution of the timpani during the 19th Century. For each important development, include the date, the person who made the advance, and a short description of what that development was.

The influence of "the exotic" played a huge role in getting the percussion instruments into the orchestra — first in opera productions and from there, into purely orchestral compositions. Discuss the early influence of Janissary music in terms of the growth of the percussion section.

Discuss why you feel that some percussion instruments found popularity in folk and popular music while other percussion instruments were more at home in formal performances such as royalty festivities or ticketed concert events.

In the distant past, some percussion instruments have had strong relationships with the belief in, and celebration of, certain gods. Do you feel that this relationship between certain instruments and religious or spiritual rituals (specifically percussion instruments) has continued until today?

Advances in technology have always helped moved musical instrument quality forward. But technology doesn't necessarily mean software and computers. The application of a rope-tuned lacing system with tug-ears, for example, made possible the tuning of military drums. Discuss what you feel were the most significant technological developments for the improvement of percussion instruments.