

# STORYTELLERS



## STUDY GUIDE MUSICAL FOLKTALES



CELEBRATING  
**29**  
YEARS


Serving Schools In Seven States

Dear Educators,

Thank you for visiting our web site for this information. We trust that you will find this reference material helpful in some way. Some of the instruments listed on the following pages have multiple spellings, i.e., donno vs. dondo. We have included information on different types of stories and tales as well as numerous storytelling web sites.

We truly hope to hear from you this 2010-11 school year. It would be such a privilege for us to bring our program to your school. You have our promise that your students, staff and parents will love **Musical Folktales!**

Sincerely,

  
Audrey Allison

  
Robert Allison

*“Once again you captivated our students and parents with your wonderful presentations... the hands-on activities are always a big thrill. I will continue to highly recommend Musical Folktales other schools!”*

Mrs. Carolyn Lett, Diversity Coordinator  
Roeper School—Lower School Campus  
Bloomfield Hills, MI – 2010

*“Our "little ones" really loved you guys... thank you so very much for your stories, music.... You were wonderful.... We look forward to your return!”*

Mrs. Alice Finch, Director  
Alice Discovery Center  
North Chicago, IL - 2010

Storytelling Workshops



In-School Concerts

Family Concerts



Hands-On Workshops



Sharing Sessions



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# STORYTELLERS

Here are photos, spellings and information on a few of the instruments used in *Musical Folktales*. The Storytellers demonstrate that instruments from different parts of the world, different cultures, can be played together - *in beautiful harmony*. In fact, a primary purpose of this program is to show through music and stories the many similarities among different cultures. Presentations conclude with a reminder for young audiences to: **Open Their Ears, Open Their Eyes And Most of All... To Keep An Open Heart!**

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## Bala also, Xylophone and Balafon (Ba-la-phone)



The balafone is made of wood, string, leather and gourds. The gourds act as resonators, each of which has a opening covered by a membrane of spider cocoon. Among the Mandinka people, balafons are usually played by the professional Griots (storytellers).

## Steel Drum



Fashioned from a fifty-five gallon oil drum by the “panmen” of Trinidad (1940’s), the steel drum has become popular throughout the world. Two-three drums of varying sizes can produce a four-octave range. They are played with rubber-tipped mallets.

## Berimbau (Bear-im-bow)



Traditionally found in Brazil (originating in West Africa), the berimbau consists of a bow made of wood (or bamboo) strung with steel wire, with a resonating gourd attached. It is played by striking the string with a stick while fretting the string with a coin.

## Didgeridoo or Didjeridu (Di-ger-e-doo), Aka, *The Chanting Tube*.



The didgeridoo is one of the world’s earliest wind instruments. It is an instrument sacred to the Aborigines of Northern Australia. It was most often used with vocals to recount stories, maintaining the heritage of the Aborigine people. Traditionally, it was made from hollow trunks of the eucalyptus tree, bored by termites in Northern Australia.

## Udu, (ooh-doo)



Created by the Ibo (ee-bo) and Hausa Tribes of Nigeria, the udu has holes on its top and side. It is played using a combination of hits and slaps, producing deep, haunting tones. Udu, (meaning *pot*) is made of clay and can be heard today in many types of music.

## Cuica, (Kwee-kah)



The cuica is a small, cylindrical, metal friction drum. It is a staple of Brazilian Samba schools and is played by rubbing a wet cloth on a thin bamboo stick that is tied under the goatskin head. Pressure applied to the head of the drum alters the pitch, producing an almost vocal-like sound.

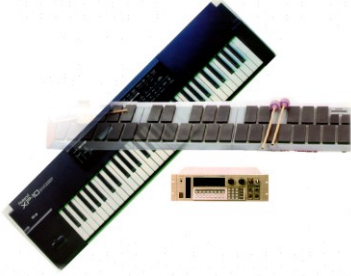
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# STORYTELLERS



**MIDI** = Musical Instrument Digital Interface



MIDI is a computer-based means of capturing, storing and reproducing sounds in music. The Storytellers blend advanced computer manipulated timbres with those produced naturally by the udu, berimbau, m'bira, etc.

The Storytellers creatively use MIDI to introduce sound effects in stories, such as dogs barking, birds chirping, etc. They also use MIDI to layer multiple-sounds and occasionally for rhythmic variety.

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## **Rainstick** also, **Rainmaker**



Rainsticks are traditionally made of cactus, but can be made of different materials including plastic. There is a series of toothpick-like spines inside the cactus that criss cross throughout the length of the stick, causing the enclosed pebbles to slowly traverse the stick. Traditionally, it was a ceremonial instrument used by various tribal groups to remove evil spirits and bring badly needed rain to their regions. (South and Central America).

## **Frame Drums**



There are many different origins of frame drums, from Native American to Celtic. They are similar in that they are all single-headed hand drums, like tambourines with no jingles. The “bodhran” of Irish origin is made with a traditional goatskin head with hardwood cross braces behind the head. It has a laminated shell and is played with a wooden beater.

## **M'bira**, (Em-be-rah) also, **Sanza**, (Zan-zah)



These “thumb pianos” are found throughout Africa in many forms and with many names, i.e., sanza, kembe, insimbi, eleke, oopochawa, and madumba. The tunings, number of rattan or metal tongues and the sizes vary from region to region. These instruments are the predecessors to today’s American-made kalimba.

## **Tabla**



This traditional ceremonial instrument from India consists of a pair of small drums. From a sitting position on the floor, they are played with the fingertips, palms and pressure on the heads to alter the timbre and pitch. The larger drum (bayan) is made of metal and the narrower drum (dayan) is made of wood. The black spots on either head are made of rubber and the drums sit on two round, donut-like bases covered in fabric.

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## MUSIC FOR STORIES

**Activity Songs:** Children love to participate in the telling of stories. Songs that involve young people by allowing them sing, dance, make animal sounds, stomp, clap, etc., will enhance any story's appeal tenfold.

**Story Songs:** Presenting any story, (preferably an original story) in song-form will captivate almost all audiences, particularly young audiences.

**Wordplay:** Unexpected word variations, colloquialisms, juxtapositions, puns and rhymes are a few tools at the disposal of educators and storytellers. Using this method requires a lot of study and preparation.

**Listing Songs:** Adding a new line to the refrain of a song each time it comes around, is a fun way to *build* songs while challenging participants.

*These are only four of many types of songs that can be used in stories. Any well-placed song can enhance a story, inspire, educate as well as entertain.*

The subject of using music in storytelling is a bit too broad to cover in this study guide. Simply put, we urge an *open-minded* approach. Educators should use all genre; folksongs, classical music, jazz, live music, pre-recorded music, high-tech music and \*low-tech music. When possible, the audience should be involved in musical selections. \**Low-tech music: Clapping, handmade shakers, spoons, washboards, etc.*

## PROPS, DRAMA AND MOVEMENT



*Audrey surprises everyone as she introduces "Mr. Snake!!!"*

Nothing is more basic, more important than capturing the interest of audiences! Without this connection, even the finest story will be pointless. Every means should be explored to ensure *initial* audience captivation. Story selection, content, sudden surprises, unique props, etc, will help to facilitate *continued* audience captivation.

Short skits, puppetry, masks, body motion, gestures, eye contact, vocal manipulation(s), drama, humor, etc., will contribute to making each story presentation a memorable experience for all.

Appropriate appearance, simple and concise introductions, dramatic pauses, expressive phrasing, character development and visualizations are just a few of the parameters to be adhered to in each presentation.

**Note:** 1) *A story that reads well may not work in a live oral presentation.* 2) *A story that works well for 30 story-lovers may not work at an outdoor festival of 10,000 people with varied interests.*

For ages 6-10, we suggest involving students in projects, i.e., making their own musical instruments. Shakers (various shapes and sizes), \*\*rainsticks, drums from coffee cans or oatmeal boxes, \*\*castanets, rattles and even mock didgeridoos (made using pvc pipes) are a few instruments that children can make.

**\*\*Rainsticks:** Using a heavy cardboard tube, place toothpicks (or straight pins) in the seam around and down the tube. Bend or break off toothpicks at seam if they are too long. Secure toothpicks with glue or tape. Tape one end of the tube securely and add rice and small dried beans. Secure the opposite end and cover the tube with colorful tape. Tip slowly back and forth, creating the sound of rain.

**\*\*Castanets:** Using a heavy, yet flexible piece of plastic (2" x 6"), glue a button on each end. Children can fold the plastic between thumb and finger to click together.

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The Storytellers' stories are from personal experiences, literature, oral traditions, history and current events. In their workshops and classroom visits, The Storytellers discuss the use of props, music, movement, vocal effects, humor and drama. Their effective use of these extensions adds dimension to their stories. The Storytellers also present concerts, hands-on sharing sessions and storytelling workshops.



### TYPES OF STORIES

**Fables:** Brief stories designed to teach a moral, often using animal characters, i.e., Aesop's Fables.

**Scary Stories:** Tales that focus on our fears (including ghost stories), such as snakes in your bed.

**Circular Tales:** A story ending as it began, with the main character learning his/her/its lesson.

**Tall Tales:** Stories in which bravado and/or exaggeration are the main element, i.e., Paul Bunyan.

**Why? Stories:** Stories that explain origins, i.e., How Leopards Got Their Spots.

**Myths:** Tales of gods or demigods that explain natural events, i.e., the creation of the world.

**Current Events:** Stories of today's events in the world, usually presented in a humorous manner.

**Historical Facts:** Stories of past events, satirized, dramatized and/or humorously presented.

These are only eight (8) types of stories often used by some of today's finest storytellers in live performances.

### THE ARTISTS



**Audrey Allison** has performed and given workshops at over two-thousand schools, libraries, community centers and concert halls throughout the Midwest United States. Her animated style, experience and vast repertoire combine to distinguish her as one of today's finest storytellers. Audrey plays steel drums, cuica, berimbau, djembe' and is one of few *chromatic* kalimba (double-sided kalimba) players in the United States!

**Robert Allison** plays didgeridoo, udu, balafone, donno, keyboards and other musical instruments. He combines primitive, modern and technologically advanced timbres to accompany Audrey's captivating stories. Prior to The Storytellers, Bob performed with many renowned entertainers/artists, including: Barry Manilow, Buddy Rich, Andy Williams, Della Reese, Diahann Carroll, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and numerous others.

**The Allison**s (married 30 years) enjoy good health, three adult children and eight beautiful grandchildren.



# STORYTELLERS

## WEB SITES



Below are a few web sites that you will find informative. These sites include storytelling festivals, associations, books, university programs, storytellers and other resources-worldwide. After looking at over 1,000 sites, we simply selected a few that would be interesting to educators, storytellers, (all levels) students and parents. Enjoy!

**Storybook Online Network**

<http://www.storybookonline.net>

**Southeast Louisiana Storytelling Guild**

<http://www.yarnspin.com/sela.htm>

**Eldrberry's Story Telling Page**

<http://www.eldrbarry.net/index.htm>

**Storytelling Resource Center-1**

<http://storydynamics.com/resources1.html>

**Children's Storybooks Online**

<http://www.magickeys.com/books/links.html>

**Appalachian Folktales and Web Sites**

<http://www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/FolkCollGen.htm>

**Center for Digital Storytelling – Links**

<http://www.storycenter.org>

**The Storytelling Resource Centre**

[www.thestorytelling-resource-centre.com](http://www.thestorytelling-resource-centre.com)

**Zen Stories**

<http://www-usr.rider.edu/~suler/zenstory/zenstory.html>

**Myth Stories**

<http://www.mythstories.com/>

**Int'l. Storytelling Center, Jonesboro, TN**

<http://www.storytellingcenter.net>

**National Storytellers' Network**

<http://www.storynet.org>

**Classroom Storytelling and Lesson Plans**

<http://www.storyarts.org>

**Folk and Fairy Tales**

<http://www.rickwalton.com/folktale/folktale.htm>

**Tim Sheppard's Storytellers' Resources**

<http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/>

**Toronto Storytelling School**

<http://www.storytellingtoronto.org/>

**The Jonesboro (TN) Storytellers Guild**

<http://www.storytellersguild.org/>

**The Story Connection**

<http://www.storyconnection.net/?content=links>

**The Moonlit Road**

<http://www.themoonlitroad.com/>

**Western Washington University**

<http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~rvohs/index.htm>

Again, these are but a few of the many storytelling web sites that we found. Please feel free to send us your ideas for new storytelling web sites, organizations, schools and other resources.