

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN DRUM KIT

(the real primitive shoe-string budget and stuff your mom threw away way.)



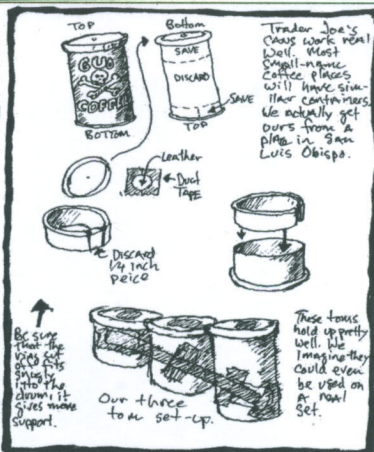
Lesson 1: The Tom's

Ingredients:

Coffee can with plastic top (the Trader Joe's one works real well; the only qualification is that they be long enough with cardboard sides with a metal lip and metal bottom), leather, duct tape, strips of wood or other hard stuff.

What you do:

Take the plastic top and duct tape a 2 inch circle of leather to the bottom, put it on the metal bottom, duct tape the edges (optional) and put a 1 inch square in the center. Now cut off the bottom portion. The more you cut off, the higher the pitch will be. Take the part you just cut off (the metal edge) and cut around it leaving a 1 inch rim. Now cut off about .25 to .5 inch off the rim (see picture). Put this part on the inside of the tom with the metal edge sitting on the cardboard edge. Cutting off the .25 inch should allow this part to go in perfectly. Now duct tape this in and you're done. Altering the amount you cut off will affect the pitch as well adding more leather or other padding. If you make a few of them and line them up (we used three) you will have a series of pitches.



Lesson 2: The Snare

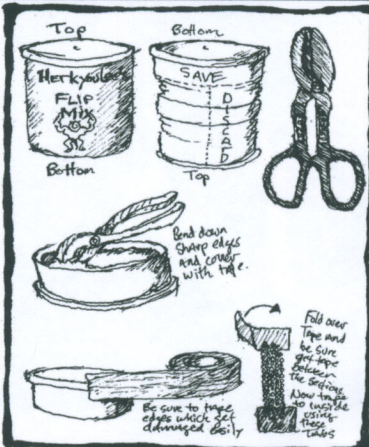
Ingredients:

Big metal can with plastic top (we used a Kayser's Hercules Flip Mix can), leather, duct tape, and some sort of loose chain, really really sharp scissors.

Cut 2-3 inch circle of leather and duct tape to the bottom of plastic top; put top onto the metal bottom. CAUTION: DANGER PRESENT IN FOLLOWING STEPS... Now cut out the rest of the can till you have about 3-4 inches left, bent the razor sharp edge down with pliers and cover with duct tape.

Before moving on to next step, clean out all wounds inflicted in the previous step.

Now take the chain (it should be as long as you can get), hopefully it is a loose chain made out of hard metal like the ones you get on Nike shoes or maybe even the chain off a snare drum. Now take the chain and bring it end to end so there's about .5-1 inch on either side to fit in the drum and apply duct tape as shown. This effect only really works when miked, but it makes it seem professional. Now apply tape in the center and around the head of the drum for years of drumming pleasure.

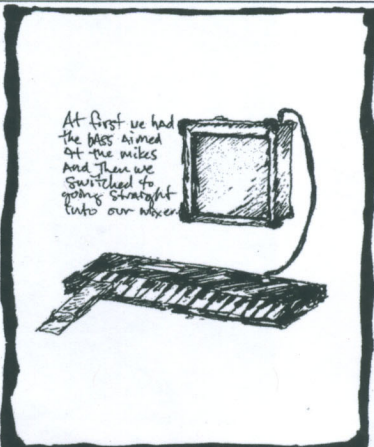


Lesson 3: The Bass Drum

Ingredients

One keyboard, one stick or other hard substance (sheet metal, plastic, bone...), one amplifier with the proper cords (optional), one mixer with the proper cords (also optional), and duct tape.

Put the keyboard on the ground next to where your foot naturally rests or wherever you want it. Duct tape to the ground your wood or other long hard substance so it lays on the bass end of the keyboard while not pressing down the keys. Turn on the keyboard and set it to a sound that comes closest to a bass drum kind of sound. If you have a keyboard with drums on it you're pretty much set. Now if you're lucky enough to have a real snazzy keyboard or lucky enough to have a friend with a snazzy keyboard (ahem) you'll be able to hook it up to an amplifier using .25 inch outs or RCA jacks and let the bass roar. If you don't have a guitar amp you can probably hook it up to your stereo, given you have RCA inputs and the proper jack. If you're miking your drums for recording set up your mikes. From here you can either let the bass bleed into one of the mikes or plug it straight into the mixer.



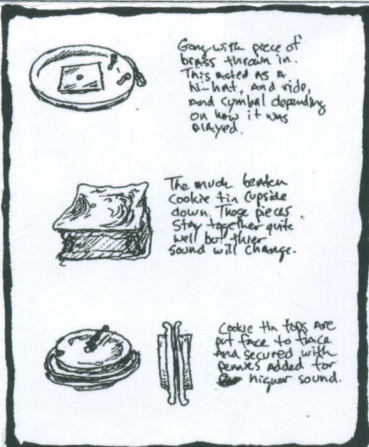
Lesson 4: The Cymbals, etc...

Ingredients:

Extremely hard metal sheets, bowls, etc...

Well, you're pretty much on your own here since there is no specific products that can be named. What we did, however, was take a gong that was given to Mr. 40 Braids, turned it upside down and put a roughly 6 inch square sheet of brass in the center, giving it sort of a hi-hat sound. We imagine any combination of hard metals can produce a hi-metal crash sort of sound giving a definite industrial feel to anyone's playing. Aving, experiment and chances are you'll end up with something that fits your needs. Just don't break down and buy anything!

Here are some of the other percussion instruments included in our set: **Cookie tins...** These tins are imported from all over the world and sound really nice. Some of them have bassy sounds, some high snare type sounds, and after a while of pounding, some take on a great steel drum/timpani kind of sound. **Cookie tin tops...** These can be combined to make cymbals. We've also combined them with pennies to make cymbals. Play around!

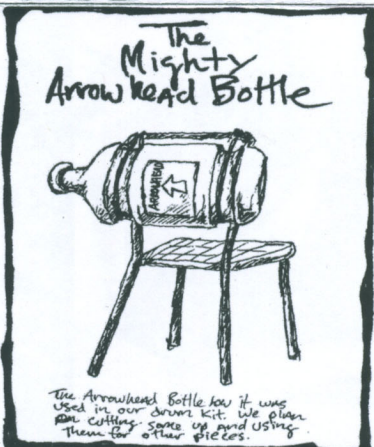


THE MIGHTY ARROWHEAD BOTTLE

Possibly the single greatest gift of God, the Mighty Arrowhead Bottle is an absolute necessity to any homemade drum kit. This single piece of plastic contains possibly an infinite amount of drum sounds ranging from snare to bass to marimba to timpani. You can play it with the tips of the sticks, ends of the sticks, sides of the sticks, padded sticks, wooden clubs... all will give you a different effect.

Unfortunately we only had one Mighty Arrowhead Bottle, but we plan to obtain more for different positions on the drum kit. The position we had ours in was the horizontal suspension position (see diagram). Addition of different materials to the bottle's basin opens up a whole other world of sounds, as does the different positions, as does cutting out sections.

An important note about this wonderful piece is that it is almost absolutely indestructible. John Bohnam once said, "The day Arrowhead starts making drum kits is the day I burn mine."



... Some Notes About This Recording, About Food, And Whatever Else...

This tape is the result of an experiment between two people and various instruments. With a week of spring break coming up, Mr. 40 Braids and Lazy Boy started an idea brewing of putting together, playing and releasing a tape within that week. It seemed like an impossible goal since we didn't have the money for tapes, or a place to play, or any talent to speak of, or even people to play all the instruments usually used in the musical process. But we did it anyway...

The original idea was to find someone who would be out of town for the week and needed someone to watch their house. In return for feeding their pets, watering the plants and generally keeping their stuff safe, we would be able to wreck audio havoc within the house.

This proved to be almost impossible. Hardly anyone we knew were going anywhere, and those who were going somewhere had at least one family member being left behind. The one person who was going to have an empty house was only going to be gone for two days and since the neighbors were pretty close, the house wouldn't have suited our needs anyway.

So the search continued...

THE BALCONY:

Eventually we had exhausted every possibility of a free home so we searched for someone who was tolerant enough, into music enough, or crazy enough to let us take over the house while they were in it. So, in the end, the burden of noise and food consumption fell on the parent of the Boy with 40 Braids and swarthy skin.

Quite cheerfully his mother agreed to have us stay there and record our album as long as we cut out the really loud stuff after five. We had played there before, and for the boy with 40 Braids, it literally had all the comforts of home.

All agreements settled, we moved in...

STUDIO WITH A VIEW:

After a few days it was decided that an organized recording and monitoring system had to be set up. After being cooped up two days we moved outdoors. The speakers, effects boxes and four track were moved out and onto the wide wood balcony with the mike cables and power cables leading indoors. A light was brought out for night time sessions, as well as spooky death-rock-ish candles. Amps were moved outdoors, as well as vacant speaker cabinets for chairs.

The studio was finally set for action...

COOKING:

The arrangement reached turned out to be greater than we could have ever expected. The noise didn't seem to bother anyone, and for the Lazy Boy, the household held great rewards. The Lazy Boy had never eaten the food of the mother and the grandfather of Mr. Braids. The food was delicious. Some of it was said to be East Indian, and it is assumed that most of it was Trinidadian since that is the family's origin. It was spicy, hot, and indescribably sumptuous, every granule worth the licking of a plate...

TOP RAMEN:

Every afternoon, between the hours of aural excitement, Lazy Boy and Mr. 40 Braids would trot downstairs for the ritual Top Ramen feasting. It seems that it is wide public opinion that Top Ramen is unwhorly, disgusting food. These kind of words are met with great defiance because for the boys Lazy and 40 Braids, Top Ramen had become a must.

They did not stop at just adding the powder and oils supplied in the packets, but concocted substances that would be looked forward to every afternoon. And by the week's end, Lazy Boy was weeping at the thought that he may not see Top Ramen for quite a while...