



Percussion Add-ons for a Drum

by [Thinkenstein](#) on March 11, 2012

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I'm a refugee from Los Angeles, living in backwoods Puerto Rico for about 35 years now and loving it. I built my own home from discarded nylon fishnet and cement.

Intro: Percussion Add-ons for a Drum

A well-rounded rhythm section has more than just drums, so I added some accessory sounds around the outside rim of my djembe drum.

I have a nice Remo brand djembe with a synthetic material head. It had a sort of ringing noise that lingered after every strike, though; something that I didn't like. I wanted a deeper sort of more jungle drum voice to it. Both of those elements were fixed by resting layers of blue x-ray film material on the original drumhead. The more layers, the more deadening of the ring. The round layers, were first taped together and then joined by a silicone rubber flap to the outer ring of the drum, so that it could be used with either voice by raising or lowering the layers via the flexible bridge of silicone. I always seem to use the deeper sound, though, and eventually eliminated the silicone bridge, just taping the layers down to the head with electrical tape.

Accessory maraca sounds, and clacking noises were added to the outer rim of the drum head using silicone rubber. Silicone's springiness makes it great for holding film cans, and other things, that hold the maraca seeds. Some of the containers are allowed to move downward and strike the drum body, adding the clacking sound option for harder strikes.

This is a great way for a drummer to round out the percussion background, since you can make single sounds, or multiple sounds, just by striking one or more things at a time.

Hear how it sounds in the last step.



Step 1: Attaching the Add-ons

First, you need a complete circle that goes around the outside of the drum head, upon which to add the silicone connections to the sound makers. I first waxed the drum head, so that I could conceivably remove the whole silicone unit someday, if I choose, and get back to the basic djembe. I doubt now that I will ever choose to do that, because all of the sound modifications were successful.

In that first ring around the drum head, I embedded some string, to keep the silicone ring from stretching and everything falling off. After the ring had hardened up, I continued with the silicone, making bridges and attaching the sound makers to the bridges. The bridges flex nicely, so the shaking of the maracas goes on for a while after the striking of it.

With practice, you can just extrude silicone and build up the bridges in the air. As an alternative, you can make them flat on a non-stick surface, such as polyethylene plastic (stretched trash bags work). Then, when dry, stick them to the ring with more silicone. You have to be creative as to how you hold parts in place until the silicone hardens up. I set the drum next to a table and rested things on the table while making the flexible connecting bridges.

One layer of x-ray film material on the drum head will kill some of the drum's ringing sound. Two layers kills it more, and so on. The number of layers allows for adjustment to personal taste. I eventually just taped the layers down on the head, which holds them securely during playing. The tape can just be peeled up later to remove the layers of film.

Remember that, due to the weight of the units, the rubber bridges will bend downward some. If you want them to stick straight out, you have to aim them a little upward when you put them in place.



Image Notes

1. The base ring of silicone goes all around the drum. Attach the add-on sound units to it.



Step 2: Here's How It Sounds

It is fun to play this instrument with more than one person at a time. I did the recording alone, however.

Click on the dog-eared page icon to open the MP3 audio file.



File Downloads



12-5-19 - C djembe.mp3 (1 MB)

[NOTE: When saving, if you see .tmp as the file ext, rename it to '12-5-19 - C djembe.mp3']

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