



# TOTAL PERCUSSION

BY JOSH GOTTRY

Total percussion is a widely held philosophy that all percussionists should be well versed in as many percussion instruments as possible. In its narrowest sense, it suggests the need for beginning elementary school percussionists to study both bells (pitched percussion) and snare drum (non-pitched percussion). In application, it is the reason why most honor band and scholarship auditions require a minimum of three percussion instruments to be performed (i.e. marimba, snare drum, and timpani). From my personal experience, and to put it bluntly, total percussion is the reason I get calls to gig! The more any percussionist can do, on as many percussion instruments as available, in as many styles and settings as possible, the more performance opportunities that person will have in the future. The best illustration I can offer in this regard is simply a list . . . a list of every percussion instrument that I can recall having played in a professional (paid) situation.

## PITCHED PERCUSSION

- Timpani
- Bells
- Xylophone
- Marimba
- Vibraphone
- Chimes
- Steel Drum

## DRUMS & CYMBALS

- Snare Drum
- Field Drum
- Bass Drum
- Crash Cymbals
- Suspended Cymbal
- Tam-Tam/Gong
- Concert Toms
- Drumset

## ACCESSORY PERCUSSION

- Tambourine
- Triangle
- Finger Cymbals

## ACCESSORY PERCUSSION Cont.

- Sleigh Bells
- Wood Block
- Cowbell
- Slide Whistle
- Siren Whistle
- Shaker
- Wind Chimes
- Temple Blocks
- Castanets
- Ratchet
- Sandpaper Blocks
- Whip

## ETHNIC PERCUSSION

- Bongos
- Congas
- Djembe
- Doumbek
- Cabasa/Afuche
- Guiro

This doesn't even count the duck call or clay pots I've played in percussion ensembles, but it hopefully presents some degree of perspective. I certainly wouldn't claim to be the best percussionist on each one of these instruments. In fact, I am fully aware of my strengths and weaknesses, and I do have my favorites. But if I'm called on to play percussion, I rarely, if ever, turn down a gig because I'm unable to play the percussion instrument they need.



**Josh Gottry** is an active percussion instructor, performer, and composer in Gilbert, Arizona. He serves as an instructor for several local percussion ensembles and private percussion students, and performs regularly as both a soloist and ensemble member. As a composer, Mr. Gottry is a three-time ASCAP grant recipient with seventeen works published for percussion. Josh Gottry is a clinician for Mike Balter Mallets, Pro-Mark Sticks, and Yamaha Percussion.