



Caribbean Express



STUDY GUIDE



RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS



Dear Teachers and Educators,

Rhythmix is excited to have you and your students join us for the 2022-23 season of **PAL - Performance, Art & Learning**. PAL assemblies are designed to foster awareness of world cultures, stimulate a sense of pride in students' cultural heritage and deepen connections to their communities.

PAL assemblies also serve as a catalyst for arts learning and a springboard for integrating arts education into your classroom.

To help your students gain the most out of each PAL assembly, we suggest that the learning begin before, and continue after, every performance.

Utilizing the resources provided, your students can engage more fully with the performance experience, connecting what they see and hear to their personal lives, culture, community and any school subjects you choose.

Aligning with the **California Arts Standards**, the accompanying study guides and slide sets help foster students' artistic competencies, cultivate their appreciation and understanding of the arts, and support them to fully engage in lifelong arts learning.

At Rhythmix, we believe exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience, helping us to learn about ourselves, each other, and the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

Your "PALs" at Rhythmix



CARIBBEAN EXPRESS

Journey through the great music of the Caribbean & the USA



Experience a dynamic mix of Caribbean and Latin American music rooted in the rhythms of Africa and indigenous cultures of the Americas with the Caribbean Express! Demonstrating the role that music plays in cultural identity, history and geography, Caribbean Express encompasses a wide variety of styles from Cuba, Trinidad, Mexico and Jamaica, including calypso, bomba, salsa, son, rumba, reggae y más! Get ready to sing, dance and clap along with the clave, congas, steel pan and be inspired by the rhythms of the Caribbean. As they say in Latin America, “¡Vamos a bailar!”

Caribbean Express is:

- Jesús Díaz on vocals and percussion, from Cuba
- Colin Douglas on drums and guitar, from the USA
- Derek Smith on the steel drum, from the USA
- Saul Sierra on the electric bass, from Mexico

With music, all you need is your ears and imagination to be able to travel the world!

Geography

The Caribbean Sea lies roughly between Mexico, Florida and Venezuela. The Caribbean is made up of almost 7,000 islands in this area, but also the coastal regions of surrounding countries.



View larger map and discover the geography of the Caribbean at [WorldAtlas.com](https://www.worldatlas.com)

Vocabulary

Percussion instruments: any instruments you can hit, shake, scrape or scratch

String Instruments: any instrument that is plucked with the fingers

Get to know the instruments!

Steel Pan from Trinidad

The **Steel drum** or **pan**, is a very unique instrument, and it was invented very recently. It is a skillfully hammered 55-gallon drum which is carefully tuned to produce exact tones. Each Pan or Set of Pans carries the full chromatic range of notes and can produce just about any kind of music.



Photo by [David Chang Kit](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Watch a demonstration of the Steel Pan [Here](#).



Now, watch the [BP Renegades Steel Orchestra](#) play “Like Ah Boss” at the International Panorama Competition in Trinidad & Tobago!

Conga Drum from Cuba

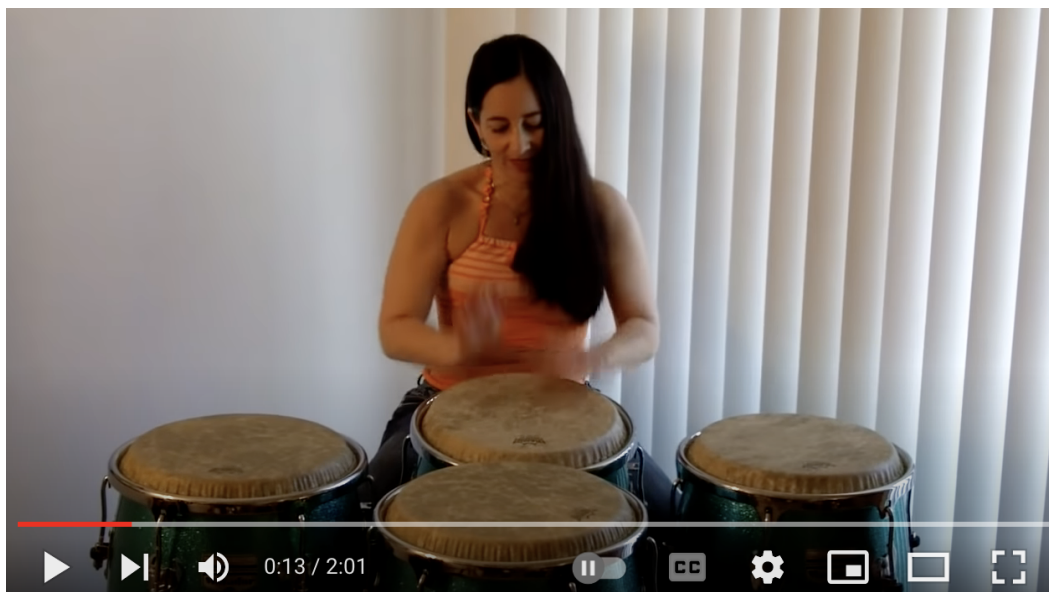


The **conga**, also known as **Tumbadora**, is a tall, narrow, single headed drum. Congas are shaped like barrels and classified into three types:

Quinto (lead drum, highest), **Tres Dos** or **Tres Golpes** (middle), and **Tumbador** (lowest). Congas were originally used in Afro-Cuban music genres such as conga (hence their name), rumba, where each drummer would play a single drum, and other popular styles such as son.

Image: A pair of congas (front) with a pair of bongos (back)
Photo by: [Edwin1971](#) at [Dutch Wikipedia](#) ([License Info](#))

Enjoy this [Conga Solo](#) with percussionist Melena from Havana, Cuba!



Bongo from Cuba

The **bongo** is an Afro-Cuban percussion instrument consisting of a pair of small open bottomed drums of different sizes. The bigger size is called the **hembra** (female) which produces the lower sound, and the smaller size is called the **macho** (male) which produces the higher sound. Bongos are commonly played in genres such as Son Cubano, Salsa, and Afro-Cuban jazz.



Check out the Congas and Bongo in action in this [short video by Trio Peligroso](#) in Cuba!



Drum Kit from the United States

The **drum kit**, also called a **drum set**, or **drums**, is a collection of drums and other percussion instruments, typically cymbals, which are set on stands to be played with sticks held in both hands, and the feet operating a kick-drum pedal and a high-hat pedal.



Image: Drum-Set (made by Sonor),
Cymbals by Headliner and Paiste.
Photo by Stephan Czuratiss
(Jazz-face).([License Agreement](#))

Check out an [amazing drum solo by Senri Kawaguchi](#)



Guitar

The **guitar** is a stringed musical instrument, with a fretted fingerboard, typically in-curved sides, with 6 or 12 strings. It's played by strumming with fingers or a guitar pick.



Photo of guitar by [Louis Hansel](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Bass Guitar

The **bass guitar** is a plucked string instrument like the electric or acoustic guitar. It has 4-6 strings and produces a lower sound. Unlike the acoustic bass, the bass guitar needs an amp and electricity to be heard.



Photo by [Seif Eddin Khayat](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Thank You! ¡Gracias! Mèsi! Masha danki!

Thank you for joining Rhythmix Cultural Works and Caribbean Express. We hope you enjoy your musical journey through the Caribbean and encourage you to open your mind to the diversity of cultures in the Bay Area.

We look forward to seeing you next time!



Caribbean Express at Rhythmix Cultural Works, 2019. Photo by Clayton Mitchell Photography.

This study guide was written by Caribbean Express with additional development by Rhythmix Cultural Works.

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About Rhythmix Cultural Works

Rhythmix Cultural Works brings people of all ages together to experience and explore music, dance, visual art and educational opportunities. The organization seeks to build community by inspiring engagement in the arts as a way to learn about each other and the world. With a strong commitment to provide programming relevant to the local population, Rhythmix strives to promote cultural awareness, encourage participation in the arts, and support local artists in the presentation of their work.

Since Rhythmix opened its doors in 2007, the community-based arts facility has built its reputation through the artistic excellence and cultural depth of its programming. To date, more than 150,000 people have engaged in arts experiences, attending high-quality performances of world music, dance, theater, exhibits and community events, as well as enrolling in classes for youth and adults in the arts, crafts, and movement-based practices from other cultures.

About PAL - Performance, Art & Learning

Rhythmix Cultural Works believes that exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience and a catalyst for cultural celebration. In support of this vision, Rhythmix developed PAL as an assembly-based youth arts education program in collaboration with the Alameda Unified School District. PAL fosters awareness of world cultures and empowers underserved youth through exposure to educational music and dance performances.

Thanks to the belief in the power of arts education and generous support from our funders and sponsors, PAL has served over 50,000 students since it launched in 2012.

For more info about Rhythmix, please visit: www.rhythmix.org

