



# Didjeridu Tutorial



In this section you will find lessons, hints, tips and audio samples to help you to learn to play and enjoy the didjeridu. The text is based on Ed Drury's. We are deeply grateful for all the effort and contributions he has made to the project.

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# Didjeridu Tutorial

## The Basic Drone



### ● Lesson Objective

In this lesson you'll get your first sounds out of your didjeridu ! Your objective is to play a controlled drone. This should be the beginning of a long and enjoyable didj playing adventure.

### ● Technique

To give you an idea what your lips should be doing, first practice making the lip buzzing without the didjeridu. Your friends will surely think you're nuts! Puff out your cheeks and push out your lips, drawing the corners of your mouth back a bit, allowing the center part of your lips to be loose. Blow air through your lips, allowing them to vibrate making a low pitched buzzing sound. This should be just like "blowing a raspberry". Your lips should be relaxed, and flap up and down making a sound which is not unlike pneumatic hammer.

The next, and somewhat trickier step is to transfer this loose lip buzzing technique to the mouthpiece of the didjeridu. There are two styles for meeting the mouthpiece : straight on with the mouthpiece centered on the lips below the nose or to the right or left of center. Both methods are fine - use whichever seems natural to you.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and blow evenly down the didjeridu while buzzing your lips. In the beginning you may well find that with your lips touching the mouthpiece, its much harder to get that buzzing going. It often helps to get them started with a burst of air. For some it helps to begin with a something like pronouncing the plosive "p". With a little practice you will be able to keep the portion of your lips which cross the cavity of the mouthpiece vibrating. This will produce the drone. If the sound is high pitched (like a trumpet note) relax your lips a bit so they vibrate at a lower rate.

As you gain experience you will be able to begin the drone more and more gently, avoiding the initial strong air burst. If your note sounds flat and weak, try blowing a bit harder.

### ● Common Mistakes

- Don't purse your lips as if you are playing a trumpet. Remember that the secret is to relax you lips so that they flap up and down freely.
- *Never press the mouthpiece tightly against your lips* as this interferes with the buzzing. If you really press too hard, you'll end up cutting off the circulation to your lips ! Owww - that hurts ! Time and again you'll catch yourself pressing the didj too hard against your lips when you are trying to master something new. Remember that all you need to do is make a seal.
- Beginner's often overblow. Once you have blasted out your first drone, relax and reduce your blowing. You'll be surprised to find that you can still keep a nice drone going with much less air.

### ● Difficulty

This excercise should be fairly straightforward. Usually you get something in the first few tries. It will take a while longer before you can control the drone.

### ● Hints and Tips

Try to relax and let the instrument show you how to do it. This exercise should be fun. Get to know your instrument. Look it up and down, inside and our. If its an original, feel the wood and appreciate the artwork.

Remember that didjing can be a personal journey, open your senses to all that your instrument can show you.



[Sound Sample](#) [.wav format]



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# Didjeridu Tutorial

## Creating Your First Rhythms



### ● Lesson Objective

In these exercises you will learn the simplest tools for creating rhythms in your playing. Because a didj does not have the tonal agility of many other wind instruments, you have to compensate by playing rhythms instead of melody. This lesson should get you started on this road.

### ● Techniques

There are many techniques for creating rhythm, but here we'll discuss just a few basic ones. More advanced lessons will pick up where we left off.

- **Gut Slaps** - Our first rhythm is a basic 4/4 beat produced by bouncing the air through our buzzing lips using the tummy muscles just as if we were expelling a deep belly laugh (eg - ha!ha!ha!ha!). Using the diaphragm while playing the didjeridu is an important technique. As the strongest respiratory muscle, the diaphragm can supply the largest amount of volume for the least amount of work. One of the primary health benefits of playing the didjeridu involves the use of this muscle. So breath deep and feel the beat!
- **Tongue** - Next, try producing the same rhythm using the tongue by mouthing the word "Tu-Tu-Tu-Tu". The tip of the tongue is placed just behind the upper front teeth and as quickly snapped downward. Variations of this sound can be made by mouthing "Da-Da-Da-Da", "Ta-Ta-Ta-Ta", "Te-Te-Te" or "Ka-Ka-Ka-Ka". Get adventurous and combine these together to create your own rhythms. Try "Ta-Ka-Ta-Ka..." or "Ta-Ka-Te-Ta-Ka-Da...." etc.
- **Cheeks** - By squeezing the cheeks we can change the harmonics of the sound of the didjeridu. Playing the basic drone allowing your cheeks to puff out, then squeeze the cheeks together slowly allowing them to puff out again. A "wah-wah" effect should result. Think of a bellows squeezing in and out. Practice doing this slowly at first and then faster. Finally, vary the speed by doing two slow cheek squeezes followed by three faster ones. (2-3 beat). This is a particularly effective technique as it not only creates rhythm, but also has a marked effect on the harmonics produced by the instrument.

### ● Common Mistakes

Often beginners will find it difficult to keep the drone going as they are pronouncing the tongued sounds. If you take too long pronouncing the sound, (like holding your tongue on the roof of your mouth too long while making the "Ta" sound) then the drone will stop. Be decisive, make the sound clearly and quickly.

### ● Difficulty

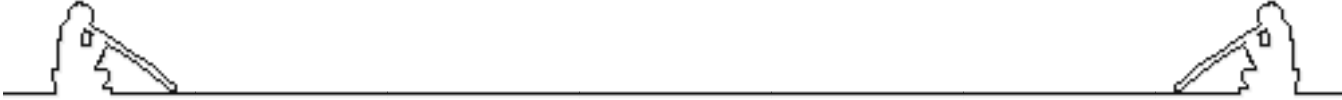
These techniques are quite simple. You will be able to get the basics right straight away. It will take a while longer to master them though, especially achieving tight control of the tongue techniques.

### ● Hints and Tips

Try to make the sounds as defined as possible. This is especially important for the tongue techniques. Start out slowly, and try to pronounce those "Ta-Ka-Te-De" sounds as clearly as possible. You'll be doing yourself a big favour by concentrating on making the sounds as clearly as you can. As you get more profficient, increase the speed and complexity of the tongue rhythms you play. It's possible to play very fast rhythms using this technique.



[bounced breaths and or gut slaps single tongued notes](#) [.wav format]



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# Didjeridu Tutorial

## Circular Breathing



### ● Lesson Objective

In this lesson you should learn the basic idea of circular breathing. This does not mean to say that you will be able to circular breathe, but you will be along the path to getting it.

### ● Technique

First a word about what circular breathing is. As you listen to didgeridu recordings, you will no doubt notice that the performer never seems to stop for a breath! Either he or she has a phenomenal lung capacity or there is a trick somewhere. Being world-wise, I'm sure you'll all choose the latter explanation. The "trick" is known as circular breathing. Physiologically it's not possible to breathe in and blow out simultaneously, but it is possible to maintain air pressure, without blowing, by using your mouth like the airbag of a bagpipe. With this (small) reservoir of air maintaining the drone, you can sniff a quick breath through your nose, thus topping up your lungs so that you can then continue blowing. This process of snatching short sniffs will, with lots of practice, allow you to play continuously. It's not easy though, and may well be the trickiest part of learning to play.

There are many ways for you to learn the basic technique. Each teacher appears to have his or her own method, so I will try to include all the techniques I encounter. If you have any ideas, don't keep them to yourself, they may be very helpful to others, and can be included in this tutorial.

### **Ed Drury has the following advice on learning to circular breathe:**

- (A) It is helpful to do some strengthening exercises. Droning while squeezing the cheeks, as described in earlier lessons, will help. A useful adjunct which you can use away from the didgeridu is to employ a balloon as follows :
  1. Move air back and forth between the mouth and an inflated balloon by moving **ONLY** the cheeks in and out.
  2. This should produce an audible sound of air quickly moving back and forth between the balloon and the mouth. Breathe in and out through the nose as required. Try to complete a cycle per second. Start with one minute duration and work up to three minutes.
- (B) Timing. Puff out your cheeks and use your lips to make a small opening in the center of your mouth as if blowing into a straw. Try to make a small steady stream of air come out of this opening using only the air in your cheeks. By placing the palm of your hand in front of your lips you should be able to feel the air stream. Breathe in through your nose while you are squeezing the air in your cheeks out.
- (C) Transfer the previous step to the didgeridu. Try to allow your lips to vibrate loosely so a low short tone is produced. It should sound something like "harrumph". Now blow the air in your lungs through your lips letting them vibrate as in the basic drone. Allow your cheeks to puff out as you run out of air and then repeat the process from the beginning of this step.
- (D) Continue working with step C increasing the speed such that the pause between the sound emitted by your cheek squeeze and the sound of your basic drone decreases. Don't worry about the transfer between the cheek powered sound and the lung powered drone being smooth for now. It will come with practice. Just try to keep shortening the pause until it disappears completely.
- (E) To work on smoother transfers between air coming from your cheeks and air coming from your lungs, place a straw in a glass of water. The glass should be only about a third full. Alternating cheek squeezing and

blowing, try to keep a steady stream of bubbles coming from the end of the straw - breathing in while you squeeze your cheeks. If you can keep the bubbles going smoothly with out pause, you are circular breathing.

**This is from the London Didgeridoo Society pamphlet:**

1. Breathing in through the nose at the same time as expelling air from the cheeks. Take a sudden swift sniff of air into the lungs, while you are blowing air out from the cheeks.
2. Create a steady stream of air coming out of the mouth. Most of the time, the air comes directly from your lungs, but while you are inhaling, the air is pushed out from the cheeks.

Practice this by placing a finger in front of your mouth and try to keep a constant stream of air hitting your hand.

During playing :

1. Blow and let lips vibrate, creating a basic drone for about 2 to 3 seconds.
2. Continue to blow from the stomach, but inflate your cheeks, and draw back the tongue.
3. Continue the vibration of your lips, but use the air in your mouth by pushing in the cheeks and bringing the tongue forward.
4. Continue to blow, and take in a quick sniff of air through the nose while doing step 3.
5. Go back to step one.

**John Pemble (pemble@duke.iccc.cc.ia.us) had this to say in a digest posting:**

Again Circular Breathing is a term that doesn't literally mean to inhale and exhale for real. Like a magician performs a trick (appearing to do one thing but actually doing another), the didjeridu player appears to be breathing in as he/she breathes out. Storing air in your cheeks and blowing it out while inhaling a breath through the nose is what circular breathing, is all about.

Go to a sink where there is a mirror you can see your face and be able to spit out water. Fill your mouth with as much water as you can till your cheeks are bulging out (like a Dizzy G. thing). Spit the water out in a smooth tiny leak like stream and breath in and out through your nose.

As you slowly (about ten to twenty seconds) empty your mouth of the water in this smooth little stream keep breathing in and out through your nose. You are more or less circular breathing, or at least illustrating the circular breathing technique as closely as possible without actually doing it.

Do this water exercise number of times, maybe for a few days. Try to do the same thing using air in your cheeks, instead of water. Slowly let air hiss out of your cheeks. Do this several times and gradually increase the amount of air you let of your cheeks.

After a while of doing that try it on your didjeridu. You may get it right immediately or perhaps in three weeks. While I could circular breathe on the didjeridu, it took me about a month to do it with any smoothness.

Also I recommend that on first trying to circular breathe to use a shorter higher pitched didjeridu. If your bamboo is too long (low) get yourself some PVC for practice.

**Randy Raine-Reusch follows up with these pointers:**

● Step 1

1. Fill your mouth full of air, puffing your cheeks. Hold the air.
2. Breathe in and out through your nose.
3. Still holding the air in your cheeks, empty your lungs through your nose. I refer to this as part A or "breathe out, cheeks puffed."
4. Now slowly breathe in through your nose and simultaneously start pushing the air out of your

mouth with your cheeks. Just as if the air in your cheeks was actually water, it helps to imagine that it is water.

5. Continue this until you can do it comfortably and you can with confidence breathe in through your nose while pushing air out from your mouth. I call this part B or "in nose, push cheeks."

- Step 2

1. Breathe out of your mouth puffing your cheeks the whole time, stop anytime, but keep your cheeks PUFFED. (Part A)
2. Now do part 4 of the above technique, that is, breathe in through your nose, pushing air out from your cheeks. (Part B)
3. Breathe out, cheeks puffed
4. In nose, push cheeks
5. Continue this cycle until it's continuous. If you have problems go back a few steps, the most important step is part 4 of the first section: breathe in through nose pushing air out of cheeks. If you can't do this comfortably without thinking about it you will have great difficulty.
6. You should be able to hold you hand in front of your mouth and feel a continuous flow of air, granted the pressure may fluctuate, but you must have a continuous flow of air, otherwise you are not doing it yet.

- Step 3 (To the didjeridu)

1. The most important factor in circular breathing on the didjeridu is to first have a good sound. It should be a full bodied sound so that you not only feel your didj vibrate, but you can feel the air around your didj vibrate. This should take very little air, but does require a good amount of pressure from your stomach. You should not at any time hear any air coming through the didj, if you do, you are wasting air and must learn to play with less.
2. Get a good sound on the didj and then start to apply the circular breathing techniques, (A) breathe out puffing cheeks and (B) breathe in nose, push cheeks. At first there will probably be a gap between the two parts, not to worry, this is normal.
3. Sit in front of the TV with a movie or something that will grab your attention. Play your didj doing the circular breathing techniques. It is important that you continually do the circular breathing techniques although you feel uncomfortable with them or there is still a gap. Watch TV and play constantly, ignore your playing just play and watch TV. The reason I say this is because your brain is you enemy here, if you are constantly criticizing yourself, it will take years to circular breath. This is a body thing not a mind thing and the more you think about it the less it works. TV as we all know, numbs the mind, so it is an effective tool in learning didj.
4. You may find that going through all the steps daily will increase your confidence and understanding of this process.
5. You may also find that all of a sudden it works! You did it and then it disappears, and you can't find it again. It disappears because you are looking for it. Don't look, just do.
6. Again as you start getting the circular breathing on the didj, there may be a drop in pressure, this also is normal, the more you practice it the smaller this drop becomes, and if you really work at it, it can disappear altogether, if you want.
7. Your breath points now become an important percussive element in playing, and with practice you will discover that there is a backbeat to your breath, that is also used extensively. Some people refer to this as a kind of bounce, although there are many types of bounces and backbeats.

Have fun and remember to turn off the TV!

**Lehwhang@aol.com has this fun idea :**

I came up with a useful technique (for me anyway) while trying to get the circular breathing (which i'm still in the process of trying to get) that I thought might be useful to learning players :

I found that a good way to practice when you can't get a hold of anything else is to just make a circle with thumb and forefinger and put it against the lips. I discovered this on a 3 hour flight. As a bonus, my bizarre behavior kept anyone from disturbing me while i practiced. At present, i can keep the breathe going on my finger circle, but can't do so consistently on the didj itself. This trick is also useful in showing interested beginners how to make their first drones.

**Robert Harper** [harper@lifesci.ucsb.edu](mailto:harper@lifesci.ucsb.edu) makes the following interesting observations

I've been messing around with PVC didj's for several months now, and wanted to pass along a little of what I've learned. It's turned out that the biggest help to me was switching to really small pipes. All it took was a 2.5-3 foot length of 1" PVC to accelarate my learning dramatically! All of the instructions on PVC didj's that I'd seen specified at least 1.5" diameters... usually 2". However, I found that playing with the smaller version was much easier to learn new techniques on. It takes less volume of air, so learning to circular breath once I switched was MUCH easier than I expected. There's plenty of time to take a long slow breath while maintaining a drone. All sorts of new techniques were easier to learn how to do without losing the drone. Another advantage is the portability factor. I even took one on a multi-day desert backpacking trip... a VERY satisfying experience, I must say. Also, no mouthpiece modifications are needed... the smoothed off end works just fine. Of course the sound is higher pitched than the larger didj's, but I've come to like it quite a bit. One concern I had was whether what I learned on the small pipe would translate easily to the larger ones, but that has not turned out to be a problem. It's also been fun to insert the end of the 1" pipe into larger pipes (from 1 foot sections up to a few feet), which gives it a deeper, richer sound... and you can hear yourself play better that way.

### ● Common Mistakes

- Thinking that you will never get it.
- Being too casual about getting in air. Sniff with abandon!
- Trying to fill your lungs on the sniff. Short sniffs are what you are after - there's no time for sedate sniffs.
- Getting dizzy (common) and falling over (less common)! Initially you will find that you will not be able to get in enough fresh air, with the result that you will become dizzy. Don't try to push on. This is not the route to any "Trance State," but is the route an unconscious flop to the hard floor! Just stop, breathe normally for a few minutes and relax, so that the balance of gases in your lungs, and diluted gases in your bloodstream can be restored.

### ● Difficulty

Many experienced didj players will tell you that circular breathing is really quite easy. This is of course absolutely true as far as these experts are concerned, but don't be fooled, this is not going to be at all easy, and you will not master this technique for a long time. By a long time, I mean a *long* time, months of playing at least. Do not be disheartened though, as circular breathing is not an insurmountable obstacle. You will have a great sense of satisfaction when you discover that it really is possible, as you snatch your first sniffed breath! (A few days of frustration will get you to this point). From there on, its all practice, trying to refine and control the technique.

### ● Hints and Tips

- Patience. Lots of it. Persevere and you too will wonder what you found so difficult in the beginning.
- Don't try be cool, calm and relaxed when it comes to sniffing that breath. Sniff in that air with purpose. You've got to move as much air into your lungs as possible, and given the short time that you have to sniff, you want to make every sniff count for a lot. As you get more experienced you will be able to relax these desperate sniffs.

- Sometimes even though you are circular breathing nicely, you still have an urgency to breathe. In this case, try instead to empty your lungs a bit (yes I said empty) by breathing out through your nose while you are playing, before taking the next sniff. This appears to help balance the mix of gases in your lungs, reducing the urge to breathe.
- If you get the straw blowing into the water thing right, go to a party immediately and impress your friends (Brian Pertl's suggestion).



[cheek squeezes....](#) [.wav format]



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# Didjeridu Tutorial



## Hints and Tips 1

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### ● Important Points to Remember

1. Never press the mouthpiece tightly against your lips. It is a common mistake, especially when attempting new skills. Stay relaxed and use just enough pressure to assure a seal.
2. Do not over practice. If your cheek muscles or lips become sore, you are over using them. The best results are obtained by daily practice. 15 minutes per day is a good starting point, but practice time is highly individual. Seek a level that you can fit into your daily routine.
3. Circular breathing is a rhythm. Many people try to set a rhythm and fit the breathing to the rhythm. A better approach is to create a rhythm around the breaths. Breathe the rhythm! Different rhythms require varying amounts of air. Start with simple rhythms based on an even beat. Then experiment with different tempos. Finally, work on more complex rhythms.
4. Though some people learn the basic skills of circular breathing rather quickly, most take some time. There is no correlation between how long it takes you to learn a new skill and how good a player you may eventually become. There is a lot more to playing and enjoying this instrument than circular breathing. Be patient with yourself and realize that these are skills that can be learned and practiced. They are not the insights of mystics handed down through a select lineage.
5. Your goal should be self expression. Don't strive to play like your instructor or another player. Work to play your music. In the lessons, your just getting the basic tools. You're both the musician and the instrument when you play the didjeridu. Choosing to play is a step you took for yourself, everything else will fall into place.





# Didjeridu Tutorial



## Harmonics

### ● Lesson Objective

In this lesson, you will be introduced to the area of harmonics. You will learn how to modulate the timbre of the didj by controlling the harmonics produced.

### ● Technique

Harmonics - all sounds are composed of harmonics. To realize this, sing a single note and mouth the vowel sound "E" then, without changing notes, make the vowel sound "O". Although you are on singing the same note, the vowel sound "E" emphasizes the upper harmonics and sounds quite different from the vowel sound "O".

- Playing the basic drone, mouth the vowel sound "E" then shape your mouth as if you were saying the word "Oh". Notice the harmonic fall? As you go from "E" to "O" the harmonics shift or "fall" from high to low. Obviously, you can do a harmonic rise by starting with the sound "O" and moving to the sound "E" with your mouth. This transition can be smoothed out a bit by adding the mouth shape "A" between the "E" and "O" sounds.
- Careful lip shaping can also affect the harmonics of the didjeridu. By altering the shape of the opening between your two buzzing lips, much as in whistling, you can create a variable upper harmonic sound. Likewise, cheek and tongue positioning in combination with mouth shaping can add a wide variety of rich harmonic tones to the didjeridu. These are worth a great deal of attention, as each didjeridu will respond a bit differently to these maneuvers.
- As you can now see, any vowel or consonant sound which you can enunciate will affect the harmonics of the didjeridu. It's now a small step to articulate syllables. Try mouthing the syllable, "did". Follow that with the syllable, "jer".
- By taking a word like didjeridu, and breaking it up into distinct syllables whose order can be varied, a wide variety of musical rhythms can be improvised. For example, "did-did-did-ger-ree, did-did-doo" will make a nicely varied little rhythm. A practice rhythm which I enjoy comes from a very popular song, "do-wah-diddy-diddy-dumb-diddy-doo".

### ● Common Mistakes

I can't think of anything you could do wrong here! Just experiment freely, and let the sounds that you are producing be your guide.

### ● Difficulty

Although achieving good control of the harmonics of your instrument will take a while, this should be an easy and fun lesson in the art of didj playing.

### ● Hints and Tips

Getting many and varied sounds out of your didjeridu has a lot to do with the harmonics you create, and how you control them. You can build a wealth of rhythm by changing the harmonics as you play.



Toot[[.wav format](#)]

Vowels[[.wav format](#)] [[RealAudio format](#)]

Syllables[[.wav format](#)] [[RealAudio format](#)]

**Last updated: Sat Mar 20 07:29:20 PST 1999**

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# Didjeridu Tutorial

## Vocalizations



### ● Lesson Objective

In this lesson you will investigate the use of vocalization combined with your didjeridu playing. You'll also learn to imitate sounds in nature, deepening your relationship with your didjeridu and the world around you.

### ● Technique

- While playing the basic drone, try making a sound like a dog barking with your vocal chords. If you find it a bit difficult to do, practice in front of a mirror without the didjeridu. Make a sound like , "woof woof woof" without moving your lips. Any sound you can make without moving your lips can be used while playing the didjeridu.
- Singing distinct or indistinct notes while droning adds a rich texture to total effect. While specific notes will vary according to the pitch of the didjeridu and the vocal range of the player. I do find a good harmony to strive for is a fifth above the dominate note of the didjeridu. This would be a G for a didjeridu which plays a C. It is good, I feel, for a player to know what pitch his or her didjeridu plays. If you have a keyboard available, you should be able to find the pitch your instrument plays in by playing a flat droning note on the didjeridu while experimenting with the notes found two octaves below middle C on the piano. Frequency analyzers are great, but when trying to read the output, be sure to play a simple droning note without harmonics (i.e. tongue flat on the floor of the mouth and cheeks stationary). Otherwise the output of the frequency analyzer will vary wildly and may be misleading.
- A good effect, when doing vocals, is to vary the volume of your voice in relation to the didjeridu. This takes a bit of practice, but it will make all your voicings much more interesting to the listener.
- To the Aborigines, the animals and birds of Australia figure prominently in their rituals and songs. The Kookaburra, in particular, is considered quite sacred. It's comical call is often imitated with a musical laugh through the didjeridu. Other times, it's is imitated by using the back of the tongue against the roof of the mouth as in pronouncing the letter "K" and varying the pitch of the voice up, then down and finally back up a scale. Frogs are easily imitated by making a croaking sound. I generally say the word "rib-it" in a low voice to imitate the frog. The bush pigeon is similar to a dove and makes a cooing sound. As entertaining as these imitations are, it is often equally effective to imitate animals which reside in the players own country. In the pacific northwest, for example, there is an abundant variety of birds who's calls may be emulated. From the prosaic crow or raven to the more esoteric hoot of an owl, learning to imitate birds and animals with which you are familiar is quite challenging and rewarding.
- Another good vocalization technique is the playing of a very short vocal burst, much like the "yap yap" of a small dog. This technique creates a very distinctive sound which may be used to punctuate the strongest rhythms.

### ● Common Mistakes

None that come to mind.

### ● Difficulty

You can sing, shout, bark, yap and howl can't you ? How hard can this be then ?

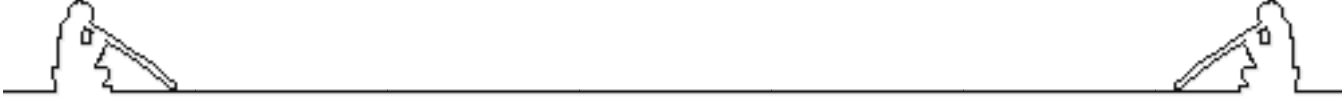
### ● Hints and Tips

Don't be embarrassed to try the strangest animal sounds.



Vocalizations [\[.wav format\]](#) [\[RealAudio format\]](#)

Dogbark [\[.wav format\]](#) [\[RealAudio format\]](#)



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# @ heddy's

[heddy Boubaker](#)

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## [La Respiration Circulaire](#) / [Circular Breathing](#)

**Leçon complète et gratuite**, en Français, de respiration circulaire ou souffle continu.

*Dernière modif: Tuesday, 13-Jun-2000 12:16:01 MEST, 62kB*

## [La Liste saxo-france](#) / [saxo-france Mailing List](#)

La **liste de discussion** en Français par E-Mail sur le Saxophone.

*Dernière modif: Monday, 19-Jun-2000 14:37:38 MEST, 4kB*

## [Liste de joueurs de Sax Alto](#) / [Alto Sax Players List](#)

La liste des **tous les joueurs de saxophone alto** connus ou inconnus, présent, passés ... ou futur ...

*Dernière modif: Monday, 15-Jan-2001 11:29:48 MET, 19kB*

## [Didjeridoo](#)

Quelques informations sur cet instrument...

*Dernière modif: Monday, 13-Nov-2000 17:25:40 MET, 5kB*

## [Le chant Diphonique](#) / [Throat Singing](#)

Infos sur le chant diphonique ou chant mongol ou overtone singing/throat singing...

*Dernière modif: Tuesday, 16-May-2000 16:36:15 MEST, 5kB*

## [Zoreï](#)

Le groupe dans lequel j'officie principalement.

## [Pages professionnelles](#) / [Work pages](#)

La zizique c'est bien beau mais faut les faire **bouffer** tout ces affamés ...

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## Leçons de Respiration Circulaire

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*Dernière Modification: 13/06/2000*

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Ce document est une traduction, une interprétation libre et une compilation des leçons sur le "[circular breathing](#)" du [Didjeridu Dreamtime server](#) de [Sean Borman](#) et de [celle](#) donnée par la [Launeddas Associazione Culturale Sonus de Canna](#) pour jouer du [Launeddas](#), le tout mélangé à mes essais - et ceux d'honorables correspondants - pour apprivoiser cette technique.

Le but ici n'est pas d'avoir une simple traduction de ces leçons sur la respiration circulaire appliquée au jeu du **Didjeridu** ou de la [Launeddas](#) mais plutôt d'avoir un début de page d'information générale sur cette technique (pouvant être adaptée au jeu de n'importe quel instrument à vent), ceci dit il existe [un paragraphe](#) détaillant les spécificités du jeu de quelques instruments en respiration circulaire. Cela explique pourquoi je n'ai pas fait une traduction littérale des documents cités ci-dessus et que je me suis permis de modifier, supprimer et ajouter certains passages (voir au paragraphe [Introduction/Difficultés](#) pour plus d'informations).

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# <<Introduction>>

## Quezaquo?

[Section originale]

Dans certaines musiques il est quelquefois possible d'entendre un instrument à vent joué par un musicien semblant posséder une capacité pulmonaire *surhumaine* (un exemple assez frappant est celui des *charmeurs de serpents*)... en fait il n'y a absolument rien de surhumain ni de magique là dedans, ce musicien peut même être un *fumeur de première*, il y a un "**truc**" dans tout ça ... et ce truc est **la respiration circulaire (RC)** ou technique permettant de continuer à souffler tout en inspirant, aussi appelée **souffle ou expiration continu** ou encore **respiration continue** (mais tout au long de ce document je ne me référerai à cette technique que sous le nom de respiration circulaire ou **RC**)..

**La RC** est utilisée généralement par les joueurs d'instruments à vent (flute, saxophone, trompette, harmonica ... on peut pratiquer la RC en jouant du piano mais vraiment je n'en voit pas l'intérêt) pour obtenir un son continu, sans pauses nécessaires pour reprendre son souffle, mais aussi dans certaines postures de Yoga, Tai Chi, voire même diverses disciplines plus ou moins *New-Age* comme le *ReBirth* et autres machins mystico-psycho-blabla. Une utilisation "*sérieuse*" de la respiration circulaire est chez les souffleurs de verre; Ils ont besoin d'un flux d'air continu pour obtenir une surface lisse et homogène lors du travail sur le verre en sortie de four. Dans ce document **le but sera de jouer d'un instrument de musique** et pas d'essayer d'atteindre

un état d'illumination quelconque (ce que ne permet pas d'ailleurs la RC seule) ni de vous apprendre à fabriquer vos propres bouteilles de tord-boyeaux.

Historiquement il semblerais que la **RC** soit une technique utilisée depuis plusieurs millénaires, ne serais ce que par le fait que le Didjeridu, instrument utilisé depuis si longtemps par les Aborigènes d'Australie ne puisse se jouer qu'avec cette technique.

## Musiques

[Section originale]

Mais dans quelles musiques peut on entendre des instrument joués avec cette technique de respiration circulaire ?

Je citais plus haut la musique des charmeurs de serpents, mais ce n'est pas tout fort heureusement. Quasiment toutes les musiques utilisant un [Didjeridu](#) aussi.

[Voir aussi la section [Instruments](#)]

Cette section à fortement besoin de contributions, alors [n'hésitez pas à m'envoyer vos listes avec références et descriptions en ce qui concerne la RC, merci d'avance.](#)

[Voir aussi la section [Discographie](#)]

## Objectifs

[Section originale]

Dans cette leçon vous devriez apprendre les concepts de base de la respiration circulaire. Cela ne signifiera pas que vous serez capable de respirer ``circulairement" après avoir lu ça, ni de tenir la même note pendant des heures, mais que vous serez sur la bonne voie et possèderez les information nécessaires pour le faire.

Le lecteur attentif pourra déceler **quelques contradictions** entre les différentes méthodes présentées ici (et de nombreux points communs aussi - heureusement - ), cela vient du fait qu'il n'existe **pas UNE** manière d'apprendre la respiration circulaire mais autant qu'il existe d'étudiants (*d'où le pluriel du titre de ce document*). *Ce document n'est pas à suivre à la lettre mais se veut plutôt une source d'inspiration et de conseils ... A vous d'y piocher ce qui vous convient et mieux d'en extrapoler une nouvelle méthode qui vous conviendrait mieux (n'oubliez pas de [me tenir au courant](#) de vos découvertes).*

## Difficultés

[Section traduite]

[Voir aussi la section [Conseils:Erreurs](#)].

De nombreux musiciens expérimentés utilisant la technique de RC vous dirons que c'est très facile. Ce qui bien sur est vrai en ce qui les concernent, mais ne soyez pas dupes, **cela ne va pas être facile du tout**, et vous ne réussirez à maîtriser pleinement cette technique qu'après un long entraînement, par long je veut dire *LONG* ... plusieurs mois au moins. Ne soyez pas découragés cependant, apprendre à pratiquer la RC n'est pas un obstacle insurmontable. Vous aurez une grande satisfaction lorsque vous découvrirez que c'est réellement

possible, lors de vos premières notes jouées selon cette technique (quelques jours de frustration à peine afin d'en arriver là). Maintenant tout est exercices, exercices, exercices, et essayer de raffiner et contrôler au maximum cette technique afin qu'elle vous soit pleinement et effectivement utilisable.

La plus grande difficulté au début est d'arriver à un degré de concentration tel que l'on puisse avoir le contrôle total et la conscience de tous les éléments entrant en jeu dans la RC ([muscles des joues](#), diaphragme, larynx ...). Tout cela nécessite quand même un peu de ZEN. Avec l'expérience l'habitude remplacera la concentration et jouer en RC deviendra un réflexe, vous permettant de vous concentrer librement sur le jeu de votre instrument.

[Section originale]

Une dernière difficulté est liée à l'instrument sur lequel cette technique sera appliquée, certains se prêtent mieux que d'autres à l'application de cette technique pour des raisons diverses et variées. Je recommande d'utiliser pour s'entraîner au début un tuyau de PVC fin (diamètre 3cm env.) d'une trentaine de centimètres environ (recommandation dédiée à l'origine aux joueurs de didjeridu mais valable cependant pour tous les instruments).

*Sachez que le passage de l'entraînement "à mains nues" ou à l'aide d'une [paille](#) à celui du jeu sur un véritable instrument ne se fait pas sans douleurs ... (Problèmes d'embouchure, de pression ...), voir pour cela la section [Instruments](#).*

Ne vous découragez surtout pas lors de cette phase, ces exercices (la paille etc) sont surtout là pour permettre une *prise de conscience* et une compréhension de la RC et de ses mécanismes et ne sont en aucun cas à prendre comme de véritables exercices d'entraînement pour une mise en pratique sur l'instrument, comme écrit plus haut les différences entre un véritable instrument et les outils d'apprentissage (paille etc) sont trop importantes pour que la pratique sur ces outils puisse effectivement servir sur l'instrument. Il est très possible qu'une fois sur l'instrument vous ayez l'impression de tout avoir perdu, il faudra quelque temps pour y arriver mais grâce aux exercices précédents vous avez acquis *la connaissance*, ne reste plus que *l'expérience* à acquérir...

Certains instruments comme le [Didjeridu](#) ne peuvent se jouer qu'en RC, de plus il faut aussi être capable de maintenir un *bourdon* pendant que la génération d'harmoniques produira une mélodie (pour une application de la RC spécifique à cet instrument référez vous au document cité en [bibliographie](#), *bien que le présent document soit grandement tiré des leçons pour le Didjeridu il a été expurgé de ses parties spécifiques à cet instrument*)

## <<La Technique>>

### La Base

[Section traduite/Didjeridu@Dreamtime]

Il n'est pas possible *physiologiquement* d'inspirer et d'expirer simultanément (nous ne possédons hélas - ou heureusement ?? - qu'une seule trachée-artère), mais il est par contre possible de maintenir une pression d'air sans souffler [l'air des poumons]: en utilisant la bouche comme le sac d'air d'une cornemuse. Avec ce (petit) réservoir d'air maintenant la pression, vous pouvez inhaler rapidement une petite quantité d'air par vos narines afin de remplir vos poumons, ceci vous permettant de continuer à souffler sans vous essouffler. Ce processus

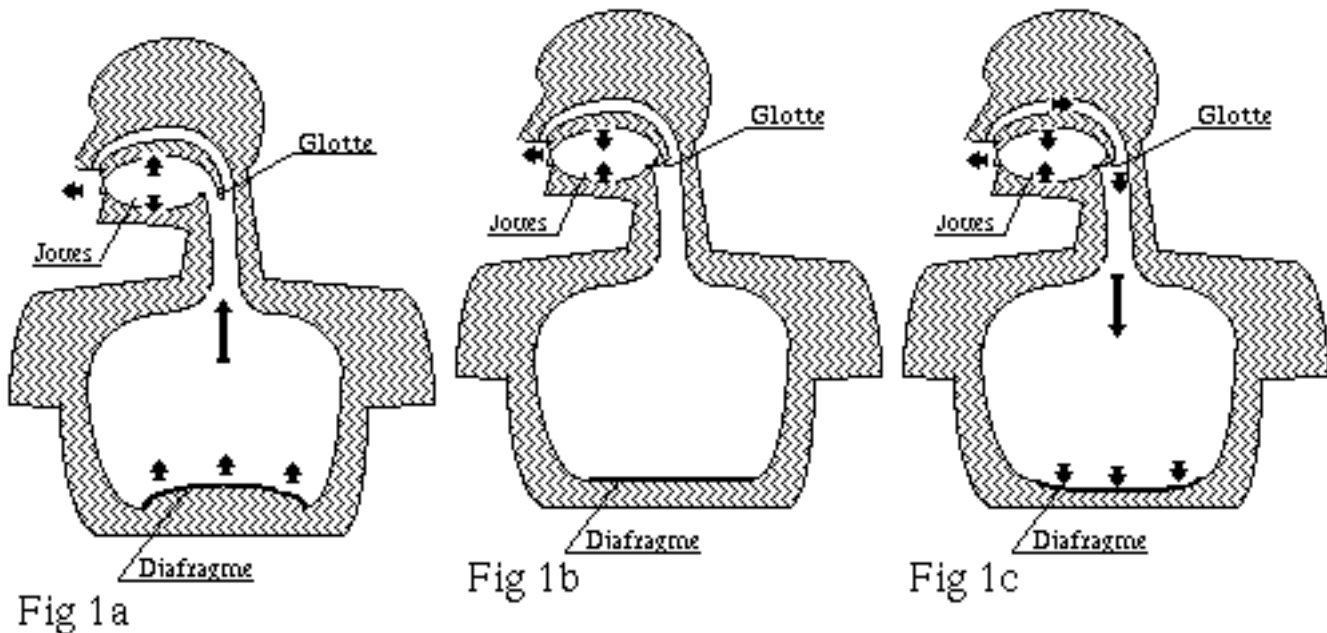
d'inhalation rapide de petites bouffées d'air vous permettra, après un entraînement sérieux, de jouer continuellement.

Créez un flux tendu, régulier et continu, d'air sortant de votre bouche. La plupart du temps l'air proviendra des poumons, mais pendant l'inhalation, l'air est poussé dehors par les [muscles des] [joues](#). [*Exercez vous à ça en plaçant un doigt devant la bouche et essayez de constater le flux constant d'air sur le bout du doigt*].

[Section originale]

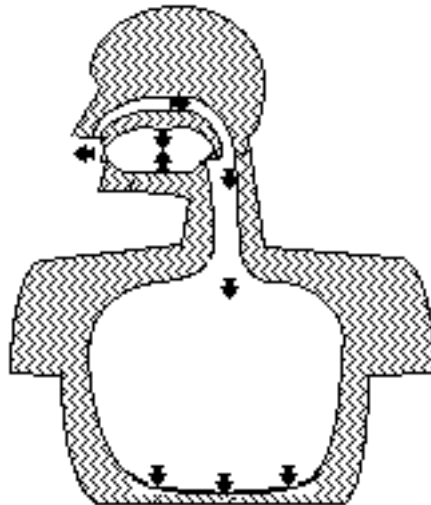
Étape par étape cela donne ceci:

1. Soufflez pendant 2 à 3 secondes.
2. Continuez de souffler avec l'estomac (le diaphragme), mais gonflez les joues ([fig1a](#)).
3. Soufflez toujours mais utilisez l'air stocké dans la bouche en contractant les [joues](#) ([fig1b](#)).
4. Toujours en soufflant comme en 3 prenez une inspiration rapide par le nez ([fig1c](#)).
5. Retour à l'étape 1.



Voici ce que cela doit donner (en gif animé) ...

[*Considérez cette animation (un peu saccadée) comme une indication plutôt qu'un exemple à suivre à la lettre*]



# Méthodes d'apprentissage

[Section traduite/Didjeridu@DreamTime]

Il existe de nombreuses façons d'enseigner cette technique. Chaque professeur possède sa propre méthode, je vais essayer d'expliquer plus bas toutes celles que j'ai pu rencontrer. Si vous avez d'autres idées [ne les gardez pas pour vous svp](#), elles peuvent être utiles aux autres et pourraient être incluses dans ce document.

Voici toutes une série de méthodes, techniques et *trucs* divers données par différentes personnes ([Ed Drury](#), [John Pemble](#), [Randy Raine-Reusch](#), [Hakim Loudyi](#), [Association culturelle de Launeddas Sonus de Canna](#) et *ma pomme*) pour apprendre et pratiquer la RC:

## - [Par Ed Drury \(edrury@percy.rain.com\)](mailto:edrury@percy.rain.com) -

Il est utile de faire des exercices de fortification et de contrôle. Une méthode intéressante est d'utiliser un ballon comme ceci:

1. Faire sortir et rentrer dans votre bouche l'air d'un ballon gonflé en utilisant SEULEMENT [la force de vos joues](#).
2. Inspirez par le nez comme requis. Essayez d'arriver à des cycles de 1 seconde. Faites cet exercice par périodes de 1 minute jusqu'à 3 minutes.
2. Gonflez vos joues et utilisez vos lèvres pour faire un petit orifice au centre de votre bouche comme si vous souffliez dans une paille. Essayez de produire un petit flux tendu d'air sortant de cette ouverture en utilisant l'air contenu dans vos joues uniquement. En plaçant la paume de la main devant vos lèvres vous devriez être capables de sentir ce flux d'air. Inspirez et expirez par le nez pendant que vous expulsez l'air de vos joues.
3. Transférez l'étape précédente sur votre instrument.  
[NdT: Ici une importante part est faite dans le document original sur certaines méthodes spécifiques au Didjeridu, comme le présent document se veut indépendant de l'instrument cette partie a été coupée. Elle peut cependant être consultée en VO ailleurs ([biblio](#))]
- 4.

Pour travailler sur un transfert plus *lisse* entre l'air expulsé par vos joues et celui provenant de vos poumons placez une paille dans un verre d'eau ... Le verre doit être au trois quart plein seulement. En alternant compressions des joues et *souffler* (avec les poumons), essayez de garder un flux régulier de bulles sortant de l'extrémité de la paille - en respirant par le nez pendant que vous compressez vos joues. Si vous pouvez maintenir le flux de bulles continu et sans pauses, vous êtes en train de respirer circulairement.

[NdT: Cela ressemble un peu au [truc du stylo](#) ]

## - [Par John Pemble \(pemble@duke.iccc.cc.ia.us\)](mailto:pemble@duke.iccc.cc.ia.us) -

1. Allez devant un lavabo au dessus duquel est placé un miroir dans lequel vous pouvez voir votre reflet. Remplissez votre bouche au maximum en gonflant les joues à la [Dizzy Gillespie](#). Recrachez l'eau en un mince et régulier filet tout en inspirant et expirant par le nez.
2. Comme vous videz lentement (environ en 10/12 secondes) votre bouche de l'eau en un mince filet tout en respirant par le nez vous êtes plus ou moins en train de respirer circulairement, ou tout du moins vous

illustrez la technique sans effectivement la pratiquer.

3. Exécutez cet exercice un bon nombre de fois, peut être pendant quelques jours. Essayez maintenant de faire la même chose en remplaçant l'eau par de l'air. Faites ça plusieurs fois en essayant d'augmenter progressivement la quantité d'air contenue dans vos joues.
4. Après un moment de cet exercice essayez sur votre instrument. Vous devriez y arriver immédiatement ou peut être après 3 semaines. Cela m'a pris un mois pour y arriver de manière régulière et continue [NdT: *Sur un Didjeridu*].

[Pour le Didj: Je vous recommande lors de vos premiers essais sur instrument d'en choisir un petit d'une tessiture plutôt aiguë lorsque c'est possible, sinon entraînez vous sur un tube de PVC.]

## **- Par Randy Raine-Reusch -**

Un apprentissage en 3 étapes:

### **1. Installer les bases:**

1. Remplissez votre bouche d'air en gonflant les joues. Gardez l'air.
2. Inspirez et expirez par le nez.
3. Tout en gardant les joues gonflées d'air, videz vos poumons par le nez et la bouche. Je me référerai à cette partie comme *partie A* ou "*expiration, joues gonflées*".
4. Maintenant inspirez doucement par le nez tout en expulsant simultanément l'air stocké dans votre bouche à l'aide de vos joues. Comme si cet air était de l'eau, (cela peut aider d'imaginer ça).
5. Continuez cet exercice jusqu'à que vous puissiez le faire confortablement et que vous puissiez inspirer par le nez tout en expulsant l'air de votre bouche avec confiance. J'appelle cette partie *partie B* ou "*par le nez, pousser les joues*"

### **2. Perfectionner:**

1. Expirez par la bouche tout en gardant constamment les joues gonflées, arrêtez vous n'importe quand, mais gardez les joues BIEN GONFLÉES.
2. Maintenant pratiquez les parties 3 et 4 de la technique précédente, qui est:
  - "*expiration, joues gonflées*"
  - "*par le nez, pousser les joues*"
3. Continuez ce cycle jusqu'à ce qu'il soit régulier et continu. Si vous avez des problèmes retournez en arrière de quelques étapes, la plus importante est la partie 4 de la première section: inspirer par le nez tout en expulsant l'air avec les joues. Si vous ne pouvez pas faire ça sans y penser alors vous aurez de grandes difficultés.
4. Vous devriez être capable de mettre votre main devant la bouche et sentir un flot continu d'air, sa pression pouvant fluctuer soit, mais le flot d'air que vous émettez doit être **CONTINU**, sinon cela veut dire que vous n'êtes pas encore entrain de respirer circulairement.

### **3. Pratiquer sur l'instrument**

[NdT: Cette section originellement dédiée exclusivement au jeu du Didjeridu a été modifiée par moi pour être la plus indépendante possible de l'instrument]

1. Le facteur le plus important dans le jeu d'un instrument avec la technique de RC est de conserver un bon son. Le mieux serai d'avoir le même son (même timbre, même puissance ...) que lorsque

l'instrument est joué avec une technique classique (cycle inspirations/expirations).

2. Ayez déjà un bon son au départ, puis appliquez les techniques de RC, "*expiration, joues gonflées*" et "*par le nez, pousser les joues*". Au début vous remarquerez certainement la différence de son entre les 2 manières de souffler, ne vous inquiétez pas, c'est normal.
3. Asseyez vous devant la télé avec un film ou quelque chose captivant votre attention. Jouez de votre instrument avec la technique de RC. Il est important d'utiliser continuellement la RC même si vous vous sentez inconfortable avec ou qu'il y ait encore une différence de son. Regardez la télé et jouez constamment, ignorez votre jeu **jouez**, simplement, et regardez la télé.  
La raison que j'invoque est que votre cerveau est votre ennemi ici, si vous vous critiquez constamment cela vous prendra des années pour respirer circulairement. C'est une *chose physique* pas une activité mentale et plus vous y pensez moins cela a de chance de fonctionner. La télé, comme chacun le sait, engourdit l'esprit, c'est donc un excellent outil pour apprendre à jouer d'un instrument avec la RC.
4. Vous trouverez que pratiquer toutes ces étapes jour après jour augmentera votre compréhension et votre confiance en cette technique.
5. Vous trouverez aussi que, soudainement, ça marche!! Vous l'avez fait puis ça a disparu, et vous n'arrivez plus à le reproduire. Ça a disparu simplement car vous l'avez recherché. **Ne cherchez pas faites le!** (Just do it - ET CE N'EST PAS UNE PUB POUR NIKE!!!!).
6. De nouveau quand vous allez réussir à pratiquer la RC sur votre instrument, il va se produire des baisses de pression, c'est aussi normal, le plus souvent vous pratiquerez le plus vite ces baisses de pression disparaîtrons, et si vous bossez vraiment dessus cela disparaîtra complètement, si vous le voulez ...
7. A ce point votre respiration devient un élément percussif de votre jeu, en avec la pratique vous découvrirez que votre respiration à un rythme. Certaines personnes appellent ça `rebonds' (`bounce' en Anglais) - [Important cette histoire de rythme](#)  
[NdT: Joué sur un Didjeridu ce rythme ressemble à un rebond de balle et est utilisé pour imiter le saut du Kangourou].

Ayez du plaisir et ... n'oubliez pas, d'éteindre la télé!

**- Par Hakim Loudyi ([hloudyi@cipcinsa.insa-lyon.fr](mailto:hloudyi@cipcinsa.insa-lyon.fr)) -**

[Section originale]

*Hakim est un joueur de [tuba](#) qui nous fait partager ses expériences pour apprivoiser cette technique.*

- La première chose que j'ai faite pour apprendre cette technique est de m'exercer à inspirer par le nez en même temps que de pousser l'air avec les joues, simplement cela.  
Pour cela, je gonfle mes joues et je bloque ma respiration, je place ensuite mes mains sur mes joues, toujours respiration bloquée. Et là, en même temps que mes mains écrasent mes joues pour expulser l'air, j'inspire par le nez; L'attention doit surtout être portée sur l'inspiration, le mouvement des mains étant machinal. Cet exercice est je pense important car le concept d'inspirer par le nez en même temps que de souffler avec les joues est difficile à assimiler (nous ne faisons normalement qu'une chose à la fois!!). Cela est d'autant plus difficile qu'il faut se concentrer sur deux choses à la fois : dans cet exercice on se concentre uniquement sur l'inspiration, le mouvement des mains étant machinal.
- Ensuite j'ai pratiqué cet exercice sans les mains.

- Après, j'ai pu pratiquer quelque chose qui ressemblait à la respiration continue, mes principales difficultés étant
  - D'assurer la transition entre l'air poussé par les joues et l'air poussé par le diaphragme (pour cela il faut s'appliquer à bien vider l'air que l'on a dans les joues). L'exercice que je fais est de gonfler mes joues avec de l'eau et de l'expulser totalement en un filet régulier (je fais ça sous la douche!!!).
  - D'emmagasinier le maximum d'air dans les joues juste avant que les poumons soient vides.
- Enfin je suis passé à l'instrument (le Tuba) et là c'est plus difficile. Je rencontre les mêmes difficultés mais il faut en plus garder un flux d'air régulier et suffisant pour avoir un bon son.

## **- Par l'Association culturelle de Launeddas Sonus de Canna -**

[Section traduite/Launeddas]

Prenez un stylo (genre Bic), retirez le tube d'encre et bouchez le petit trou sur le côté; entre ce trou et la partie supérieure du stylo (là où se situe le petit bouchon en plastique - qui doit d'ailleurs rester fermé) faites un autre petit trou (plus petit que celui que vous venez de boucher). Utilisez une aiguille chauffée au rouge pour faire ça. Puis remplissez un verre d'eau, placez le sur une table et installez vous devant, le tube du stylo dans la bouche -par le bas-, trempant dans le verre jusqu'à ce que le petit trou soit immergé ([fig2](#)). Maintenant soufflez, vous remarquerez des petites bulles et le son créé par elles. Vous remarquerez aussi que lorsque vous cessez de souffler les bulles s'arrêtent [NdT: *cqfd*].

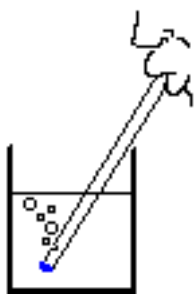


fig2: Le truc du stylo.

Et maintenant pour résumer la technique: concentrez vous, placez le stylo dans la bouche et soufflez en utilisant la technique de RC. Pendant les trois premiers temps (de la mesure: un, deux, trois), vous stockez de l'air pour le quatrième en gonflant les joues tout en émettant de l'air par la bouche en provenance des poumons. Pendant le dernier quart (sans interrompre le flux sortant d'air) vous devez simultanément dégonfler vos joues compressant l'air qui y était contenu et en même temps inspirer de l'air frais par votre nez. Si vous n'y arrivez pas du premier coup, essayez encore. Ne vous sentez pas frustrés car un grand nombre de personnes, même celles connaissant très bien la technique, ont rarement réussi du premier coup. Quand l'étudiant a acquis cela, il doit simplement pratiquer jusqu'à ce qu'il soit capable de faire ça pendant 10 minutes. Après cela on peut dire qu'il est à une bonne étape, car il a franchi un niveau et résolu un problème qui lui semblait impossible à atteindre au début.

# <<Instruments>>

[Section originale]

Chaque instrument à vent (*aérophone*) possède ses spécificités et ses difficultés dans son jeu en technique de RC. Ici seront détaillées quelques unes de ces caractéristiques instrument par instrument (j'essayerais de me limiter seulement aux instruments que je joue moi même ou sur lesquels j'aurais eu des explications claires et détaillées quand à son jeu en RC. Je listerais aussi certains instruments - généralement *exotiques* (non occidentaux ...) - qui à ma connaissance se jouent principalement voire exclusivement en RC).

Les principales différences et difficultés entre instruments proviennent de **l'embouchure** (déterminant la qualité de la note et du son émis, en termes de timbre, de hauteur ...) et du **retour de pression** (résistance exercée sur le souffle).

## Le Didjeridu:

C'est un instrument qui se prête assez bien au jeu en **RC** (on ne peut le jouer que de cette manière d'ailleurs :-), question embouchure et retour de pression il n'y a pas de problèmes majeurs. La grande difficulté est le [rythme](#) et les effets, toute la musique du Didj est basée sur ces principes - la modulation du rythme, des harmoniques et la production d'effets sonores sur un bourdon (drone) continu. Les modulations de rythme et les effets à produire obligent à *casser* le [rythme](#) naturel de la respiration et c'est là la principale difficulté.

[pour plus de renseignements sur le Didjeridu et la RC voir en section [Bibliographie](#)]

## Le Saxophone:

La difficulté majeure pour pratiquer la **RC** sur un SAX est l'embouchure, le -les- Sax fourni un retour de pression suffisant pour que cela ne pose aucun problème de ce côté, mais il est beaucoup plus délicat de tenir une bonne embouchure tout en soufflant avec les joues. Il existe 2 applications majeures de la RC sur un Sax: tenir une note et jouer de manière continue; Ces deux styles présentent des difficultés différentes, **bon maintien de l'embouchure** et **qualité du son** et de la note (justesse) pour le premier, difficultés de passage à des résistances au souffle différentes - en fonction de la hauteur de la note - pour l'autre.

[pour plus de renseignements sur le Sax et la RC voir en section [Bibliographie](#)]

## La Flute:

Le gros problème avec la flute est le terrible manque de retour de pression. Cela oblige à respirer très - trop - fréquemment. Personnellement autant j'arrive plus où moins à pratiquer la RC sur le Didj ou le Sax autant je n'ai jamais réussi à la flute (a bec, traversière ou autre), mais je sait que certains y arrivent. Apparemment il semblerais que les difficultés que j'ai rencontré viennent du fait que pour la flute il ne faille pas utiliser la force des joues comme ``propulseur" de l'air mais plutôt la langue dans un savant mouvement de vas et viens ...

[pour plus de renseignements sur la Flute et la RC voir en section [Bibliographie](#)]

## Le Tuba:

D'après certains joueurs de cet instrument il serait très facile d'y pratiquer la **RC**. Pas de problème d'embouchure, retour de pression important, il est même possible de faire des effets comme avec le [Didjeridu](#) (les joueurs de Tuba qui pratiquent la **RC** avec qui j'ai discuté jouent aussi du Didj).

## L'Harmonica:

Le principal problème avec l'harmonica est de jouer les notes inspirées (pas dans le sens inspiration

divine gros malin) ... pour les notes soufflées il n'y a pas de problème particulier. Tandis que pour jouer les notes inspirées il faut pratiquer ce que j'appellerais la **respiration circulaire inversée**. Il s'agit d'expirer continuellement par le nez tout en inspirant continuellement par la bouche, grâce à un effet de ``piston'' avec la langue certaines personnes y arrivent - moi non mais bonne chance -.

### La Trompette:

Je ne suis pas un fameux joueur de trompette mais les essais de **RC** que j'ai tentés avec ont été très très concluants. La trompette a un excellent retour de pression et l'embouchure ne pose pas autant de problèmes qu'avec un [saxophone](#).

[pour plus de renseignements sur la Trompette et la RC voir en section [Bibliographie](#)]

### La Launeddas:

Il semblerai que cet instrument Italien de la famille des [Hautbois](#) ne puisse se pratiquer qu'en **RC**.

[pour plus d'informations voir en section [Bibliographie](#)]

### Les Hautbois:

Il semblerai que ces instruments: le Hautbois occidental, la **Bombarde**, la **Chalémie** comme ses équivalents orientaux: **Gaïta** (Maroc, Algérie), **Alghaïta** (Afrique Occidentale), **Serunaï** (Malaisie), **Shanaï** (Inde), **Gyaling** (Tibet), ou **Zourna ou Zurna** (Turquie) se prettent assez bien au jeu en RC, grace à leur faible débit d'air (dixit un joueur de Hautbois...), il doit sûrement exister des problèmes spécifiques à l'embouchure inhérente aux instruments à *anches doubles* mais ce n'est qu'une supposition de ma part. La **RC** est même utilisée par de grands concertistes classiques (*Bill Arrowsmith* - Hautbois solo du Metropolitan Opéra) sur des hautx-bois `classiques' mais seulement dans certaines conditions très particulières semblerait il.

### Le Gyaling:

Instrument Tibétain de la famille des [Hautbois](#) ne se joue **qu'en RC**. [François Terrier](#) nous explique comment:

*Le Gyaling ne se joue qu'en RC et les élèves l'apprennent traditionnellement avec un bol d'eau et une paille. Pour ma part, une combinaison du mouvement joues/ langue me paraît plus facile quant au fait de garder une pression constante lors de la respiration. (on commence par les joues et on finit par la langue). L'embouchure du Gyaling (double anche) ne pose aucun problème car les lèvres ne doivent pas exercer de pression sur les anches (sinon pas de son...ou un couac). La difficulté réside donc dans la transition bouche/langue/diaphragme et maintenir une embouchure souple (on a tendance à crisper les lèvres lors des transitions) Voilà pour ces quelques précisions.*

### Les Clarinettes:

Les différentes clarinettes, qu'elles soient `occidentales' mais surtout orientales comme l'[Arghoul](#), ou l'**Alboka** du Pays Basque (clarinettes à 2 tubes - un bourdon et un pour la mélodie) se jouent très souvent en **RC**.

### L'Arghoul:

Instrument oriental de la famille des [clarinettes](#), appelé aussi **Mizmar** (Egypte), **Zamr** (Tunisie), **Aghanon** (Maroc), **Argun** (Turquie), **Masul** (Golfe Persique) se joue **principalement** en **RC**.

### Le Doudoug:

Instrument Arménien, sorte de petite flute en bois munie d'une anche et dont le son rappelle celui du hautbois se joue **principalement** en **RC**. [Baudoin](#) nous en dit plus:

*On peut en jouer en posant naturellement le doigt sur le trou mais aussi en le roulant pour fermer ou*

*libérer progressivement l'orifice, ce qui permet de passer en continu d'une note à celle du dessus ou du dessous. Le joueur de doudoug le plus connu est Djivan GASPARIAN et il a une discographie abondante facilement trouvable en musiques du monde.*

*La respiration circulaire est aisée avec le doudoug car la résistance de l'anche est importante. Souvent deux joueurs interprètent un morceau l'un faisant la mélodie et l'autre une basse continue, note tenue qui ne peut être produite qu'avec la respiration circulaire.*

- Les Trompes de l'Himalaya se jouent aussi très bien en RC.

Les autres:

A vous de remplir cette rubrique ...

>>**N'hésitez pas à contribuer à cette section.**<<

---

## <<Conseils>>

Quelques petits conseils en vrac, des erreurs à éviter, des trucs et des astuces utiles ... bref tout ce qui peut aider à faire avancer un peu le *shmilblick* est consigné en vrac ici.

## Erreurs Communes à éviter

[Section traduite]

[Voir aussi la section [Intro:Difficultés](#)].

- Penser que vous n'allez jamais y arriver. *Un jour ou l'autre vous y arriverez c'est sûr ... patience, ne [vous découragez jamais](#).*
- Être trop négligent/occasionnel dans vos inspirations. *Respirez avec désinvolture mais énergie.*
- Essayer de remplir ses poumons sur **une seule** respiration. *De courtes inspirations sont nécessaires - il n'y a PAS de place ni de temps pour une respiration profonde.*
- Avoir le vertige (commun) et des pertes d'équilibre (moins commun). Au début vous aurez l'impression de ne pas être capable d'inspirer assez d'air frais, avec comme résultat d'être pris de vertiges. N'essayez pas d'insister. Ce n'est pas le chemin vers un état de *Trance* mais plutôt celui vers une dure chute sur le sol! **Stop!!!** *Respirez normalement pendant quelques minutes et relaxez vous, afin que le taux de gaz carbonique et d'oxygène dans vos poumons redevienne équilibré et que votre sang s'oxygène à nouveau normalement.*

## Trucs et astuces

[Section traduite + ajouts]

- *Patience.* Beaucoup de patience. Persévérez et vous maîtriserez ce que vous trouviez si difficile à faire au début.

**Musclez vos joues!!** Une des composantes essentielle d'une bonne qualité du *souffle continu* créé par la RC est la capacité à produire un flux d'air **puissant** et **``lisse''** lors de l'expiration de l'air contenu dans les

joues. Depuis tout petit nous sommes entraînés à expirer l'air de nos poumons mais à moins d'être gonflé de ballon professionnel nous n'avons que très peu d'entraînement pour expirer avec force l'air contenu dans nos joues avec la seule force de celles-ci. Il faut donc s'entraîner, avec [le truc du Ballon](#) par exemple, ou un autre moyen indiqué [en section Méthodes](#) mais encore en jouant avec l'eau sous la douche ou tout autre moyen que votre imagination débordante pourrait vous inspirer ...

- N'essayez pas d'être à tout prix cool, calme et relaxé au début, quand il s'agit d'obtenir votre oxygène. Respirez à bon escient. Vous devez inspirer une quantité maximum d'air dans vos poumons à chaque fois, étant donné le peu de temps que vous avez pour ça vous allez vouloir *désespérément* que chaque inspiration vous apporte le plus... Quand vous serez plus expérimentés vous apprendrez à relaxer ces inspirations désespérées.

*[NdT: Je sais cette section est un peu confuse mais AMHA il me semble que ça veuille dire de ne pas se prendre dès le début pour un grand maître de la RC et qu'il faille accepter son état de débutant tout simplement]*

- Quelques fois même si vous êtes en pleine RC et que tout semble aller pour le mieux, il peut soudainement vous arriver un besoin urgent d'inspirer à fond. Dans ce cas essayez de *vider* vos poumons (eh oui! j'ai bien dit **vider**) en soufflant l'air y restant par votre nez tout en continuant à jouer (souffler par la bouche), avant de prendre la prochaine inhalation. Ceci semble rééquilibrer le mélange de gaz dans les poumons, réduisant de fait le besoin de respirer.

*[NdT: Cette astuce est plus qu'un simple truc, c'est une partie essentielle de la technique, mais plus vous avancerez moins vous en aurez besoin].*

La **RC est un rythme**. De nombreuses personnes essaient de prendre un rythme puis d'appliquer la RC en fonction de ce rythme. Une meilleure approche est de créer le rythme *autour* de la respiration. Respirez le rythme! Des rythmes différents requièrent des quantités différentes d'air. Commencez avec des rythmes binaires simple, puis augmentez progressivement le tempo. Finalement travaillez des rythmes plus complexes.

D'où l'importance du rythme comme me l'a fait remarquer **Pierre Gasne** <[pierre.gasne@wanadoo.fr](mailto:pierre.gasne@wanadoo.fr)> (il parle spécifiquement du jeu du Didjeridu mais ce problème de **gap** à intégrer au rythme est commun à tous les instruments)

*" Un truc primordial à piger pour maîtriser la respiration circulaire est que celle ci soit intégrée dans un rythme, une succession d'inspirations nasales rapides et superficielles, pour atténuer (au début) ce que les anglos appellent le **gap**. Une fois acquis ce résultat encourageant, on apprend en contrôlant mieux son didje à respirer circulairement sur un drone sans gap apparent.*

*J'aurais aimé comprendre ce truc quand je m'acharnais à apprendre le didje. "*

- Le jour ou vous arriverez à faire le truc de la [paille](#) ou du [stylo](#) dans un verre d'eau correctement, allez vite impressionner vos ami(e)s avec ça (succès garanti pour la soirée!).
- Avant d'essayer de pratiquer la Respiration Circulaire entraînez vous à **BIEN respirer par le ventre**, pour cela deux exercices (où bien allez voir un prof de **Yoga** il vous expliquera ça bien mieux que moi ;-): ([ici un petit article sur la respiration pour le saxophone qui peut aider aussi](#)).

1. Allongez vous sur le dos, posez les deux mains bien à plat sur le ventre puis inspirez doucement par le nez en gonflant le ventre -les mains servent à contrôler que le ventre se gonfle bien- une fois le ventre bien gonflé remplissez les poumons puis lorsque vous sentez que plus une ``goutte" d'air ne peut entrer dans votre corps bloquez la respiration environ 1 seconde. Ensuite soufflez, doucement et de la manière la plus continue et ``lisse" possible, par la bouche en commençant par rentrer le ventre puis les poumons jusqu'à que ceux ci soient vides. Recommencez. Au bout d'un

certain temps vous devriez ressentir une impression de vagues (comme à la mer) dans votre corps c'est un signe que tout va bien...

2. Même position que l'exercice 1, mêmes actions aussi, mais l'exercice précédent consistait à remplir complètement les poumons puis à les vider totalement alors que celui ci consiste à respirer en utilisant le **moins** d'air possible.

Effectuez ces 2 exercices en alternances quelques minutes le soir jusqu'à ce que, au bout de quelques jours, vous sentiez que vous faites ça de façon lisse et relax ("smooth"). Mais n'oubliez surtout pas **ne jamais forcer** et savoir s'arrêter.

- La RC *c'est comme le vélo* ... une fois qu'on l'a et qu'on la maîtrise, on peut s'arrêter même plusieurs mois et reprendre facilement - quelques heures de remise en main et c'est reparti!

---

## <<Annexes>>

### Bibliographie, pointeurs

[Section originale]

#### [The flute player's book](#) - Vernon Hill

Contient un paragraphe sur la RC.

#### [Lesson of circular breathing for the Didjeridu](#) - Sean Borman

La RC appliquée au jeu du Didjeridu.

*La plupart du matériel contenu dans ce document provient de là*

#### [Lesson of circular breathing for the Launeddas](#) - Launeddas Associazione Culturale Sonus de Canna

La RC appliquée au jeu de la Launeddas.

#### [The Art of Jazz trumpet](#) - John McNeil

Contient un paragraphe sur la RC.

#### [Circular Breathing for the Flutist](#) - Robert Dick (Multiple Breath Music Co.)

Informations svp ??

#### [Circular Breathing](#) - Trent Kynaston (Studio 224 1978)

Informations svp??

#### [Circular Breathing for the Saxophone](#) - Bob R. Kenyon

Tiré de la FAQ [alt.music.saxophone](http://alt.music.saxophone).

#### [Didjeridu techniques](#) - Celia Grossman

#### [Didjeridu Tutorial](#) - James A. Hall

Spécifique au Didjeridu mais très intéressant.

#### [Site du Hautbois](#)

Nombreuses informations sur le monde du Hautbois.

#### [Les ouvrages de Michel Ricquier](#)

Auteur de nombreux ouvrages dont quelques uns peuvent être très intéressants sur le sujet de la **RC**.

# Discographie

[Section originale]

... En construction ...

Contributions bienvenues.

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Leçons de Respiration Circulaire

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## How Can I Learn Circular Breathing?

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### Circular Breathing

A Method

by

Dr. Robert S. Spring, DMA

Professor of Music

Arizona State University

[Robert.Spring@asu.edu](mailto:Robert.Spring@asu.edu)

<http://www.asu.edu/cfa/music/>

Circular breathing is a technique that enables the wind instrumentalist to maintain a sound for long periods of time by inhaling through the nose while maintaining air flow through the instrument, using the cheeks as "bellows". The procedure involves four distinct stages:

1. As the performer begins to run low on air, the cheeks are puffed.
2. Air from the cheeks is pushed with the cheek muscles through the instrument and used to maintain the sound while inhalation occurs through the nose.
3. As the air decreases in the cheeks and sufficient air is brought into the lungs through the nose, the soft palate closes and air is again used from the lungs.
4. The cheeks are brought back to their normal embouchure position.

The process of "switching" from air in the lungs to air in the cheeks and back again is the single factor that keeps many individuals from succeeding at circular breathing. There are many methods to teach this "feeling". The following is one method used to learn this technique as well as several exercises that I feel particularly helpful. As in any new technique, circular breathing must be practiced on a daily basis for success. In addition it is very important to begin work with the instrument as soon as possible during study. Exercises are important, but are not helpful if the student cannot achieve the desired result with the instrument.

Preliminary study is done in 8 steps:

1. Puff the cheeks and breath normally with the cheeks out. This will aid in the "feel" of breathing with the cheeks extended.
2. Again puff the cheeks and create a small aperture in the lips, letting air escape through the lips while inhaling and exhaling normally through the nose. By controlling the muscles in the cheeks, try to maintain an air stream for three to five seconds.
3. Place a straw in a glass of water and repeat step two with the straw in the water. Sufficient air should be used to force air from the straw to create bubbles in the water. This step should be repeated many times until the process feels somewhat natural.
4. While the air is being forced from the cheeks, inhale quickly and deeply through the nose. While the cheeks are still slightly puffed, begin to exhale through the mouth and empty the lungs. Try to keep the air stream and bubbles as constant and even as possible. Repeat several times.
5. Repeat step four but do not empty the lungs. As the lungs begin to empty again puff the cheeks, inhale quickly and deeply through the nose. After a small amount of air has been inhaled, close the soft palate and "switch back" to air used from the lungs. Repeat several times. This is the process that is used while circular breathing.
6. Place only the mouthpiece and barrel into the mouth. Practice holding a pitch as steady as possible by alternating a normal embouchure with an embouchure with the cheeks puffed. The student will notice the firmness necessary in the corners of the mouth and support needed from the upper lip

area.

7. Repeat steps four and five with the mouthpiece and barrel only inserted in the mouth. The student is likely to squeak quite a bit during these first few attempts. The student will probably notice a "bump" in the sound while changing from the sound produced by the air in the cheeks to the sound produced by the air in the lungs. This is natural. Exercises later will try to eliminate or smooth this bump as much as possible for each individual.
8. The remainder of the instrument should now be added. It is important to begin using the entire clarinet as soon as possible. The student should not be as concerned with getting a great sound as long as one that is usable is attained.

The following [exercise](#) proves very useful in beginning circular breathing study. It is important to remember that this technique does take time to develop. Most performers takes several months of study prior to any public performance attempt.

The most workable register is the upper chalameaux. It is also easier to mask the bump in the sound if your breath during passages of moving notes. See [examples 1- 3](#). The student is encouraged to compose other similar exercises.

The upper clarion register is the most difficult for circular breathing. Motion of the soft tissue in the mouth and throat that is involved during inhalation through the nose causes a scoop in the pitch that is very difficult to control. During the early stages of study, G on the top of the staff is the upper limit for successful circular breathing. Articulation is also difficult while circular breathing and should not be attempted until the student is very comfortable slurring.

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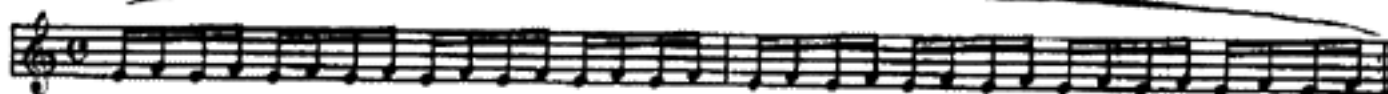
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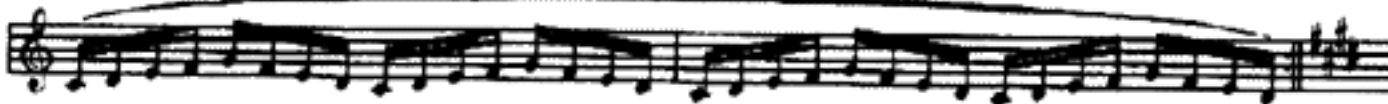
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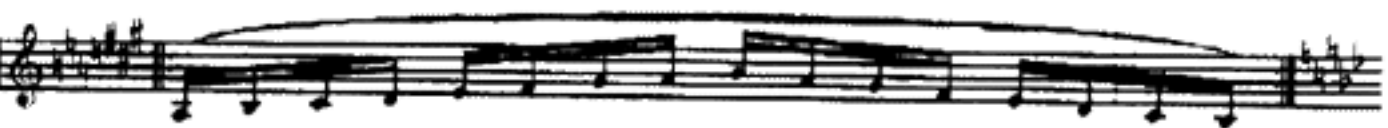
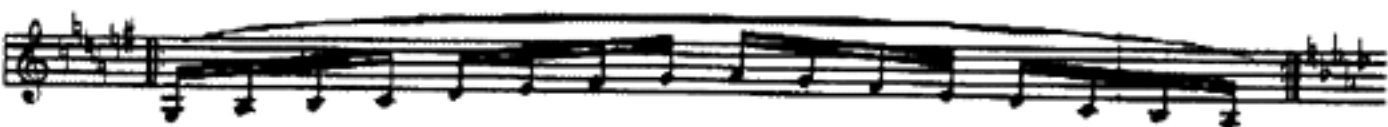
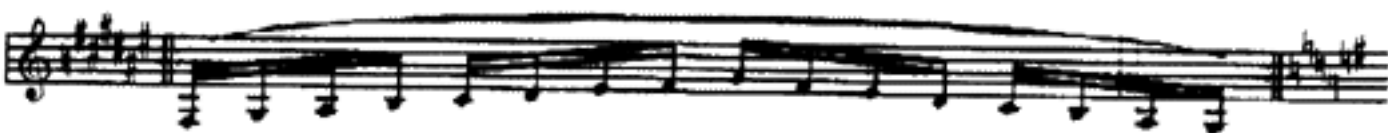
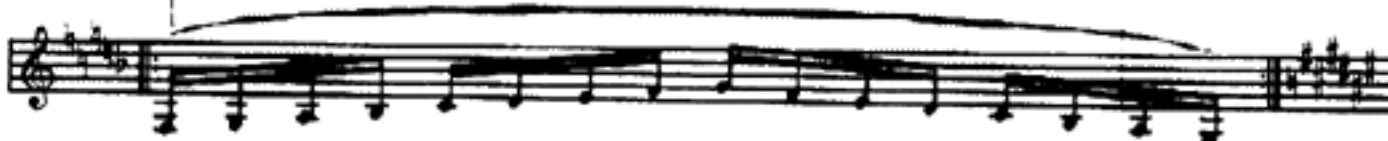
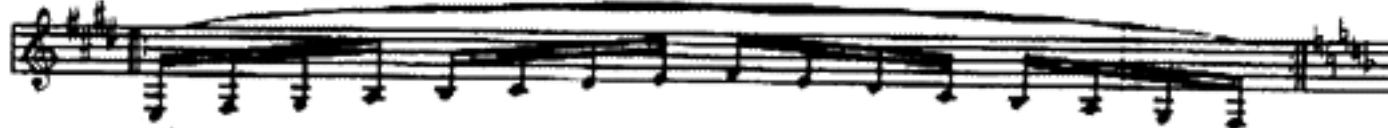
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3





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## Frequently Asked Questions

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More on these subjects may be found in the [Playing](#) and [Making Tips](#) sections

(1)

Q-What makes a good didg?

A- A good clear, open and tapered or opening hole, with good wood integrity, and a strong, not too thick wall, will give a warm open volumous sound that makes for a great didg. A simplistic answer making it sound easy but as with the endless possibilities theres an art to comparing and understanding the differences and picking the best didg to journey with. So being that it takes a maker years to fully get to know the many moods of didg ; its a hard question to answer with words, without a thesis to give justice to it. The best way is to try many didgs, compare their qualities and ask lots of questions.

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(2)

Q- How does the length affect sound?

A- The longer the didg , the slower ones lips vibrate to match the change in the air pressure. At each length there is a different pressure required to kick start the vibrating drone of that particular didg. There is one other factor that can potentially make two didgs of different lengths have the same note. A didg with a substantial taper, compared with another didg the same length with an even diameter hole, will play a higher note than the even hole. The tapered didg takes less pressure to kickstart the didg and the lips vibrate quicker at a higher vibration. So in effect, length plus the hole configuration together, alter the pressure and the speed of the vibration, played by the speed of the lips vibrating. These two factors make for endless possible combinations and no two didgs the same.

Put another way Length is the main determinant, but secondly is the shape of the internal hole and the ultimate determinant which is both combined; is the ease for the air pressure to be released from one end to another. The more air volume for the sound to travel through plus the internal variations effecting ease, creates the lips to vibrate slower. So the quicker and easier for the air and sound to travel the higher the note.

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(3)

Q- How is the hole bored out?

A- Termites or White Ants as they are nicknamed, make their nest under the ground ,inside or on the tree or in mounds above ground with complex natural airconditioning to make life comfortable in the hot terrain they live. The termites eat the heart wood out leaving the alive sap wood to grow on, enabling the tree to live to full maturity whilst being hollowed out on the inside. In classic dry country /termite terrain, the smallest of trees can be perfectly hollowed out on the inside. Or a large tree can have 30 + branches each potentially a perfect didgeridoo. Mostly there is a range from being solid to partially eaten to fully eaten, and a didg finder drives ,walks and searches far afield looking for ideal didgs.

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(4)

Q - What is the process of finding a didg ?

A - A trip bush can mean to the top of Aus or down or west into the dry & desert regions. Trips are often thousands of Kms and can take from a week to a month away. It involves looking for termite country. The art of spotting or choosing a didg is a learnt art and is

a constant learning process with the myriad of different woods and terrain being endless .

Trips are a combination of practical product finding and personal journeying. Its time alone, in the bush feeling into a new phase of journeying with the bush, didg ,receiving levels, opening to new reflections and endeavouring to get more connected with the environment. A good excuse to go walkabout.

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(5)

Q-Should I pour water down the inside of my didg?

A- Traditionally water was used down the inside of the didg to add a glisteny surface to the inside to help the sound travel. It also gave moisture to the wood to help balance climatic extremes and balance somewhat the expansion and contraction that temperature and humidity puts wood through. A wash out with water also moves on insects and spiders who find didg a great home and it cleans ,dust, spit,or just the energy of a full on didg session .On the whole its a part of looking after an instrument and friend.

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(6)

Q- What are the didgs sealed with and what maintainance is needed ?

A- Our didgs are sealed on the outside with oil, natural resin varnish or occasionally left with just the ochre wood glue mix for a more traditional feel.

With the natural resin varnish basically no maintainance is required. This gives a water proof exterior. If used outdoors or roughed around a lot, another coat may be beneficial every 3-10 years ( depending upon didg and use) Being that we seal the inside of the didg you can go swimming with your didg - a simpler way to clean it out.With an oiled finish , a periodic oil is beneficial, and the timing is dependant upon climate and use. At the least every 6-12 months as preferred oiling regularity.With an ochre /wood glue finish , the exterior is water resistant not proof, so minimise water on the outside. With age it becomes more water resistant. If one desires it to be water proof applying a flat varnish to the outside will give a similar finish with more protection.

The inside of our didgs are fully sealed with either beeswax , oil and sometimes natural resin varnish. Only occasionally we leave the inside unsealed and whereso we have done so to perhaps feature a particular didg in its perfect natural state.

If a didg is well looked after there is little to no need to reseal the

inside. This is definitely the case with a didg beeswaxed or natural resin varnished on the inside for how complete a seal it gives. The regular water clean though is helpful with the waxed didg to clear out any insects that like the wax. With an oiled didg one may give a flush through with oil- perhaps linseed oil, but only where a didg is climatically or use wise , needing some extra nourishment to prolong its life.

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(7)

Q -Why is the didg sound so moving ?

A - This answer has many perspectives and each person has a different slant. Heres an array.

\* The drone sound is similar to "Omm" the sound of creation. To add some weight to this, I read in a news article that the sound of the earth rotating was somehow taped on a space mission and to their surprise it sounded like a didgeridoo.

\* The didgeridoo connects us with our tribal past no matter how long back our our connection is to our tribal ancestors

\* The beat of the didg , and the circular nature of the sound is reassuring, like the beat of our mothers heart beat when we were listening from inside her belly.

\* Sound is powerfull and the didg is a magnifyer of sound. It somehow accentuates feeling like few other instruments. Air instruments like bagpipes and flute have a stirring quality in a similar but different way.

\* Didg is the only air instrument that utlises both air and voice , and consequently offers both the deep and high note ranges simultaneously. Voice is used with effect in key and out of key. This gives the ability to overlay different rythms and sound effects into the one experience of sound. This is so powerfull somehow that perhaps in the wide array of sound we as the listener are assimilating that our normal sense of hearing is either overloaded or expanded and so our assemblage point is shifted.

\* Didg offers such range of playing styles; as varied as the individual, and being that there is no exact way to play, it there is nowhere for one to go to get approval, to say I've arrived or I'm at this level of playing skill. There is no outside reference point of Okness other than how one feels. For the listener, the myriad sound experiences, always transported one to a fresh place.

\* The continuos nature of circular breathing is both hypnotising and seemingly magical in what seems a very difficult skill . The

player is often given much respect for being able to keep the drone going on and on.

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(8)

Q - Isn't circular breathing difficult? & How do you circular breath?

A - Circular breathing is very simple and yet can be very difficult if one doesn't follow the steps or exercises that lead naturally to it. At the same time though if one trully desires to circular breath, even without instruction or knowing, one can find the way to it.

Most simply, circular breathing is the action of storing some air in the mouth cavity by puffing out the cheeks and / or opening the jaw and when needing to take a breath, flattening the cheeks and or closing the jaw to maintain sufficient pressure to keep the lips vibrating for long enough to snatch a breath. The snatching becomes an integral part of the rythm.

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(9)

Q - How long does it take to learn to circular breath ?

A - It can take 5 minutes to 5 months . Most who are persistant and practice regularly get it within weeks or within 1-3 months. It can be surprisingly easy and also elusive. Relaxing and enjoying the process speeds it up.

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(10)

Q How are didgs classed

A-Class is a subjective thing and is only a helpfull tool in classifying didgs or for you in describing your quality price requirements , when in truth there all different and its next to impossible to classify ,if didgs are made with their individual spirit in mind

. But as a tool they are classed , based on looks ,sound ,rarity,etc etc and another person may classify them different. Definately a tricky question ,you can find further info on our site.

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(11)

Q- Do you suggest drinking any certain fluid before playing? One that will clear your throat and coat your mouth, as to keep it lubed longer. I brought my didg to a friend's house for a little improv session. We played in 20-30 minute sessions at a time, and I noticed, with 20-30 minutes of constant expulsion of air, that the back of my throat was getting very dry. I also noticed that my lips were losing their initial moisture, which I counteracted, a bit, with

forming an "S" sound with my tongue (which sounds almost like a shower, or rattler snake, with the cheeks not puffed.....and rightfully so..... there's a "shower" of saliva occurring.

A-Good question,- Ultimately the best way to keep lubed is on the whole to drink a heap of water, and eat lots of uncooked fresh fruit and vegies. The quick drink before a session does little if ones body is generally a bit dehydrated. Didging does require saliva use and it asks of it from our reserves,so keeping the liquid up in general life is the best way. if you wanting to keep hydrated ,avoid alcohol, tea and coffee which are dehydraters. if some folk find that alcohol loosens your playing up, its the relaxing factor at work which I'll go into further below, but remember that for every glass of alcohol I think you need about 2-3 of water to stop the body from dehydrating. My feeling is that very regular alcohol consumption without balancing wont help ones didg playing in the long term. The same with stress, for adrenalin running overboard depletes the body reserves.

The ways you mentioned to help the saliva flow are natural body responses to keep the saliva flowing and your right on target, with your methods, I do the same. These come pretty automatic when trying to keep the drone going. Another way is relaxing. Often when performing if my adrenelin is running too high it can deplete my body and the saliva flow slows up- a bummer. The best help is relaxing and breathing easier not going into trying hard.

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(12)

Q- Why do didgs crack and how can it be prevented?

A-Wood naturally expands and contracts and expansion lines can become cracks depending upon the wood, how and when it was cut, and the curing process. Didgs cut green and not cured well is a major cause of cracking.The majority of didgs sold are cut green. Of Heartlands approximately half are, but thats a very low percentage most makers would be 95-100% ,more like most a 100% . Theres nothing wrong with didgs cut green other than more care is needed in selection ,curing and especially selection when sending into a different climate zone. Green didgs of course are more susceptible to cracking than a sun seasoned dead wood didg. So sun seasoned dead wood and wood with very wavy grain patterns are the ultimate for crack proof didgs.

Munga one of the Heartland makers for example wont cut a green didg. All dead wood. Look at his didgs on our site and the quality, and imagine the searching involved in only finding dead wood of this quality. Because Munga, Brian, Paul and I particularly are looking for dead wood rather than the easier green wood we are learning more about the differences between and the nature of cracking- green and dead wood -the bigger picture. A lifetime learning.

A green didg well seasoned can be as crack resistant as a sunseasoned didg, but the sun seasoned didg is the ultimate for peace of mind.

Not leaving your didg outside in the sun, outside overnight, or in a hot car for long periods is the best way to minimise the expansion and contraction and so prevent your didg cracking. For tips as to repairing cracked didgs refer to our [Tips- Repairing Section](#)

How to check whether a crack is releasing air? Blowing with your mouth over the crack to see whether air goes through is one way. The best way is filling the didg with water with the hand over the mouthpiece . One final way is playing the didg and holding the hand just away from the didg to feel for air.

So cracking can be put down to expansion and contraction caused by climatic swings where wood is encouraged to expand or contract and noone can fully guarantee how each will react. With much experience though we can predict

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## The CIRCULAR BREATHING PAGE



This page is an extract from the '[Guide to Good Vibrations](#)' by Justin Timson.

It contains all the information you will need to learn to circular breath using the didgeridoo.

If you follow these instructions carefully and practice for at least half an hour a day, you should be comfortably breathing within 3 weeks.

Of course it is helpful to use a didge that feels comfortable. We recommend that it be no lower than the key of C, and no higher than the key of F



A very basic understanding is all that is needed to achieve a feat many people describe as "damn near impossible". You don't need to have a specially shaped throat, or to practice for years, in fact, by carefully following the explanation below, you could be circular breathing in just a few days. !!

Many people believe that it involves constantly breathing in and out at the same time. This is not "damn near impossible", but ABSOLUTELY impossible. (although some may disagree!)

Circular breathing actually involves 'squeezing' out a small amount of air with the cheeks, while at the same time sniffing a small amount of air in through the nose as

you play. This is done at regular intervals, to "top-up" the air supply. Simple ! (and entirely possible.)

It is also possible to keep the sound going with an upward movement of the jaw to push the air instead of the cheeks, which can have benefits over cheek breathing. This method is quite advanced and allows one to play very fast rhythms. See the section on jaw breathing for more on this subject.



### 3 SIMPLE STEPS TO A CONTINUOUS AIR-FLOW .

#### STEP 1

#### Isolating your cheek air

These first few exercises should be done without the didge. Fill your cheeks with as much air as you can, and hold it there. Now Slowly start to breath in through your nose, being careful to keep your cheeks full of air. If your cheeks suck in, try pushing your tongue against your front teeth before you start to breath in. Now try breathing in and out normally through your nose while keeping your cheeks fully inflated...

Well done, you have successfully isolated your cheek air. !! Later you will be using the air inside your cheeks to keep the sound going while you take some air in through your nose.



#### STEP 2.

Cheek muscles ahoy !!

This next step involves squeezing the air out of your mouth using your cheek muscles alone.

In the section on Rythms, we learnt to use the cheek muscles to make beats. Remember that this was achieved by making a quick 'smile' type movement. This was your first attempt at using the cheek muscles on their own. Let's try again, but this time squeeze them hard, and quickly as you can. You will need to keep your lips pressed tightly together as you make the movement to keep the pressure on. You should make as much lip noise as you can, and you should be showing your dimples at the end of each squeeze. By making the

whole movement very exaggerated you will quickly get yourself used to it. Then make very small movements to really see the fine points of what is happening.

Remember that there should be no help from the diaphragm.

Another good way to get the idea of using your cheek muscles on their own, is to fill your mouth with water, and then squeeze it out in a thin stream, as if you were playfully squirting someone in the swimming pool.

The only way to be really sure that your cheek muscles are operating on their own, however, is to sniff in some air at the same time that you are squeezing the air out of your mouth using your cheek muscles.

We call this movement "SQUIFFING" (squeezing and sniffing air at the same time).

This is very different from 'BREATHING and sniffing at the same time , which would be impossible. So, start with your cheeks full of air, and very slowly start to breath in through the nose. While the air is slowly coming through your nose, you should have enough time to think about squeezing your cheek air out through your tightened lips.

*Remember, using your cheek muscles is as simple as smiling!*



The whole process should be slow and exaggerated and last for about 3-5 seconds. As you practice, always remember to start the breathing in first, nice and slowly, to give you time to think about squeezing out the air with the cheeks. If you managed to get both things happening at the same time, even for just a short moment, then you have come a long way already.

**You have successfully squiffed!**

Once you have a nice long squiff going..( Remember to tighten your lips to slow the release of air from your cheeks.) you should try and make the squiff very small, so it becomes barely audible. This will train your diaphragm muscle to move with the same force as your cheek muscles. Doing this should also speed the movement up. This is the desired effect, as the average breath when circular breathing is about as fast as, and has about the same force as an average sniff. So your cheeks and diaphragm will be working simultaneously and with the same velocity. There is a certain amount of co-ordination involved here so remember to relax and it will all happen a whole lot quicker.

Remember, it's very important that both the squeeze and sniff are happening at the

SAME TIME, no matter how small.

It is also important at this stage for you to know that ,  
*If your squiff isn't right, you can progress no further.!*

It's very easy for the two movements to slowly fall apart, so remember not to let that happen. Most people that are given a rough idea of what to do can struggle with this concept for months and usually only succeed by accidentally synchronizing the two movements.

When you think you can get a nicely relaxed, medium sized squiff happening without having to think about it, you can try doing one in the didge as you play. If you managed a decent sized cheek beat in the previous section, then it's really only a matter of taking a quick sniff with each beat from your cheeks.

The type of cheek movement you are aiming for while using the didge is really quite gentle, A sort of 'whe' shape, as if saying the first half of 'where'. Ultimately, this is the movement you will be making as you circular breath.

Remember that your cheek air is actually keeping your lips vibrating for that instant that you snatch some air through your nose, so you have to be sure that your cheeks are doing their job and keeping that sound going. The amount of air you take in will be small to begin with, so don't be too concerned if it doesn't seem enough. Eventually you will be capable of almost filling your lungs in one breath, although doing this would really be an emergency procedure if you had over used your air supply.

The trick is to maintain your breath by regularly topping up your supply of air, without letting it get below about quarter full at any time.

Let us move on to the last step,



## STEP 3

### BLOW SQUIFF BLOW

The final step involves inserting a squiff while you play, without the sound stopping.

This happens in 3 parts, BLOW-SQUIFF-BLOW, which becomes  
 BLOWSQUIFFBLOW,  
 A full cycle, No gaps.

The sound is started keeping your cheeks inflated, (BLOW)  
Then comes the SQUIFF, and immediately after the squiff, the lungs take over  
again.(BLOW)

Remember that the squiff part will usually be much faster than the blowing part, so it  
is really

BLOOOOOOWWWsquiffBLOOOOOOWWWsquiffBLOOOOOOWWW

Start by performing the first half, that's, 'Bloooowwsquiff...', and then let the sound  
stop.

Just remember that it is the lungs that have to take over the sound again after you have  
used the push from your cheeks. This should actually happen just before the cheeks  
have finished squeezing out all their air.

As you blow the air from your lungs, with your cheeks inflated, preparing to squiff,  
think about blowing again as quickly after the squiff as possible.

This point, where the 'squiff' 'meets the second 'blow' is where the connection is made.

It is the point that takes you from normal breather, to Circular Breather.

If you've practiced your squiffing enough, you'll find that the squiff will start to  
disappear into your playing, effectively joining the "blows" together. Get used to  
putting a squiff into your playing whenever you can, and very soon you will complete  
a full cycle without thinking about it.

When you are not thinking about it is the most likely time for the "join" to happen,  
as this is when you will be most relaxed.

If you are not relaxed and trying too hard then it will take a lot longer, and you may  
find that you are over doing it on the sniffing, which is another thing that holds people  
back. Small sniffs are more relaxed than big ones and can be just as effective.

The join in your first few cycles will be obvious at first where the sound will  
sometimes drop and sometimes be louder, depending on how much or how little you  
use the cheeks, so it's really a matter of balancing that pressure between your cheeks  
and breath.(balanced squiffing)

Circular breathing by it's very nature is a smooth and flowing movement that  
should require little or no effort. And it is the smoothness of your join which will  
require the most patience and attention. Remember that you won't get enough air in to  
play continuously to begin with. Only with practice will you become relaxed enough  
to *allow* the cycle to happen rather than make it. You will only become fully aware of  
this once you have been actually doing it for a few weeks, so don't be put off by the  
rough ride that gets you there.

# ONGYAH !

One way to feel the smooth nature of circular breathing, is by saying a magic word.

The magic word is "ONGYAH!"

Try squiffing and mouthing the word "ONG". (doing this outside the didge and using the "smiling" method of squiffing, this would translate to "PONG".. or 'PING '

You will feel your tongue at the back of your throat at the  
"..NG". part.

Now say the whole word, " ONGYAH" while squiffing.

The movement that your tongue makes as it goes from the ..NG.. to ..YAH. is where the connection is made. You will feel how your tongue moves in a wavelike manner to make a smooth pressure change from cheeks to lungs.rather than dropping abruptly

which translates as ONGA

So, the 'OH' is the BLOW, the 'NG' is where the squiff happens, and the 'YAH' is the connection point from the squiff to blow again.

Practice softly whispering the magic word to train your tongue to move in the right way.

i.e.: **ongyah ongyah ongyah,**.. while squiffing...

## The Straw routine

There is a novel way to demonstrate non-stop breathing involving the use of a glass of water and straw. This method is one way to get used to circular breathing, but it won't help you much when it comes to lip- vibrating.. Nevertheless it is novel.

So, take a glass of water and a drinking straw, bend the straw at the end that is in the water and do your squiffing routine into the straw to produce a continuous flow of bubbles!

To practice getting your cheeks working properly you can try filling your mouth with water and squirting it out in a long controlled stream. It is not recommended that you try breathing in whilst doing this!

Brass and reed instruments also have enough back pressure to achieve a continuous tone. This can really give you the edge when it comes to playing those ultra, ultra long, drawn out notes!

If you play a brass or reed instrument, try circular breathing on it and it could help you to develop a whole new style of playing.

If you have managed to complete a full cycle by this stage, then you are one of a small number of very receptive and most likely, stress free individuals that meditates

regularly. .Either that or you just fluked it! VERY WELL DONE!! If you're struggling and confused, well that means you are perfectly normal and will be arriving shortly at what may be your first addiction!

**HAPPY PLAYING AND ALL THE BEST  
VIBRATIONS TO YOU ALL..... !!**



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DIDGERIDOO**

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# THE DIDJERIDU

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## History

The Didjeridu is an aboriginal instrument from Australia. It is played by blowing (somewhat like a trumpet) into the mouth hole. The Didjeridu plays a large part in the ceremonies and spirituality of the aboriginal people. Historically Didjeridus are hollowed out branches of Euclyptus trees by termites. Today you can find Didjeridus made from p.v.c. piping to ceramic. I have used mahogany lumber to create these Didjeridus

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## The Art

Hand crafted in mahogany, these didjeridu's are built with chisels and hand planes. I make them out of two pieces and laminate them together (since there are no eucalyptus trees in New England). I work on each didjeridu over a period of about three days, playing it and changing it's shape and tone while I make it. I am not out to make a lot of money, I actually enjoy building them just as much as I enjoy playing them.

The Didjeridus are made in the "old Colt Firearms Building", a factory converted into live in artist studios.

For order information and prices please email me at [kev.mel@ix.netcom.com](mailto:kev.mel@ix.netcom.com)

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## The Basic Drone

Getting your first sound out of your Didjeridu is an exciting and fantastic event. First try blowing with your mouth closed so that your lips vibrate (like blowing a raspberry). Since the action of your lips vibrating is where the sound comes from. Now, do this buzzing with your mouth placed on your Didjeridu. It may take a while, but the sound will come.

**Note: Traditional playing is normally through the center of the mouth. Though, it is easier to play through the side of your mouth. I recommend the side approach.**

### Mistakes:

Don't press the mouth piece of your Didjeridu tightly against your mouth. You only need a seal to play. Don't over blow. Once you get your first sound, relax and reduce your air flow. You will be amazed on how little air it takes to play. Don't get upset, enjoy the didjeridu. Learning to play will come in time. don't try to play for

too long in one sitting, you will get dizzy.



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## Different Playing Techniques

Once you have been able to play and control the basic drone, you should have noticed that the shape of your mouth changes the tone. The position of your tongue also has an effect on the sound, try moving it around. Even try pronouncing syllables in a rhythm. (ta-ta-ta-ta, ka-ka-ka-ka, etc.)

Also try filling your cheeks with different amounts of air. By moving air in and out and from side to side in your mouth a sound similar to a "wah-wah" should happen.

A gut slap is another technique in playing. This is performed by your stomach muscles, a lot like laughing. (ha-ha-ha) the air comes in quick, strong bursts and has a variation in the tone.

Another technique is vocalizations. Try singing while playing, or making animal sounds. A good sound to start with is like a dog's bark.

Any sound that you are able to get out of your Didjeridu is a good sound, be proud of it, this is what playing your Didjeridu is all about. I highly recommend trying to learn how to play as many sounds as you can before trying to learn how to circular breath.



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## Circular Breathing

You don't need to know how to breath in a circular state to play your Didjeridu, but it adds an edge to your playing skills (and length). It is impossible to exhale while at the same time inhaling. Circular breathing is simply keeping an even amount of pressure in your mouth, while you breath in and fill your lungs

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## Practice Exercises

There are many ways to learn how to circular breathe. Since I taught myself, I find this way to be the easiest.

### Step 1:

All you need is a straw and a glass (or cup) of water, and some time. {time is the hardest thing to find, so I recommend doing it while you watch T.V.} Blow bubbles into the water. Your goal is to keep a constant flow of bubbles bubbling. While exhaling breath through your nose. The trick to this is filling your mouth with air and moving your tongue back. After a couple of days, you should have mastered this exercise.

### Step 2:

Moving on to the Didjeridu, what I have discovered is that circular breathing is more about control of your mouth than your lungs. With your mouth placed against your Didjeridu, fill your cheeks

with air and exhale the rest of your breath through your nose. The only air in your system should be in your mouth. Practice playing with only the air in your mouth. After a while of practice, breath in through your nose like you did with the straw. If you mastered the straw, this should not take long to learn.

### Step 3:

Practice. Like anything else, mastering circular breathing takes practice, and I recommend learning what sounds you are capable of , before moving on to breathing.

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## Reference

One great place for your questions or more information is on the Internet. One site that stands out from the rest:

[Mills Dreamtime Didjeridu 3W Server](#)



I hope that this booklet has been helpful to you. If you need to reach me for any reason:

**Kevin Derken** 140 Huyshope ave. apt 308 Hartford, CT. 06106 Phone:  
860-246-2432 E-mail: [kev.mel@ix.netcom](mailto:kev.mel@ix.netcom)


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# How to play Launeddas

(Qui  per la versione Italiana)

## THE LAUNEDDAS TECHNIQUE

The Launeddas, the Sardinian popular direct-breath polyphonic musical instrument is made up of three different cane tubes of unequal size. The longest is called "Tumbu or pedale", it has no lateral holes, and it produces a prolonged grave note in the only natural hole of the cane. The second cane is called "Mancosa Manna" linked to the first by the use of a tarred string; it is played with the left hand by holding one's thumb underneath it in order to hold up its weight ; it has five little rectangular holes, four of which are covered by the fingertips of the following fingers: forefinger, middle finger, ring finger and little finger. The fifth hole, the lowest one called "Pentiadori" or "arrefinu" is left open. The third cane is the shortest, it is called "Mancosedda" or "destrina", and it has five little holes too; it is played with the right hand by covering the four upper holes as mentioned before for "Mancosu Manna" and by leaving the fifth free/open. Every cane tube has a single beating reed that is produced by the cane itself, so that final end of the cane remains linked to the cane knot.

## THE CIRCULAR BREATHING TECHNIQUE

How the musician is capable of producing and maintaining it.

No polyphonic wind instrument with a protracted breathing technique, except "Launeddas" is played uninterruptedly even when the notes are separated or when there is a pause, obtained by lowering simultaneously the tone to the note of the chord or to the note of the tonality of the music played during the moment of separation or pause: for this reason the "launeddas" player has to breathe into the instrument continuously from the beginning to the end of the piece played, without the slightest interruption. To the reader who is not familiar with Launeddas it could appear impossible to blow continuously without stopping at all for more than an hour. This happens because the Launeddas player is capable of recovering his breath without any difficulty without interrupting the piece of music. The technique: The musician breathes deeply before the beginning of the piece, and re-takes breath at every Semibreve, then he puts the Launeddas to his mouth and blows. During the first three beats he keeps his breath for the last quarter of the semibreve by forcibly blowing up his cheeks. In the last quarter, he both deflates his cheeks compressing his breath stored up in the Launeddas, and takes breath inhaling through his nose and so on continuously.



## HOW TO LEARN THE CIRCULAR BREATHING TECHNIQUE

The way to learn the protracted breathing technique is the same as described for the player above; for the learner however it is slightly different because even if he is an adult, before learning he cannot produce sufficient air so as to play; he will have to use a little cane in place of the Launeddas. We will provide instructions so that this little cane can be made and instructions in order to use it. Take a pen, eliminate the ink container and put a little plug in the little hole on the side; between this hole and the upper part of the plastic container (where the little plastic plug is placed, which will remain closed) make another hole smaller than the other already found on the pen. In order to do this use the tip of a red-hot needle. Then fill a glass of water and after having placed it on the table put the plastic pen container in your mouth on the side from which the ink container was taken off. Place it in the glass of water until you reach and cover the new tiny hole and then blow; you will notice the tiny bubbles and the sound created by them. You will also notice that when you have finished blowing the bubbles will stop too. Summarizing the technique then: concentrate, set the pen cover in your mouth, place it in the water and blow in the same way as the Launeddas player blows in his instrument. Let's repeat: During the first three times; that is at one two and three, you store the air for the last quarter, by forcibly inflating your cheeks. In the last quarter (without interrupting the flux of wind coming out) you should simultaneously deflate your cheeks and compress the air in them and at the same time you take in air from your nose, and continue blowing the other semibreve. If you don't succeed the first time, try again. Don't feel frustrated because a great number of people, even though understanding the technique, have rarely succeeded at a first attempt. When the learner has acquired this, he just needs practice until he is capable of going on for at least 10 minutes. After this it can be said that he is at a good stage, because he has reached a stage and resolved a problem that seemed impossible to reach at the beginning.

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developping protracted breathing...

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# ...how to play Launeddas<sup>(II)</sup>

## DEVELOPING THE BREATHING TECHNIQUE .

The breathing technique is developed by gradually enlarging the hole in the pen and by practicing at every stage (with the water bubbles) until one is able to blow for at least 10 minutes. The amount of time a student will need in order to play a Launedda will not depend on the intelligence of the student but on constant practice. Example: If the student practices three times a day, he will notice that from the first to the third attempt, he will feel pleased with what he has accomplished. If he practices every three days it will be difficult for him to make any sort of progress from the initial practice.

## PRACTICE STEPS IN ORDER TO PLAY LAUNEDDAS WITHOUT COVERING THE HOLES

Take the Launedda with your right hand, keeping it in the right position by placing your thumb under it and the index and middle finger over it; bring the stem section-reed to your mouth up to the waxed welded point. Keeping your tongue straight down, blow, making sure that reed does not



come into contact with the teeth and is safe from saliva. If the pupil manages recover back his breath for two, three or four times without interrupting the music he should continue, because he will get good results with more practice. If he succeeds in recovering his breath only once he should go back and practice with the plastic pen case immersed in the water. One must remember that if the student is not capable of blowing the Launedda for at least 10 minutes without stopping, he musn't use his fingers to cover the holes.

## HOW TO COVER THE HOLES IN ORDER TO BEGIN PLAYING

Take the "Mankosedda or Destrina" of a median or of any other "cuntzertu" with the right hand, put the thumb under the cane, between the second and third hole; straighten the index and with its middle phalanx cover the first hole, then cover: with the phalanx of the middle and ring finger the second and third hole and with that of the little finger the fourth hole, so that the fingers are well straightened and at the same time capable of holding the mancosedda. At the beginning it will be difficult to cover the holes spontaneously, because the fingers are not used to staying in that position and feeling where the holes are. With some practice the problem will be resolved and the skill will be mastered. At this point you can

start playing the note; provided that your breath is enough and continuous as well. The notes that you will compose will be semibreves. You will begin by raising and lowering the forefinger up and down, then the middle finger, the ring finger and the little finger. The amount of time breath is kept will surely fade because the fingers do not cover the holes entirely. Sometimes the reed may block up. After a five-minute break you will begin again until the notes are played right and distinctly. When you have managed to play the semibreves then practice the minims, the crotchets and the quavers. When one is capable of performing these exercises with the right hand they must be performed with the left one. After having managed to play one Launedda for at least 10 minutes by moving one's fingers well, practice should be done by putting the "croba" or copia to the mouth, that is "Su Tumbu e Sa Mancosa Manna, trying to resist as long as possible. After some time the "mancosedda" or destrina can be added and they can be played together.

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## Circular Breathing : "How to develop a feel for it / first attempts"

[An informal insight]

"Circular breathing" refers to the technique of expelling air through one's mouth while simultaneously breathing-in through one's nose, and then "re-connecting" the airflow to the mouth-stream. OK, I'll try to put it into English:

'Imagine that the mouth always has air in it, while playing (and not just concentrating on the air / flow being used while it goes through the reed, but rather, on the "other" air that's left unused, for now). Now imagine that it's thicker than air, such as in a plasma state, or as just plain water. It would be easy to amass a quantity of that substance in the cheek-bulges, or the anatomical "pockets" closer back to the throat area, and to "squirt" the same contents forward, using a cheek-pucker motion. Quite simply, 'inflate your cheeks, Dizzy Gillespie style, push on them with your hands or fingers if need-be (or use muscles only), and "squirt". Air WILL come out.

For part 2 (breathing through your nose -- don't do this with a bad cold), merely push on the cheeks while adding the step of inhaling through your nose. If need be, use water in your mouth (only) instead: I guarantee you that you won't choke. Don't worry yet about step 3 (re-connecting).

Try to duplicate the exercise without using hand/finger pressure on the cheeks, if that's what you've been doing, but use only the cheek / face muscles (and don't worry about embouchure control just yet). OK ... the mind wants to potentially panic, because you have to override the parts of the glottis area that wish to prevent you from drowning, water or no water in the mouth. You might remember, most people die from drowning due to the body's choking off the air-flow INTO the body, because in its attempts to keep the water out, it closes off the wind-pipe. So only after you're dead does the water usually go into the lungs, when that initial primaevial reflex no longer takes-over. So, when starting circular breathing, you can encounter that self-gagging reflex, at least in the mind (for me, it just emerges as initial panic, until I tell it that I'm not operating from primaevial reflexes, just from oboistic ones ... which isn't so very different, actually).

Once there's a sense of expelling air while breathing in, then try to blow back "forward" to re-establish an airstream that resembles the "traditional" or customary one you would "normally" use. There'll be a gap at first, then pitch bends, etc., but the point is, the process becomes assimilable.

There are many ways to use feed-back(s) other than the acoustical one, and I prefer actually avoiding the acoustical one until much later in the process: aesthetics tend to interfere with this in the beginning; i.e., the yearning for a good centered tone & pitch become initial hindrances to the exploration. So ... some people are successful with a straw in a (tall) glass that has about 1" of water (whatever) in it [tall so that you don't get splashed ...] The visual reinforcement of bubbles through the liquid will help confirm that air IS flowing outwards during (nose) inhalation. Never-mind the judgments about "is it sufficient of an airstream to get a reed vibrating ..."

Another way, even more visual, is to use one of those party-blasters (with or without noise-maker capabilities) that uncurls when air is blown through them. That way, our visual reinforcement tendencies can be used to encourage the process (and at parties, you can blast away the neighborhood for hours on

end). Be creative -- you know yourself best ...

When the transition to an oboe is made (I never tried on bassoon, since I don't play), use a lighter reed (for me, EH reeds were even easier). Again, don't worry about sonorities ... use the reed alone, then easy-response notes (half-hole E-flat's, high C" even, whatever YOU like as a comfortable note); and for psychologically easy finger action, try trills (we can't judge pitch quality as well on those anyway) ... Then try familiar passages (scales, scale fragments). Even if you cannot get it to be "anywhere" on the horn, there'll be enough easy fragments to isolate a "circular breath", or perhaps, you'll just love half-hole D, and encounter it in the passages where it's needed the most. Loud tutti sections are great to experiment, in "public".

A couple observations: don't wait until you're depleted to take the "circular breath"; rather, do it when you're no more than a "third" low of air, meaning, with still 2/3 full air capacity left. It will be more seamless. Also, trust that over time it will adjust to farther back in the mouth / throat area, and not so much in the cheeks ... so don't worry if you look like a blowfish at first (if you do). Don't be afraid to "tank-up" with a few quick circular breaths in succession, either, if need be (some pieces are easier for me that way, as "Piri"). And, don't think it will alleviate entirely the CO-2 build-up, because unfortunately, it will delay its surfacing, but not eliminate it (some players EXhale through their noses while playing, to have the option to release CO-2). Personally, I find that to exhale and play the next phrase before inhaling at all is still better than circular breathing my way through a piece, such as the second Schumann Romance. Moreover, I still believe in the communicative power of the breath, as a musical / emotional entity (string quartets use them all the time).

For the really talented, go listen to Robert Dick on flute (or Ransom Wilson); or any LOW-pressure instrument performing artist; or the great brass players who do it, and especially, anyone on an ethnic instrument whose function IS to produce endless drones (hours at a time). [And of course, it came from glass-blowing ... oh, and no, the diseases associated with glass-blowing aren't from that at all, but rather from the types of metals & salts used to make the right coloration ... and then inhaled at potentially still hot-vapor temperatures ... so we're safe)

And also, listen to some of those same performers actually articulate while circular breathing (it's a little odd, but think about it: single tonguing doesn't interfere with the process, anatomically ... double, however, would; non-uvular flutter tonguing wouldn't either ... but it's all a matter of resistance encountered (mental, and physical): too much physical air resistance mustered-up, and the worse circular breathing "works". And of course there are the masters on our own instruments (kudos from all of us to Alex Klein in particular) ... but there are many, many successful & wonderful players who incorporate that technique in a "second-nature" fashion, much as the rest of us have assimilated the act of trilling: it "happens", just by initializing the thought; we don't tell it exactly what to do, but we know where we are during the trill: on the lower, or higher note ... we can change the speed, end on either note, "count" the number of shakes to align with chamber music partners (as in the Bach Double) ... and NEVER to we dictate a mechanical up-down message to our fingers ... However, if we were re-building through physical therapy exercises, we would follow a path parallel to what I've suggested for circular breathing: methodical approaches that seem a little separated from the conclusion / fusion we seek, but which do lead there (as others' others' approaches also would) ...

So, happy puffing / splashing; whatever ... I hope that it helps clarify & can lead you (positively) somewhere ... Some of my previous students took months to get it; others got it superbly in only 3 days ... I guess it's all in your mind, really.

'Feel free to pass around the info, if it helps, & good-luck,

## Franck (Avril)

["In-Site" references](#)



# Didjeridu Tutorial

## Circular Breathing

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### Lesson Objective

In this lesson you should learn the basic idea of circular breathing. This does not mean to say that you will be able to circular breathe, but you will be along the path to getting it.

### Technique

First a word about what circular breathing is. As you listen to didjeridu recordings, you will no doubt notice that the performer never seems to stop for a breath! Either he or she has a phenomenal lung capacity or there is a trick somewhere. Being world-wise, I'm sure you'll all choose the latter explanation. The "trick" is known as circular breathing. Physiologically it's not possible to breathe in and blow out simultaneously, but it is possible to maintain air pressure, without blowing, by using your mouth like the airbag of a bagpipe. With this (small) reservoir of air maintaining the drone, you can sniff a quick breath through your nose, thus topping up your lungs so that you can then continue blowing. This process of snatching short sniffs will, with lots of practice, allow you to play continuously. It's not easy though, and may well be the trickiest part of learning to play.

There are many ways for you to learn the basic technique. Each teacher appears to have his or her own method, so I will try to include all the techniques I encounter. If you have any ideas, don't keep them to yourself, they may be very helpful to others, and can be included in this tutorial.

Ed Drury has the following advice on learning to circular breathe:

- \* (A) It is helpful to do some strengthening exercises. Droning while squeezing the cheeks, as described in earlier lessons, will help. A useful adjunct which you can use away from the didjeridu is to employ a balloon as follows :
  1. Move air back and forth between the mouth and an inflated balloon by moving ONLY the cheeks in and out.
  2. This should produce an audible sound of air quickly moving back and forth between the balloon and the mouth. Breathe in and out through the nose as required. Try to complete a cycle per second. Start with one minute duration and work up to three minutes.

- \* (B) Timing. Puff out your cheeks and use your lips to make a small opening in the center of your mouth as if blowing into a straw. Try to make a small steady stream of air come out of this opening using only the air in your cheeks. By placing the palm of your hand in front of your lips you should be able to feel the air stream. Breathe in through your nose while you are squeezing the air in your cheeks out.
- \* (C) Transfer the previous step to the didgeridu. Try to allow your lips to vibrate loosely so a low short tone is produced. It should sound something like "harrumph". Now blow the air in your lungs through your lips letting them vibrate as in the basic drone. Allow your cheeks to puff out as you run out of air and then repeat the process from the beginning of this step.
- \* (D) Continue working with step C increasing the speed such that the pause between the sound emitted by your cheek squeeze and the sound of your basic drone decreases. Don't worry about the transfer between the cheek powered sound and the lung powered drone being smooth for now. It will come with practice. Just try to keep shortening the pause until it disappears completely.
- \* (E) To work on smoother transfers between air coming from your cheeks and air coming from your lungs, place a straw in a glass of water. The glass should be only about a third full. Alternating cheek squeezing and blowing, try to keep a steady stream of bubbles coming from the end of the straw - breathing in while you squeeze your cheeks. If you can keep the bubbles going smoothly with out pause, you are circular breathing.

This is from the London Didgeridoo Society pamphlet:

1. Breathing in through the nose at the same time as expelling air from the cheeks. Take a sudden swift sniff of air into the lungs, while you are blowing air out from the cheeks.
2. Create a steady stream of air coming out of the mouth. Most of the time, the air comes directly from your lungs, but while you are inhaling, the air is pushed out from the cheeks.

Practice this by placing a finger in front of your mouth and try to keep a constant stream of air hitting your hand.

During playing :

1. Blow and let lips vibrate, creating a basic drone for about 2 to 3 seconds.
2. Continue to blow from the stomach, but inflate your cheeks, and draw back the tongue.
3. Continue the vibration of your lips, but use the air in your mouth by pushing in the cheeks and bringing the tongue forward.

4. Continue to blow, and take in a quick sniff of air through the nose while doing step 3.
5. Go back to step one.

John Pemble (pemble@duke.iccc.cc.ia.us) had this to say in a digest posting:

Again Circular Breathing is a term that doesn't literally mean to inhale and exhale for real. Like a magician performs a trick (appearing to do one thing but actually doing another), the didjeridu player appears to be breathing in as he/she breathes out. Storing air in your cheeks and blowing it out while inhaling a breath through the nose is what circular breathing, is all about.

Go to a sink where there is a mirror you can see your face and be able to spit out water. Fill your mouth with as much water as you can till your cheeks are bulging out (like a Dizzy G. thing). Spit the water out in a smooth tiny leak like stream and breath in and out through your nose.

As you slowly (about ten to twenty seconds) empty your mouth of the water in this smooth little stream keep breathing in and out through your nose. You are more or less circular breathing, or at least illustrating the circular breathing technique as closely as possible without actually doing it.

Do this water exercise number of times, maybe for a few days. Try to do the same thing using air in your cheeks, instead of water. Slowly let air hiss out of your cheeks. Do this several times and gradually increase the amount of air you let of your cheeks.

After a while of doing that try it on your didjeridu. You may get it right immediately or perhaps in three weeks. While I could circular breathe on the didjeridu, it took me about a month to do it with any smoothness.

Also I recommend that on first trying to circular breathe to use a shorter higher pitched didjeridu. If your bamboo is too long (low) get yourself some PVC for practice.

Randy Raine-Reusch follows up with these pointers:

\* Step 1

1. Fill your mouth full of air, puffing your cheeks. Hold the air.
2. Breathe in and out through your nose.
3. Still holding the air in your cheeks, empty your lungs through your nose. I refer to this as part A or "breathe out, cheeks puffed."

4. Now slowly breathe in through your nose and simultaneously start pushing the air out of your mouth with your cheeks. Just as if the air in your cheeks was actually water, it helps to imagine that it is water.
5. Continue this until you can do it comfortably and you can with confidence breathe in through your nose while pushing air out from your mouth. I call this part B or "in nose, push cheeks."

\* Step 2

1. Breathe out of your mouth puffing your cheeks the whole time, stop anytime, but keep your cheeks PUFFED. (Part A)
2. Now do part 4 of the above technique, that is, breathe in through your nose, pushing air out from your cheeks. (Part B)
3. Breathe out, cheeks puffed
4. In nose, push cheeks
5. Continue this cycle until it's continuous. If you have problems go back a few steps, the most important step is part 4 of the first section: breathe in through nose pushing air out of cheeks. If you can't do this comfortably without thinking about it you will have great difficulty.
6. You should be able to hold you hand in front of your mouth and feel a continuous flow of air, granted the pressure may fluctuate, but you must have a continuous flow of air, otherwise you are not doing it yet.

\* Step 3 (To the didjeridu)

1. The most important factor in circular breathing on the didjeridu is to first have a good sound. It should be a full bodied sound so that you not only feel your didj vibrate, but you can feel the air around your didj vibrate. This should take very little air, but does require a good amount of pressure from your stomach. You should not at any time hear any air coming through the didj, if you do, you are wasting air and must learn to play with less.
2. Get a good sound on the didj and then start to apply the circular breathing techniques, (A) breathe out puffing cheeks and (B) breathe in nose, push cheeks. At first there will probably be a gap between the two parts, not to worry, this is normal.
3. Sit in front of the TV with a movie or something that will grab your attention. Play your didj doing the circular breathing techniques. It is important that you continually do the circular breathing techniques although you feel uncomfortable with them or there is still a gap. Watch TV and play constantly, ignore your playing just play and watch TV. The reason I say this is because your brain is you enemy here, if you are constantly criticizing yourself, it will

take years to circular breath. This is a body thing not a mind thing and the more you think about it the less it works. TV as we all know, numbs the mind, so it is an effective tool in learning didj.

4. You may find that going through all the steps daily will increase your confidence and understanding of this process.
5. You may also find that all of a sudden it works! You did it and then it disappears, and you can't find it again. It disappears because you are looking for it. Don't look, just do.
6. Again as you start getting the circular breathing on the didj, there may be a drop in pressure, this also is normal, the more you practice it the smaller this drop becomes, and if you really work at it, it can disappear altogether, if you want.
7. Your breath points now become an important percussive element in playing, and with practice you will discover that there is a backbeat to your breath, that is also used extensively. Some people refer to this as a kind of bounce, although there are many types of bounces and backbeats.

Have fun and remember to turn off the TV!

Lehwhang@aol.com has this fun idea :

I came up with a useful technique (for me anyway) while trying to get the circular breathing (which i'm still in the process of trying to get) that I thought might be useful to learning players :

I found that a good way to practice when you can't get a hold of anything else is to just make a circle with thumb and forefinger and put it against the lips. I discovered this on a 3 hour flight. As a bonus, my bizarre behavior kept anyone from disturbing me while i practiced. At present, i can keep the breathe going on my finger circle, but can't do so consistently on the didj itself. This trick is also useful in showing interested beginners how to make their first drones.

#### Common Mistakes

- \* Thinking that you will never get it.
- \* Being too casual about getting in air. Sniff with abandon!
- \* Trying to fill your lungs on the sniff. Short sniffs are what you are after - there's no time for sedate sniffs.
- \* Getting dizzy (common) and falling over (less common)! Initially you will find that you will not be able to get in enough fresh air, with the result that you will become dizzy. Don't try to push on. This is not the route to any "Trance State," but is the route an unconscious flop to the hard floor! Just stop, breathe normally for a few minutes and relax, so that the balance of gases in your lungs, and diluted gases in your bloodstream can be restored.

## Difficulty

Many experienced didj players will tell you that circular breathing is really quite easy. This is of course absolutely true as far as these experts are concerned, but don't be fooled, this is not going to be at all easy, and you will not master this technique for a long time. By a long time, I mean a long time, months of playing at least. Do not be disheartened though, as circular breathing is not an insurmountable obstacle. You will have a great sense of satisfaction when you discover that it really is possible, as you snatch your first sniffed breath! (A few days of frustration will get you to this point). From there on, its all practice, trying to refine and control the technique.

## Hints and Tips

- \* Patience. Lots of it. Persevere and you too will wonder what you found so difficult in the beginning.
- \* Don't try be cool, calm and relaxed when it comes to sniffing that breath. Sniff in that air with purpose. You've got to move as much air into your lungs as possible, and given the short time that you have to sniff, you want to make every sniff count for a lot. As you get more experienced you will be able to relax these desperate sniffs.
- \* Sometimes even though you are circular breathing nicely, you still have an urgency to breathe. In this case, try instead to empty your lungs a bit (yes I said empty) by breathing out through your nose while you are playing, before taking the next sniff. This appears to help balance the mix of gases in your lungs, reducing the urge to breathe.
- \* If you get the straw blowing into the water thing right, go to a party immediately and impress your friends (Brian Pertl's suggestion).

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## The Didjeridu

The most interesting Aboriginal musical instrument is the didjeridu. It was only known to the tribes of Eastern Kimberly and the northern third of the Northern Territory. The instrument is an unstopped hollowed piece of bamboo or termite-hollowed wood, usually the latter, about four or five feet long, and two or more inches in internal diameter, with a mouth-piece made of wax or hardened gum. The player blows into the instrument in trumpet fashion.

The Didjeridu is used with other instruments such as the Bull Roarer and Click (or Clap) Sticks. It is often used as an accompaniment to song and dance. It is also used in ceremonial functions. A large version of the Didgeridoo called a Yurlunggur is used only in ceremonies.

Three distinct styles of traditional playing have been identified. West Arnhem Land uses quiet and uncomplicated patterns. A feature of that style is that hummed notes are used in conjunction with blown notes to produce slower patterns. North-East Arnhem Land uses the first overtone, at about a tenth above the fundamental droning note. This may be heard as a long hoot or a short sharp "toot". Eastern Arnhem Land styles use the second pitch as well as a variety of techniques using manipulations of the tongue, lips and breath to create fast energetic rhythmic patterns. The precision and variety of rhythm produced on the didjeridu are very striking. Sometimes it sounds like a deep pipe organ note being played continuously; at other times like a drum beaten in three-four time, and so on, varying according to the type of song and dance which it is accompanying.

The continuous nature of the sound is most remarkable. The breath is taken, or "snapped", through the nose. Two quick breaths are usually taken but some of the incoming air is kept in the mouth to be blown into the instrument while the next quick intake is being made. This process, called circular breathing, results in the cheeks being used much like a bellows.

The Didjeridu is the center-piece of most of the Corroborees danced by the Northern tribes in the Territory and the East Kimberleys. A corroboree is an important ceremonial when all the various tribes of a region would come together to hear and recount the sacred stories.

- Ed Drury

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## The Didjeridu

Also spelt Didgeridoo, is an end blown musical instrument, generally made from wood or bamboo, without a separate mouthpiece. Approximately

forty aboriginal names for it are known where it is used, from the north of Western Australia through the Arnhem Land peninsula to Northern Queensland.

The wooden variety are termite-hollowed branches or trunks of trees with the bark removed and the ends internally scraped or, nowadays, chiseled and rasped to improve the playing sound.

Some trees used in Didjeridu production are Stringy Bark (*Eucalyptus Tetrodonta*), Woolly Butt (*Eucalyptus Miniata*), River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*), Ironwood (*Erythrophlaeum Labouchei*) and in more recent years in South Australia, Box Gum and Wattle though the instrument is not native to South Australia.

Bamboo Didjeridus are traditionally hollowed out with a fire stick or hot coals however, in recent times, extension drill bits have been used.

A rim of bees wax or tree gum may be attached to the narrow end of the generally conical tube.

The instrument may vary in length from just under a metre to 2.5 metres (used for sacred rites and ceremonies) however, preferred length seems to be between 1 and 1.5m. The instrument is often decorated with ochre and clay designs and in modern times, carved or burnt patterns may be utilized.

- Alistair Black

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## Musical Instruments

The most interesting Aboriginal musical instrument is the Didjeridu, but it is only known in Eastern Kimberly and the northern third of the Northern Territory. It is an unstopped hollowed piece of bamboo or wood, usually the latter, about four or five feet long, and with two inches or even more in internal diameter, with a mouth-piece made of wax or hardened gum.

The player blows into the instrument in trumpet fashion. The precision and variety of rhythm produced on the Didjeridu are very striking. Sometimes it sounds like a deep bourdon organ stop being played continuously; at other times like a drum beaten in three-four time, and so on, varying according to the type of song and dance which it is accompanying, and indeed, "carrying". The tongue lies flat, with the lip at times projecting into the mouth-piece. The continuous nature of the sound is most remarkable. The diaphragm rises as breath is taken, or "snapped", through the nose. It is emitted through the Didjeridu. Two quick breaths are usually taken, and the next over a second later, but some of the incoming air is kept in the mouth to be blown into the

instrument while a quick intake is being made. Glassblowers may understand.

Didjeridu playing is learnt when young. A good player, or "puller" as he is called, produces two pitches, one usually a tenth above the regular one but it is always a short sharp sound, with no suggestion of a Didjeridu. I have not seen more than one Didjeridu played at the one time.

- The Australian Aborigines, A.P. Elkin

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## Myths and Legends

### \* From Alistair Black

There are a number of stories revealing something of the significance of the Didgeridu in the Aboriginals of northern Australia. It is seen as a phallic symbol and male instrument, with women in many areas traditionally prohibited from playing. Legend has it that if a woman plays the Didgeridu, she is likely to give birth to twins. Being a nomadic hunter gatherer people, the extra mouth to feed is seen as a liability; one baby may then be killed.

In the beginning of time, the Rainbow Serpent played a part in creation, sliding across the earth, making riverbeds and the accompanying landscape features. A particular long (2.5m) Didgeridu is used in "Djungguwan," ceremonies, where it presents "Yurlunggur," or the Rainbow Serpent.

Another story that links the Didgeridu with creation tells of how in the beginning the Great Spirit Balame (Byamee) created man and woman and they in turn had the responsibility to create the animals and birds which they did by either singing them into form or sounding them into form through playing the Didgeridu.

The Didgeridu itself was supposed to have been created or conceived a long time ago. In the North of Australia, two young and beautiful adolescent girls were captured by a mean giant who wanted them to be his wives. After some time the girls managed to escape and hastily made their way back to their tribe. The mean giant was angry when he discovered what had happened and endeavored to reclaim what he considered his property. Meanwhile, the elders of the young girls' tribe set a trap for the giant. They dug a huge pit along the path leading to their home camp. The giant, in his angry haste, fell into the pit and was immediately killed with many spears thrown by tribal hunters hiding nearby. As he curled on his penis, looking very much like a huge porcupine, he began to blow on his penis, making an amazing droning sound. They tried to copy it, to no avail' so they searched for and found a large hollow log, the center of which had been eaten out by termites. By blowing on one end of this hollow log, they were able to create the sound made by the giant in his death throws.

### \* Gary Fenstermacher (pigface@zurich.gcomm.com) relates a wonderful story that he heard from the didj player, Paul Taylor :

Three men were camped on a cold night in the outback. One of the

men told another to put another log on the fire, because the fire was getting low and it was so cold. So, the other man turned around and grabbed a log, which was awfully light to the touch, for it was hollow. As he turned to drop it into the fire, he noticed the entire length was covered with termites. He didn't know what to do, for he could not throw the branch into the fire, because it would kill the termites, and his friends were telling him to do so because it was cold. So he carefully removed all the termites from the outside of the log by scooping them into his hand, and he deposited them inside the branch. Then he raised the branch to his lips and blew the termites into the air, and the termites blown into the air became the stars, and the first didjeridu was created.

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## Didjeridu History

The origin of the Didjeridu is not accurately known, though some research indicates it's birth may have been as recent as one thousand years ago (World Archaeology-vol 12, no 3, Alice Moyle). Traditionally, it comes from the north of Australia and is played by males. It is not normally used as a solo instrument, but rather accompanies clicking sticks, singing and dancing. It is used primarily, but not exclusively, in "more open" ceremonies, clan songs and fun songs. Boys learn to play the Didjeridu from an early age, the most efficient player is recognized and held in high esteem. The player may tap out rhythms using click sticks or his fingers on the instrument while playing.

Increasingly, Didjeridus are included in music groups, rock bands, orchestras and in a solo capacity as atmosphere creators for seminars and workshops. The haunting music of a solo Didjeridu touches people's hearts and calls to remembrance our spiritual and earthly heritage.

- Alistair Black

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# Making Your Own PVC Didjeridu

By Matt Newby

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Several months ago, I asked on rec.music.makers.builders, and in the didjeridu digest, what the measurements were for making your own didjeridu. With the leads you provided, and the help of a couple of physics books, I worked out the formulas for calculating the length of a pipe to produce a fundamental of a specific note. I then obtained some 2" Schedule 40 PVC piping and was able to make some decent sounding instruments. I borrowed a chromatic tuner to validate that my calculations were correct, and was pleasantly surprised to find out that they were right on. After a little bit of effort learning the instrument, I've mastered the basics enough to feel comfortable playing as a solo didj in our ensemble at church (raised a few eyebrows in the process! :-)

## \* Formulae:

Here's the measurements that I worked out for plastic pipe didjeridus. The formula for calculating the length of a tube, given that you want it to resonate at a specific frequency is as follows:

### 1. The speed of sound

$V(\text{sound}) = 340 \text{ m/s}$  at sea level (my measurements are in inches, so we have to convert the speed to in/sec by multiplying  $340 \text{ m/s} * 1/0.0254 \text{ in/m}$ )  
 $V(\text{sound}) = 13385.826 \text{ in/s}$

### 2. Frequency

The frequencies listed in the chart below are calculated by this formula:

$F(\text{note} - 1 \text{ semitone}) = F(\text{note}) / (2^{(1/12)})$   
(that's the 12th root of 2 in the denominator)  
Where  $F(A) = 220 \text{ Hertz}$

### 3. Effective Length vs Actual Length

The formulas for calculating the resonant frequency of a pipe were in three categories: both ends closed, both ends open, and one end closed. The didjeridu is in the last category. This means that one end is where the pressure disturbance is created, and is sealed to the atmosphere around it. The other end is open to the atmosphere and the pressure must drop to atmospheric pressure very shortly after leaving the end of



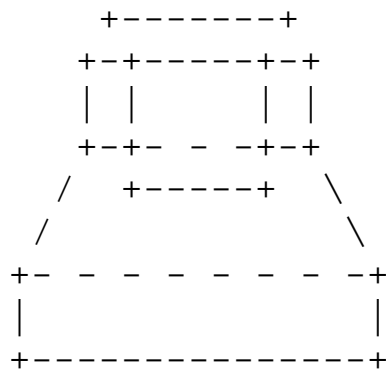
business. My first attempts a cutting the pipe required a hack saw. This works, in the sense that the pipe gets cut, but leaves a very imprecise edge. Precision is important in the construction of my set of didjs. I also checked the pitch by observing the display of my friend's chromatic tuner.

\* Construction:

1. Mouthpiece

I deviated from the traditional method of forming a mouthpiece with wax, and chose to construct interchangeable mouthpieces from two or three couplers, also made out of PVC. I used a coupler that dropped from an exterior diameter of 2" to an exterior diameter of 1.5". I then inserted another coupler into the 1.5" side that further tightened the interior diameter to 1". I find that this arrangement is comfortable for playing all the didjs lower than the D#. I got ahold of two other inserts to go from 1" to 3/4" and from 1" to 1/2". These allow me to play the higher pitched instruments with ease. The side advantage is that they are removable and interchangeable so they are extremely easy to clean and convenient for sharing with other players.

Figure 2  
Mouthpiece



2. Pipe construction

I did not make multiple didj's of full length. I purchased some 2" to 2" connectors and cut the didj's as follows: I made two solid "base units" which produce the 220Hz A. Then I cut the other pipes so that, when attached to the "base unit" with one of the connectors, the overall pipe length is as displayed in the chart. Except for the 98Hz G didj, all the other pipe pieces are smaller than the A "base unit". This makes for a much smaller load to carry when transporting them. (Since I also play a small conga, harmonicas, melodica, clave, shakers, etc., and soon will be playing a djembe, portability is very important to me!)

This method of construction also lets me haul out the two "base units" along with two extensions and another player and

play didjchords!

### 3. Cost

I don't think I've ever made a cheaper instrument. I can pick up 10' of the 2" PVC piping for \$2.41 each. The couplers and connectors are a little more expensive individually, but overall, my entire didj set probably didn't set me back more than \$20.

#### \* Conclusions and Questions:

I've had a blast with these things so far. PVC is so inexpensive that even a novice like me can afford to make mistakes in construction, and not feel guilty about throwing away my flubs. I've found that Acetone does an admirable job of taking the pink lettering off the pipe without damaging the plastic in the process. I haven't had the time to explore decorations yet, so if any of you have any idea what kind of paint would adhere to the plastic, please let me know. Also, do you have any leads on where I can find some "appropriate" designs to paint on the tubes, as well as some indication of what the designs mean to the Aborigines?

I've also started constructing my didj's with some PVC traps and larger couplers allowing me to put a right angle bend in the pipe and get the "business end" of the didj pointed back at me. This is very nice to have when you've got an electric guitar amp on one side, a bass amp on the other, a drum set behind you, and a bank of monitor speakers in front. Let's face it, the didj isn't inherently as loud as the electrically amplified instruments. It also allows me to point my head up instead of down while playing so that I can see our worship leader. The larger couplers are put together to make a kind of bell about 4" across that slightly amplifies the sound produced when playing.

While the PVC version of the Didj doesn't produce as warm or mellow of tones as a "genuine" Australian Aboriginal Didjeridu, its cost, and the ease of working with it make it an excellent choice for beginning players. For the non-discriminating ear of those who haven't been exposed to wooden didj's, I've found that many people recognize the characteristic sounds my plastic didj's produce, and can even cite movies and advertisements where they've heard the sound before.

If you are just starting out, I recommend you get ahold of some instructional tapes, and invest in a little PVC to learn the basics. You can go a long way with plastic before you decide you want to spend the money for a wooden didj. I hope this article gives you the information you need to get started with this wonderful instrument.

[Link to my main page](#)

# Building a Quick and Easy PVC Didjeridu

With Denver Greer

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As I look through past postings in the Didjeridu Digest, I find a number of folks new to the fascinating world of the "grunt stick." Being new to the art myself, I can certainly relate to their burning desire for more knowledge. And of course I don't think you can find a better resource than Dreamtime. However, I do find a couple of common questions in the postings of most newcomers: How can I make one? Where can I get one? How can I learn to play one? And again I reference back to Dreamtime to answer these issues. All these questions are answered, to one degree or another, throughout the postings. (But to learn the "how to play" I, like Tom Bray, also strongly recommend Brian Pertl's instructional tape "Echoes From The Dreamtime.") However, to cut to the chase on the "how to make," I thought I would take a few minutes and post this article on the way I make a very quick and easy ABS Didjeridu.

## \* Material Needed

1. A 3' to 5' length of 1.5" ABS
2. A can of white primer spray paint
3. A can of any type of wood stain and an old rag
4. Course sandpaper
5. A mouthpiece (ABS union/beeswax/injection molded, etc)

## \* Equipment Needed

1. Bar-B-Que Pit and charcoal
2. Heavy-duty leather gloves
3. Baseball Bat or a funnel

## \* How To Build It

1. After selecting the length of 1.5" ABS to be used, take the sheet of course sandpaper and rough-up the slick finish of the ABS. Be sure to sand off the manufacturer's white painted markings down the length of the pipe. Use long sanding strokes along the axis of the pipe.
2. Build a fire in the Bar-B and cook supper (makes things go better with spouse!) After the coals are covered with a white ash (that is to say no more flames), and with the heavy-duty leather gloves on, heat the end of the ABS. When it becomes soft, use the baseball bat or a funnel as a "bell-jig" and

flare the end of the pipe. (NOTE: A number of articles have been posted in the Didjeridu Digest discussing a possible health risk of ABS.)

3. Continue heating the pipe in 10" to 12" segments and as it softens you can push/pull/twist unusual angles in the pipe to more simulate an actual tree branch. If the pipe gets too hot, it may blemish. These wrinkles and bubbles only tend to add to the authenticity of the finished product.
4. When cool, spray paint the entire pipe with a flat white primer. Be sure to also spray down into the "bell" end of the pipe.
5. When dry, and using an old rag, apply your selected wood stain to the white finish. Be sure and wipe the stain along the axis of the pipe. You will be amazed at how much the dried stain will look real wood.
6. Apply the mouthpiece of choice.
7. Lastly, should you so desire, paint emblems or designs to round-out the decor of your new Didj. On some of mine, I even use jute-twine to make a mid-pipe handhold or to accent the mouthpiece.

And so you have it! Takes about 10 hours from hardware store to overtones. And it looks nice enough that my wife allows me to leave it leaning against the wall in the family room! If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me, the middle-aged-fat-white-guy, at:

dd\_greer@ONWORLD.OWT.COM>

Building A Unique  
ABS Didjeridu

With Tom Bray

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If you wish to build an instrument that is distinctive in appearance, sound and playability, then this is for you. The trick, involved here, is shaping the ABS. Altering the shape will give one an instrument of unique character but one that cannot be tuned, perhaps a solo instrument. ABS has gluing characteristics that are superior to PVC in this application. The goal is to taper a 5 ft. length of 3" ABS, create a snap-in mouth piece fixture and give it a texture and feel that will deny it's ABS heritage. It will appear sculpturally organic. One may create slight crooks or bends in addition to the taper. People who see my didjeridus, even those who play ABS, are genuinely surprised to discover that they are actually plastic.

\* Materials Needed

1. 5 ft of 3" ABS.
2. 1 ft or so of 1.5" ABS from which to cut shorter pieces.
3. 1-1.5" ABS cap - Look for ABS caps that are slightly domed.
4. ABS glue - ABS glue is extremely volatile, read the cautions and heed them.
5. Six 3" automobile hose clamps.

#### \* Equipment Needed

1. A saber saw will make the cuts nicely.
2. A vice is very helpful for holding the ABS.
3. A socket driver is essential for easy and speedy hose clamp adjustment.
4. An electric drill and rotary rasp.
5. Electrical sanding tools or various wood rasps.

#### \* How To Build It

Mark out and using the saber saw, remove from the 3" ABS pipe a wedge or isosceles triangle that is 4ft long The length of the base of the triangle which is at the end of the ABS pipe should be the difference between the internal circumference of 3" pipe and the external circumference of the union. It is, indeed, a long skinny triangle that you will cut out. A carpenters chalk line makes the "mark-out" a simple matter. Actually make the wedge or triangle about 3'8" and continue from the apex a straight cut of 4". Space the 3" hose clamps evenly over the length of the cut and tighten each a bit at a time until the edges of the cut are drawn together. Insert the 1.5" union into the small end. It should fit snugly. If it is loose, use the saw to remove enough material so that the end clamp will draw the pipe tightly around the 1.5" union. If the opening is too small loosen the end clamp until the 1.5" union can be inserted, then tighten clamp and insert a thin piece of ABS in the gap. After tightening the clamps inspect the fit up. Generally there will be a few places where the fit-up is not very good, simply insert the saw blade into the gap and remove a blades width of material a few inches long from both ends of the gap area where both sides make contact. Then move the nearest clamp to the center of the gap area tighten to see if the edges can now be drawn together. If not, remove more material until a good fit-up occurs. Generally speaking, ABS glue will fill in a blades width gap. The glue will collapse a little bit and you will have apply more in order to build it up. Some glue will fall through to the interior of the pipe. If you want to remove this fall-through easily, put a bit of newspaper in the pipe and remove when finished. Wait approximately 30 minutes between applications when building up with this glue. I don't think you can do this with PVC.

Now that you have a reasonable fit, loosen all the clamps and

starting at the apex of the triangle, apply glue liberally to the inside edges. Actually, you will create a mess on the outside around the seam that you are trying to obliterate, don't worry about it. Glue and clamp about 12" at a time. Work quickly!! When you get to the end, swab glue on the inside of the tapered end and on the outside of the 1.5" union and insert all the way for a flush fit with the end making sure not to get any glue on the inside of the union. Clamp quickly and tightly. The glue will collapse where there were mini-gaps. wait 30 minutes and fill in until the surface is at the desired level. Now let this clamped up, abysmal excuse for a didjeridu dry for 48 hours.

We can now make a mouthpiece. If you wish to use only a beeswax mouthpiece, you may lay the wax inside the union. I would like to recommend a 75% beeswax-25% paraffin(canning wax) mixture as this will provide more stability during hot weather. To make an ABS mouthpiece, you will need an electric drill and a rotary rasp. I use a lathe and a 1" drill bit to start the hole, but you can work your way through the center of the cap with the rotary rasp. Consider making the mouthpiece opening oval in shape as this will fit, more naturally, the contour of your mouth. This shaping is achieved more easily if you have the rotary rasp in a drill press. Next, remove the corners that are adjacent the long sides of the opening. This will provide room for your nose and chin. One can see why the domed cap is necessary. When removing corners to make room for nose and chin, you don't want break through the wall of the cap. Now it is time to sand the mouthpiece smooth. Use a short piece of 1.5" ABS to attach the mouthpiece to the 1.5" union that has been glue-welded into the didjeridu. If you want try a temporary beeswax mouthpiece, lay the wax into one end of a 1.5" union and attach the same way as the cap mouthpiece.

Your didjeridu is now dry. Remove the clamps, which isn't easy but by loosening and wiggling them back and forth they will come away from the dry glue. Apply a mouthpiece and see how it sounds.

Texturing and finishing is next. I use a "poly-fan" sanding wheel by Pferd on a high speed angle grinder to remove excess glue and give the entire surface a hewn look. You should be able to use any kind of electrical sander or even hand powered wood rasps to achieve a desired effect. The ABS glue leaves white marks and these can be covered with shoe polish or more surface glue can be added, left to dry and sanded to create a different effect.

Your new didjeridu may have a larger bore than what you are used to and require more air volume to play. Give it time. It will have a higher pitch than an instrument with straight sides of similar length, but I think that all of the things that a good didjeriduist does besides the basic drone contrasts better with this basic drone thereby making the instrument more playable. An

instrument this size has a large sound and emits vibrations that you can feel. Some things in your room may vibrate in sympathy.

If you are wondering why I have a lathe, ect., well, I am a sculptor and building didjeridus is a natural extension of what I normally do. I have been building and playing didjeridus for about nine months and recently heard about and ordered Brian Pertl's instructional tape "Echoes From The Dreamtime". It is wonderful. I highly recommend it.

If you have any questions, you can contact the author at dtbray@primenet.com

## Methods for Moulding Beeswax Mouthpieces

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Most players like to have a comfortable beeswax mouthpiece on their didj. In this section, I will describe two popular methods. Excuse the unpoetic licence that I took in naming them, but I think that this is at least clear. The one thing that you will obviously need for both of these methods is beeswax ! See the note on where to get beeswax.

### 1. The Melt and Dip Method

This method requires the use of a double boiler. Those of you who cook will know the concept (Mmmmm chocolate !). The idea is to use two containers. One larger one, in which you will boil water, and a smaller one (which you don't mind ruining) which will contain the wax. A good idea for the small container is a cleaned out catfood can.

Place a block of beeswax in the catfood can, and float/place this into the saucepan of boiling water. If all goes well, you'll end up with a catfood can filled with molted wax. You don't want to put the wax on direct high heat because it tends to blacken and burn.

Once you have a can full of molten wax, you dip and remove the didj from the wax, each time building up the wax mouthpiece. I have heard that some people turn the didj slowly as they remove it, helping the building process.

Another thing that I have seen is a deep initial dipping (a few centimeters) which helps to seal the inside of the mouth end of the didj which gets the most amount of moisture. This is supposed to help prevent cracking due to expansion and contraction resulting from repeated wetting and drying inherent in didj playing.

### 2. The Softened Wax Moulding Method

Similar to the way in which the melt-and-dip method returns you to the kitchen, this method will return you to your childhood (or ceramics class).

Cut strips of beeswax from your wax block. These strips should be around half a centimeter in thickness. Warm these strips by rubbing them in your hands, in hot water, using a hairdrier, near a lamp etc. Once the wax is soft and easily workable, roll the wax in your hands to make a snake (childhood returns). Make sure the snake is the same thickness all along. Keep rolling the snake until the length is the same as the circumference of the pipe to which you will add it. Join the ends to make a circle, and then work this wax ring on to the didj mouthpiece. As the wax is soft and malleable, it should be easy to make a comfortable fit. As the wax cools, it will of course harden.

## Other Techniques for Making Mouthpieces

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### Dentist Moulding Medium

Guy Brown has this to say:

"A mouthpiece building technique I was told about, but have not tried, is to use dentist's moulding medium (they use this for taking impressions of teeth). Evidently this is expensive, but can be moulded to fit the shape of your mouth and then sets very hard and is very durable. I understand that Graham Wiggins (alias Dr. Didg) uses this technique."

### Injection molded mouthpieces for 1.5 inch ABS pipe

Scott Baker (sbaker@marimba.cse.tek.com):

had a die made for injection molding ABS plastic mouthpieces which fit 1.5 inch ABS pipe. Anyone interested in purchasing these parts can contact him.

### Screw fittings for PVC didj's

Gary Fenstermacher (pigface@zurich.gcomm.com) comments:

"What I found to be simple and easy to make was to just use a screw fitting for my PVC didj. Just bring the end down to 1.5", then get the piece that goes from 1.5" to 1.25" with a threaded end. That 1.25" works just fine for me. No work involved, its cheap, and available right there with the PVC. I suppose using beeswax or whatever will be better in the long run, but if you're just starting this is just as good."

## Didjeridu's With No Wax On The Mouthpiece

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Some players prefer to have no wax at all on their wooden didj mouthpieces. They play the didj "raw," that is with no beeswax added - just lips on wood.

Of course it's not always possible to have a didj with a perfectly sized mouthpiece opening, since this is determined by the tree ! If the opening is too large, then there's no choice but to add wax. In the case when the opening is just right (or slightly smaller), a little bit of smoothing work with a rasp is all that is needed to make a comfortable mouthpiece.

David Hudson uses this method. Most of his didj'es are "raw". Since he makes his own didj's, he can pick and choose what wood he'll take, thus avoiding the size problem. He then shapes the mouthpiece with a rasp so that it fits his mouth perfectly. This way he ensures a perfect fit.

There's a really good reason why David prefers this method. He explains how when you have a wax mouthpiece and a friend wants to play your didj, the first thing that happens is that the mouthpiece gets modified to suit your friend. Once the friend is finished playing and returns the didj, you find that your perfect mouthpiece no longer fits! The Solution ? Make a mouthpiece that you can't modify.

This may sound a bit extreme, since beeswax is pretty hard. Remember though that the Aborigine players use the wonderful, intoxicatingly fragrant wax produced by the Australian "sugarback," a small stingless bee, for their mouthpieces. This wax is almost black in colour, and is much more malleable than regular beeswax at room temperature. The reason why we don't see much of this stuff around is that it is very hard to obtain, and is thus used very sparingly.

### Making Your Own Whirligig

By Dennis Havlena

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Hi from the Straits of Mackinac in northern Michigan.

A while ago there was a topic being thrown about on a usenet music group concerning "whirligigs" -- sort of a cousin to the bullroarer

utilizing a rubber-band affixed to a light crucifix-shaped (\*) frame at the end of which is a handle. The thing sounds by either whirling it while grasping the handle or by waving it vigorously up & down in any number of rhythmic patterns. (\*) In my case.

I did a considerable amount of experimentation with them and am here to describe the simple construction of what I judge to be the best.

When played in conjunction with a didgeridu (tuned to the whirligig -- I use a trombone-style d'du) the overall effect can be quite powerful.

Here's the plan :



- \* I used 1/2" x 1/2" cedar wood but about anything will work (although the lighter the better for "non-rotating", arm-swinging type playing)
- \* I notch both wooden pieces to attach the crossarm, but anything will work
- \* Affix handle to "boom" with loose screw to allow for free rotation
- \* Use "office-type", 1/4" wide rubber-band
- \* The route of the rubber-band forms a triangle but only two sides of this triangle vibrate (the band along the third side lays right against the wood)
- \* I used a piece of dowel-rod for the handle, but nearly anything will do
- \* By adjusting one half of the band tighter than the other, you can tune the beast to a 2-note chord. My favorite is a do-sol (1-5) ratio. I should note here that for some reason the plucked note pitches are not quite the same as the "whirled" or swung pitches (!) so the fine-tuning must be done so that the thing is in tune while in motion.

Two of these things can be used "arm-swinging/pendulum" style (the four notes tuned to a chord) to create some pretty wierdly attractive rhythms.

Dennis Havlena - W8UR  
am854@freenet.carleton.ca

[Link to my main page](#)

## Playing Styles

The Didjeridu is used with other instruments such as the Bull Roarer and Click (or Clap) Sticks.

West Arnhem Land uses the quiet and uncomplicated patterns. Hummed notes are used in conjunction with blown notes to produce slower patterns. North-East Arnhem Land uses the first overtone, at about a tenth above the fundamental. Eastern Arnhem Land styles use the second pitch as well as a variety of techniques using manipulations of the tongue, lips and breath to create fast energetic rhythmic patterns.

The Didjeridu is often used as an accompaniment to song and dance. It is also used in ceremonial functions. A large version of the Didjeridu called a Yurlunggur is used only in ceremonies.

The Didjeridu is the center-piece of most of the Corroborees danced by the Northern tribes in the Territory and the East Kimberleys. A corroboree is an important ceremonial when all the various tribes of a region would come together to hear and recount the sacred stories.

- The Australian Aborigines, A.P. Elkin

## Didjeridu Tutorial

### The Basic Drone

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#### [INLINE] Lesson Objective

In this lesson you'll get your first sounds out of your didjeridu ! Your objective is to play a controlled drone. This should be the beginning of a long and enjoyable didj playing adventure.

#### [INLINE] Technique

To give you an idea what your lips should be doing, first practice making the lip buzzing without the didjeridu. Your friends will surely think you're nuts! Puff out your cheeks and push out your lips, drawing the corners of your mouth back a bit, allowing the center part of your lips to be loose. Blow air through your lips, allowing them to vibrate making a low pitched buzzing sound. This should be just like "blowing a raspberry". Your lips should be relaxed, and flap up and down making a sound which is not unlike pneumatic hammer.

The next, and somewhat trickier step is to transfer this loose lip buzzing technique to the mouthpiece of the didjeridu. There are two styles for meeting the mouthpiece : straight on with the mouthpiece centered on the lips below the nose or to the right or left of center. Both methods are fine - use whichever seems natural to you.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and blow evenly down the didjeridu while buzzing your lips. In the beginning you may well find that with your lips touching the mouthpiece, its much harder to get that buzzing going. It often helps to get them started with a burst of

air. For some it helps to begin with a something like pronouncing the plosive "p". With a little practice you will be able to keep the portion of your lips which cross the cavity of the mouthpiece vibrating. This will produce the drone. If the sound is high pitched (like a trumpet note) relax your lips a bit so they vibrate at a lower rate.

As you gain experience you will be able to begin the drone more and more gently, avoiding the initial strong air burst. If your note sounds flat and weak, try blowing a bit harder.

#### [INLINE] Common Mistakes

- \* Don't purse your lips as if you are playing a trumpet. Remember that the secret is to relax you lips so that they flap up and down freely.
- \* Never press the mouthpiece tightly against your lips as this interferes with the buzzing. If you really press too hard, you'll end up cutting off the circulation to your lips ! Owww - that hurts ! Time and again you'll catch yourself pressing the didj too hard against your lips when you are trying to master something new. Remember that all you need to do is make a seal.
- \* Beginner's often overblow. Once you have blasted out your first drone, relax and reduce your blowing. You'll be surprised to find that you can still keep a nice drone going with much less air.

#### [INLINE] Difficulty

This excercise should be fairly straightforward. Usually you get something in the first few tries. It will take a while longer before you can control the drone.

#### [INLINE] Hints and Tips

Try to relax and let the instrument show you how to do it. This exercise should be fun. Get to know your instrument. Look it up and down, inside and our. If its an original, feel the wood and appreciate the artwork. Remember that didjing can be a personal journey, open your senses to all that your instrument can show you.

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## Didjeridu Tutorial

### Hints and Tips 1

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#### [INLINE] Important Points to Remember

1. Never press the mouthpiece tightly against your lips. It is a common mistake, especially when attempting new skills. Stay relaxed and use just enough pressure to assure a seal.
2. Do not over practice. If your cheek muscles or lips become sore, you are over using them. The best results are obtained by daily practice. 15 minutes per day is a good starting point, but practice time is highly individual. Seek a level that you can fit into your daily routine.
3. Circular breathing is a rhythm. Many people try to set a rhythm and fit the breathing to the rhythm. A better approach is to create a rhythm around the breaths. Breathe the rhythm! Different rhythms require varying amounts of air. Start with simple rhythms based on an even beat. Then experiment with different tempos. Finally, work on more complex rhythms.
4. Though some people learn the basic skills of circular breathing rather quickly, most take some time. There is no correlation between how long it takes you to learn a new skill and how good a player you may eventually become. There is a lot more to playing and enjoying this instrument than circular breathing. Be patient with yourself and realize that these are skills that can be learned and practiced. They are not the insights of mystics handed down through a select lineage.
5. Your goal should be self expression. Don't strive to play like your instructor or another player. Work to play your music. In the lessons, your just getting the basic tools. You're both the musician and the instrument when you play the didjeridu. Choosing to play is a step you took for yourself, everything else will fall into place.

## Didjeridu Tutorial

### Creating Your First Rhythms

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#### [INLINE] Lesson Objective

In these exercises you will learn the simplest tools for creating rhythms in your playing. Because a didj does not have the tonal agility of many other wind instruments, you have to compensate by playing rhythms instead of melody. This lesson should get you started on this road.

#### [INLINE] Techniques

There are many techniques for creating rhythm, but here we'll discuss just a few basic ones. More advanced lessons will pick up where we left off.

- \* Gut Slaps - Our first rhythm is a basic 4/4 beat produced by bouncing the air through our buzzing lips using the tummy muscles just as if we were expelling a deep belly laugh (eg - ha!ha!ha!ha!). Using the diaphragm while playing the didjeridu is an important technique. As the strongest respiratory muscle, the diaphragm can supply the largest amount of volume for the least amount of work. One of the primary health benefits of playing the didjeridu involves the use of this muscle. So breath deep and feel the beat!
- \* Tongue - Next, try producing the same rhythm using the tongue by mouthing the word "Tu-Tu-Tu-Tu". The tip of the tongue is placed just behind the upper front teeth and as quickly snapped downward. Variations of this sound can be made by mouthing "Da-Da-Da-Da", "Ta-Ta-Ta-Ta", "Te-Te-Te" or "Ka-Ka-Ka-Ka". Get adventurous and combine these together to create your own rhythms. Try "Ta-Ka-Ta-Ka..." or "Ta-Ka-Te-Ta-Ka-Da...." etc.
- \* Cheeks - By squeezing the cheeks we can change the harmonics of the sound of the didjeridu. Playing the basic drone allowing your cheeks to puff out, then squeeze the cheeks together slowly allowing them to puff out again. A "wah-wah" effect should result. Think of a bellows squeezing in and out. Practice doing this slowly at first and then faster. Finally, vary the speed by doing two slow cheek squeezes followed by three faster ones. (2-3 beat). This is a particularly effective technique as it not only creates rhythm, but also has a marked effect on the harmonics produced by the instrument.

#### [INLINE] Common Mistakes

Often beginners will find it difficult to keep the drone going as they are pronouncing the tongued sounds. If you take too long pronouncing the sound, (like holding your tongue on the roof of your mouth too long while making the "Ta" sound) then the drone will stop. Be decisive, make the sound clearly and quickly.

#### [INLINE] Difficulty

These techniques are quite simple. You will be able to get the basics right straight away. It will take a while longer to master them though, especially achieving tight control of the tongue techniques.

#### [INLINE] Hints and Tips

Try to make the sounds as defined as possible. This is especially important for the tongue techniques. Start out slowly, and try to pronounce those "Ta-Ka-Te-De" sounds as clearly as possible. You'll

be doing yourself a big favour by concentrating on making the sounds as clearly as you can. As you get more profficient, increase the speed and complexity of the tongue rhythms you play. It's possible to play very fast rhythms using this technique.

# Didjeridu Tutorial

## Harmonics

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### Lesson Objective

In this lesson, you will be introduced to the area of harmonics. You will learn how to modulate the timbre of the didj by controlling the harmonics produced.

### Technique

Harmonics - all sounds are composed of harmonics. To realize this, sing a single note and mouth the vowel sound "E" then, without changing notes, make the vowel sound "O". Although you are on singing the same note, the vowel sound "E" emphasizes the upper harmonics and sounds quite different from the vowel sound "O".

- \* Playing the basic drone, mouth the vowel sound "E" then shape your mouth as if your were saying the word "Oh". Notice the harmonic fall? As you go from "E" to "O" the harmonics shift or "fall" from high to low. Obviously, you can do a harmonic rise by starting with the sound "O" and moving to the sound "E" with your mouth. This transition can be smoothed out a bit by adding the mouth shape "A" between the "E" and "O" sounds.
- \* Careful lip shaping can also affect the harmonics of the didjeridu. By altering the shape of the opening between your two buzzing lips, much as in whistling, you can create a variable upper harmonic sound. Likewise, cheek and tongue positioning in combination with mouth shaping can add a wide variety of rich harmonic tones to the didjeridu. These are worth a great deal of attention, as each didjeridu will respond a bit differently to these maneuvers.
- \* As you can now see, any vowel or consonant sound which you can enunciate will affect the harmonics of the didjeridu. It's now a small step to articulate syllables. Try mouthing the syllable , "did". Follow that with the syllable, "jer".
- \* By taking a word like didjeridu, and breaking it up into distinct syllables who's order can be varied, a wide variety of musical rhythms can be improvised. For example, "did-did-did-ger-ree, did-did-doo" will make a nicely varied little rhythm. A practice rhythm which I enjoy comes from a very popular song, "do-wah-diddy-diddy-dumb-diddy-doo".

## Common Mistakes

I can't think of anything you could do wrong here! Just experiment freely, and let the sounds that you are producing be your guide.

## Difficulty

Although achieving good control of the harmonics of your instrument will take a while, this should be an easy and fun lesson in the art of didj playing.

## Hints and Tips

Getting many and varied sounds out of your didjeridu has a lot to do with the harmonics you create, and how you control them. You can build a wealth of rhythm by changing the harmonics as you play.

[Link to my main page](#)

## Didjeridu Tutorial

### Vocalizations

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#### [INLINE] Lesson Objective

In this lesson you will investigate the use of vocalization combined with your didjeridu playing. You'll also learn to imitate sounds in nature, deepening your relationship with your didjeridu and the world around you.

#### [INLINE] Technique

- \* While playing the basic drone, try making a sound like a dog barking with your vocal chords. If you find it a bit difficult to do, practice in front of a mirror without the didjeridu. Make a sound like , "woof woof woof" without moving your lips. Any sound you can make without moving your lips can be used while playing the didjeridu.
- \* Singing distinct or indistinct notes while droning adds a rich texture to total effect. While specific notes will vary according to the pitch of the didjeridu and the vocal range of the player. I do find a good harmony to strive for is a fifth above the dominate note of the didjeridu. This would be a G for a didjeridu which plays a C. It is good, I feel, for a player to know what pitch his or her didjeridu plays. If you have a keyboard available, you should be able to find the pitch your instrument plays in by playing a flat droning note on the didjeridu while experimenting with the notes found two octaves below middle C on the piano. Frequency analyzers are great, but when trying to read the output, be sure to play a simple droning note without harmonics (i.e. tongue flat on the floor of the mouth and cheeks stationary). Otherwise the output of the frequency analyzer will vary wildly and may be misleading.
- \* A good effect, when doing vocals, is to vary the volume of your voice in relation to the didjeridu. This takes a bit of practice, but it will make all your voicings much more interesting to the listener.
- \* To the Aborigines, the animals and birds of Australia figure prominently in their rituals and songs. The Kookaburra, in particular, is considered quite sacred. It's comical call is often imitated with a musical laugh through the didjeridu. Other times, it's is imitated by using the back of the tongue against the roof of the mouth as in pronouncing the letter "K" and varying the pitch of the voice up, then down and finally back up a scale. Frogs are easily imitated by making a croaking sound. I generally say the word "rib-it" in a low voice to imitate the frog. The bush pigeon is similar to a dove and makes a cooing sound. As entertaining as these imitations are, it is often equally effective to imitate animals which reside in the players own country. In the pacific northwest, for example, there is an abundant variety of birds who's calls may be emulated. From the prosaic crow or raven to the more esoteric hoot of an owl, learning to imitate birds and animals with which you are familiar is quite challenging and rewarding.
- \* Another good vocalization technique is the playing of a very short vocal burst, much like the "yap yap" of a small dog. This technique creates a very distinctive sound which may be used to punctuate the strongest rhythms.

[INLINE] Common Mistakes

None that come to mind.

[INLINE] Difficulty

You can sing, shout, bark, yap and howl can't you ? How hard can this be then ?

[INLINE] Hints and Tips

Don't be embarrassed to try the strangest animal sounds.

## The Didgeridoo Page

Do you have a nice didj.gif, public domain or for which you own the copyright?  
Would you be willing to share it here with fellow didj aficionados?  
Please mail to nhunter@well.com

---

### Artists

- \* Alan Dargin
  - + Reconciliation
  - + Other Recordings
- \* David Hudson
- \* Stephen Kent
  - + Beasts of Paradise
  - + Lights In A Fat City
  - + Trance Mission
  - + Other Recordings
- \* Charles MacMahon (Gondwanaland)
- \* Adam Plack ('Nomad')
- \* Graham Wiggins (Outback, Dr. Didj)
- \* Yothu Yindi

### Record Companies

- \* Australian Music International (Nomad)
- \* City of Tribes Communications (Stephen Kent, Trance Mission, Lights In A Fat City)
- \* EXTREME records (Lights In A Fat City)
- \* Rykodisc (Outback, Dr. Didj)
- \* Small World Music (Alan Dargin, Reconciliation)

### Music-Related News Groups

- \* exotic music
- \* world music

### Other Resources

- \* The Big World Music Show Home Page
  - \* CERN/ANU Aboriginal Studies WWW VL
  - \* Tandanya - National Aboriginal Cultural Institute
  - \* Dreamtime - The Didjeridu Web Server
  - \* Rhythm Music Magazine
  - \* The Internet Music Monolith Links to Music Related Web Sites with an emphasis on Australian Sites
- 

### Alan Dargin

#### Biography

Alan Dargin was born and raised in an Aboriginal tribe in Australia's northeast Arnhem land. He began studying the didgeridoo at age five. Dargin's grandfather taught him how to play, passing on secret techniques which have been passed down for generations over the instrument's 40,000 year history.

Dargin's primary didgeridoo is over 100 years old and was given to him by his grandfather. It is made from the branch of a eucalyptus tree which is naturally hollowed out by ants that hatch under the bark and burrow into the wood. The didgeridoo is decorated with Aboriginal tribal markings and was originally used in tribal ceremonies to induce Dreamtime. Dargin still plays ceremonial music, but never for the

public. It is forbidden by custom.

Dargin has toured extensively in Australia and the US and has performed with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall. Most recently, he toured Korea on behalf of the Australian Foreign Affairs Department. He has appeared in a number of Australian films and has also found the time to earn a science degree from the University of Toronto.

#### Discography

Artist: Alan Dargin with Michael Atherton  
Title: Bloodwood  
Label: Natural Symphonies  
Catalog No: NS331  
Released: 1993

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#### Alan Dargin with Reconciliation

The members of Reconciliation are Irish musicians Simon O'Dwyer and Maria Cullen on Bronze Age Irish Horn and percussion respectively and Australians Alan Dargin and Phillip Conyngham on didgeridoo.

Artist: Reconciliation  
Title: Two Stories In One  
Label: Natural Symphonies  
Catalog No: NS1131  
Released: 1993

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#### Other Recordings featuring Alan Dargin

Artist: Michael Atherton  
Title: Windshift  
Label: Natural Symphonies  
Catalog No: NS831  
Released: 1993

Alan Dargin appears on one track of Michael Atherton's Windshift CD.

Artist: Bu-Baca Diop  
Title: Stand  
Label: Stern's Africa  
Catalog No: STCD1059  
Released: 1995

Bu-Baca Diop was born in Senegal and is currently resident in Sydney, Australia. Alan Dargin appears on two tracks of Bu-Baca Diop's Stand CD.

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#### David Hudson

David Hudson is an Australian Aboriginal. His two CDs on the Celestial Harmonies label are a delight to the didj-fancier's ears. The first, Woolunda, consists of ten solo pieces for the didgeridoo; the second, rainbow serpent adds percussion.

#### Discography

Artist: David Hudson  
Title: Woolunda: Ten solos for Didgeridoo  
Label: Celestial Harmonies

Catalog No: I3071-2  
Released: 1993

Artist: David Hudson  
Title: rainbow serpent: music for didgeridoo & percussion  
Label: Celestial Harmonies  
Catalog No: I3096-2  
Released: 1994

---

## Stephen Kent

Born in Devon, England, raised in Uganda, a former musical director of Circus Oz, founder member of seminal acapella world/punk combo Furious Pig, Didjeridu master Stephen Kent is currently resident in San Francisco, CA.

## Discography

Artist: Stephen Kent  
Title: Landing  
Label: City of Tribes Communications  
Catalog No: CTOCD-003  
Released: 1994

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## Stephen Kent with Beasts Of Paradise

Beasts of Paradise is:  
Geoffrey Gordon: Dumbek, Zambian drums, tablas, snare drum, percussion, Inuit throat singing  
Barbar Imhoff: Harp, fuzz harp  
Nancy Kaspar: Double Bass  
Stephen Kent: Didgeridoo, shakers  
Eda Maxym: Vocals  
Kenneth Newby: Inuit throat singing  
Jai Uttal: Dotar  
Kalonica McQuestern: Organ, toy piano, vocals  
Peter Whitehead: Home made one string rehab, frame drum  
Lyne Miller: Bagpipe

Artist: Beasts of Paradise  
Title: Nobody Knew The Time  
Label: City of Tribes Communications  
Catalog No: CTOCD-006  
Released: 1994

---

## Stephen Kent with Lights In A Fat City

Stephen Kent began jamming with Eddy Sayer, a percussionist he met at a London rehearsal studio, and began playing with him in the Camden Lock Market and other outdoor venues. They made a tape of four-track recordings and some things recorded live in the street and called it Lights In A Fat City after a phrase in Hunter S. Thompson's Great Shark Hunt. When they were billed as LIAFC for their first WOMAD gig, the name stuck.

-- RMM(2)

Lights In A Fat City is:  
Stephen Kent: Didgeridoo & percussion  
Eddy Sayer: Drums & percussion  
Simon Tassano: Treatments, atmospheres, & FX

## Discography

Artist: Lights In A Fat City  
Title: Somewhere  
Label: City of Tribes Communications  
Catalog No: CTOCD-001  
Released: 1988

Artist: Lights In A Fat City  
Title: Sound Column  
Label: EXTREME records  
Catalog No: XCD 023  
Released:

---

## Stephen Kent with Trance Mission

Trance Mission plays original music that alternatively rages, bristles, and glides through a new world of aboriginal drones, ployrhythmic percussion, chanting vocals, processed sample textures, and the looping acrobatics of clarinets, animal horns, and Balinese flutes.

Trance Mission is:  
Beth Custer: Clarinets/Vocals/Toys  
Stephen Kent: Didgeridoos/Animal Horns/Sticks/Vocals  
John Loose: Tablas/DumbekKit/Samples  
Kenneth Newby: Khaen/Suling/Ghatam/Samples/Vocals

## Discography

Artist: Trance Mission  
Title: Trance Mission  
Label: City of Tribes Communications  
Catalog No: CTOCD-002  
Released: 1993

Artist: Trance Mission  
Title: Meanwhile  
Label: City of Tribes Communications  
Catalog No: CTOCD-005  
Released: 1995

---

## Other Recordings featuring Stephen Kent

Artist: Various Artists  
Title: The Event Horizon  
Label: City of Tribes Communications  
Catalog No: CTOCD-004  
Released: 1995

The Event Horizon is an excellent introduction to the innovative City of Tribes label. Stephen Kent appears on five of the eight tracks, including Rocking Horse People's remarkable rendition of the Beatle's Tomorrow Never Knows.

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## Charles MacMahon

### Biography

Charles MacMahon is the didjeridoo player for Gondwanaland, an Australian band that combines didj, drums and synth. Besides being

very talented, he is best known for almost being Australia's first terrorist. He grew up on a station in the Outback, and being very angry at the way the aboriginals were treated, put together a large pipe bomb to detonate at some government office. The bomb detonated as he was building it, costing him his arm. He plays with a harness to hold his didj. He makes didjs out of PVC pipe (he may have originated this practice) with sliding parts. These are light enough for him to manage with his prosthetic arm, which he uses to slide the pieces.

In addition to Gondwanaland (who have three or four CDs out, perhaps more by now), Charles recorded with various San Francisco bands, including the Residents, Snakefinger, Esmerelda, and Rhythm & Noise (back when Diamanda Galas performed with them).

#### Gondwanaland

Gondwanaland is  
Charles McMahon: Didgeridu & Vocals  
Peter Carolan: Keyboard & Synth  
Eddy Duquemin: Drums & other percussion

#### Discography

Artist: Gondwanaland  
Title: Terra Incognita  
Label: WEA  
Catalog No: ?  
Released: ?

Artist: Gondwanaland  
Title: Let the Dog Out  
Label: WEA  
Catalog No: 255412-2  
Released: 1985

Artist: Gondwanaland  
Title: Gondwanaland  
Label: WEA  
Catalog No: 255135-2  
Released: 1987

Thanks to Jerod Pore for Charles MacMahon info.

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#### Adam Plack ('Nomad')

##### Discography

Artist: Nomad  
Title: Dawn Until Dusk  
Label: Australian Music International  
Catalog No:  
Released:

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#### Graham Wiggins

##### Biography

American-born Graham Wiggins began teaching himself the didgeridoo while a physics student in Boston thirteen years ago. After years of practice and study, he earned his doctorate in physics at Oxford University. Wiggins' post-doctoral education came directly from the streets of London, where he and a variety of musical partners honed their craft as performers and street musicians. In the process,

Wiggins' didgeridoo playing became a favorite on the festival circuit and in the UK club scene.

It was in his role as founding member of Outback that Wiggins first gained the attention of American ears. Critically acclaimed for its engaging and accessible fusion of musical styles, the band topped Billboard's World Music chart with the Hannibal albums BAKA and DANCE THE DEVIL AWAY.

After Outback's break-up, Wiggins journeyed to Australia's Elcho Island where he perfected his advanced didgeridoo performance techniques by living and studying with Aboriginal masters. Upon his return to the UK, he joined former Outback percussionist Ian Campbell and fellow Oxford graduate, guitarist Mark Revell, to form the group that would bear his nickname [Dr. Didj]. After roadtesting their material on the European festival circuit and in England's renowned rave scene, they recorded OUT OF THE WOODS in 1994.

#### Discography

Artist: Outback  
Title: Baka  
Label: Hannibal  
Catalog No: HNCD 1357  
Released: 1991

Artist: Outback  
Title: Dance The Devil Away  
Label: Hannibal  
Catalog No: HNCD 1369  
Released: 1992

Artist: Dr. Didj  
Title: Out of the woods  
Label: Hannibal  
Catalog No: HNCD 1384  
Released: 1995

---

#### Yothu Yindi

Mandawuy Yunupingu, an aborigine, was pronounced Australian of the Year for 1992 by the Australian government, in recognition of his accomplishments in the national and international arenas. Mandawuy is the leader of the group Yothu Yindi, hailed by Billboard magazine as "the flagship of Australian music". He is one of his country's foremost cultural ambassadors. His band swept the awards of the Australian music industry and played at the United Nations to inaugurate the Year of Indigenous Peoples in 1993.

-- RMM(1)

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#### Australian Music International

An indie label dedicated to the task of making Australian pop and traditional music a viable force in the world beat marketplace.

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253 W. 18th St.  
New York, NY 10011  
U. S. A.

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Small World Music, Inc.  
117 30th Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37212  
U. S. A.

Tel: (615) 320 7672  
E-mail: smlwrld@aol.com

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Rhythm Music Magazine

Global Sounds & Ideas.

872 Mass Ave, 2-2  
P.O. Box 391894  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
U. S. A.

E-mail: rhythm@id.wing.net

(1) April/May, 1994 - Yothu Yindi feature interview, Stephen Kent & Alan Dargin sidebar.

(2) Vol. IV, No. 3, 1995 - Stephen Kent & Adam Plack feature interview.

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=END=

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## Didg Tips



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[9\) I know how to Circular breath, but it seems that even when I circular breathe I still need to stop to breath. Is this usual? Is there a way to fill my lungs more or should I just breathe more often. I probably breath once every 5- 10 seconds., Jasen](#)

[try to use more pressure to increase volume, it works till I get to a point where it just wrecks the drone. How do you guys get such good volume? Some of the credit obviously goes to the didge shape, but technique does too ..right?](#)

[3\) "Water improves the playing of the didg" Peter\(USA\)](#)

[4\) May didgeridoo Playing cause adverse physiological effects? Are there known Occupational diseases for didg players? , Claudio](#)

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.....

#### 1) Q- How do you play a didg?

A- The mechanics of making the drone sound is to blow a raspberry, done by flapping the lips as a horse does, as you blow out, whilst sealing the mouthpiece with your mouth and lips inside the top of the didg. Some people get it first go, others get a note closer to a trumpet sound which sounds more like a farting sound. If you get this sound have a laugh and dont be ashamed to keep trying. Recall the innocence of being childlike and exploring sound so you can give yourself the chance to explore the sounds possible until you hit on the sweet drone and overtone notes.

Ok so if your getting the farting sound, experiment with the contrast of tight and loose lips. Even overtighten further as you blow out, you will notice the trumpet like overtone sound that the didg is capable of. This sound is used as a percussive sound with the drone as the background sound. Then overloosen your lips letting the air be expelled quicker through your lips. The drone is the important one that is first base, so, keep at it, - take a breath in, blow out, sealing the mouthpiece end with your mouth inside, letting the lips loose so they start bouncing up and down against one another giving of the drone sound. Trying can be a hurdle as one can overcompensate with tight lips, so keep coming back to loose lips and not trying to contain or focus the air being expelled, even if the air is released very quick. It s the combination of

the lips being together yet loose that leads to the bouncing as the air is released, a vibrating drone. Once you've got the drone sound you will then be able to start varying the lip tightness and experimenting with sound variances without losing the drone note.

As your starting out with didg, enjoy and embrace the unknown element of learning to play. Each didg and each person is individual and there's no right or wrong way to play or to learn as to steps or timing. In this way didg is an explorative instrument that some folk even liken to a friend. If you enjoy the element of playing a natural instrument and relate to its connection to earth and spirit, it can be a sacred journey. At the same time immensely fun.  
Happy didgin

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## 2) - Q - How do you make that classic drone sound?

A - The ability to vary drone pitch and sound often comes over time as your lips get better and better at maintaining a drone at a tighter aperture. So my suggestion is to keep experimenting and see how tight you can develop your lips to vibrate without losing the note. Also different didgs and different people all add accentuations that vary the sound so to totally imitate another is often impossible. We all have our own individual sound.

Also in regard to the tight lipped drone, by moving your tongue close to your lips and almost in between as they vibrate often creates the much sort after, defined drone sound (some call this a reed note with the tongue between the lips). Then varying from loose to tight as you circular breath creates one of the simplest rhythms.

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## 3) - Q - How do you make that popping sound ?

A - It's made with flat cheeks, a slightly open mouth drone, in other words jaw as open as possible and all of a sudden closing mouth to very tight drone cheeks still flat. This produces a popping or whacking sound. Try outside of didg to get a feel for it. The sound comes from the sudden compression and release of air. Using contrast between loose and tight lips is a feature to work on in playing and this is the extreme transition. Doing it at half speed produces another slightly different effect, that is a common sound used in traditional playing styles - a punctuation after going from loose

lips to tight with the drone note almost stopping and then being kickstarted again, with a definable stop point. Both of these effects put into a rhythm context sound great.

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4) After playing continuously for several minutes sometimes I find

I get a pool of saliva building up under my tongue. If it gets between my lips it sometimes causes my drone to stop. I can't swallow without my drone stopping. What's the best way to avoid this?

Do I need to learn to circular swallow? :-) or just dribble without stopping? Dave

Great question Dave, a common question and obstacle for didg players. Saliva is that essential ingredient that gives lubrication to our lips and tongue and accentuation to our voice, so having too much is better than too little. But too much can also effect the sound range whilst at the same time stored inside the mouth the fluid alters the soundings somewhat and this can be used to an advantage. So there's positives and the negatives to saliva buildup. Swallowing can only be done if you stop for a split second. This can only work in a playing sequence, if it suits the playing style as a piece. If it does it can be done by accentuating the break, which can be highlighted by jumping back into the playing with a toot note (overtone) or any accentuated sounding. Mark Atkins (professional aboriginal didg player) and I worked together at a festival where I was selling didg and he was busking. I learnt a lot listening to his playing. He had a knack of using complete breaks in his playing as accentuations, where he'd even add a non drone based call to great effect. So this is definitely one way to get around this problem.

The simplest way though is to let the river run rather than damming it up; in other words gradually or here and there spit it through the doing. We do this to a degree anyway but sometimes if excess is building it's either store it or let some flow. There's a knack to minimising any glitches in the sound train as you're doing so. When I do this I generally have an alteration somewhat in the sound but at least the drone keeps going and I don't have a reservoir in my mouth.

And as to circular swallowing let me know if you're perfect, it must be an enlightened didg player's trick, for us mortals circular dribbling is the go. I hope this helps Dave, happy didgin bro, Tynon

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5) Overtones on the didg How do you make that toot note or

## overtone , **Damian**

The overtone or toot or horn note is made by tightening the lips in a more trumpet like way as opposed to the loose lips bouncing drone note. By also putting the top lip slightly forward or pulling the bottom lip inward it can also be likened to the process of blowing a flute. Similar but tighter like a trumpet. Each didg has a sweet spot as to the degree of tightness or openness and each didg has generally two or more overtones by further tightening or reducing the amount of air released under pressure.

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How do you get rid of the gap between overtone and drone,  
Dave Seaton.

The process of changing between the drone note where the lips are in alignment with each other and loose and the overtone where much more pressure is added as the opening is reduced and the lips change position slightly, is a challenge as to getting the change over smooth and integrated. This is one playing process that is trial and error and no amount of teaching from another generally helps. Knowing that pressure is needed in the overtone and keeping air reserves and preparedness to slip and loosen the lips back into a drone are the elements to keep in mind. Apart from that just a good dose of persistence and desire to get it will be the most helpfull.

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## 6) How do I make rhythms on the didg ? , Bart

Rhythms on the didg are created by a combination of breath timing, and sound or mouthing repetition. For example if the timing of the outbreath equals the timing of the inbreath ( inbreath covering the full squeeze cheek motion of the inbreath phase-not the actual snatch timing), then you have a rhythm. If the outbreath is twice the inbreath phase this is another rhythm. If theres two in breaths for every outbreath phase you have another rhythm. If you have two in for an equal timed out followed by one in for equal timed out and then the whole two parts repeat over and over, you have a more complicated rhythm. And it goes on and on, the possibiities are pretty endless. Then interspersing vocal sounds in a timed pattern the rhythm is accentuated. or certain wordings or mouthed phrasings can be used whether didgeridoo, didamore, didamulla, thuka too, ditty roo, walk a doo, kirrawee, lilli pilli- make up your own.

With rhythms simplicity is helpfull and repetition is the foundation. Even the simplest rhythms played over and over becomes enchanting when one relaxs into it. Those listeneing will often get more out of this than a complex but formless

playing style. Trying to incorporate too much can be a failing. I know of one class didg player that stuck to one rhythm and played it over and over and explored every way that one rhythm could be strengthened. He is renowned for his rhythmic playing style.

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### 7) What is jawbreathing ?, Bart

Jawbreathing is a more advanced style of circular breathing where you don't rely on the cheeks, as in puffing up and then flattening as you snatch a breath. It is done with the cheeks totally flat at all times, also making the stream of air very focused, and punchy. It then relies more on diaphragmatic breathing because there's less time to get the breath in and it relies on more controlled use of muscles in the mouth and jaw movement, with the diaphragm backing up with the strong snatch and keeping the pressure up.

It suits a more rhythmic playing style with a lot of punchiness which comes from the diaphragm and snatch pulse that forms a very strong beat. Oscillating between jawbreathing and cheek breathing in a rhythmic way can also be an effective way to build a rhythm form that has contrasting effects.

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### 8) How do you circular breath? for Marcelo, Mik & Kerry

Circular breathing is the simple and yes believe it simple act of storing excess air in your cheek/mouth cavity and when grabbing a quick snatch of air with your nose, using your cheeks and jaw to squeeze enough air pressure through your lips that the vibrating lips continue doing their thing long enough to get that bit of air.

I say simple because the first thing that will trip you up learning is thinking it's hard. Break it down into its simple components. And practice simple steps that lead you towards it. And believe, that it's simple and that you're going to get it. Persist, focus, enjoy, let go and trust. It will come.

To know that you've got what it takes, blow a balloon. Feel those cheek muscles, that's what you're developing. Then fill the mouth with water in the shower in the mornings and spit out at the same time as you snatch a breath. If you can do that you'll know you can do it. The rest is practice.

Next look in the mirror while you play and see if you can do a drone and pump your cheeks in and out, in and out, over and over until you're out of breath. Have you control over what your



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9) I know how to Circular breath, but it seems that even when I circular breathe I still need to stop to breath. Is this usual? Is there a way to fill my lungs more or should I just breathe more often. I probably breath once every 5-10 seconds., Jasen

Most folk in the early stages of circular breathing tend to predominantly have a slower style of playing that ties in with taking breaths every now and again. Yes, theres more pressure on the snatches and more chance of running out of air. Breathing more regularly should make a big difference, whilst its a good challenge to also work towards integrating fast and slow styles of breathing and playing. The early on phase in our playing often highlighted by slower stretched out drones and playing style is a fantastic stage except we often want its to pass thinking it doesn't sound that good and yes our circular may be a struggle.

The more our playing develops the more you may find that regular snatches of breath becomes more the done thing, enforcing a more rhythmic style of playing. Even if a long stretch of outbreath playing might be then contrasted with some short in and outs to refill the lungs, and then repeating this pattern of long out breath with perhaps 2,3 or 4 quicker in an out breaths, over and over. When we only take breaths further apart, interestingly theres more chance of the remaining air in our lungs becoming stale. Complete exchange of air is as important as taking in air.

Releasing air through the nose as well as droning on is a common practice in didg playing to release stale air. So this could be one reason your running out of air. If you can't work out how to do this, dont worry, you might even be doing it and not realising; or it will naturally come. One day I realised I'd been doing it for awhile without knowing so.

Interestingly I find that it eventually becomes easy to rely on short quicker breaths and then get lazy with the style of breathing that your doing, slow and spaced out, so honour where you coming from and with these suggestions a new phase will open the way. Just dont throw out how you play now this will serve you well **as well**.

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1) **Accepting our playing and becoming more expressive.**

As John Lennon said " Life s what happens whilst were busy making other plans"

True for life and surely didg playing for, when do we arrive???? This would be one of the main gifts and challenges that I've found from didg playing. Just to be in the process however it is, letting go of judgments and expectations.

Blessing our playing as it is!

Have you ever been playing and noticed yourself overly concerned by how it sounds to someone else?

Ahh the critic again! A friend and a foe!

I imagine our aura shrinks in and we open overly to others energy fields and any that match our feeling of being judged or not good enough.

I've found an expanding process whilst playing is helpful, and it begins by showering acceptance on myself as I play, then giving myself permission to totally let loose and feeling my aura expand with the sound until I'm lost in the expression. In fact I don't lose myself, I find my centre.

Go For It!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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2) Animal sounds...I can make reasonably good yelps and screams but I don't seem to be able to get heaps of volume and really high pitch which can sound sooo good. Am I going to be limited by my natural voice pitch or with practise will I be able to get higher and louder?

Also volume in general...if I try to use more pressure to increase volume, it works till I get to a point where it just wrecks the drone. How do you guys get such good volume? Some of the credit obviously goes to the didge shape, but technique does too..right?

As with overtones making vocal sounds takes added energy and stores of air so having an awareness can help especially if you want to put out an outpouring of vocal sounds, as in volume or a lot together or complicated as to articulating. It is easier for the drone note to drop out, so being aware of this builds an ability to work with both drone and vocals.

Each of us has a different access to sound based upon the pitch and range of our voice so ultimately we will each have our individual flare as to vocal sounds, whilst I believe each of us has an ability to produce loud and effective vocals.

The above suggestions [1\) Accepting our playing and becoming more expressive](#). can be a very helpful way to expand one's vocal range.

It's our inhibitions that are most often our obstacle. Appreciate their gift, challenge their limits and step by step you'll see big improvements. Gentle calls project part way down the didg and give a far of sound feel, whilst if you want a loud sound or cry, project it down the didg, intend it to go out the other end not half way. Mean it all the way. High tones or really low tones may take some experimentation but play along and

they'll come.

Most of all have fun exploring vocal sounds , the more one explores the more one plays the more it becomes second nature. And watch for the judge within , give him a day of, have a laugh and play on.

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### 3) "Water improves the playing of the didg", Peter(USA)

It is traditional practice culturally in Australia for water to be poured down the didg before playing. Its primary purpose is to help the sound travel along the glisteny surface created by the water. There is a noticeable difference in sound improvement. Also time on the didg warming it up, adds to the improvement in sound transference. The water also cleanses the didg and moistens the wood perhaps increasing its longevity. Some didgs are sealed on the inside with varnish or beeswax to create this effect on a permanant basis. If so Its still recommended to flush with water at least, to cleanse the didg of spit, dust and insects who love to move in. Also after a didg session a water flush down the didg can feel a nice completion.

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### 4) May didgeridoo Playing cause adverse physiological effects? Are there known Occupational diseases for didg players? , Claudio

Top question. What a challenge to answer it. here we go!

I know two Dr Didgs, one a mate who is an actual doctor didg player healer. I'll ask him as well.

I am into didg healing work, so I'll dub myself Dr Didg No 3 and answer your question.

From experience most physiological effects are on the plus side, calming effects from breath control, internal organ massage from diaphragm action, sound vibration healing effects, mental switch off from the positive focus of a rhythmic healing vibratory kind.

But heres the short list on the down sides.

Most are excistant with experienced players more so than for players in the earlier or more recreational styles of playing.

#### \* Lip problems

- e.g- breaking a bloodvessel . Cause ~ inadequate warm up. Going from slow droning to fast high pressure tight lip droning, way too quick with inadquate build up. Cure ~ Rest and more warm up time . It should heal fine. I've had this and

changing mouthpiece positioning from one side to playing in the middle or the other side is one way to speed healing. If you experience blowing up of the lip as in expanding in size, this is generally a beginners concern and settles down, just ease into it a bit a day or a few times a day and this should very soon no longer occur.

### **\* Didg players sholder**

- Holding a didg in one arm and playing every day for quite long periods can produce tightness and muscle and tendon fatigue. I was talking to Dr Didg a couple of months back and two didg mates I knew were visiting him with didg players sholder. Cure ~ get a massage or visit a physio, and change or alternate which arm holds the didg; and buy or make a didg stand to support your didg while you play ( check [www.heartdidg/didgstands.htm](http://www.heartdidg/didgstands.htm) ) This releases the weight and tension of holding and maximises the healing effects of playing perhaps many fold.

### **\* Hyperventilating and Up- tempo playing stress**

Hyperventilation is common in learning circular and is either discomforting or a nice high or spin out. its simply resulting from not getting enough oxygen in and too much blowing out so remember to take time to breath and keep grounded.

Up tempo playing stress, is similar , it comes from excessive fast, rhythmic playing where short sharp quick breaths are taken regularly. There can be a tendency to fall into lazyness with first not getting enough air in and so experiencing mild hyperventialtion, but also prolonging this style of playing is very up and is of high energy on a nervous system level and if not balanced it may be experienced as mildly stressfull. It also can be addictive, so if one finds themselves only playing fast styles with resistance to integrating slower styles you may have the symptoms of 'fast playing addiction' lets call it.

Integrating fast and slow is very wholistic and both have their place and positive effect whilst with any polarity there is either a potential missed or a down side that may eventuate from over emphasising.\*

### **\* Voice and throat concerns**

Voice-Like with singing our voice can do well to be warmed up, so when doing calls and shrill sounds which are more radical on our voice than tones and droning like voice sounds, take time to warm the voice up and stretch gradually until settled and ready to go for it.\*

Throat- The other factor is if your didg has been sitting idle it may have quite a dust build up inside and also may be moldy if in a damp environment. Your didg becomes an extension of your throat chamber and any dust etc in the didg will circulate into your lungs. Ask any didg maker who often picks up a

didg after sanding or making and forgets to blow through it first. So rinsing ones didg before and or after playing is a good habit if your concerned by this or notice a dryness in your throat from didg playing. Didg playing does use a lot of saliva so dry throat is not only from dusty didgs more so from playing a heap and maybe not drinking enough fluid in general, but a dusty didg doesn't help much.

\* Playing other peoples didgs-

In this day and age one may take two approaches. One to trust explicitly and beleive one has no thing to fear and will not contract anything from another persons didg. One part of me relates to this. Anthiam and I havn't immunised our children, out of our trust and also our healthy diet and lifestyle, we trust in our bodies immunity, so I have one foot on that side of the fence. On the other side from years of selling didg to folk; and festivals where I and others would play didgs over and over, it is my experience that my body had to work overtime in fighting stuff I took on and I'd often come home with a cold. Was it the environment of a festival, talking and giving too much, or sharing too many didgs. Well I reckon a combination. These days I still live with a foot on either side, trusting my immunity and also I dont make a habit of playing didgs that other have played ,unless I at least check theres no saliva and wipe it clean . Ideally I wash didgs with a Teatree or Eucalyptus oil water mix which is a natural disenfectant. I'm not real good with follow through except with water and a rag but periodically adding something and doing so and rinsing the inside as well is a good disenfectant process. Taking ones didg to the beach and dipping in salt water is also a good cleansing .

Some folk have a didg thats only for them and another didg there more open to sharing. Something to journey with!

~~~~~

I'd love to hear of any other factors or experiences others have had, and I'll add more to this over time.

But seriously didg playing is so damn good for us, you should see the length of the plus's I'm gathering as part of a didg book to come. Makes the above down sides a speck.

So didg on in bliss of the pitfalls mostly ; just be in balance and in your centre and this will draw you on as is perfect for you.

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