

Bamboo Roundhouse

Environment Low end - hessian cloths, baskets of raffia, shaker bottles filled with dried chillies, cinnamon sticks, lentils, pot pourri. Masked character. High end - roundhouse made with bamboo poles and fencing. Bamboo mats, cushions, resonance boards, wood xylophones and instruments. Star projections on ceiling and bamboo light.



Raffia and shakers Character draws group to 'hessian corner' - interacts with each person and encourages exploration of raffia, smell, touch spinning in lights, making hair, wrapping round, burying, dancing with etc. Introduce shaker bottles - watch and feel the contents as bottles are tipped, turned and rolled around - build gentle rhythms as shaken and tapped and dropped on the ground.

Roundhouse Sounds of music or character lead to enter bamboo house. Resonance boards on floor or raised on wheelchairs. Listen to sounds of Mbiras as the vibrations tickle fingers, toes, faces, bodies. Experiment with tapping sounds, scraping, banging, make stories or songs, play games with each other.



Woods Introduce wood instruments one at a time - listen to different tonal qualities, stop/start, rhythm changes, build to whole group piece with singing and chanting led by different individuals. fade instruments as evening falls.

Chill Pull out stripey blankets/cushions and all lie down together as stars appear in the sky and beautiful music serenades you. Sing your dreams, make wishes or simply rest and watch the moving stars through the roof.

Evaluation Tactile elements and character encouraged groups to use an often 'abandoned' part of the studio. Was cosy and inviting and felt unifying, particularly inclusive of muso. Shaker bottles very successful due to visual and tactile elements - plus good fun. Roundhouse was wonderful for incorporating whole group in a spacious but confined way. Resonance boards worked brilliantly with some groups - less effective with others. School groups particularly enjoyed them - one student whose arms are normally tight in spasm had completely relaxed them due to the vibrations he could feel through the board. Others lay down and felt tingles through whole bodies, others played sound games with each other - making stories. Wood instruments need upgrading - as many in different keys, or poor sound quality. However rhythmic musical section enjoyed by all. The star projections encouraged people to lie down (not easy for some) and look up and the chill was very successful with all groups settling, eventually. The bamboo light cast circular shadows and woke each person gently as the morning sun rose. Should have kept the structure for 2 weeks workshops!

