

Vibratones or Wah-Wah tubes

Vibratones or Wah -Wah tubes are a useful group of instruments that are available in tuned sets which can be used together to create an ethereal, ambient piece of music. Similar to a hand chime in construction, they consist of a circular tube of metal with a slit in one end and a hole towards the other end.. Vibratones present specific challenges to participants and like all instruments that use beaters they can be tricky to play conventionally, though these skills may be acquired by some. They are however extremely useful in a number of ways:

- You can use a tuned set together that automatically produces a pleasing sound
- They have a vocal quality when they are made to sound 'wah-wah' which can be mimicked and is very engaging
- They require specific skills and hand-eye coordination to be able to play conventionally, skills that many participants will be able to acquire
- The sound has a long sustain so you can just play it and enjoy the sound, unlike a xylophone or drum for example where you feel you need to play a rhythm
- They can be used in different ways to produce sounds, so are good for exploration on a one-to-one basis. Participants might start by dropping beaters inside them, for example.
- They don't need to be played rhythmically to produce a soundscape, although they can be
- They are child sized and interesting objects in their own right. Participants may spend some time exploring their weight, temperature (they are very cold when they've been kept in the car) and texture.
- They can be used in pairs, with one person holding the instrument and another hitting it or putting their finger over the hole to make the wah-wah sound
- They can be used to explore preferences for high/low and loud/soft sounds

When you strike the slit end with a beater and move your finger over the hole it produces a 'wah-wah' effect that greatly enhances the musicality of the instrument and gives it a vocal quality

They can be used in many different ways, such as:

- By 'flying' them over people's heads to engage them, get their heads up and see whether they track the sounds
- By vocally mimicking the 'wah-wah' sounds to encourage vocalising
- Offering them one each to explore in their own way
- By playing them all together, with each person playing in their own time, to produce an ambient piece of music with no rhythm

Workshops

Snow Queen, Mindscape, Proserpine

Videos

Vibratones