

Pots, Pans, and Washboard Blues

African Americans created the Blues genre in the **Southern United States** between the late 1800s and early 1900s. During this period, many African Americans experienced hardships from **Jim Crow** laws that **segregated**, or separated, people by race and prevented African Americans and other people of color from having certain rights. Despite this, the ingenuity that rises from hard times led to creative expressions through the Blues, and if they couldn't afford instruments some folks found ways to make beats with their bodies (a.k.a. hamboning) or everyday items like washboards, jugs, and spoons.

Materials:

Spoons, pots, pans, buckets, tabletops, or your body!

Anything you can get creative with to make music!



Instructions:

- Think of a time you were sad and why –this might inspire your Blues music.
 - What happened, how did you feel, and what did you do to feel better?
- Listen to any Blues beat you like and try to create that sound with your “instruments”.
 - You can also try hamboning (using your body):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0LirYOXwRA>
- Now, try to make some blues sounds as you tell a story about “blues”.

If you need some inspiration for Blues sounds, here are some songs from artists featured in the Music Makers Relief Foundation and some featured in the Music Makers exhibit temporarily on display at our Cape Fear Museum!

- **Memphis Breakdown, Carolina Chocolate Drops**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ved7J0wuXw>
 - See if you can spot any creative instruments.
- **Rain in your Life, Essie Mae Brooks**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C96ZbGT1fhA>
 - Essie uses Blues to discuss loss and sadness as “rain” in life, but how “rain” is important to appreciate the sunshine.
- **Thomas Rhyant, A Change is Gonna Come**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pw6tt4Gc7pc>

See the next page for a fun and simple musical instrument craft!

DIY Shakers

While shakers are not considered original Blues instruments, they are a fun way to make music and get movin'! They are also a simple way to repurpose or upcycle some materials you may have around the house.

Materials:

- Empty (and clean) aluminum drink can, plastic bottle, plastic egg, or small container with a lid
- Dry rice, beans, or pasta
- Tape
- Funnel (optional)

Instructions:

- Choose one of the listed containers above (can, bottle, egg, or other container) and a filler material (beans, rice, pasta).
- Fill the container with the filler material, making sure to leave space for the material to move and create noise.
- Tape the container shut and gently test it to make sure it is properly closed. If you are using a container with a lid, you may want to reinforce the lid with tape.
- If you are using an empty aluminum drink can, make sure to fully push open the drinking area and take off the tab before filling the can.
 - **Be careful with sharp edges and make sure to have parental assistance.**
- Once you are done, make some music!

You can also watch Native American Blues artists, Charly Lowry & Friends, blend elements of blues and folk-rock with instruments such as the shaker. (Charly Lowry is a featured Music Maker artist).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19FjXRNEUFU>



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