

How to Make a Bowl Sing



Rubbing a bowl makes it sing, that is where they got their name. What actually happens is that one tone is enhanced and all other tones disappear, creating a pure and penetrating ring. This does not work well with all bowls, although they still will have a nice sound effect while the other tones remain more in the background.

The right striker is crucial, it needs to be bare wood and of a smaller diameter. Softer woods will work, but hardwoods are by far the best for rubbing around the rim of the bowl. Press the stick firmly against the rim of the bowl to prevent a rattling sound. Think of it as riding a wave as you slowly drag and press the striker around the bowl in circles. Rubbing will gradually bring out the singing. Not all bowls lend themselves to rubbing. The thicker the metal of the bowl, especially the rim, the nicer the sound. Sometimes a light tap to start the sound, then commencing with the rubbing, will make it work more easily. Do not expect to get immediate results. It is a skill that has to be developed. The right pressure is crucial, and you have to hold the bowl firmly and control it with your fingers. Usually it can not be done with the bowl placed on a pillow or holder. With patience and the proper hardwood stick, rubbing thick large, middle and small size bowls produces penetrating, clear partials as all other tones are subdued or disappear. In general, rubbing thin bowls will not give nice sounds.



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