



**Bonggo Charlie's percussion instruments:
Percussion is everywhere in nature**



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Being a creative percussionist Bongo Charley makes every instrument as if he will use it him self. Because you hardly make a living as a freelance percussionist in Suriname, Bongo Charley (Leon Lemmer) developed himself during 25 years as an artisan and producer of dozens of percussion instruments. All are made of local material: cedar wood, goatskins for drums, different gourds-calabash species-, seeds and scrap metal. At the Caribbean Festivals of Arts (Carifesta) held since 1972, Bongo Charley has been the only one specialized in Pan African, African Caribbean and South American percussion instruments.

"You can hear music everywhere and in everything nature gives and that's my inspiration", says Bongo Charlie. (Born 1955). He lives in the nature district of Commewijne, a 20 minutes ride from Paramaribo where he built his house and rehearsal studio with his wife and assistant artisan Gladys. Their two children Daniel and Nehemiah do music and handicraft as well.

Bongo Charley is intrigued by any kind of sound from percussion so he makes them ranging from Brazilian

talking drums to a variety of shake instruments. One Such instrument is from a cylinder covered with strings of beads you roll on your hand, known as *abasa* for salsa and as *afuse* for the Brazilian samba. He also makes the *berimbao*, a bow on which is beaten with a stick that makes a characteristic sound on which athletic Brazilians perform the "capoeira", an African Brazilian fighting dance. Special effect instruments as the *whistling snorrobot* from Australia he makes because it gives him a kick, Charley says. "Percussion is universal he explains. Where people of different places come together good things as percussion are exchanged". So he produces the West African *sekere*, the broad bottom calabash covered by a fishnet of beads or seeds that make a nice sound as you shake it. And the thumb piano, or *mbira*, holding it with both hands you play the eight notes with your thumbs just as a small computer game. Well known in the Afro Surinamese kawina and the Curacao tumba is the *cowbell*, on which is played with a tick. Charley makes them in all sizes. The same way his own creation the *loksiblock* is played. By beating with a stick on the wooden husk of the loksi tree. On his solo- cd

Authentic Feelings and in a variety of Surinamese alternative music Bongo Charley's percussion is wellknown. At Readytex there is always a representative selection of Bongo Charley's percussion instruments for sale, including the ten described above.

Elvira Rijdsdijk

Readytex - Maagdenstraat 44-48 -
Paramaribo - Suriname
Tel. (597) 421750
Fax (597) 471507
E-mail: readytex@cq-link.sr
Website: www.readytexartgallery.com

