

# Karin Tauscher



## Mission Statement:

*My goal is to provide students with a positive and enjoyable musical experience which expands their view of themselves and their world. They will explore their musical abilities while gaining awareness of, and respect for, peoples and cultures on the other side of the globe, in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa where the music has its roots.*

## Grades Served:

4 - 12, Adult

## Lives In:

Hood River, OR

## Homestay:

Not required

## Curriculum Connections

CL CS GH MC  
MU PG

## Marimba: Playing the Wooden Voices of Africa

Marimbas are large wooden xylophones played in an ensemble consisting of instruments in the ranges of soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass. Students learn simple parts which work together to create interlocking rhythms and harmonizing melodies. Gourd shakers, called “hoshō”, contribute rhythm and texture to the sound, as do drums and other percussion instruments.

African Marimba is an exciting and accessible music style in which students learn not only how to play the notes and the rhythms, but also how to work cooperatively to create something beautiful. They will learn that everyone can contribute in a meaningful way to the process of making music, regardless of their musical experience or perceived ability. They will learn to respect the learning processes of others, though they may be very different from their own. Through this “group process” aspect of marimba, students learn important lessons they can apply to other areas of their lives. They will also learn about African culture and the history of the pieces they learn. Whenever possible, the residency will culminate in a performance.

## Elective Residency in African-Style Marimba Music

This is a residency similar in content to the standard marimba residency, but adapted especially for smaller groups and/or special populations, including Talented and Gifted, Special Needs, and ELL. This residency is designed for groups of 8-15 students. In this small group format, students receive plenty of individual attention, allowing each student to be truly challenged at his/her own level. The small group setting also offers a more in-depth experience in learning cooperative skills and cultural instruction as they learn music from a culture so unfamiliar to most of us. It can be structured in a number of ways: as a full, week long residency, or a more intensive short term experience.

## Performance in African-Style Marimba Music

Two student performing bands: an adult band called Zvakanaka and youth band, Chigwaya, are available for performances at assemblies or other special events.

## Teacher Workshops

A special, introductory marimba workshop for teachers can be a useful and enjoyable way for teachers to get first-hand experience learning what their students are doing. Optimally, participating teachers then perform what they learn during the end-of-the-week performance. This provides teachers with a new and exciting challenge, and students benefit from seeing their teachers challenging themselves in a different role.

## Facilities & Supplies

Marimba residencies require a room with at least 16x20 feet of open space, which can accommodate relatively high noise levels (a music room or gym is ideal). In addition, a locked space to store instruments during the residency is needed. A \$75 per project instrument fee covers instrument wear and tear.

## About the Artist...

Karin Tauscher has had a life-long passion for music. She began studying African marimba in 1995, and has been teaching this unique style of music since 1998. She has hosted numerous Zimbabwean musicians in her home, giving her wonderful opportunities to study both the music and culture of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa. She has a M.A. in Counseling Psychology, and has worked as a mental health counselor, parent educator, and music teacher for children, youth, and adults. She currently teaches marimba classes for all ages, directs a performing band in Hood River, and plays with Boka Marimba in Portland.