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Crafts from our
favorite crooners

CALEXICO'S CREATIVE REUSE

Turn bamboo and straw into one-of-a-kind drum brushes.

by John Convertino | Photo by Garry McLeod

I came up with the idea of making bamboo brushes while working with [singer-songwriter] Victoria Williams. We were practicing in her tiny house up in Laurel Canyon and had to play very softly—metal brushes sounded too harsh. I noticed bamboo growing in her backyard, and thought of using straw for the brush part. Victoria was very excited to hear the sounds the homemade brushes made on the drums and cymbals. Years later, I used the soft pitter to lull my baby daughter Mia to sleep.



INGREDIENTS

Bamboo stalk, at least 1 1/2' long
An old broom or a bunch of straw
Wood glue

TOOLS

Scissors
Sandpaper
Hacksaw

MAKE IT:

1. Cut the bamboo several inches from one of its natural joints. This is the handle, so make it long enough to fit in your hand. If need be,

sand the ends smooth. 2. If you're salvaging an old broom, cut the string that holds the brush together. Gather up a handful of straw and trim it down. 3. Fill the hole closest to the joint in the bamboo with wood glue. 4. Push the straw at least one inch into the hole. The glue may spill out and get messy, so have a rag handy.

5. Set the handle upright to dry. 6. Now do the whole thing over again to finish the pair.

7. Play soft, but remember to swing!

{ TIP } Depending on the type of bamboo you use, you may need a drill to bore the hole at the end.

John Convertino's band, Calexico, recently released *Carried to Dust*, a new album out on Quarterstick/Touch.

