Rhythms



Rhythms are the thundering heart of the movement. We play simple percussion music inspired by Brazilian samba. Bands can help rebels claim and hold space for protest, attract attention and create a positive and fun atmosphere. Our groups can be large or small, bands have ranged from over a hundred to just a few individuals so we are versatile and agile in our support.

Rhythms is a crucial part of the climate activism movement because we bring a fun, carnival atmosphere to protests that can lift spirits and diffuse tense situations. Although it’s not always appropriate to have a band at quieter and more serious demonstrations, when we are invited to a protest we help people claim space for nonviolent resistance.

Integration of Rhythms at marches and actions can look effortless, but how noise will be used on protest needs be considered. We’re best for marches and longer or larger actions where energy needs to be maintained. Any action which intends to use Rhythms should discuss with a band coordinator beforehand how the music is going to be used. Communication is vital, so a link role with the band is essential during an action.

Where does XR Rhythms come from?

There have been samba-fusion activist bands in London since the 1980s, when the band Batucada Mandela supported an anti-apartheid picket at the South African embassy. In the 1990s, the bands Barking Bateria and Rhythms of Resistance London supported anticapitalist protests. Rhythms of Resistance would later become a global movement.

In 2018, two XR activists with specialities in world music brought some people and some drums together to make the first Extinction Rebellion band during the October Declaration of Rebellion in

London, using Rhythms of Resistance as an inspiration. The bands spread from small groups in London and Bristol to a national network that can bring hundreds of people to protests.

Who can join XR Rhythms?

Anybody!

We help people who want to get involved in environmental and social justice protest find a place for themselves. No experience and very little time commitment is necessary to join a band. Most bands practice for a couple of hours once a week or every few weeks, and will usually have spare instruments. You'll immediately have something to do in Extinction Rebellion and a friendly group to do it with!

Find out more about us on our website and we can be contacted at info@xrrhythms.uk.
