

# PASIC50 Scholarly Research Overview

By Lisa Rogers

**T**he PAS Scholarly Research Committee is delighted to sponsor several scholarly research sessions for PASIC 2025. The research presented this year will cover a wide array of topics.

## LIVE SESSIONS

**Dr. Jean Carlo Ureña González**

**Dominican Merengue: The Role of the Güira.**

Jean Carlo Ureña González will present a session titled “Dominican Merengue: The Role of the Güira.” During the presentation, Ureña González will delve into the pivotal role of the güira in Dominican merengue, offering a detailed examination of its historical and rhythmic

evolution from the 1930s to the 2000s. Additionally, he’ll examine the güira’s function within two primary styles of merengue: *perico ripiao* and *merengue de orquesta*. Ureña González will also include an analysis of the instrument’s contributions to the genre’s development, supported by historical context and rhythmic demonstrations. The presentation concludes with two solo performances, showcasing the güira’s stylistic versatility and its integral role in shaping the sound of Dominican merengue, including its influence in Western percussion.

Ureña González is an educator, performer, and scholar specializing in Afro-Caribbean and Latin American music traditions. Originally from the Dominican Republic, he holds a deep connection to the music of the African diaspora, with expertise in such styles as merengue, palo, and gagá. As a dedicated advocate for cultural preservation and musical innovation, he bridges traditional and contemporary practices, sharing his knowledge through dynamic performances and engaging workshops. He is committed to fostering cross-cultural understanding and inspiring the next generation of musicians and scholars. Ureña González serves as Director of Percussion Studies at Lawrence University-Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin.

**Marcia McCants**

**How Musicians Convey Emotion Through Body Movement**

Marcia McCants’s presentation aims to answer the following questions: (1) How do musicians convey emotion through body movement? (2) Are musicians aware of their own body movements? (3) Is emotional body movement or music expressivity practiced or taught? Through her research with human subjects and the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis, McCants will present her findings, which include: (1) varying levels of body awareness observed when playing, (2) particular body movements induced intentional emotional responses, and (3) overall understanding of the music performed and its meaning to engage the



**Dr. Jean Carlo Ureña González**



**Marcia McCants**

audience. The findings also showed that being musically and emotionally expressive, with body movement, requires meticulous practice and significant attentiveness during practice sessions.

Marcia McCants earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Industry from James Madison University, a Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance from George Mason University, and a Master of Arts degree in Applied Psychology of Music from the University of Leeds. McCants has performed with the Colour of Music Orchestra in 2021 and 2024 and the Colour of Music Orchestra percussion section at PASIC 2021. She also has performed with the Fairfax Wind Symphony, Massanutten Brass Band, and the Brass Band of Northern Virginia. She co-founded the first percussion ensemble at the University of Leeds. McCants is a member of the PAS Scholarly Research Committee and Diversity Alliance.

#### **Michael Schutz**

##### **Why Can't Composers Write Sad Music for the Xylophone?**

Michael Schutz believes that although the xylophone easily conveys "happy" and/or "light-hearted" effects, it is rarely chosen by composers to convey sadness. He asks the question, "Is this typecasting merely a lack of imagination or a fundamental constraint of the instrument's design?" Schutz suggests that this question connects with a growing body of research exploring the relationship

between an instrument's structure and its musical usage. He also believes the answer to the question holds important consequences for percussionists interested in the evolution and/or future directions of percussion repertoire (e.g., commissions, interpretation of new works, improvisation). Using demonstrations of standard repertoire, Schutz's presentation will synthesize insights from music cognition, linguistics, and acoustics, along with performance demonstrations offering an interdisciplinary perspective on how repertoire for the xylophone has evolved to its current state. Additionally, the presentation will help clarify how the xylophone's acoustic constraints and affordances shape its emotional repertoire, offering insight useful for composers and performers of percussion literature alike.

Michael Schutz is Professor of Music Cognition/Percussion at McMaster University in Canada, where he directs the percussion ensemble and teaches courses on music perception and cognition. He co-founded the Canadian Percussion Network ([www.percnet.ca](http://www.percnet.ca)), an organization building bridges between percussion research and performance. Schutz spent five years as Director of Percussion Studies at Longwood University, where he performed with the Roanoke Symphony and Opera on the James. He premiered composer Judith Shatin's trio "Time To Burn," and recorded it on a release from Innova Recordings. Solo performances include guest appearances at Kent State University, University of California, University of Virginia, Ontario and Virginia/DC Day of Percussion, and Project:Percussion. He earned a Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance from Northwestern University and a Bachelor of Musical Arts degree from Pennsylvania State University.

#### **VIRTUAL SESSION**

##### **Michael Jones**

##### **Percussion and Mediation: The Legacy of Bruno Latour for the Percussive Arts**

Michael Jones's virtual presentation will explore how the work of French so-

ciologist and philosopher Bruno Latour can impact one's understanding of the percussive arts. Latour is one of the pioneering thinkers of actor-network theory (ANT), a social methodology that focuses on the individual actors who weave a social fabric (human and non-human) rather than the resultant fabric itself. At the center of Latour's philosophy is the concept of irreducibility, where nothing can be reduced to its relations, yet nonetheless these relations must exist for a thing to be real. The later work of Latour shifts the focus of this work from the translating, mediating social networks of ANT to metaphysical questions of being in modernity. Latour ultimately arrives at what he terms an ontological pluriverse, which he deploys for questioning the assumptions of Western modernity and its construction(s) of truth and knowledge.

Jones believes that Western percussion, being an art form descended from the modernist impulses of the early 20th century, remains entangled, both materially and epistemically, in modernity's motivating drives. During his presentation, he will share that Latour's work may help percussionists to question the discipline's commonly accepted ontology of action, which in percussion is defined by human intention above all else, "no instruments, just sticks." Furthermore, he believes it may enrich the experience of playing percussion by attuning percussionists to the myriad agencies that construct the networks of the art form. Finally, Jones



**Michael Schutz**



**Michael Jones**

will suggest that Latour's work may help percussionists in the increasingly urgent projects of decolonization and ecological sustainability — two contemporary issues in Western percussion. Percussionists may access Latour's work from any number of directions, be it historical, sociological, or philosophical, and Jones believes doing so will greatly enrich the art form throughout the ongoing century.

Michael Jones is a percussionist and conductor who serves as Percussion Teaching Fellow at Bard College in Hudson Valley, New York. His work focuses on championing new pieces of the 21st century as well as works from the 20th century avant-garde. He is particularly interested in touch, resonance, and the enchanted currents of percussion objects. Jones's scholarship focuses on the intersections of 20th-century modernism, instrumental ontology, and continental philosophy. In 2024, he joined the executive committee of Transplanted Roots, and will help to produce its 2025 conference in Porto, Portugal. Jones serves as a member of the PAS New Music/Research Committee and has published works in *Twentieth-Century Music* and *Percussive Notes*. [PN](#)

## DRUMSET

### Matt Billingslea

Drumset Clinic / Performance

#### Practical Drums – Thoughts on Longevity

How do you approach your career and instrument for longevity — to be able to “choose” what you do and when you do it? This presentation will include performances, stories, thoughts, knowledge, and ideas for helping all musicians/percussionists navigate a career in music. Specifically, the session will center on finding yourself as a musician, getting the gig, maintaining your mind/body/career, actual practical playing advice/examples, and how to keep the gig.

Matt Billingslea attended Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, earning a Bachelor of Music degree in Jazz Studies and Music Industry. Matt spent three years with multi-Grammy winners Lady A, and co-wrote “Wanted You More,” a top-20 single from Lady A's album *Own The Night*. As a clinician/educator, Matt has done lectures and master classes, served as an artist-in-residence for the Capital University Jazz Week, and has presented at PASIC as well as several Tennessee PAS Days of Percussion.

### Rashid Williams

Drumset Clinic

#### Flowing Through Different Genres

Being able to flow and play through different genres while being efficient and effective within all of them can truly be difficult. In my clinic I will play and explain the common points and the contrast points of rock and R&B/hip-hop music. Having built a career in R&B/hip-hop, I've had a first-hand experience with carrying some points of my playing into the rock genre and learning a whole new approach to the drums to properly fit that genre.

Rashid Williams' style and precision in drumming is being recognized throughout the music industry. At age 22 Rashid plays with the maturity of someone twice his age. He has a combination of chops, groove, and impeccable time, well balanced and expertly displayed. Rashid is currently touring with multi-platinum artist John Legend. He has also toured with Eric Roberson, Goapele, N.E.R.D., Jill Scott, Diddy Dirty Money, JCole and Alicia Keys.

### Drumset Committee Panel

#### The Art of Drumset Teaching: Best Practices and Successful Strategies

This panel discussion, hosted by the PAS Drumset Committee, will spotlight the realities of teaching drumset in today's fast-changing world. Our panel of experienced educators (from private studios to academic settings and beyond) will share the challenges they face and the innovative strategies that have made the greatest impact in their careers. By focusing on proven best practices, evolving student needs, and the tools that help teachers succeed, this discussion aims to equip attendees with fresh insights for strengthening their own teaching and inspiring the next generation of drummers.