

PERCUSSIVE NOTES

Vol. 63, No. 5, October 2025



PASIC 50

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PASIC50
1976-2025

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As you turn the pages of this issue of *Percussive Notes*, it can only mean one thing: the countdown to PASIC is officially on. This special PASIC Preview edition is designed to give you an inside look at the incredible talent and innovation that will be on display at our upcoming convention. It's a chance to hear directly from and about the artists who inspire us all — a sneak peek at the excitement to come. This issue signals the convergence of percussionists from every corner of the globe, all making their way to Indianapolis for the year's most anticipated percussion event.

When we arrive in Indianapolis, a city that feels like a second home to so many of us, we'll be celebrating an important milestone: the 50th Percussive Arts Society International Convention. This incredible 50-year journey is a testament to the strength of our community and the tradition we've all had a hand in building. This is our chance to both reflect on our history and honor the countless individuals who have brought us to this moment. Ultimately, these 50 years represent our collective progress and provide a sense of stability and forward momentum for the future of PAS and our art form.

This year's convention is more than just an important landmark; it's a culmination of everything that makes PAS so vibrant and unique. We've brought together an exceptional lineup of artists, clinicians, and exhibitors who will share their passion and expertise. You'll find a bustling exhibit hall filled with the latest gear from your favorite brands, and you'll experience a wide variety of performances and clinics that span the entire percussive world, from marching to symphonic, drumset to world percussion, and everything in between. The curated schedule honors our rich history while also look-

ing forward to the future of percussion. Whether you're a seasoned professional, a student, or a devoted hobbyist, there will be something for you to learn, experience, and celebrate.

For half a century, PASIC has been the premier event for drummers and percussionists, and our 50th convention promises to be the most memorable yet. In this issue, you will read about drumset artists Dafnis Prieto and Nikkie Glaspie, marching percussion groups the Santa Clara Vanguard and The Hellcats, and you will hear directly from keyboard artists Ji Hye Jung and Stefon Harris. This is only a sampling of the contents of this issue and the vast lineup in store at PASIC50. Beyond the concerts and sessions, remember that PASIC is also an opportunity to reconnect with old friends, make new connections, and immerse yourself in the art form we all love.

As we look forward to this incredible event, I also want to take a moment to thank the dedicated individuals who make all of this possible. The PAS staff, Executive Director Joshua Simonds, the Board of Directors, the Board of Advisors, the Past Presidents, and countless volunteers give their time and energy behind the scenes to ensure that our organization continues to thrive. Their commitment is the bedrock of our success, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their tireless work on behalf of our percussion community.

I look forward to celebrating this historic occasion with all of you. Whether you have attended for years or this will be your first PASIC, prepare yourself for an unforgettable experience.

See you in Indianapolis!

Thad Anderson
President, Percussive Arts Society



PASIC SCHEDULE



**PASIC
50
1976-2025**

“Inuksuit”: An Anthem for Being Human

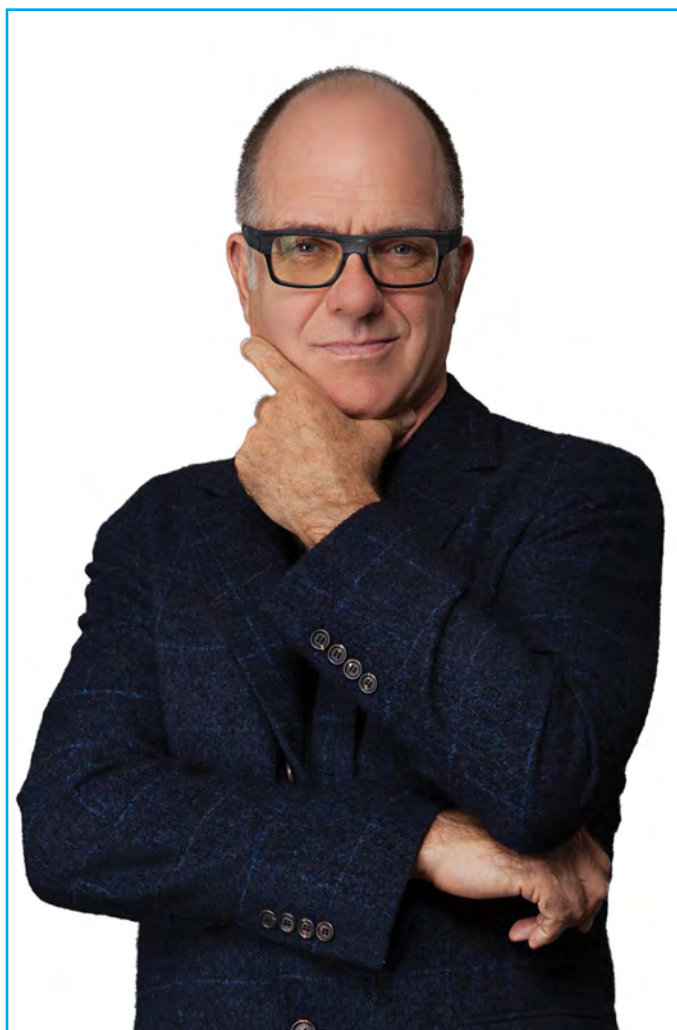
By Steven Schick

On June 30, 2009, 21 percussionists,¹ all participants in the “Roots and Rhizomes” percussion course at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, gathered at Goat Creek near Kananaskis in Banff National Park to give the first performance of John Luther Adams’s “Inuksuit.” The previous night, at a soggy preview concert on the grounds of Banff Centre, an audience of several dozen hearty Canadians braved the weather. But with a worsening forecast, even the breathtaking scenery of the Canadian Rockies failed to draw a crowd for the official premiere. Under threatening skies, the small ensemble ported dozens of drums, cymbals, and gongs across frigid streams and up muddy mountainsides. The audience was minuscule, consisting of the faculty for Roots and Rhizomes that year – Bob Becker, Anders Loguin, and Aiyun Huang – along with Barry Shiffman of Banff Centre, a videographer from *The New Yorker*, and the composer, John Luther Adams.

Afterward, the cold, wet, and tired musicians faced an arduous load-out. The music was exhilarating, but it was hard work. None of us would have imagined then that “Inuksuit” would become one of the most performed and best loved works of the percussion repertoire, having been played on nearly every continent before combined audiences numbering in the tens of thousands.

Today, many hundreds of performances later, the success of “Inuksuit” is well-established. But it still feels a little mystifying. In every performance I have organized, percussionists have played for free, supplied their own instruments, and often traveled long distances. They load in over uneven terrain, rehearse, and perform under whatever weather conditions might prevail, and load out again for the trip home. There are no soloists, no star performers, and no paychecks. On the other side of the curtain, concert presenters can’t easily sell tickets, and in large outdoor sites with performers spread over many acres, it might not even

be possible for an audience member to hear all the music being played at a given moment. “Quixotic” doesn’t even begin to de-



Steven Schick

scribe this! Yet perhaps because it is indifferent to the economies of modern concert giving, “Inuksuit” has tapped into the deep aquifer of communal energy that drives all percussion playing.

Please don’t misunderstand: “Inuksuit” is thrilling and emotionally rich music. But somehow its logistical challenges also seem to be part of the attraction. Doug Perkins, long-time advocate of “Inuksuit,” lists among his favorite performances one

3). The skin and metal rhythms are modeled on the shapes of “inukshuk”—stone assemblages made by the indigenous people of the circum-polar arctic. Inukshuk are the sentinels of the north, signposting the vast expanse of the arctic to indicate an especially welcoming place for humans—perhaps a rich hunting ground or a place simply where good things happened. The large supporting stones of the inukshuk are represented as massive drum,

“Inuksuit” teaches us that our primary job as musicians is not to perform, but to listen.

in Chicago’s Millennium Park, the fabled “Inuk-So-Wet” when a summer-long drought ended in a downpour that greeted that performance.” Another Perkins performance in the Italian Dolomites was interrupted by a sudden passing storm. Megan Arns encapsulated it well, “‘Inuksuit’ often meant driving long distances with our gear and cramming into shared hotel rooms. We didn’t mind. We were happy to see old friends, meet new ones, and be a part of the performance. I have noticed a renewed appreciation for our percussion community when my students return home from a performance of ‘Inuksuit.’” Maria Finkelmeier added, “It reminded me how grateful I am to belong to a community that values important narrative work and careful sonic exploration while completely embracing a gear haul to wild places.”

Are the exigencies of weather and labor of positive value in “Inuksuit”? Bonnie Whiting answers by evoking John Cage: “The work succeeds through collective, process-based labor. Percussionists are uniquely positioned to take on both conceptual and logistical challenges in community, and in ‘Inuksuit’ the unpredictability of each environment at any given moment adds a welcome layer of indeterminacy.”

Who knows what the weather will be like in Indianapolis when we perform “Inuksuit” in November for the 50th anniversary of PASIC, or what the load-in will be like. But we do know that we will be among like-minded artists, friends, and colleagues. Along with members of the artistic committee, whose comments I am including in this article, I invite you to join us, as performers or as listeners.

The musical components of “Inuksuit” are self-evident. Starting together at the center of an outdoor space, a percussion ensemble consisting of three sub-groups gradually moves to pre-determined remote positions within a chosen outdoor site. The first group begins with breathing sounds and walks slowly to the farthest positions; Group 2 takes its positions next in the middle-distance, playing rubbed stones and other friction sounds along the way. Then Group 3 walks to positions closest to the center and plays whirled tubes or other aeolian instruments as they move. Once in place, cues from Group 1 prompt a rising tide of rhythm from sets of drums (Group 2) and cymbals (Group

cymbal, and gong strokes in the score. And silences within the rhythmic flow symbolize the open spaces of the stone sculptures—the arches and fenestrations within each inukshuk.

Finally, after a build-up of noise and rhythm, the texture slowly thins. Performers from Groups 1 and 2 return one-by-one to their central starting point. Glockenspiels and piccolo players from Group 3 offer an elegiac coda of birdsong. The pieces finishes, as it began, in silence. This is where the magic truly begins. The concluding bell and piccolo birdsong music is a gossamer invitation to hear the music that is always there—the often-obscured songs of the planet. Wind rushing through trees or across water, the sounds of nearby birds and animals (including bipeds.) This moment, in which the intense focus of listening shifts from composed music to the sounds of the earth itself, is always luminous. Life-affirming.

“Inuksuit” teaches us that our primary job as musicians is not to perform, but to listen. In an increasingly noisy and distracted world, we are reminded in “Inuksuit” that musicians play a critical role in society as models of the selfless action of listening attentively. This is not just a practical skill but an ethical act that can help salve the scars of environmental or social damage. Reflecting Wendell Berry’s maxim that “There are no unsacred spaces; there are only sacred spaces and desecrated spaces,” “Inuksuit” has become, for many of us, a force of re-sanctification for people and places in need of healing. In fact, “Inuksuit” so frequently prompts reactions of deep emotion and spiritual connectedness that it feels like much more than music. Doug Perkins: “[It’s] a work that is about more than the notes on the page. It teaches people to work and to listen together.”

Last year, along with Daniel Moore, Doug Perkins, Megan Arns, and many others, I organized an emotionally charged performance of “Inuksuit” in Iowa City at my alma mater, the University of Iowa. Our chosen site was City Park on the floodplain of the Iowa River. In 2008, in one of the most devastating natural disasters to hit my home state, the Iowa River crested to more than 31 feet. City Park was under water as were nearly all the arts facilities I knew as a student. In a massive gesture of faith in the arts, the university rebuilt those structures. But scars from

the flood can still be seen in the high water marks a dozen feet above people's heads and in a brigade of brand-new buildings set back from the flood zone. The resilience of the university and its commitment to artmaking is tangible. And on a crystalline, windswept day in October it felt as though, through "Inuksuit," we were helping to consecrate those efforts.

Another moving "Inuksuit" performance was a 2018 bi-national project, in which we played across the U.S./Mexican border. The ensemble was separated into two groups – roughly 40 in each country. Our audience of several hundred was also divided into two sides, positioned several hundred feet apart and separated by the 30-foot-tall border fence. Before the concert, listeners on the Mexican side wandered along the Tijuana boardwalk and ate lunch in cantinas along the playas. On the U.S. side, the scene was grimmer. We set up in the ironically named "Friendship Circle and Bi-national Garden." Google it: there is nothing friendly about this small plot of bare, reddish-brown dirt. It's a kind of no-man's-land between the border and the United States proper. Normally, the Garden is closed to the public, but for a few hours on some weekends it opens, and you can walk right up to the border fence. One sunny November morning I watched an elderly man on the U.S. side carry a chair and small table to the fence and over an early Sunday lunch speak to some young children and their mother on the Mexican side. Passing objects through the tight wire mesh is strictly forbidden, but if you press hard enough you can just feel someone's fingertips on the other side.

That day, "Inuksuit" grew out the sounds of wind and breath, as it always does. As usual, the dramatic drum, cymbal, and siren moments were thrilling. The ending was especially poignant as the glockenspiel and piccolo birdsong ended so softly that at first no one knew the piece was over. For several minutes there was only the music of the birds and the rising afternoon wind.

Finally, the applause began. Starting slowly, the first uncertain claps were barely distinguishable from the growl of the nearby surf. Then in a roar of its own, with every passing second more clearly itself, a tide of human noise washed over the border in volleys of cheers, first on the Mexican side, then answered by an equally raucous response from the U.S. side. For a quarter of an hour, we cheered. We cheered for each other, for the land, and for the dream that it might belong to us all. A massive wave of noise flowed across the border. And for a fleeting moment of joy the wall disappeared.

It seems that just when we need it, "Inuksuit" brings us lessons in healing and hope. It heals by touching the land itself, and by extension also touching the original stewards of the land, from the indigenous people of the circumpolar arctic to the Kumeyaay along the San Diego-Tijuana border to native peoples everywhere it is played. It prompts hope when we manage to live up to its name: "Inuksuit," from the Inuit for "to act in the capacity of being human."

Whether "Inuksuit" is played at the U.S./Mexico border, in the Canadian Rockies, or as it was in Scott Herring's favorite performance around the University of South Carolina's historic Horseshoe, it demands, as Thad Anderson wrote, "the audience's curiosity and ability to move within the soundscape. In the same way that the music breathes with the natural surroundings, the shared intent of the audience profoundly contributes to the overall experience."

Omar Carmenates recalled a conversation with the composer after the U.S. premiere at Furman University. "I thanked him profusely for being with us and for his wonderful leadership with the many young musicians (some even high school age)." John Luther Adams responded saying, "That is something I will cherish about this performance too, Omar – that the piece teaches its performers as much, if not more, than it learns from them."



Yes, we all gain. “Inuksuit” is an anthem for being human. This is music not only for die-hard percussionists or fanatical new-music audiences, but for any of us who call this beautiful blue and green planet our home. Our sacred space.

ENDNOTE

1. The performers in the premiere of Inuksuit were Andrew Bliss, Michael Compitello, Justin DeHart, Eric Derr, Dustin Donahue, Jonathan Hepfer, Sandra Joseph, Ross Karre, Andrew Meyerson, Daniel Morphy, James Petercsak, Jorge Peña, Corinne René, Melanie Sehman, Steven Sehman, Daniel Tones, Jude Traxler, Bonnie Whiting.

VIDEO

<https://www.newyorker.com/video/watch/inuksuit> PN

EVENING CONCERT

Wula Drum and Dance Ensemble

Wednesday

Steeped in the dynamic sounds and energetic movements of West Africa, Wula Drum is comprised of world-class master drummers, dancers, and instrumentalists. Performing a broad repertoire of energetic rhythms, songs, and dances, the music is played on such instruments as the djembe, dunduns, krin (log drums), and balaphone (African xylophone). Guided by Artistic Director master drummer M'Bemba Bangoura, The Wula Drum and Dance Ensemble has people jumping out of their seats, rousing audiences with the vibrancy of a rich musical culture.

In West Africa, the djembe drum is used to bring people together for many purposes: to communicate, celebrate, and motivate. The djembe, a cultural lineage that spans years upon years, is for all humanity to experience. Through the rhythms, expression, mindfulness, and joy are cultivated.

Wula Drum's mission is to deliver the highest quality West African performances with authentic, handmade instruments, educating people about African drum and dance. They believe that the way to break down barriers of race and class is through music and dance education, environmental awareness, fair wages, and supporting sustainable livelihoods in both Guinea and the USA.

Wula Drum has performed at countless events over the years, ranging from Performing Arts Centers, festivals (internationally and domestically), schools, universities, libraries, museums, corporate venues, and private events. Wula Drum has performed in the USA as well as in Mexico, China, Canada, and the Caribbean.

EVENING CONCERT

Jeff Hamilton Trio

Thursday

Jeff Hamilton was born in Richmond, Indiana. He attended Indiana University and later studied with John Von Ohlen. Hamilton was influenced by Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Mel Lewis, Philly Joe Jones, and Shelly Manne. In 1974, he got his first big break playing with the New Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. He attained a childhood goal in 1977 when he joined Woody Herman and the Thundering Herd, with whom he made several recordings. Throughout his extensive career, Jeff has performed with many artists and won multiple awards, including playing with Lionel Hampton, L.A.4, Ella Fitzgerald, the Count Basie Orchestra, Rosemary Clooney, and Monty Alexander and the Ray Brown Trio, and more.

Jeff currently focuses on performing with The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, pianist Tamir Hendelman, and the PASIC50 concert group, The Jeff Hamilton Trio, featuring Tadataka Unno on piano and Jon Hamar on bass.

Galactic Featuring Jelly Joseph and Stanton Moore

Saturday

For over 30 years, Galactic has been a powerhouse of New Orleans music, fusing funk, jazz, rock, and soul into a sound that's unmistakably their own, driven by drummer Stanton Moore. Originally coming together in the '90s as a late-night funk band, the group has grown into a genre-defying collective that continues to evolve while staying true to their roots. Their high-energy live shows and adventurous collaborations have earned them a loyal following around the world. In recent years, Galactic has been touring and recording with dynamic vocalist Jelly Joseph, whose soulful, commanding voice adds a powerful new dimension to their sound. The band also serves as the owner and steward of the legendary Tipitina's music venue, where they host iconic performances and foster the next generation of New Orleans artists. In 2021, they launched Tipitina's Record Club, an all-vinyl label celebrating the city's rich musical legacy.

Their newest release, *Audience With the Queen*, marks a major milestone: a full-length collaboration with Irma Thomas, the beloved “Soul Queen of New Orleans.” Featuring Thomas on every track, the album blends her timeless voice with Galactic's modern edge, delivering a powerful and deeply rooted collection of songs that honor both tradition and innovation. *Audience With the Queen* is a testament to Galactic's unique place in American music — deeply New Orleans, endlessly collaborative, and always pushing forward.

Celebrating M'Boom

By Thomas Taylor

As we embark on the 101st year of drummer Max Roach's birth, Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) percussion professors and M'Boom alumni will come together at PASIC50 to present a concert of music from the American jazz percussion group M'Boom, founded by Roach in 1970. All members of the group played an array of percussion instruments during their performances including marimba, timpani, xylophone, vibraphone, gongs, bells, an array of drums from around the world, and drumset. The tribute performance will consist of some of the original M'Boom pieces from the recordings created in the 1970s and 1980s.

The performing ensemble will feature Joe Chambers (original surviving M'Boom member) and Stefon Harris (who played briefly in the ensemble before Roach's passing). The HBCU percussion professors who will participate are Thomas Taylor, Dr. Lamont Lawhorn, Dr. Sean Daniels, Dr. Don Parker, Marcia McCants, and Malcolm Jackson. Come celebrate the ensemble and original compositions created from its original members.

A CONVERSATION WITH JOE CHAMBERS

Thomas Taylor: Tell us about your birthplace and your musical influences.

Joe Chambers: I was born in Stone Acre, Virginia. We stayed there about a year, and then my family moved to a town called Chester, near Philadelphia. My education there was excellent. There was a lot of emphasis on art, music, and dancing. There was a program called "rent an instrument." Children could rent an instrument monthly, so everybody played. It became like a fad. Everybody was renting and playing instruments.

Taylor: What was the instrument you rented?

Chambers: Of course, the drums. We had a piano in the house. Lesson wise, I started on piano. Another brother played piano, one played the reeds, saxophone, clarinets, and another one played trombone. And my sister danced. So we were a musical

family. I was playing the piano and I was banging on pots and pans, setting them up like drums. I had those instincts.

Taylor: Who were some of your musical influences?

Chambers: My first influences were on TV. I saw Gene Krupa on TV, chewing gum, sticks flying in the air, and stuff. That was my first influence. And then Buddy Rich was out, but he wasn't as popular. I didn't know about Max Roach until I was about 13 years of age. I had a friend who had an older brother who had a record collection. We went around to his house, and he was playing Clifford Brown/Max Roach stuff and Miles Davis. I was immediately attracted to that. I said, "I gotta find out what this is all about."

Taylor: How much did you play in the Philadelphia area before you moved to other major cities?

Chambers: I played a lot in school. The educational system at that time put an emphasis on science and math, but there was lots of musical activity. There were marching bands, concert orchestras, even jazz bands. So that was happening, and there was a lot of activity in the neighborhood because there was an abundance of other talented people, and I played a lot of R&B coming



Joe Chambers

up. I played on a talent show when I was eight years old. Paul Whiteman had a TV talent contest for young people, and I was on that show.

I was athlete and a musician. I played, I ran track, I played football, and I was pretty good. I was playing with local R&B people in clubs and dances and stuff. From the time I was about 14, I was a weekend, working musician. Bobby Charles was popular around that time, and when he went to D.C., I went with him. I liked D.C. so I decided to stay in Washington. It was a thriving place for musicians, and they had a long history, because Duke Ellington and a host of others came from D.C. Then, I got a job with a group called the JFK quintet in a club called Bohemian Caverns. We played six nights a week for three years!

Taylor: There are some key albums that almost every jazz musician should know, and you are on many of them. Joe Henderson's, *Mode for Joe*, Bobby Hutchison's, *Oblique and Components*. Freddie Hubbard's *Breaking Point*, Donald Byrd's, *Mustang*. I didn't realize that you were on Chick Corea's, *Tones for Joan's Bones*, and Miles Davis's *In a Silent Way*. Most importantly, Wayne Shorter's, *Etcetera* and *Adam's Apple*. Those are such classic albums.

Chambers: A lot of those dates were not working bands. Back in those days, you would get a job that would last, especially in New York. My first job in a club was at the old Five Spot for six weeks,

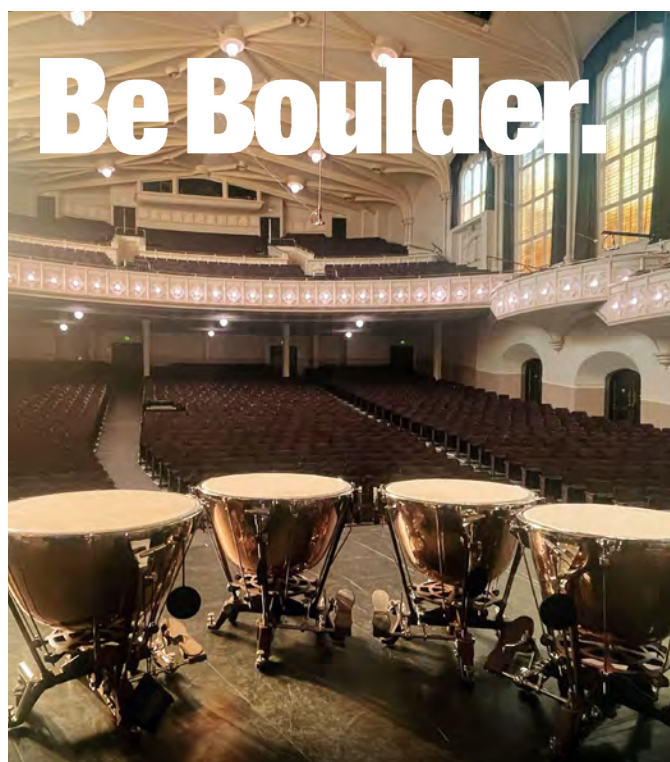
six nights a week. I worked at Minton's Playhouse for the whole summer of '65. But as far as recording, with Blue Note records, you would rehearse for about four or five days in succession. Then you'd go in and record, and it sounded like a working band.

Taylor: How did you become the house drummer at Blue Note and start working with Wayne Shorter?

Chambers: In D.C., when I was working in the Bohemian Caverns club six nights a week, people like Miles, Duke, and many others would come down and hang out in the Caverns. My first job in New York was with Eric Dolphy at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In the band was me, Freddie Hubbard, Richard Davis, and Bobby Hutchison. And Eric had a recording date with Blue Note. Eric told me to come to the rehearsal and bring music. I came to the rehearsal with a piece I wrote called "Mirrors." The thing you must realize is that there were no drummers writing music except Max Roach. Freddie Hubbard liked "Mirrors" and said he was going to record it. But Duke Pearson recorded it before Freddie Hubbard. So that's how I got in at Blue Note. They must have looked at "Mirrors," and looked at those voicings, and said, "Damn, this dude knows what he's doing!"

Taylor: How did you meet Max Roach and how did you all develop M'Boom?

Chambers: There was a show called Gretsch Drum Night at Bird-



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land. It would have Max Roach, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, and Elvin Jones. So in the summer of 1970, Max calls me and all the other original members, and says, “I want to explore percussion.” The band was Max, myself, Warren Smith, Freddy Waits, Roy Brooks, Omar Clay, and Ray Mantilla. So, every Saturday from about late August 1970 we would get together at Warren Smith’s studio — no gigs in sight and not looking for any. Smith had all the percussion, and we were learning the instruments. You had to learn how to play the timpani correctly. You had to learn the mallets. That began my journey into learning to play the mallets. I already had a piano background, so it wasn’t a big deal for me. Learning all the percussion instruments, the hand drums, the idiophonic instruments, the shakers, and stuff — there are techniques to all those instruments. I saw the need for a legitimate hand percussionist, so that’s how Ray Mantilla got into M’Boom.

Taylor: Who named the group M’Boom?

Chambers: Max. That name comes from Africa. There’s a tribe called M’Boom. It’s now the Democratic Republic of the Congo and it comes out of that mythology. I don’t specifically know the meaning of it. I know it’s supposed to designate the configuration of elders in a tribal situation — elders who become your mentors.

Taylor: How did M’Boom get into recording?

Chambers: Max was already a recording artist. And everybody was working; nobody was dependent on M’Boom to make money. It was just a learning process. I was working with bands and recording, and stuff. Smith was doing Broadway shows, plus, he was a professor at old Westboro University. Omar Clay was working with singers like Sarah Vaughn. Freddie Waits was working with groups. So we had other means of making money. We did our first record for a company called Strata East. That was Charles Tolliver and Stanley Cowell’s company. The next record was with Columbia Japan.

Taylor: What is the current state of M’Boom and your other project of M’Boom with horns?

Chambers: I’ve got a couple of M’Boom with horns performances coming up soon. There are 2025 and 2026 concerts at Pittsburgh University and North Carolina Central University. If it’s successful, maybe we can get this moving.

Taylor: I hope that people will reach out to you at PASIC. Now tell me about your eBook, *Cross Rhythms* (Hudson Music). What made you decide to put this book out?

Chambers: There was a student at Illinois University around 2013 working on his dissertation about me. Part of the book is that dissertation and part of it is my autobiography. I talk about a lot of things. I talk about the music business and about how rock and roll came to be. And there’s a section called “Blues as Ethos.” Understand that the blues is the most misrepresented, ill-defined idiom of all. Blues is an African retention. The modality of the blues

M’Boom at PASIC 1982.



PHOTO BY RICK MATTINGLY

— the blues scale, the notes — comes out of Africa. That’s the only modality in the world that combines major and minor simultaneously. I’ve got records of music from East Africa, Mauritania, that sounds just like blues.

Taylor: I’m excited to be able to share the stage with you. And I hope that a lot of people come out and see our performance. That performance will be just a snapshot in time, but I’m excited about learning the music and memorizing it, and getting my parts together with the rest of the HBCU tribute ensemble.

Thomas Taylor is a working jazz drummer and university percussion professor at North Carolina Central University. He has played and taught music, drumming, and jazz on five continents for more than 25 years. He has written university textbooks, articles for *Modern Drummer* and *Percussive Notes*, and has a new jazz drumming method book. [PN](#)

EVENING CONCERT

Les Percussions de Strasbourg

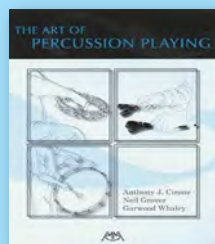
Friday

Founded in 1962, the Percussions de Strasbourg are world-renowned ambassadors of musical creation. With their exceptional repertoire, the group performs 20th-century masterpieces and commissioned new works with the same concerns: to bring life to a contemporary heritage while revisiting it constantly, and to continue to innovate in a context of artistic diversification.

Since its foundation, the group still stands at the heart of creation, thanks to its particular connections with contemporary composers and the diversity of its abilities in terms of musical formats: from duo to octet, from acoustics to electronics, from recitals to musical theater and dance, etc.

Having performed more than 350 works, the group has recorded many times and has received around 30 international awards, including a Victoire de la Musique Classique in 2017, which the Percussions de Strasbourg label won for its first record release, *Burning Bright* by Hugues Dufourt.

The daily commitment of the ensemble to educational activities is reflected in their various actions, particularly with the public in Haute-pierre, where the ensemble is in residence.

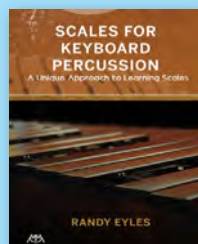


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Anthony Cirone,
Neil Grover and
Garwood Whaley

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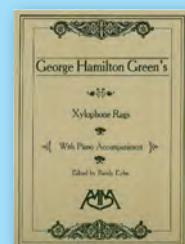


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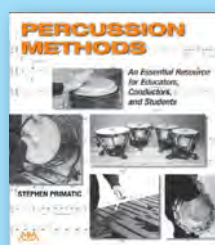


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Edited by
Randy Eyles

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Stephen Primatic

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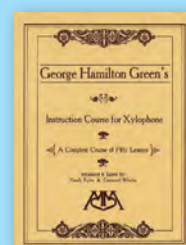


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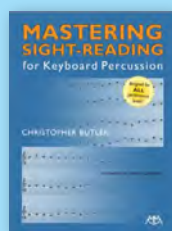


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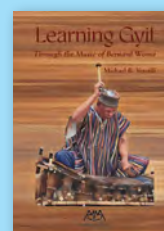


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Using audio recordings, Bernard Woma includes a combination of Dagara oral tradition and Western musical transcriptions to introduce the music of the Dagara xylophone tradition in this illuminating text.

Focus Day: Percussion & Movement

By Karlyn Viña, Alexandros Fragiskatos, and Mika Godbole

The PAS New Music/Research Committee is delighted to present “Percussion & Movement” at PASIC50, a series of concerts and a panel discussion exploring relationships between music and movement. The first two concerts will feature solo and chamber Percussion Theatre works incorporating movement alongside other elements including acting, characterization, and vocalization into cohesive and holistic works of performance art. A mid-day panel discussion will delve deeper into the collaborative process between Percussion and Dance, featuring panelists with unique perspectives and collaborative experiences. The 1 P.M. and 3 P.M. programs will feature works with Movement as a Core Element integral to the realization of the works, including highly visual works, some with prescribed choreography and multi-media elements. The day will conclude with a 5 P.M. program featuring collaborations with dancers and works inspired by dance.

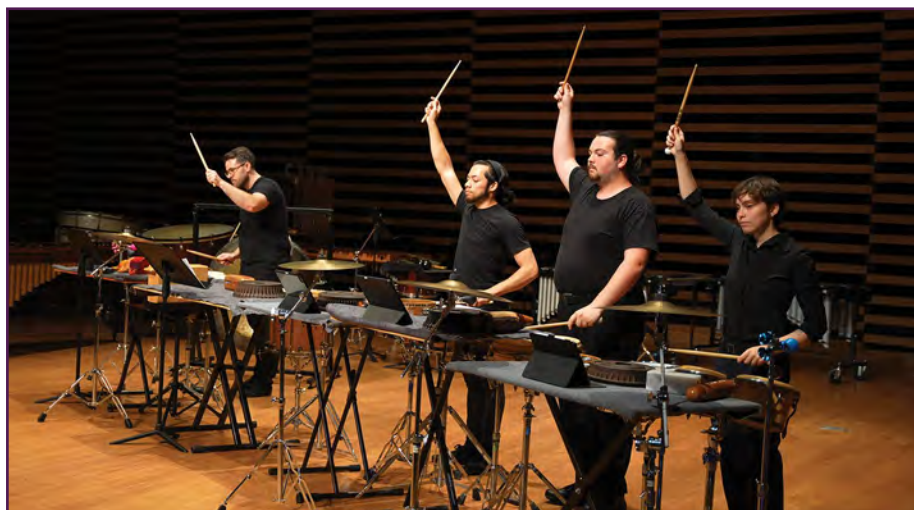
The Focus Day presentations will feature over 30 artists with diverse backgrounds and relationships to movement, and at different stages in their careers, as part of New Music/Research Presents at PASIC50. All events will take place on Thursday, Nov. 13, in room 120 (concerts) and room 209 (panel discussion).

PERCUSSION THEATRE – PART 1

The 9:00 A.M. concert showcases music with a strong emphasis on the interplay between sound and theatricality. Kevin von Kampen and the University of South Florida Percussion Ensemble open with Carl Schimmel’s “POPET” (2018) for percussion quartet. This theatrical piece incorporates spoken word and choreography, exploring the idea of one player’s actions being accompanied by another’s sounds, creating a “puppet show” effect. The work uses Middle English text to emphasize musicality and theatricality over narrative clarity.

Next, I-Jen Fang performs Christopher

Deane’s 2002 work “The Bones of Chuang Tzu (Prelude No. 5 for Timpani).” This piece, premiered by Fang in 2003, is a multi-art-form experience combining music, dance, poem, and recitation. Inspired by Chinese literature and Fang’s own heritage and eurythmics background, the performance features Fang reading a Chinese poem while dancing and playing a combination of Western and Eastern percussion instruments, centered around timpani. The work highlights the performer’s ability to move gracefully across the stage while simultaneously utilizing extended techniques to produce a variety of “bone sounds” one might not expect to hear on timpani.



University of South Florida Percussion Ensemble

Alexandrea Richard then performs Thierry De Mey's "Silence Must Be!" (2002), a piece that uses the body as the primary instrument. The work begins with a series of precisely timed hand motions and conducting gestures, which create complex polyrhythms through their spatial relationships. These movements are first performed in silence and then with a pre-recorded track of Richard's own mouth sounds, creating a deeply personal and bodily experience. "Silence Must Be!" ultimately explores how the body can drive rhythm and convey a rich, multifaceted narrative.

Allen Otte performs Mark Applebaum's "Composition Machine No. 1" (2014),

which explores the relationship between performer and sound object. This work unfolds in four parts, with the first two comprising an interpretive performance of a graphic score followed by the score's destruction and use, along with other objects, as a sound source. In the third part, the arrangement of these objects is traced to create a new graphic score, which Otte

interprets as a "dance" with a frame drum in the final part.

The concert concludes with Fabio Oliveira and the Rowan University Percussion Ensemble performing Mauricio Kagel's "Pas de Cinq" (1965). This rarely performed quintet, part of Kagel's *Journal de Théâtre* series, makes unusual demands on the percussionist-actors. Instruments are placed at distant points on the stage, requiring performers to walk across imaginary paths with different surface materials to play their parts. The resulting sounds are a byproduct of these movements, creating the type of absurd ballet-musical experience characteristic of Kagel's style.

PERCUSSION THEATRE – PART 2

The 11 A.M. concert will continue to delve into the relationship between percussion and movement as applied in works for theatrical percussion. To open, Francis Favis and Less Than 10 Music will perform "I Delayed People's Flights In Narrow Hallways" by Mayke Nas and Wouter Snoei. In this work, four performers rhythmically write on blackboards, mimicking the repetitive writing of lines of text as punishment. The premise of the piece was inspired by the famous play *Self-Accusation* (1966) by Peter Handke.



I-Jen Fang



Allen Otte



Alexandrea Richard



Fabio Oliveira



Francis Favis

The program continues with Elizabeth Soflin performing “By Language Embellished, I” by Stuart Saunders Smith. Written in 1984, the piece challenges the performer’s characterization through both gesture and spoken word. As in many works for percussion theatre, the use of the soloist’s own voice and body alongside percussion playing results in a deeply personal interpretation of the work.

The program continues with Grounding Trio (Taryn Marks, Rose Martin, and Melissa Wang) performing “Your Past Self (is Dead)” composed for three or more performers by Melissa Wang. The work utilizes text and choreography inspired by both “healthy” and “unhealthy” coping mechanisms, including meditation, grounding techniques, and alcohol or pills as methods for letting go of conflicting or intrusive thought patterns.

Next, Bonnie Whiting will perform “Stages” for singing, speaking, and moving percussionist, composed by Wang Lu with and for Bonnie Whiting. The piece transcends different stages of consciousness in an exploration of percussive sounds, movements, and vocalizations. The inspiration for these scenes is rooted in personal experiences from both Wang’s and Whiting’s pasts, including marching snare drum as a Communist Young Pioneer and navigating tension between family and religious extremism.

The program will conclude with members of the High Point University Percussion Ensemble performing “Fugue for Bells, Beans, and Bugs” by Constantin Basica, a theatrical trio with multi-media elements. In this work, the performers clap, speak, and move through a musical series in canon, retrograde, and rhythmic augmentation and diminution. The performers then drop handfuls of bells, beans, and bugs and move through the space picking them up in tandem with the same actions taking place in an accompanying video.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The noon hour features a panel discussion titled “Percussion and Dance: A Cross Section of Possibilities.” Moderated

by Alexandros Fragiskatos on behalf of the New Music/Research Committee, the discussion will explore the relationship between percussion and dance. The four panelists — William Labossiere, Andy Miller, and Drew Tucker — each have a deep and unique connection to dance and will bring their own perspective to a conversation highlighting historical and modern applications, including practical collaborative techniques, creative compositional approaches, and diverse career pathways for percussionists in the dance world.



Elizabeth Soflin



Melissa Wang, Rose Martin, and Taryn Marks



Bonnie Whiting



High Point University
Percussion Ensemble



Alexandros Fragiskatos

MOVEMENT AS CORE ELEMENT – PART 1

Focusing on works with movement as a core element, the 1:00 P.M. concert begins with a performance of “Pièce de gestes” by Thierry De Mey, performed by Andrew Bliss and the University of Tennessee Percussion Ensemble. While you may be familiar with “Musique de Table,” in which three performers use their hands and gesture to create musical sounds on a table-top, in “Pièce de gestes,” the element of sound production is removed, creating a work that is purely visual.

The next piece will be “Black and White” from *Frolic* by Fish Yu, performed by the Kōng Duo (Bevis Ng and Hoi Tong

Keung). *Frolic* was commissioned by the Kōng Duo to highlight their shared identity as Hong Kongers and utilizes Hong Kong children’s games as musical inspiration. The movements in “Black and White” are inspired by a clapping children’s game of the same name that is popular in Hong Kong.

The program continues with “Ceci n’est pas une balle” (“This is not a ball”), composed by Compagnie Kahlua and performed by Benjamin Charles with members of the Tarleton State Percussion Ensemble. This is a choreographed work for a trio of performers with a prerecorded audio track that includes many recognizable musical quotes ranging from Han-



William Labossiere



Drew Tucker



Kōng Duo



Andy Miller



Andrew Bliss



Benjamin Charles

del to Rage Against the Machine. “Ceci n’est pas une balle” is centered around an imaginary ball, which is manipulated by the performers throughout the work.

Next, Triolet (Kristie Ibrahim, Gina Ryan, and Victoria Sparks) will interpret “The Flower Episode (after Toshi Maki-hara)” by Jessie Marino. The hand movements in the piece are evocative of those in Thierry De Mey’s “Musique de Table” except that the gestures are performed in a circular formation on top of a timpani rather than on a table.

Abby Fisher will then perform “Kon-trol” by João Pedro Oliveira — a gesture-based, choreographed work that

aligns with a pre-recorded track. In “Kon-trol,” movements align with sounds that represent invisible percussion instruments; in short, the performer visually represents production of the percussive sounds heard in the track.

Finally, Casey Cangelosi and Aaron Trumbore will perform “Blink” by Cangelosi. “Blink” utilizes traditional jing cymbals and choreography that align with a track of sampled camera sounds: zooms, beeps, snaps, clicks, and button presses. “Blink” was commissioned by the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture and Drumily Percussion Group and premiered in November 2024 in Taipei.

**MOVEMENT AS CORE ELEMENT
– PART 2**

Movement as Core Element continues at the 3:00 P.M. concert with a second hour of compelling works, starting off with the Sam Houston Percussion Group, under the guidance of Dr. John Lane, performing “Piece for the Middle Seat of an Airplane” by Jessie Marino. This 2017 work, originally commissioned for and premiered by line upon line percussion, consists of a set of instructions along with structural delineations from the composer for the performers to craft “a piece of musical choreography that you can perform during the quiet hours of a red-eye flight...all from



Triolet



Abby Fisher



Casey Cangelosi



Sam Houston Percussion Group

the position of the middle seat of the exit row.”

Dr. Frank Kumor, Director of Percussion at Kutztown University, takes the stage next to perform Jennifer Stasack’s 1987 “Six Elegies Dancing” for marimba and kick drum. Dr. Kumor wrote about this piece in his doctoral dissertation, *Interpreting the Relationship Between Movement and Music in Selected Twentieth Century Percussion Music*, highlighting the importance of movement and gesture.

Ancel Neeley is joined by projections of himself as he presents Michael Beil’s “Key Jack.” Premiered in 2017 and written for a pianist (or any skilled performer),

live video, and tape, with no instrument present for the performance, Beil captures the audience by deconstructing any association with the physical instrument, relying solely on the movement of the performer(s) as projections disappear and reappear. The use of a Max/MSP patch processes the live video feed, which is accelerated and decelerated as it is projected back on the stage as accompaniment.

From a piece that requires the use of extensive live technology, the performance hour transitions to exploring the simplicity of the relationship between the performer and their instrument as an extension of the hand. Dr. Michael Jones

performs “Mani. Gonxha,” the 2011 solo by Perluigi Billone that is one in a series of percussion solos focused on hands (“mani” in Italian) — specifically, the hands of historical figures and their resultant efforts. Two Tibetan singing bowls serve as the sole source of sound while the motion of the hands dictated via Billone’s graphic notation are tied inexorably to the production of the various timbres.

To complete the second hour of Movement as Core Element, KNO Percussion, directed by Von Hansen, performs the extroverted “Strings Attached” by Eric Griswold. A central pole connects six percussionists playing snare drums with



Dr. Frank Kumor



Ancel Neeley



Dr. Michael Jones

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sticks strung to the pole or each other. Though larger physical motions manifest expectedly as visual wave forms, added visual changes in the nylon string waves caused by subtle timbral shifts further illuminate and reinforce changes that are less overt.

COLLABORATIONS WITH AND INSPIRED BY DANCE

At 5:00 P.M., New Music/Research presents a concert devoted to Collaborations with and Inspired by Dance. We are delighted to welcome dance collaborators to enliven another round of works with movement. The hour begins with a solo performance by Daniel Shiller of an arrangement of “Bagr Binne,” religious dance music from upper-northwest Ghana. Using live looping with a gyl, steel pan, and various percussion instruments, Shiller combines dance music from Ghana and Brazil into an energetic rhythmic tapestry that nods to its roots while presenting something new.

The hour moves into the realm of tap and percussion partnerships, starting with Tommy Wasiuta presenting “Tap Shoes as a Percussive Instrument.” Wasiuta, a trained tap dancer, recently released his 2024 album *Drum Shoes*, which explores tap shoes as a standalone instrument. Taking a Nate Smith drumset solo as a point of departure, Wasiuta performs his own transcription demonstrating the commonalities between the sounds of a drumset and tap shoes.

Composer, percussionist, and dancer Bri Wiegand performs “Moses Supposedly,” the second movement of an original work titled *Lyrebird*, composed by Wiegand for tap dancer and fixed media. Cleverly spliced and interlaced TV/movie clips from *Singin’ in the Rain*, *Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Beavis and Butthead*, *The Tick*, and many others create a rhythmic bed for the tap dancer to imitate. Like the Australian lyrebird known for its remarkable mimicry skills, the dancer is asked to emulate rhythms from the connected media clips.

Associate Professor of Music at the Uni-



KNO Percussion



Daniel Shiller



Bri Wiegand



Tommy Wasiuta



Angela Kepley & Cheryl Okuda

versity of Arizona Dr. Morris Palter presents the next tap-based project. “Stepping into Crazy Army” combines Steve Gadd’s famous “Crazy Army” drum solo with Bob Becker’s “Away Without Leave” and

creates a tap dance showcase featuring the Boys’ Club Dance Collective (dancers Veronica Simpson, Laura Donaldson, and Elise McGrenera). A world premiere per-



**Boys' Club Tap Dance Collective featuring
Morris Palter and Nathan Smith**



Virginia Tech Percussion Ensemble

formance developed for the 2025 New Music/Research Day, the group develops language tying rudimental drumming and tap dance using “Crazy Army” as a point of inspiration.

Percussionist Angela Kepley and dancer Cheryl Okuda present “(Manipulation)” by Brian Wach, a 2011 work that states the nature of its premise in the very title of the work. Acting as puppet master and puppet, this intimate collaboration explores control both sonically and visually. Notated for vibraphone, three wood-blocks, wooden wind chimes, and other, smaller colors, the music sets the stage for a responsive, choreographed work.

The day concludes with Dr. Annie Stevens, the Virginia Tech Percussion Ensemble, and the VT Advanced Dance Class performing an excerpt of Robert Honstein’s “An Index of Possibility.” As the result of a long-term commitment to collaborations between percussion and dance, this presentation of Honstein’s work exemplifies the thoughtfulness and vulnerability behind a joint student endeavor.

CONCLUSION

Percussion and movement are inextricably connected, as it is through gesture or movement (along with instruments and often implements) that percussionists create sound. The PAS New Music/Research Committee is pleased to present this series of concerts and a panel discussion exploring relationships between percussion and movement through dance, theatre, gesture, and more. We hope to see you on November 13! **PN**

A conversation with Dafnis Prieto

By Colleen Clark

Dafnis Prieto, winner of a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy nominations and one Grammy win, will not only perform at PASIC50 with his *Sí o Sí* Quartet but also present a clinic.

Since his arrival from Cuba to New York City in 1999, Prieto has shared the stage with jazz and Latin jazz luminaries including Michel Camilo, Eddie Palmieri, Steve Coleman, Roy Hargrove, and Henry Threadgill, among many others. Prieto’s sound is distinct and truly one of a kind. Leading multiple groups, from big band to duos, he has enjoyed a long tenure as a bandleader, drummer, and composer.

2025 is a celebratory year for Prieto. He released his tenth studio album, *3 Sides of the Coin*, featuring his *Sí o Sí* Quartet. He

also published his third book, *What are the Odds? A Journey on Latin Rhythms and Meters*, which will be the basis of his PASIC clinic. Aligning with his vision as a teacher, Prieto uses the organizational opportunities of book writing to supplement his artistry in the classroom. In 2015, Prieto joined the faculty at the University of Miami, where he leads the highly regarded Frost Latin Jazz Orchestra.

I had the distinct pleasure of speaking with Prieto ahead of his return to PASIC. We spoke about *3 Sides of the Coin*, the *Sí o Sí* Quartet, and what he’d like for audiences to take away from his performance and clinic at PASIC50. Don’t miss the opportunity to be in the rooms with this legend at either his clinic or his Thursday evening concert.

Colleen Clark: What would you like for audiences to take away from your clinic and performance at PASIC?

Dafnis Prieto: Well, I’m doing two performances. One is going to be a workshop, at which I will focus on my latest book, *What are the Odds?* It’s a book on my own interpretation of traditional rhythms, taking them through a journey of different meters. That’s one of the subjects I teach to my students at Frost School of Music. I believe that’s happening at noon.

Then in the evening I’m doing a performance with my *Sí o Sí* Quartet. We are going to concentrate on the music of the latest album, *3 Sides of the Coin*. This is the second album of this band; the first album was *Live at Jazz Standard*. The new one is differ-



Dafnis Prieto *Sí o Sí* Quartet

ent because it was done in the studio. It has a different sound and personnel, except the saxophonist and me stayed the same from the first incarnation of the *Sí o Sí* Quartet. So, it has a different personality and different music. The sound is also different because the sound really depends on many factors, especially on who is playing and the interpretations that those specific musicians add to the music. The difference also has to do with us playing different music. The musicians are Peter Apfelbaum, sax; Martin Bejerano, piano; Raul Reyes, bass; and myself on drums.

CC: You're experiencing so many milestones this year: 50 years on the planet, 25 years in the U.S., 10th studio album. Do you feel your writing has reflected that or do you feel the same in your writing and playing?

DP: I hope my writing has evolved [laughs]. I would like to believe so. It has evolved not because it's better or worse, but because it moves on. It's going in different directions. It doesn't have to be a better direction or a worse direction, or whatever direction it is; to me, music is storytelling. There are going to be different stories, different things in that time difference from one album to another, especially because the first one was done in 2009. So yes, it's different and it has evolved. I'm al-

ways writing music not only for this ensemble, but for many other ensembles of mine. I also write music for commissions and things like that. Composition is a big thing in my life.

CC: Did you have a great experience with NYO (National Youth Orchestra)? I saw they had premiered one of your pieces.

DP: Yes. They commissioned me to write a new piece for big band. I actually ended up playing. I went there [Carnegie Hall], and I just wanted to do that. It was very meaningful to me to share my point of view. I did a masterclass with them. They are all great kids, very talented. They do an amazing job with the direction of Sean Jones. He's doing a beautiful job with them.

CC: Do you feel that your level of artistry has influenced your teaching and vice versa? Have you felt the effect from both sides of the coin?

DP: I think it's all combined. It's very intrinsic. One thing goes with the other. Obviously, the education helps me organize ideas in order to deliver and present them to the students in different ways so they can take advantage of that information. As an artist, I don't think about those things. Those things might happen as a consequence of it. The artistry thing in terms of music is not only what you learn but also how you're able to process that and how you're able to reimagine and make it your own so that it becomes an artistic statement and not just a copy of a formula. In a nutshell, there are differences and similarities between one and the other because it's inside oneself. It's very difficult to compartmentalize that. I learned how to love education and teaching, but I think more as an artist than as an academic.

CC: Would you like to send a special message to *Percussive Notes* readers about your PASIC appearances?

DP: I am really looking forward to shar-

ing my music, knowledge, and information through this third book as well as music from *3 Sides of the Coin*. It's very exciting to share it to a big community of percussionists and drummers who I know are very interested in all of this information to help them organize music or make music. **PN**

INTERACTIVE DRUMMING

Arlene de Silva

Drumming Up Health with HealthRHYTHMS

HealthRHYTHMS group empowerment drumming is a well-established evidence-based creative music expression protocol supported by several peer-reviewed scientific publications focusing on biological and psychosocial outcomes in a host of subjects. The program is a cost-effective strategy for fostering group-based nurturing, support, camaraderie, and self-expression. The program is well-suited as a stress-reduction strategy that reduces depression, anger, and anxiety, and builds self-esteem, respect, and empathy. Research has documented statistically significant improvements in quality of life, including physical, emotional, and social benefits. HealthRHYTHMS is effective for individuals facing numerous health and psychosocial challenges. The one-hour program creates a non-threatening environment and is offered by a trained facilitator who guides individuals of all ages to take an active and meaningful role in their health and wellbeing. No prior musical knowledge is required to participate.

Lucho Pellegrini

IDC Washboard Session

This masterclass will first dive into the history of the washboard as an instrument, and then will cover patterns and rhythms that the washboard is well known for, as well as exploring the possibilities of adapting it to other music styles. This workshop is for EVERYONE. You'll learn how to keep a washboard rhythm, and we'll also work on improvisation.



Dafnis Prieto

Nikki Glaspie: The older I get, the more I don't believe in genres

By Colleen Clark

Nikki Glaspie, one of the founding members of Beyoncé's Suga Mama band, has built her reputation on pocket and groove. She has graced stages and festivals worldwide with artists including Dumpstaphunk, Maceo Parker, and Snarky Puppy, and tours leading her own groups The Nth Power, Super Sonic Shorties, Nikki Glaspie & the Homies, and Punkadelick (which she'll bring to PASIC50). Her work on the road is fueled by her drive

to continue expanding her knowledge in groove and challenge herself in different musical situations. Glaspie takes pride in sharing the history of the music, always researching and discovering new music, which helps her directly reflect on the drumset and inspires her continuous creativity.

I had the distinct pleasure of speaking with Glaspie ahead of her second PASIC clinic. Don't miss the chance to hear directly from this incredible musician who

has toured the world, played to sold-out stadiums, and recorded multiple hits.

Colleen Clark: Tell me about your 2025 PASIC clinic and what you'd like for audiences to take away from it.

Nikki Glaspie: I am super excited about it because I've been to PASIC one time [2017], and this year I'm coming with a different band. The first time I came with The Nth Power, which is completely different from Punkadelick. When this band started in late 2020/2021, I thought instantly this would be an amazing band for a PASIC clinic because we take orchestral instruments into rock clubs. We take them to festivals, rock, blues – whatever type of festivals. We play lots of different festivals and we take these instruments into a non-traditional setting.

I am excited about presenting this because I feel like lots of percussionists feel boxed in because they play marimba or timpani or orchestral instruments. There hasn't been a clear place that they can apply these instruments outside of classical vs. jazz. I'm excited to hopefully spark some creativity so that people don't feel boxed in. Typically, when you play marimba or vibraphone, you join an orchestra or a Broadway pit or DCI,



Nikki Glaspie

which is my personal favorite, but you age out.

I'm really excited to present because Mike Dillon is one of a kind, and he did something extremely creative with his instrument. He's a percussionist through and through. He plays congas, timbales, tabla, vibraphone, marimba — he's incredible. Whenever people see us, they're like, "What is this? How is this possible?" We're a band of percussionists. Piano is a percussion instrument. Brian Haas is probably one of the greatest, most creative Rhodes players on the planet. It's so much fun playing with these guys. I thought this band would be perfect because people can see how they can possibly be creative with this. I can actually take it somewhere and do something else other than the "norm." The thought is you're either jazz or classical — one or the other. No, actually it's not one or the other. You can do whatever you want with it.

We hope to inspire people to be more creative because that's what we need right now. We need people to put creativity into the world that's not manufactured by a computer.

CC: You're touring constantly. Share what it's like to be on the road with so many different projects, and a little about some of them.

NK: I am on tour all the time. I'm in like six active bands. Four of them are my own. The Nth Power is the first band I started in 2012/2013. We pretty much tour year-round, but sporadically, maybe once or twice a month we'll do a weekend. Sometimes we like to dedicate an entire month to touring. The reason I'm in so many bands is to stay creative, not stagnant, and keep playing different styles of music. It's really important to be able to play everything and be expressive in all genres. The older I get, the more I don't believe in genres. They are classifications, I see the similarities in all of them. I love all styles of music, which is why I like to play them. I like to mix it up.

The Nth Power is more soul driven, but there are elements of rock, funk, folk, gospel, reggae, and world music. We get together and write, and our influences come out. We're not trying to sound like a specific thing. Punkadelick is punk, jazz, cumbia, and Carnival music. I would say that jazz comes from the attitude of which we are playing the music. It's very free and we improvise a lot.

I also tour with Snarky Puppy. There are four drummers in the band. It's really cool, because it's such a great concept and the music is never stale. It's fresh every single time. There are four core members to the band and the other six are in rotation. I think a fan figured out that there were more than 1,500 different combinations of the band. It's pretty crazy. I mean, that's pretty cool. The three tours I've done had a different lineup every time and it's very exciting.

I have an all-female band called the Super Sonic Shorties. That band is almost like Snarky Puppy where it's a collective and you never know who's going to be there because a bunch of us work a lot. We're trying to get an album out and writing together. Hopefully it'll come out next year. It's just like a lot of

moving pieces and trying to raise money and all the things. We are all about education, representation and excellence. We went to OU last year as Artists in Residence, which was so much fun. It was really awesome because a lot of people aren't used to seeing 10 women together on stage who have also toured the world with *everyone*. Our collective resume is ridiculous.

I have one other band: Kamani. It's a small funk band that I have with Sput [Searight], so it's a two-drummer band. He plays drums, keys, and percussion. We have a Frankenstein-like rig for him. It's awesome. I play a little bit of guitar and he'll play drums, and then we'll switch. It's straight-up funk.

CC: Is there anything you'd like to add?

NK: I'm very excited about the funk resurgence that's happening. I've been in funk for a long time. I used to play with Maceo Parker, and there was a minute where I was like, "Is this tradition going to be kept alive? This idiom?" I'm really happy. It's coming out of Memphis. It's coming out of Dallas. It's coming out of a lot of places. I'm very thankful for that. Ghost Note, Mono Neon, Cory Henry, Xavier Lynn, Devin Way, Pas-



Punkadelick
L to R: Brian Haas, Mike Dillon, Nikki Glaspie

torfunk [Brandon Brown], and all these cats are keeping it going and inspiring other people to really get into funk and to play it. It's really the foundation of a lot of music: disco, hip-hop, pop. It's all there. I really learned how to play funk in the club. At the point where the clubs were shut down and the world was shut down, I was like, "Oh, no. We need people playing music." People *have* to play music. It's so important. We need the vibration. We need the positivity. We need the artistry to inspire us to keep going. The world is so dark these days, we must brighten it with creativity and love — love thru creativity.

Nikki Glaspie describes herself as "Sorceress. Alchemist. Beat Conductor. Funk Philosopher. Seneshal of Style. Purveyor of Pocket. Child of God. Agent of Love. A student of J Dilla, James Brown, Led Zepplin, Earth, Wind & Fire, gospel traditions, and all points between, Nikki has toured the world as the drummer of Beyonce's backing band Suga Mama, trotting the globe behind the likes of Maceo Parker, Ivan Neville's Dumpstaphunk, Yemen Blues, GRiZ, Nicholas Payton, North Mississippi All Stars, and more. She is currently touring with Snarky Puppy, Punkadelick, and her own bands, The Nth Power and Super Sonic Shorties. Glaspie studied at Berklee College of Music, where she perfected her craft of conveying messages through music. For the better part of two decades, Nikki has been in-demand, with a who's who of the jazz/funk and pop scene. **PN**

KEYBOARD

Matthew Lau

Keyboard Daytime Showcase Concert

IDENTITY—Reimagining Contemporary Vibraphone Music

IDENTITY is a 45-minute multimedia program featuring custom cinematic visuals and electronics, showcasing the vibraphone's versatility through iconic repertoire alongside new commissions. Throughout my artistic journey, I faced discrimination for performing pieces that challenged the status quo and heard repeatedly that a solo career was impossible — unless it was jazz. IDENTITY manifests as a project of perseverance and resilience, embodying my journey as a queer person-of-color, challenging stereotypes and societal expectations. The program transcends boundaries of genre, race, sexuality, and class.

Hailed for his "soulful and technically impressive solo" at the Aspen Music Festival, award-winning percussionist Dr. Matthew Lau is known for high-caliber performances with a whimsical twist. Lau serves on the PAS Board of Advisors and Keyboard Committee and the Board of Directors for The Vibraphone Project Inc. He co-founded Hong Kong's The Up:Strike Project and is part of the Fisher/Lau Project. Matthew has performed and taught internationally in the USA, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Taiwan, Spain, Australia, and Russia. He has received grants from the Boston Foundation and Hong Kong Arts Development Council and was named New Artist of the Year.

Heather Thorn and Vivacity with the Nola Anniversary

Marimba Band

Keyboard Daytime Showcase Concert

Heather Thorn Salutes the 50th Anniversary

As we approach the 50th Anniversary of the Eastman Marimba Band's highly influential album, *Nola*, xylophone soloist Heather Thorn will celebrate the milestone with selections from the recording. She will be accompanied by original Eastman Marimba Band member and soloist Gordon Stout, along with other special guest percussionists in the Anniversary Marimba Band including Garry Kvistad (Nexus), Will Rapp, and Jeff Moore. Heather and her band Vivacity will also present music from the Great American Songbook (1920s-'50s). Inspired by her teacher, Bob Becker, along with the xylophone performance traditions of George and Joe Green, Harry Breuer, Teddy Brown, Red Norvo, and Sammy Herman, Thorn presents modern interpretations and arrangements of some classic jazz standards.

Heather Thorn is a xylophonist who performs with her band, Vivacity. In 2019 and 2022, she was featured with Vivacity as the headline act for the I Love Jazz International Jazz Festival in Brazil. She was also a guest soloist with the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra in 2021 for the Holiday Pops concert. Heather has been featured as a guest artist with Michael Andrew and Swingerhead, and an opening act for the Glenn Miller Orchestra. As leader of Vivacity, she frequently performs for swing dances around the Central Florida area. Heather wrote and performs her musical stage show *Nostalgia Radio Hour*, featuring classic tunes from the 1920s-1950.



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Creative Independence on the Drumset

By Jim Mola

Having attended my first PASIC in the late '80s, and having since served on the PAS Drumset Committee and as New York PAS chapter president, I am clearly an enthusiastic fan of PAS, and a firm believer in their mission. As such, it's an enormous honor to be asked to present a virtual clinic as part of PASIC's 50th anniversary convention. I've chosen to present an approach to independence that, while unusual on the surface, offers drummers at all levels an opportunity to truly free up their limbs to act as separate voices, and to remove the barriers that sometimes become blocks to free expression in the moments when that freedom is needed the most.

In many ways, we're living in the best of times: innovation, access to information, and seemingly unlimited access to art, beauty, and technology, as well as the tools to make them, all unprecedented in history. At the same time, we're seeing many traditionally effective methods of teaching and learning challenged or even replaced. Sometimes that's for the better, sometimes not.

I don't think I've seen more change in teaching and learning the drumset than those that have occurred in the past few years on social media. With 15- and 30-second clips now the norm, and those clips most often used to teach a particular lick rather than a technique or, dare I say, a musical precept, notation has largely been replaced by a series of L's, R's, and K's. By not assigning a particular limb to a particular sound source, the students are free to learn the pattern and then expand it to their particular instrument and its layout, which can be double pedals, mounted percussion, electronics, etc., with the only limit being one's creativity and imagination. The more patterns you learn, the more your vocabulary grows, and therefore your ability to contribute to the music (or wow the followers if you're playing alone in front of a camera) grows with it. And if you look at the sheer number of people crushing it daily on Instagram, etc., it's hard to argue with the merits of this approach.

That said, our human anatomy is unchanged, and our instrument is still based on using our four limbs in an endless variety of combinations. And that's what my PASIC virtual clinic will address.

My earliest training came from Tony Chirco, a local musician with a deep passion for learning and teaching music. He counted the most serious area drummers among his students, including Adam Nussbaum, Joe Corsello, John Cutrone, and Danny Brubeck. He was never widely known, but his interest in how music worked and how best to teach it at its most effective level drove him his entire professional life. Having studied with him for quite a few years in my youth and then staying close to him until his passing, I had the opportunity to see how his teaching held up in the bigger scheme of things. I was sometimes surprised at how far ahead of the curve he was in many ways.

One thing that was ingrained in me was to make the most of my time by studying and practicing the most essential yet most effective techniques, and not using my practice time for endless minor permutations and repetitions. This idea applied to everything we did — hand development, drumset techniques, and harmonic theory concepts on the vibraphone. By focusing on the DNA of each idea, we could build real intellectual and physical intimacy with the material, which, once ingrained, was available to use freely and at will, depending upon the music.

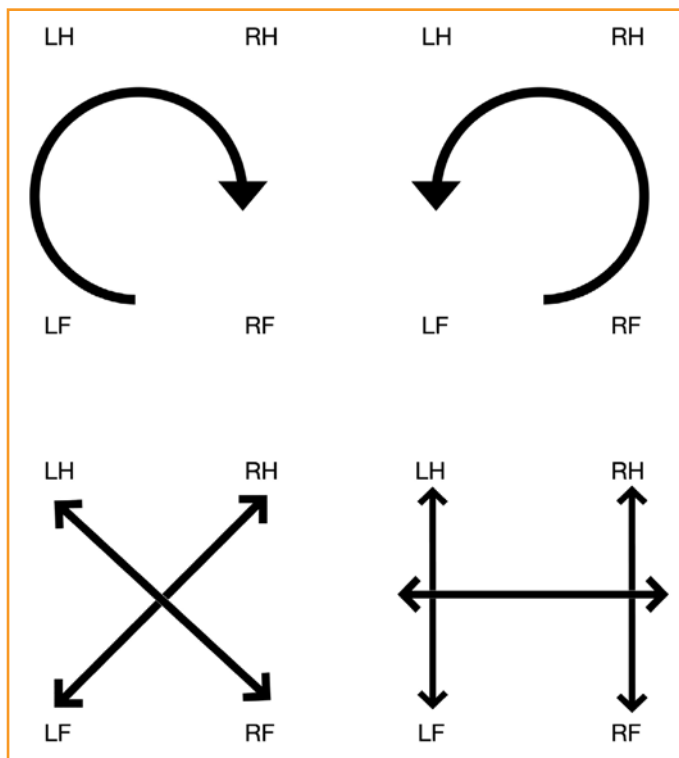
If we think about how many drumset method books — especially those geared toward beginners — are laid out, we most often see a static pattern — for example eighths on the hi-hat/ride, 2 and 4 on the snare, and a series of increasingly complex permutations with the bass drum. Eventually the snare drum will be offset, again increasing the difficulty of the pattern and continuing as above.

In keeping with the idea of dealing with the essence of each idea, the way I learned about "four-way independence" came

from addressing the various ways the limbs interacted with each other and developing those connections until they were fluid, as opposed to static coordination exercises that isolated the bass drum, then introduced the snare, and so on.

What this entails is a simple set of four designs: Clockwise, counterclockwise, an X, and an H. Two “circular” and two “linear,” with the H covering voicing between each hand/foot side, as well as hand-to-hand and foot-to-foot. (See Diagram 1.)

Diagram 1



In my clinic I will explore these designs in much greater detail, as well as play examples of how I incorporate them into my own playing, but here are the basics:

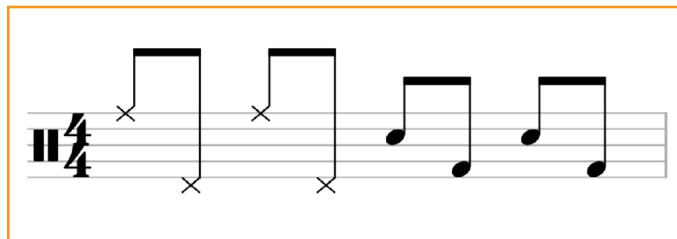
Clockwise:



Counterclockwise:



X:



The vertical bars of the H:



And the “cross bar” of the H: (Think of them as singles between the hands and between the feet):



What has fascinated me in my many years of teaching these concepts, is that it's such a simple idea that very young students and total beginners grasp the shape idea almost immediately, even if they struggle with the actual physical playing of it for a minute. Whereas some pro drummers, who have been well trained but in a more traditional manner, seem to take a bit longer to internalize it because they have created a pattern-based approach, and executing the interaction of the limbs in a way they haven't encountered or leaned into as much can really throw them.

Please feel free to reach out to me at jim@jimmola.com with any questions you may have. I hope you will join me for my virtual PASIC clinic, and I hope to see you in Indy for PASIC50.

Jim Mola has studied with Tony Chirco, Michael Carvin, Freddie Waits, Morris “Arnie” Lang, Jack DeJohnette, Trilok Gurtu, Colin Walcott, and Ed Blackwell. Jim has performed or recorded with such artists as Tony Bennett, Weird Al Yankovic, Phil Woods, Dr. Billy Taylor, Hank Jones, Stanley Turrentine, Charlie Rouse, Angelique Kidjo, Mike Stern, Annie Ross, Henny Youngman, Mario Cantone, and Sally Kellerman and recorded for jingles, films, and TV. Teaching privately since 1978, Jim followed Ed Soph and Randy Jones teaching drumset at the University of Bridgeport. He joined The Collective's Artist in Residence faculty

in 2008, and faculty in 2014. He taught the Jazz and Standards vocal track, saw drum students, and created the Genre Analysis course, tracing the multicultural roots of American music. **PN**



Jim Mola

DRUMSET

Allison Miller and Brinae Ali

Drumset Clinic / Performance

Tap Dance is Percussion

World renowned tap dancer Brinae Ali and drummer Allison Miller will demonstrate the vitality of tap dance throughout jazz history. From the early 1900s to today, tap dance and drumming share a rhythmic language that percussively inspires and supports one another. Through historical context and performance, Ali and Miller show how tap and drumming share this common language, communicating through syncopated rhythms of the African diaspora and improvisation.

Drummer/teacher/composer Allison Miller engages her deep roots in improvisation as a vehicle to explore all music. Miller has released 17 albums as a leader/co-leader and has collaborated with such artists as Derrick Hodge, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Brandi Carlile, *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, Natalie Merchant, and Ani DiFranco. Her most recent release, *Big & Lovely*, features Miller and her compositions played by the Grammy-nominated One O'Clock Lab Band. Miller is a founding member of Blue Note recording group Artemis. She teaches at Peabody Institute, New School for Jazz, and is the Artistic Director of Jazz Camp West.

DRUMSET

Wayne Salzmann II

Drumset Clinic

Functional Improvisation

Functional improvisation allows you to serve the music in a meaningful and creative way using your unique voice. If your drumming language is fluent, improvisation is as easy as speaking. How do you find your voice? Combine your influences (listening) with your experiences (practice), and these inform our improvisational choices.

Wayne Salzmann II is a drummer, educator, author, and composer who has toured/recorded extensively with Grammy-winning guitarist Eric Johnson. He has also performed with Steve Miller, Kenny Rogers, Kris Kristofferson, Joe Satriani, Christopher Cross, Mike Stern, Robben Ford, Oz Noy, Chris Potter, Dick Oatts, the San Antonio Symphony, and many others. Salzmann was the drumset instructor at UT-Austin from 2010–22 and has given clinics and masterclasses worldwide.

Greg Clark Jr.

Drumset Clinic / Performance

Being Ready to Get the Gig and Keep the Gig

This session will discuss the different things you need to do to prepare for the gig as well as the consistent things you need to do to keep the gig. It will cover things like creating and developing your own sound, being aware of different styles of music past and present, being flexible enough to shift your sound to fit any music style, professional behavior while touring and working with unfamiliar musicians, and musical directing from the drummer's seat.

Greg Clark Jr. is a musician/music director/clinician who has performed, recorded and toured with such artist as Stanley Clarke, Will Smith, JLO, Ciara, Rickey Minor, Snarky Puppy, Manhattan Transfer, Billy Porter, Cody Simpson, L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra, LeAnn Rimes, S.W.V, Coi Leray, and many more, as well as drum clinics and master classes in numerous locations.

Greyson Nekrutman

Drumset Clinic

Greyson Nekrutman has become a fresh inspiration for drummers worldwide. Greyson recently completed a sold-out clinic tour in the USA and Canada, has made highly viewed appearances on Drumeo on top of appearances at major drum festivals around the world, and toured with the band Suicidal Tendencies. In high school, he was selected as the drummer for the 2019 All-National Honors Jazz Ensemble. His "singlehanded rejuvenation" of the big band/swing drumming of the Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman era launched him into the international spotlight. His highly energetic, note-for-note/side-by-side video transcriptions of such iconic drummers as Buddy Rich, Philly Joe Jones, Louis Bellson, and many others is filling a musical gap that was largely vacant for decades, picking up millions of viewers. Greyson has also worked with Alice In Chains vocalist William Duvall and recorded Duvall's album, *11.12.21 Live-In-Studio Nashville*, and he has also performed or recorded with Billy Howerdell, DJ Premier, Veronica Swift, Bakithi Kumalo, Darren Criss, and more.

The George Mason Show: A Satirical Farce, a Creative Splendor, a Cartoonish Spectacle

By Dan Schack

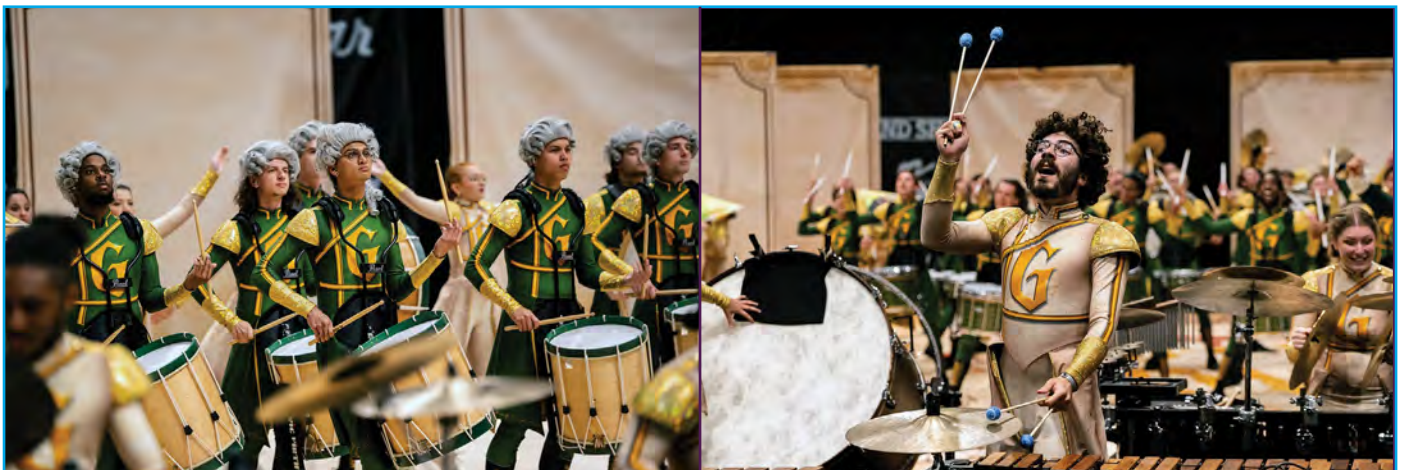
What if someone from Colonial-era America was dropped into the audience of a Winter Guard International Independent World Class percussion competition? This hypothetical figure would likely undergo a sweeping cornucopia of emotions and realizations, one of which being that the performance arts of today are infatuated with bleakness and sorrow. If art reflects the context in which it's created, then society outside must be downtrodden or full-on apocalyptic.

The other realization this forefather might have is that there is a lot to learn from indoor marching percussion. Many performances attempt to explain some vastly complex concept, like the human condition or death. These shows tell, succinctly and unwaveringly, exactly what one should think about these

sprawling ideas. The nuance of these concepts are communicated through the medium of inner mallet runs, pliés, and disembodied voiceovers.

What if that colonial figure was none other than George Mason, signer of the Declaration of Independence and namesake of the largest public university in Virginia? And what if George Mason was not an overserious statesman perceiving a drumline show, but instead a whimsical fool stumbling uncontrollably through his own indoor drumline creation?

In 2025, the George Mason University Indoor Drumline (GMUID) set forth on a bold exploration (much like our Colonial forebears) in an attempt to define what we are as an activity. Committing ourselves to an absurd framework, we placed a live action George Mason at the focal point of our production, a tool



George Mason University Indoor Drumline

that could function simultaneously as our literal mouthpiece as well as the buffoon who purports to be at the helm of his own show, only to be whiplashed around by conventions of the indoor percussion activity that are too powerful for him to suppress or control. We created a boisterous character with a big personality to do our bidding: the founding father who's also a university and a drumline. And thus, *The George Mason Show* was spawned.

Our satirical and self-referential positioning allowed us to creatively extrapolate from the character of George Mason. George could ask questions or posit thoughts, and in doing so he was asking and positing as the George Mason drumline, the two concepts inseparable. This enabled us a distinct method through which we could ask questions about the activity no one really wants to ask out loud:

- When does artistic emulation become straight up copying?
- Should we as designers in a competitive field aim to “check the boxes” of our judges sheets or allow our natural creative output to determine where we land competitively?
- What role does technology (screens, lights, etc.) play in a live performance art that is centered around member education and experience?
- Does drumline have to be serious to be taken seriously?

George serves as a character you could potentially laugh off. He is emotional, narcissistic, impulsive, and downright silly. But at the root of his ethos is a nagging urge to figure out exactly how to fit into the centerless genre we call Percussion Independent World class. Can George answer this question for us? Probably not.

So what is *The George Mason Show* about, really? I'm not sure I, or anyone, can tell you. It's a satirical farce, certainly — a semi-sardonic love letter to an activity that might take itself too seriously. It's an attempt to get credit for making fun of the things that are credited. It's a chance to communicate something about how we as a design team and an organization feel, and who we want to be, or don't want to be. It's not about anything.

What you'll experience in our PASIC session, however, is something I can tell you. The core design team will explain how we constructed the show in four parts:

- The strategic use of comedy, absurdity, and satire.
- Integrating rope tension drums into modern marching design.
- Ways of thinking outside the visual box.
- Orchestration techniques for indoor drumline.

We are fortunate to have nearly the complete cast of *The George Mason Show* joining us for our session, to provide musical and visual examples through live performance. While we won't be marching the entire show, we will be ending the session with a full run-through in a standstill setting.

The George Mason Show opens with a six-person rope-tension snare line and a four-person rope-tension bass line, immediately immersing the audience in the world of this person we call

George Mason. The 60x90-foot floor tarp is folded in half on side two (stage left), appearing like the front of a Colonial manuscript that contains George Mason's hand-written scribbings. Eight ten-foot-tall parchment-style panels loom upon the borders of the folded floor, creating a theatrical setting that reinforces the interiority of the world we've entered. All George Everything.

Following a traditional roll-off, the rope drummers strut across the floor in a marching style that lacks the contemporary flair you expect from a 2025 drumline intro. George parades across the stage like a delirious pageant queen, welcoming us all to his personal spectacle that will lack any sense of clear messaging or lesson to be gleaned. It's just *The George Mason Show*.

The melodies of “Yankee Doodle” spring forth from dueling xylophones, punctuated by the authentic sound of the rope-drum troupe that provide at once a realism and a comedic filter; it's totally absurd to think such a basic song, a nursery rhyme, could be impactful in a world class percussion performance environment. Once “Yankee Doodle” is fulfilled to the degree that competitive credit can be received, George verbally welcomes all to his illustrious indoor drumline show, which is filled with “drums, pit, cymbals, and sh...tuff!”

To avoid getting fileted by the judges for moving our gigantic backdrop props with no motivation, George simply tells us “we have melody, and groove...and big props that move!” This simple but powerful line enables us to reset our stage, at which point our visual ensemble pulls out the entire floor and George narrowly escapes getting bulldozed by a ten-foot-tall piece of parchment. While many indoor drumlines attempt to reconfigure their setting while distracting you with a flashy snare feature, we instead draw attention directly to the clunky nature of the set-change mechanism, creating an effect out of what is usually a haphazard dud in the middle of otherwise well-crafted programs.

With the reveal of our full-sized stage, George's show resumes with the whimsical momentum provided by the plucky baroque stylings of Jerskin Fendrix's “I Just Hope She's Alright.” This postmodern synthwave aesthetic continues to take shape throughout the program, somehow fitting nicely within the goofy Colonial milieu we've established so far. The battery and front ensemble proceed to deliver what one would consider the meat-and-potatoes of a drumline show, including important facets like vertical alignment, dynamic contouring, rhythmic interplay, contemporary rudimental language, university-standard mallet techniques, overarching musical direction, and audio-visual alignment.

As George reemerges into the scene, it becomes time for a schoolhouse lesson in bass drumming. Two of the massive panels flip around magically to reveal oversized bass drum notation, which include ubiquitous bass drum rudiments like “1's, 2's, 3's...4's” and hand-to-hands, to less-known bass drum rudiments like Moonsmashers (which we made up for this show). As George offers a smattering of bass drum rudiments to the audience via

a sing-songy *sprechgesang*, the bass line plays the exact notes we see written on the parchment, helping enable a better comprehension of what is usually completely incomprehensible (and unjudgeable). As many perceivers of marching bass drumlines do, George becomes overwhelmed with the sheer density and complexity of their playing, leading him to the classic exclamation known by any who have frequented parking lot warm ups: “YEAH BASS!”

The velocity of the music ramps up, driving the battery into a visual frenzy of countermotion and suspense. High-octane drill and music propel the viewer into the energetic psyche of a creative mind attempting to express the inexpressible. As the energy peaks, George wisely knows that it’s time to provide the audience and judges relief after all that sonic and visual hullabaloo. He tears out from behind a panel, yelling “STOP!” Relieving the pressure of the moment, he follows up with the echoic delivery of the term “SPACE,” a word colloquially known to percussionists as that substance-less substance that resides between the notes, coordinated with the appearance of the word on one of the panel props. The visual members float throughout the floor like astronauts in a gravity free environment, invoking the image of actual outer space.

“TEXTURE” soon appears on the next panel to flip, accompanied by George’s ASMR delivery. The snare line taps ambiguous rhythms on every surface they can find, including the scraping of the snare guts. “MOTIF” is George’s next enunciation, triggering the use of some well-known West Coast visual motions and musical sextuplet rhythms that are frequently imitated but never duplicated.

In his attempt to ensure that all the right components make it into his drumline show, George essentially crashes out, screaming “MOTIF” and running wildly across the stage. A Gregorian choir singing “George Mason” can be heard interwoven with the snare line playing a *ghost roll*, which is a triplet roll with specific partials taken out while the player’s hands continue to move through the auditory space. Such an effect creates rhythmic and visual surprise: the combination of “SPACE,” “TEXTURE,” and “MOTIF.” George falls on his face, defeated and overwhelmed.

George lays sprawled upon the floor, destroyed by his own creative machinations. From seemingly nowhere, a large anthropomorphic TV named Televisiana rolls out into the focal point, questioning dramatically (with a feminine voice) if George “would [ever] do an indoor show without me?” Energized by his love for using TVs in indoor drumline shows, George peers longingly at his betrothed, responding gently, “Never, my love.” George goes to her, fawning over the beauty of her glass face.

George arrives at Televisiana and clears his throat, kicking off the verse to Celine Dion’s “My Heart Will Go On.” George lip syncs the lyrics as he caresses and gallivants around his love object. “My Heart Will Go On” serves as an appropriate musical centerpiece to reinforce the satirical heart that resides at the core of George’s show: a meme within a meme within a meme. The mo-

ment climaxes as George rides Televisiana across the floor, the new King of the Ocean, while the battery and front ensemble deliver a drum corps-style full bore ensemble hit, including unison swing flag choreography with the letters GE (General Effect) printed across the flags. The entire moment is campy but also highly emotional and impactful. Celine Dion still hits in 2025.

How does one end such an off-the-wall journey? As with most drumline shows, it is imperative George Mason avoids penalization. As the clock strikes two minutes upon the face of Televisiana, George screams “GET OFF THE FLOOR,” sending the performers into a wild frenzy that includes the cymbal line folding the floor past the 50-yard line boundary and a sung disembodied voiceover urging the performers: “Do not get a penalty!”

Rather than attempting to end his production with some kind of meaningful takeaway, George’s final act is the ushering of the entire ensemble over the penalty line so that he can avoid incurring damage to our score. The frenetic nature of an indoor drumline leaving the floor after the competition is the creative fodder that drives the end of this show. Again, George Mason draws attention to the thing many others attempt to obscure, the effect of the moment driven by the breaking of the fourth wall into the reality of an indoor drumline competition and the common feeling we all have of trying to finish a performance and avoid a penalty, all while “making sense” of the end of the production itself. Why even try to make sense of it at all? The end.

Dan Schack is the Creative Director of the George Mason University Indoor Drumline. He is an active designer, educator, adjudicator, and consultant in the marching arts. Dan serves as a battery instructor for the Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps and the Program Coordinator/Battery Arranger for the Connecticut Hurricanes Drum and Bugle Corps. [PN](#)

DRUMSET

Isac Jamba

Drumset Clinic

Isac Jamba is a self-taught drummer and musician with over 30 years of experience in music. Since childhood, drums and Brazilian rhythms have been his passion. He has worked with renowned artists, recorded over 100 albums, and performed at international festivals. But what truly drives him is a passion for teaching and sharing the knowledge he’s gained along the way. Isac lives in the U.S., where he teaches Brazilian rhythms to musicians worldwide through his online platform. He travels to deliver workshops and masterclasses, always with the goal of inspiring and helping other musicians improve their skills. What moves him the most is teaching and witnessing the growth and transformation of his students. around the world.

Ensemble Skills that Transcend the Marching Arts

By Lauren Teel

In the world of ensemble performance, success is rarely the result of individual talent alone. What transforms a group of performers into a strong musical ensemble is a shared sense of musical purpose and active awareness. I often credit my own experiences in the marching arts for developing my sense of ensemble awareness and listening skills.

This PASIC50 session will explore those skills in depth, offering performers and educators tools to build musicianship from the inside out. While the clinic is framed through the lens of the front ensemble, takeaways are applicable to all performers striving for ensemble excellence.

SOUND AS THE DESTINATION, NOT A BYPRODUCT

I always start with sound. As an aural artform, sound should be the ultimate destination in any ensemble I work with. Too often I encounter students whose primary focus is on the motion, with little attention to the intention or quality of the sound they're producing. Technique is important because it gives us control over sound, but of equal importance must be the awareness and ear training. The sound must be a deliberate choice. As an educator, it's important to spend time with students discussing differences in qualities of sound — not necessarily in the framing of “good” or “bad,” but more along the lines of “resonant,” “dry,” “articulate,” etc. The more they can perceive differences in the sounds they are producing, and the avenues they took to achieve those differences, the easier it becomes for them to intentionally develop their own sense of voice.

VOCABULARY, TIMING, AND MUSICAL FLUENCY

Once the ensemble has a general consciousness of sound, we move towards making them “fluent” in their musical language. We use a set of simple scalar exercises during the summer that

functions far beyond daily endurance-building. These exercises are designed to develop basics of their musical vocabulary but, more importantly, engage the brain. These simple exercises can be adapted and played with endless variations. The end result is a much more well-rounded musician.

The analogy I use is linguistic: when you first learn a complex word, it may feel clunky or forced. The more you encounter it in different contexts, the more naturally it becomes part of your language. Musical vocabulary is no different. By rotating phrasing, hand sequences, and dynamics, performers can begin to “speak” musically with more confidence and clarity. Imagine you are reading a passage in a language you are unfamiliar with.



Lauren Teel

The emphasis and cadence might sound odd to a native speaker because you are not truly fluent in the language or understand the context of what you are saying.

BALANCE, TOUCH, AND LISTENING AS A REFLEX

One of our main focuses in the summer is what it means to truly be “clean.” The playing must not only be in time, but also at the same dynamic and with the same articulation. That’s easier said than done, especially in an environment where players are often separated physically and aurally. We spend a great deal of time developing active listening skills, just as much as we work on techniques and other skills.

One of my favorite ways to develop a student’s sense of active listening is through an improvising game. I will have all the students start on one keyboard and layer in, one at a time. Each player must match the previous player’s tone, dynamic, and phrasing, essentially “reading” one another in real time. The next player is not to enter the improv until they deem the players before them have matched all of these qualities. It fosters deeper listening and ensemble intuition. This exercise is particularly revealing when done without a visual cue. Much like how being in a dark room heightens your hearing, removing visual cues can amplify what you are able to hear.

We also explore how the physical setup of instruments (e.g., placing timpani near the low end of the marimba) affects timing

and clarity. These details matter, but they must always tie back to a deeper “why.” When students know *why* we do something, they internalize the purpose. Usually the answer is simple: “Because it’s the sound we want.”

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

It’s not enough to know *how* to play a part, but also there needs to be a strong understanding of the context. What is the intent of this phrase? Who has the main line? Is the phrase an arrival or transitional moment? How does your voice support or contrast the ensemble? What is the source material and style?

Understanding context helps avoid the pitfalls of “flow state,” where players are technically executing but mentally disengaged. By training awareness, performers can stay connected and responsive, even during moments of error. Performance psychology becomes just as important as physical technique.

At the core of it all is intentionality, knowing what you want to say musically, and listening deeply enough to say it well. These skills are universal, not just for the front ensemble, but essential habits for any musician.

Lauren Teel is a percussion educator, performer, and designer based in the Southeast. She serves on the percussion faculty at Jacksonville State University and is the Percussion Caption Head and Designer for the Troopers Drum & Bugle Corps. [PN](#)



Alliance of Black Orchestral Percussionists

ABOP is a nonprofit that mentors young Black percussionists seeking a symphonic career. Use the QR code to view this video about ABOP and our Mentorship Program.

Visit us at
PASIC:
Booth
#104



Watering Brings Growth

By Adam Norris and Thomas Claesen

The experience of any battery percussion section throughout a given season is one of fluidity, where parts, stickings, dynamics, and more are constantly in a battle to find the appropriate balance of risk vs. execution. This can be complicated by multiple factors, including the voicing and volumes of the rest of the musical ensemble, the staging and physical demand, and more. In our PASIC50 clinic, we will shed light on the typical considerations we make for the Rhythm X quadline.

One constant (or, at least, near constant) occasion throughout the season is the need to “water” the parts. For those unfamiliar with the battery terminology, this usually refers to simplifying the parts to be more achievable (and therefore clearer for the listener/judge) by diluting the skill sets and/or voices — removing some of the more difficult rudiments embedded in the part itself, simplifying rhythms, or removing some voices altogether. There is an age-old adage in the battery world: The fastest way to clean the snare line is to take out the quads. While humorous (at least to non-quad drummers) and unfortunately very effective at the stated goal, we like to ask: What if there is a better way? The “old” way can achieve the desired result in most cases but usually comes at the cost of students and performers feeling disappointed and demoralized, even if the

action taken is not a direct result of execution issues.

In our opinion, “watering” something should encourage growth. Instead of asking “Should this be removed?” a better question would be “Should this be modified?” With some straightforward tips, a battery section may be able to find the best of both worlds: music that students are still excited about playing, while achieving the appropriate transparency and execution required for the ensemble.

First, an educator needs to accurately diagnose what the root cause of the issue may be, instead of just the symptom. What is the intent and why is it not coming across? For instance, check out the excerpt in Example 1.

In the original version, the balance of the battery ensemble sounds off. Even if the quads nail the rhythms and are visually at the same height, they don’t seem to fit in with what the snares, basses, and cymbals are doing. Gut reaction? Take out the quads. Our suggestion: tweak the voicing and even the rhythms.

These are the diagnoses and fixes we found through multiple iterations:

- The triplet roll from the original version wasn’t quite getting across. The real culprit was changing drums every partial during counts 6–8 of that roll. Sometimes the constant changing of frequencies can simply sound “muddy” when combined



Thomas Claesen



Adam Norris

ORIGINAL VERSION

Andrew Markworth
Tim Jackson

Example 1: ORIGINAL VERSION

Tempo: $\text{♩} = 192$

Drum parts (Measures 1-8):

- Snare:** Measures 1-4 show triplet patterns. Measure 5 starts with a *f* dynamic. Measure 6 has a *mf* to *ff* crescendo. Measures 7-8 continue with triplet patterns.
- Quads:** Measures 1-4 show triplet patterns. Measure 5 starts with a *f* dynamic. Measure 6 has a *p* to *ff* crescendo. Measures 7-8 continue with triplet patterns.
- Bass:** Measures 1-4 show triplet patterns. Measure 5 starts with a *f* dynamic. Measure 6 has a *p* to *ff* crescendo. Measures 7-8 continue with triplet patterns.
- Cymbals:** Measures 1-4 show triplet patterns. Measure 5 starts with a *f* dynamic. Measure 6 has a *p* to *ff* crescendo. Measures 7-8 continue with triplet patterns.

Measure numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Dynamic markings: *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *p*.

Notation: Triplet patterns, crescendo lines, and dynamic markings are used throughout the score.

with other static voices like the snare drums, even if the rhythms are perfectly aligned. Removing or limiting the lateral motion can do wonders for clearing up the sound while allowing the performers to still participate.

Sidenote: the start of the crescendo comes with a drum change to drum 2

(in the final version). While the snares technically already increased their stick heights there, we kept those two diddles on drum 2 at three inches because the around takes care of that dynamic jump. More on that below.

- The quarter-note triplet in the tenor voice didn't work. It remained in the bass

voice, but we made the upper battery part unison. That contributed to the triplet roll "cutting" more up top instead of distracting from it.

- On the fivelet, we got rid of the big 4-3 jump with the crossover. The challenging lateral motion in combination with the original dynamics just wasn't working

out. Compensating for taking out something challenging like that, we inserted scrapes on the second fivelet. It was appropriate, felt good, and kept some lateral demand.

- Zooming out, we noticed that part of our beef with the original music was a discrepancy in dynamics with the front ensemble. The above changes were part of a coordinated effort to match dynamics

front to back, enhancing the clarity of intent for this entire moment.

Example 2 shows the Final(s) Version.

This approach allows the quads to still play a part of the show they enjoy, continue to refine more skillsets, and contribute rather than distract. It's a win-win for the entire ensemble and can keep spirits high throughout the competitive season. It allows the educator to frame things more in

the vein of “getting the parts right” from a design-oriented perspective and less of a student performance issue (though that still may be the actual root cause).

For bass drums and quads, we encourage you to examine balance issues through the lens of frequency ranges. Here are a couple of our go-to balance tips:

1. The bigger the drums, the louder they are. Volumes/heights across the various

Example 2

FINAL(S) VERSION

The musical score for "FINAL(S) VERSION" consists of 8 measures. The notation is as follows:

- Measure 1:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *p* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 2:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 3:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 4:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 5:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 6:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 7:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.
- Measure 8:** Ghost (3), Snare (3), Bass Drum (3), Cymbal (3). Dynamics: *mf* for Snare, *ff* for Bass Drum, *f* for Cymbal.

sized drums are not created equal. The opposite is true as the drums get smaller.

2. Along with #1, to be more specific: if the snares are at the edge, the quads will likely be too loud on anything lower than drum 1. The opposite may also be true; if the snares are playing a louder dynamic, the quad voice may be lost when playing on the higher drums.

3. Match the frequency range with the volume, especially through dynamic changes. Crescendos work well moving from higher to lower drums, decrescendos work well moving from lower to higher drums.

4. Lateral velocity matters; larger lateral motions in the quad voice are extremely difficult to control at lower volumes. Tweaking the “around patterns” in proximity to those motions can be a great way to maximize the ensemble balance while retaining a majority of the original part.

Sometimes, execution is the culprit, and the students cannot consistently perform the written part at a high enough level for success. The common remedy to this is to immediately reduce the original part: take the diddles out, take the flams out, quads play on one drum, etc. For quads specifically, we would caution against the immediate reduction of the lateral responsibility.

Ultimately, the decision on “watering” parts comes down to the educator’s expertise and experience in relation to the season, written part, student ability, etc. Our recommendation: diagnose the issue and use the smallest version of an adjustment first. You may find that the modification of the part (as opposed to complete removal) allows you to retain the intent of the composition while greatly increasing the ceiling for the execution (and keeping your students happy!). If the minimal change nets an immediate increase in the success of the part, it’s likely worth pursuing. If not, consider continuing along the same path with smaller adjustments before scrapping the entire voice or rhythms. Changing parts is a normal process for any battery section, but in our experience this route has proven time and again to be the best of both worlds.

These strategies will be demonstrated live at our upcoming clinic at PASIC50. We will bring the Rhythm X 2025 Quadline on stage and share with you more quad knowledge, from high-level perspective thinking down to the mechanics of how to play the instrument — from basic skillsets to extremely demanding show repertoire. We hope to see you there!

Adam Norris and **Thomas Claesen** have both taught several top-12 drum corps. They’ve been teaching the Rhythm X Quadline together since the 2018 WGI season. **Adam** is a percussion specialist in the Louisville, Kentucky area, working full time as a private educator and arranger. He is the assistant percussion caption manager at The Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps and has been instructing the Rhythm X Quadline since 2013. **Thomas** is a drummer, designer, and entrepreneur. Originally from Belgium, he now resides in Nashville, Tenn. He is the cofounder of Teeq, a new, user-friendly way to give online video feedback, and this summer he launched Quadlingual, a brand representing the marching tenor community. [PN](#)

DRUMSET

Ash Soan

Drumset Clinic

Ash Soan’s live experience includes performing at Woodstock ‘94, supporting The Rolling Stones, REM, Bon Jovi, Van Halen, Oasis, and Bryan Adams at Wembley with his band Del Amitri throughout 1994–97, followed by touring and playing with Marianne Faithfull, Sinéad O’Connor, Sheryl Crow, Robbie Williams, James Morrison, Will Young, Squeeze, Lewis Taylor, Hamish Stuart, The Waterboys, Jeff Lorber, Trevor Horn and Seal, Rumer, Terry Reid, Ronnie Wood, Dionne Warwick, and many more. Other experiences include playing the 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony with Mike Oldfield, being the house drummer on the BBC/ITV TV show *The Voice* for seven years, and playing on the *Terminator Genisys*, *Mission Impossible Fall Out*, *Kung Fu Panda 3*, *The Lion King*, and *Boss Baby 2* soundtracks. The main part of Soan’s career has been within the recording industry, and over the past 20 years or so he has performed on 60 Top 10 albums for artists including Cher, Seal, Robbie Williams, Billy Idol, Adele, Enrique Iglesias, Dionne Warwick, Rumer, James Morrison, Cee Lo, Celine Dion, and Ronan Keating. His discography includes 19 Top-10 singles and to date he’s recorded 32 No. 1 albums and 10 No. 1 singles on various pop and rock charts around the world.



Rhythm X Quadline

The Hellcats: Rudimental Torchbearers Since 1778

By J. Andrew Porter and Jack Bounds

Rudimental drumming has a rich and unique history in the United States. Much of what we practice today evolved from European drumming styles and traditions. Given our history as a former British colony, a great deal of our rudimental drumming tradition evolved from the practices

of the British military. As it was in much of Europe, drumming in the earliest history of the United States was of practical use. It was used by the military in camp and in battle — to provide instruction to soldiers on the battlefield, to practice drill and ceremony, and to lift morale in camp.

The Hellcats have a proud lineage of rudimental drummers dating back to the Continental Army in January 1778, when the garrison of West Point was established on the banks of the Hudson River, approximately 50 miles north of New York City. Given its strategic importance in the Revolution, General George Washington made West Point his headquarters in 1779. Washington had previously issued General Orders that stated a fifer and drummer were to be stationed with each company of soldiers. Additionally, fife majors and drum majors were tasked with ensuring the professional capabilities of the musicians; otherwise, the musicians risked being reduced in rank and pay. There have been fifers and rudimental drummers stationed at West Point ever since, and we take pride in hiring the most skilled and technically proficient musicians available. This lineage has established The Hellcats as the first and longest serving group of professional musicians in the U.S. Army.

The Hellcats got their nickname in the early 1900s from those they serve: the Corps of Cadets at USMA. The U.S. Military Academy was established as an engineering and officer training college for the U.S. Army in 1802 by President Thomas Jefferson and has since evolved into one of the premier leadership training institutions in the world. The West Point Band was officially recognized by an act of Congress in 1817, making it the oldest band in the U.S. Army.

Known officially as the Field Music Group of the West Point Band, The Hellcats are comprised of six buglers, two piccolos, and five drummers, and are one of three performance elements in the West Point Band. They are the U.S. Army's only remaining traditional field music group and are responsible for continuing military field music support traditions at the U.S. Military Academy. This



The Hellcats

includes a live bugler to perform Reveille and Retreat ceremonies daily, and small ensemble support for all cadet accountability formations prior to breakfast and lunch.

All members of the West Point Band go through a rigorous audition process that is specific to the job requirements of each job opening. Once candidates are selected, they must complete U.S. Army Basic Combat Training before joining the West Point Band and eventually serving as a Non-Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Army. The West Point Band is one of four Army Special Bands, with the other three stationed in the Military District of Washington.

Today, drummers in The Hellcats serve an important role at the United States Military Academy and enjoy one of the most dynamic and varied responsibilities of all musicians in the U.S. Army's Special Bands. Duties include everything from early morning music for formations and keeping the cadets in step for drill and ceremony practice, full military honors for soldiers and veterans who have passed, feature performances at West Point and on various national and international stages, and performances for national and international media broadcasts.

The Hellcats have performed with the New York Philharmonic; as part of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Macy's July 4th Fireworks Spectacular; as featured performers in tattoos in the U.S., Germany, and Scotland; and for broadcasts on ABC, NBC, FoxNews, and BBC1. Additionally, The Hellcats have filled many roles in leading and instructing cadets, including running USMA Reception Day activities, instructing basic drill and ceremony techniques, and leading land navigation instruction for cadet summer training.

The Hellcats are excited to highlight and build on this rich history as part of their presentation for PASIC50. With the unique responsibilities of today's Hellcat drummers, they take pride in bridging the gap between the historic military roots of rudimental drumming and today's artistic and competitive drumming endeavors. The Hellcats will perform some of their standard traditional repertoire as well as some more modern compositions and look to expose the link between our shared rudimental drumming history and today's modern writing styles and performance techniques. In short, there's something for everyone, whether you are interested in "ancient" style drumming, modern drum corps and WGI drumming, or just getting a little history lesson on how our current art form evolved.

Biographies for current performers in The Hellcats: <https://band.westpoint.edu/hellcats/>.

Note: The Hellcats are currently looking to hire a rudimental drummer. The application window closes on Oct. 6, 2025. Audition requirements and other information are listed at: <https://band.westpoint.edu/audition/rudimental-drummer/>. PN

MARCHING

Shelby Shelton

Virtual Marching Clinic

MOVE IT! Front Ensemble Emotive Gestures

This interactive session will focus on strategies for teaching students to move with effectiveness and expressiveness while performing. We'll primarily explore front ensemble gestures that can enhance exercises or show music, helping to convey a broad range of emotions to the audience. Audience participants will engage in movement activities and observe student musicians demonstrating effective gestures in performance. We will also touch briefly on scientific studies that support the positive impact of gestures for musicians. While this clinic will focus on front ensembles, the techniques are applicable to other percussion instruments and chamber ensembles.

Shelby Shelton is an active performer, adjudicator, and educator. She is the director of percussion at Northwest Missouri State University and the Front Ensemble Coordinator at Carolina Crown. Shelby has worked with the Cavaliers, Sacramento Mandarins, Madison Scouts, George Mason Indoor percussion, Music City Drum Corps, Father Ryan High School, and Veritas indoor percussion. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in percussion performance at James Madison University. Her academic research is centered on emotive gestures and expression within the context of front ensemble.

KEYBOARD

Rim of the Well Trio

Virtual Keyboard Clinic / Performance

Marimba Improvisation in Flamenco-Fusion Style

Flamenco's sophisticated rhythms thrill audiences, and spontaneous improvised marimba adds new excitement. The Rim of the Well Trio — composer Steve Mullins, guitar; Doug Walter, marimba; and Carl Dixon, cajón — have performed for Flamenco dance parties, Flamenco school recitals, concerts and clubs in the U.S. & Europe. Steve's flamenco background and love of snare drum fuse complex, syncopated rhythms with Spanish Flamenco's aggressive, tragic vision. Doug will describe how well-timed phrasing leads to accuracy and why, for music of such passion, we practice dynamics as methodically as we work for speed. Flamenco rhythms shift between 3/4, 12/8 and 3/2. Doug will demonstrate improvising through these spontaneous metric modulations. Flamenco improvisation emphasizes exotic minor chords. Doug will teach marimbists to exploit these frenzied sounds and rhythms in a unique experience!

The Rim of the Well Trio plays Flamenco-Fusion improvised music. Dr. Doug Walter directs percussion at the University of Colorado Boulder. Composer, multi-instrumentalist and ethnomusicologist, Dr. Steve Mullins taught at the University of Colorado. His PhD dissertation, *Flamenco Gestures*, explores the aesthetics of Spanish Flamenco. Carl Dixon plays with the Brazilian band Ginga, teaches hand drums and percussion at University of Colorado Boulder, directs the Boulder Samba School, holds several orchestral positions, and is the founder of Virada Drums.

Santa Clara Vanguard at PASIC50

By Sean Womack

The 50th anniversary edition of PASIC will see the Santa Clara Vanguard (SCV) percussion section take the stage in Indianapolis as the featured Drum Corps International (DCI) percussion ensemble at this year's convention. Known for their innovative artistry and a rich tradition of excellence spanning decades, SCV will present their 2025 percussion ensemble, led by renowned designers, arrangers, and caption heads Sandi and Paul Rennick. This milestone PASIC session will not only celebrate SCV's continued excellence and influence in the marching percussion community but also PASIC's long history of hosting the marching arts activity's top ensembles.

Santa Clara Vanguard boasts an impressive history, having won seven DCI World Championships, most recently in 2018. Additionally, the percussion section has earned multiple Fred Sanford High Percussion Awards, named after the legendary SCV Percussion Caption Head Fred Sanford. SCV most recently won drums in 2024, shortly after a impressive run of four straight high-percussion awards from 2016–19.

Their 2025 production, titled "The aVAnt-Guard," explores avant-garde musical themes, blending classical compositions by Bartók and Corigliano with mod-

ern influences. This bold artistic direction continues to reflect SCV's commitment to pushing the boundaries and helping to redefine the drum corps experience.

At PASIC50 we will go behind the scenes with the Santa Clara Vanguard Percussion Ensemble. Under the guidance and direction of Sandi and Paul Rennick, the percussion section has helped shape the current marching percussive landscape in DCI and beyond. Seeing behind the curtain of SCV, the convention attendees will be able to see the people,

concepts, and processes that have helped create one of the most successful percussion ensembles in recent history.

SCV's presence at PASIC50 underscores the synergy between the marching arts and broader percussion disciplines, offering attendees a rare glimpse into the elite world of one of DCI's top ensembles. As the Vanguard percussionists take the stage, they not only honor their own legacy but also inspire the next generation of artists moving forward. We hope to see you in Indianapolis in November.



Santa Clara Vanguard Percussion Section

Sean Womack is the Associate Director of Bands/Director of Percussion at North Forsyth High School in Cumming, Georgia. Womack received his Bachelor of Science in Music Education degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and a Master of Music in Percussion Performance degree from the University of Georgia. He is the co-founder and former partner of DoubleStop Percussion LLC, a percussion education company in Birmingham, Alabama. He is an active arranger and designer in the marching arts and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the country. Womack also serves as chair of the PAS Marching/Rudimental Committee. His music is published through Tapspace. [PN](#)

SYMPHONIC

Leonardo Soto

Symphonic Clinic / Performance

Andy Akiho Timpani Concerto

Leonardo Soto will be performing a timpani concerto, accompanied by electronics, written by Andy Akiho, which will be premiered with the Houston Symphony in March 2026.

Leonardo R. Soto, Jr. is the Principal Timpanist of the Houston Symphony since 2018. He is also timpanist at the Grand Teton Music Festival and was an active member of Miami's Nu-Deco ensemble. Leo has performed with such orchestras as Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Seoul Philharmonic, and Orquesta Filarmonica de Santiago. Leo is a co-founder faculty at the International Timpani Intensive, a faculty member at Frost School of Music at the University of Miami and the Brevard Music Festival, and he has conducted masterclasses at such universities as Northwestern, DePaul, Rice, Denver, UGA, Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Seoul, and Carnegie Hall's NYO.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Quey Percussion Duo (Gene Koshinski and Tim Broschious)

Daytime Showcase Concert

Next New Thing

Our showcase concert will feature some of the newest projects we have been working on, including several world premieres. The cornerstone to the program will be the unveiling of the digital playback version of Gene Koshinski's massive double percussion concerto "soniChroma." This 25-minute work is dynamic, colorful, and fills the stage with over 80 percussion instruments! We couldn't think of a more perfect place than PASIC50 to showcase our "next new thing."

For over 20 years, Quey Percussion Duo (Gene Koshinski and Tim Broschious) has blended traditions of contemporary, cross-cultural, classical, and popular music to create colorful sound worlds that often place focus on interlocking counterpoint and musical multi-tasking. The duo has performed in 14 countries and four continents and has worked with music festivals, art galleries, chamber music series, professional orchestras, TV/film, and have engaged in more than 200 university residencies worldwide. Through their focus on creating high-level video content, their digital audience has climbed to over four million viewers and counting. They hold the only full-time residency by a percussion duo in the U.S. at the University of Delaware.

Morse Percussion

Daytime Showcase Concert

Singapore Sounds

The music culture of Singapore is a vibrant and dynamic blend of various influences, reflecting the country's multicultural society. Singapore has cultivated a rich and diverse music scene that spans classical, contemporary, traditional, and popular genres, with a population made up of a mix of ethnicities — Chinese, Malay, Indian, and others — each with their own musical traditions. This multiculturalism is reflected in Singapore's music, which combines elements from a wide array of traditions: Chinese music, Malay drumming, Indian konnakol, Southeast Asian musical roots, etc. Morse Percussion brings a plethora of contemporary percussion music featuring Singaporean roots and instruments found in Asian traditions, while incorporating the sensitivity and colors that you might expect from a percussion chamber group.

Morse Percussion is a contemporary classical percussion group formed in 2020 by Derek Koh and Joachim Lim. Morse Percussion aims to inspire and cultivate interest through exquisite modern practices and compelling productions with the goal to be Singapore's first professional percussion group characterized by musical diversity and excellence. An ardent supporter of commissioning Singaporean works, Morse Percussion has commissioned 12 Singaporean percussion works.

SYMPHONIC

Frank Epstein

Symphonic Cymbals Lab

Since 1968, Frank Epstein has been a percussionist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Retired from the orchestra after a 43-year tenure, Frank was a member of the Tanglewood Music Center faculty as well as the Chairman of the Percussion and Brass departments at the New England Conservatory. As one of the founders of the Collage New Music Ensemble, he served as their musical director for over 25 years, and authored the book *Cymbalisms*, a complete guide for the orchestral cymbal player.

Mental Floss

Variations to test your brain

By Gene Fambrough

I am excited to have the opportunity to share one of my favorite clinic topics in the form of a virtual session for the 50th Anniversary of PASIC. I believe it will be beneficial to have a video record of the session in order to allow continued reference to this topic; as you can imagine, since we are testing our brains with this system, some of the concepts presented can seem dense at first – but that is the point!

It has been my experience that students will readily admit that mistakes in performances, rehearsals, or practice sessions occur mostly because of a lapse in concentration. We can develop our hands and literature to the point of perfection, only to get lost in the form or let our mind drift unintentionally. This virtual session aims to provide an approach to “train your brain” to help address these issues.

The idea of these challenges goes back several decades, and possibly further; Tom Float utilized many of these ideas 45 years ago. Different from the concept of “gridding,” which combines two or more elements in order to focus on physical dexterity (i.e., “chops”), this system is meant to be mentally challenging instead of physically challenging. Another significant difference is to avoid notation if possible; once the basic pattern and variation is understood, players should “think” their way through the exercise. It is this process that subsequently improves your mental awareness.

EXPLANATION

We begin by using one of the most common exercises as our explanation and subsequent point of departure, the sixteenth-note accent pattern (4-2-1):



Understanding the construction of this exercise is important: 4 counts of each pattern (played one time), 2 counts of each pattern (played twice), and finally 1 count of each pattern (played 4 times). This is referred to as a “4-2-1” format and is commonly applied to other elements of drumming (timing, diddles, flams, rolls, etc.).



Using this concept, there are six different variations to be applied (by increasing difficulty): Element, Count, Order, Structure, Sticking, and Metronome.

ELEMENT VARIATION

The first variation we can apply is to change the element of the exercise; in this case, we'll add a second accent following the initial accent in each pattern:



With double accents as our new element, we then proceed with a 4-2-1 format.

Other examples of element variation include substituting diddles for accents (or 5-stroke rolls for double accents), adding flams on accents, or adding diddles before or after accents.

COUNT VARIATION

We can also change the count structure of the exercise (i.e., how many repeats for each individual “thing”). Simply put, instead of the standard 4-2-1 format (which reinforces typical 4-bar phrase structure), we can use any other arrangement of repetitions and groups we desire. Examples include:

- 5 counts (1 x); 3 counts (3 x); 1 count (5 x)
- 4 counts (1 x); 3 counts (2 x); 2 counts (3 x); 1 count (4 x)
- 5 counts (1 x); 4 counts (1 x); 3 counts (1 x); 2 counts (1 x); 1 count (1 x)

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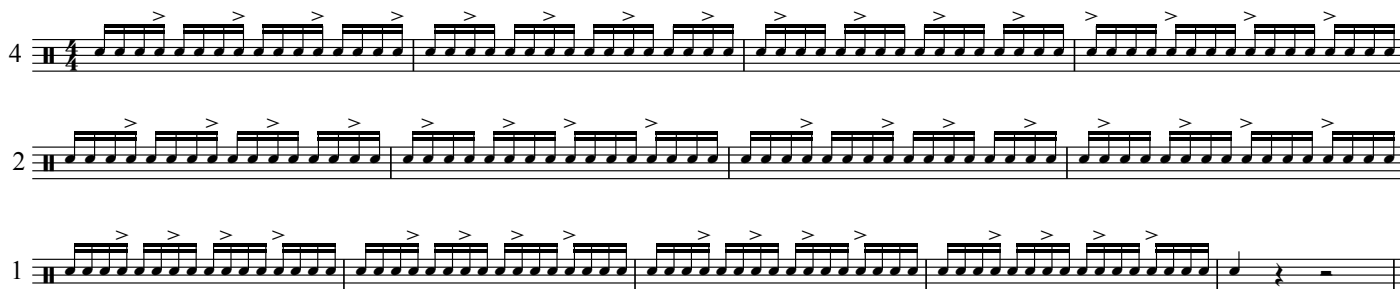
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ORDER VARIATION

Continuing with the sixteenth-note accent pattern (using 4-2-1 for clarity), we can change the order of elements to create a new variation of the exercise. The most logical order variation is to play the exercise “backwards,” i.e., starting with the accent on the “a,” then the “&,” then “e,” and finally accents on downbeats:



The order of accents can be arranged in any way imaginable (think permutations for four mallets), and can create some interesting mental challenges as a result of how we normally arrange the accents. As an example, try shifting the accents by one sixteenth note (e - & - a - 1) and notice how your brain tries to adjust where each phrase begins.

STRUCTURE VARIATION

In structure variation, we can change the structure to what is referred to as “forwards/backwards.” This is an alternation of the smaller sets (4’s, 2’s, 1’s) between forwards and backwards.

This subsequently opens up other interesting possibilities, such as creating longer patterns by interlacing forwards and backwards with each other, or even between sixteenth and triplet partials. More options become available by how you decide to relate the hand motion between sixteenth and triplet partials.

OTHER VARIATIONS

The other types of variation that will be explained are sticking variations and metronome variations, each presenting their own sets of challenges. Due to the “rabbit hole” nature of this topic, the more you experiment the more you will discover. It is only limited by your imagination; there are no rules other than the ones you decide for yourself, and your success is determined by how well you follow those rules.

Fortunately for me (and unfortunately for some students), all of these variations can be combined to create an endless supply of material. Each time I revisit this concept (including for this article), I discover additional possibilities to test out and work through. It is my hope that after this session you can embrace the benefits of this method and realize the effectiveness of the “mental challenge” technique. With some thought, percussionists can apply this in other settings – drumset, keyboards, and marching percussion for starters – and help their students become lifelong learners.

Gene Fambrough is professor of percussion at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he has been on the faculty since 2001. [PN](#)

Expansive Approach to Timbre on Marimba

By Payton MacDonald

I've always been an improviser since day one — since I was 10 years old. When I finished university and started building my career, it was firmly in the contemporary classical realm. This involved improvisation, but I was primarily playing very difficult non-improvised music. For example, I commissioned solo marimba pieces from Charles Wuorinen and Stuart Saunders Smith, whilst playing with Alarm Will Sound and with the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble. That was mostly non-improvised. At that time, it felt like I had a whole, different life as an improviser outside those spaces.

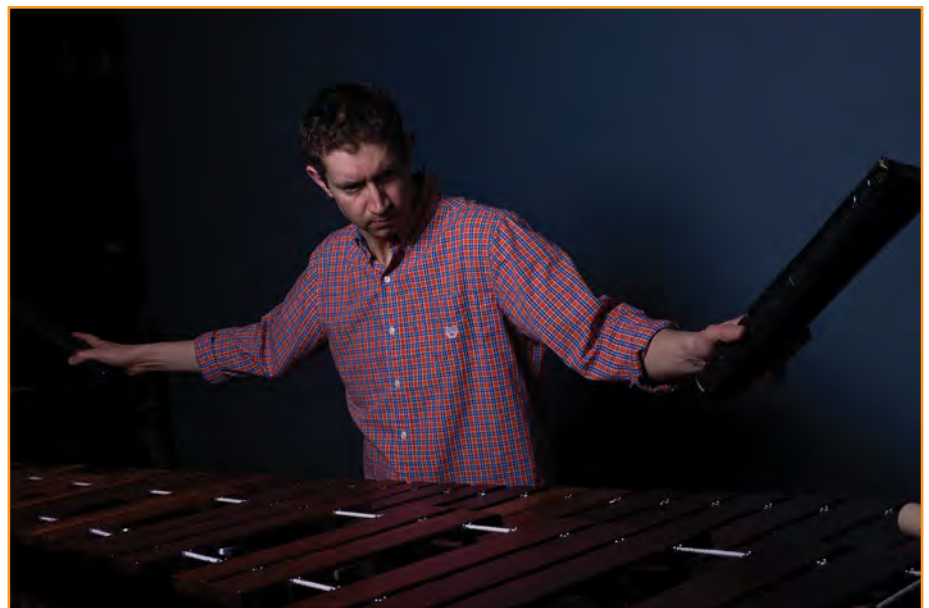
Over the past 10–15 years, I've become deeply involved in a community of improvisers for whom extended techniques are normalized. For us, timbre is an essential and foundational aspect of musicianship and a prominent structural device for composing and improvising alongside rhythm, harmony, melody, and other parameters of organized sound. I'm now doing more improvising than non-improvised music, although I still do the latter with my students in the university. However, the recordings I'm releasing and the performances I'm doing are in the improvised realm, where timbral exploration is integral to the work.

The inspiration for this improvised music draws back to the 1960s with John

Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Anthony Braxton, the creative musicians affiliated with the AACM, and it continues to present day. Most of these people approach their instruments with great breadth in terms of timbre. They were all trained with standard technique, including a basic understanding on how to produce a “good” sound on the instrument. From there, they developed all sorts of other sounds that are not viewed as “less good,” they're just other sounds that you can make on the instrument. This has connections with John Cage's ideas about

sound as a non-moral compass. We can appreciate any sound for its beauty.

With these ideas guiding me, I proceeded doing things that were very simple, and frankly, not very innovative. Other people had already done them. I started working more with preparations on the instrument: putting things on top of it, putting things between the bars and the resonators, moving the upper manual bars around. Instead of the regular pattern of 2-3-2-3, I might have six notes in a row. They're the same chunks of wood, but by physically moving them around,



Payton MacDonald

my relationship with the instrument changes dramatically. I do this for a couple of reasons. It makes the instrument feel a lot different. Plus, in a certain way, it instantly erases 400 years of keyboard history. This frees me up to consider the marimba as a kind of multiple percussion instrument rather than a keyboard instrument.

I have also started building all sorts of different mallets. Some ideas were borrowed from things other people had done, like the slap mallets, which Keiko Abe was doing in the late 1970s. Others, I had not seen anyone do, but they weren't very complicated or expensive. I just started attaching things to mallets and covering them. I also built up my six-mallet technique, which enabled me to approach the instrument a little bit differently. I started building large cluster beaters, an expansion of the slap mallet idea.

Historically, in terms of expansive timbre on marimba, other than Keiko's work and one other person, Stacey Bowers, not a lot has been done. Abe-sensei could play the most beautiful Bach. Then she could approach this instrument with unbelievable force and energy, treating it more like a bunch of wooden drums. She used a wide range of mallets and beaters. Bowers wrote études for prepared marimba in the 1970s. He includes a preparation chart, like John Cage's "Sonatas and Interludes," and tells you what to put between the bars or under the bars with specific instructions — for example, a piece of cork or tinfoil.

BEYOND THE INSTRUMENT AND ITS HISTORY/ CHAMPIONS

The thing is, I'm not really a percussionist. I'm a composer and improviser who plays percussion. The percussionists I mentioned comprise a smaller proportion of my influences than the broader contemporary literature: Xenakis, Lachenmann, Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell, Elliott Sharp, Cage, Harrison, Feldman, and so many others — both

their improvised music and non-improvised music. Hearing the Bergamot string quartet play "Grído" (Lachenmann's Third String Quartet), was one of those nights where, 20 minutes later, I was a different person. It changed me and made me understand why people are interested in his compositions. His exploration of timbre is almost unparalleled; the sounds he gets out of string instruments are things I had never heard a string quartet do before. Finally, nature also plays an important role in influencing what I do. I do projects where I'm out hiking and biking and often take time to just sit and listen. There are amazing sounds out there.

NEW SOUNDS AND NOVELTY-SEEKING

To a certain extent, I'm less interested in whether what I'm doing is new or not anymore, because the more pressing question is if what I'm doing, at this moment, is musically viable and musically necessary. Sometimes I catch myself, essentially, practicing in front of people in a performance, where I'm exploring new things, but not really for any good reason. That may not have anything to do with what is happening on stage, especially if I'm working with other people. In that case, it might be new, it might be innovative, but it's probably not great musicianship. So, in that context, I find the quest for something new to be irrelevant.

I'll never forget what Glenn Gould once said when talking about counterpoint: "It doesn't matter who does it first. What really matters is who does it best." Bach wasn't the first contrapuntist, right? But he sure did it awfully well.

I'm always exploring — always trying to broaden my horizons and go places I haven't been. It's how I'm wired. I very much enjoy the process of getting to a place where I almost feel like I'm losing control. That's one indication that I'm somewhere new. Another very good indication is when I'm in a place of discomfort. I constantly seek a Sense of Wonder, something science fiction writers desire. The Sense of Wonder is a feeling and an

experience of something entirely new, unlike anything you've experienced before, which completely changes your worldview. That, to me, is one of the gold standards of great experimental music. It takes me somewhere I've never been before, somewhere new.

In a similar vein, whilst playing I may be hearing something but can't do it. That means I have to build my technique towards it. Technique doesn't always necessarily mean faster. We often think of technique in this very drum corps sort of way: faster, louder, cleaner, right? But technique is more expansive than that: sometimes it means developing a whole new physical approach to the instrument, or other times technique means being able to manage my mind in a way that allows my body and the instrument to connect in new ways.

I very much enjoy being on those frontiers, but sometimes it isn't necessary. Sometimes the best thing I can do is just play a beautiful open fifth and let it resonate and be done with it — with a pair of medium yarn mallets.

An area where I found novelty-seeking to be of particular interest is with social media. With my Instagram account, I noticed that when I put up a short reel of myself moving around the instrument, in a very aggressive, physical way, sort of going crazy with these these "stochastic" mallets I'll get a lot of plays. They're simply yarn mallets with a pingpong ball that I attached to them. It took maybe five to fifteen minutes to make them. When you play with them, the ball bounces around in these weird ways. It's also very visually interesting, because you see so much going on.

When I put up a post of me using just normal medium yarn mallets playing something sweet and tuneful, I *might* get a thousand plays. The stochastic mallets are not inherently better, they're just more titillating to people.

I have felt that little urge sometimes in thinking, "Oh, I haven't had a video that got a lot of hits for a while; maybe I should find something even crazier to do." But to

me, that's kind of a dead-end street. You get diminishing returns with that after a while, and I'm not sure that it would be musically necessary. It doesn't have any musical value; rather, it is just clamoring for attention.

BUSINESS MECHANISM

The fixation on the new is part of this high modernist tradition that we have inherited to some extent as percussionists. It's a beautiful tradition. I love that you can have Braxton and Aphex Twin and Meredith Monk all in the same conversation. But, it also can create this weird pressure where you feel like you always have to produce something new. That way, the critics will get interested and it'll lead to more commissions. There's a whole business mechanism with all this, which I try to eschew and instead focus on what I'm doing musically.

That business mechanism has to do with carving out a place for yourself in this very crowded and, unfortunately, underfunded ecosystem. Ideally, if you create a unique place/space, then that can lead to attention one way or another, which can then lead to commissions. Then more people will go to your concerts, commission you, buy tickets, buy your scores, etc. Of course, we all want gigs; I'm not going to ignore that fact. And we all want to get paid well for those gigs. There's nothing wrong with that. I just want to make sure I'm not losing focus on why I got into this in the first place. After all, if all I cared about was money I would have pursued a completely different career.

LIMITATIONS

There may actually be a limit to the number of things you can do on the instrument. I don't feel that I've hit that limit yet, but I only have two arms and, thankfully, 10 fingers. I can hold up to eight mallets at a time, but it gets kind of clumsy at that point. Six mallets is more manageable. I spend most of my time with four mallets in my hands. The instrument has a fixed range. The bars are

a certain width; the sustain only so long, etc. There are limitations.

For a lot of the repertoire we play, a lot of the composers worked with the performer. I know when Druckman wrote "Reflections on the Nature of Water," he had accomplished marimbists guiding him, and part of the reason that piece is such a joy to play is because it's so idiomatic. It fits quite well under the hands, for the most part. It generally does things that the marimba does well: it's spacious, it's often in a sweet part of the range. I think that's one of the reasons it holds up over the years, in addition to the fact that it's compositionally very strong. All that is to say: we have limitations. There are things the instrument can do and things it can't. There are things our bodies can do, and things they can't. That does dictate some of what I can do when I'm improvising. But I'm always pushing against those limitations, trying to find something new, something different, and hopefully something beautiful and wonderful.

Payton MacDonald is a composer, percussionist (specializing in keyboard percussion), singer, and filmmaker. He explores the frontiers of art in a variety of settings, from Carnegie Hall to remote wilderness locations. He spent his early years drumming along with jazz records, while exploring the Rocky Mountains near his home in Idaho by foot, bicycle, and skis. Eventually he was shaped into a percussionist who plays marimbas, vibes, snare drums, bicycles, plants, pots and pans, and anything else that might produce an interesting tone. Along the way Payton discovered Indian classical music, and he has studied that music for over 20 years. He often dreams up and executes large-scale, ambitious projects, such as his film *Sonic Divide*, which shows Payton pedaling his mountain bike 2,500 miles along the Continental Divide, while performing 30 new pieces of music, or his *Sonic Peaks* project, in which Payton hikes to the summit of hundreds of mountains and creates new music reflecting those

experiences. He has released over 100 recordings. Payton studied music formally at the University of Michigan (BFA) and Eastman School of Music (MM and DMA), as well as with the legendary Gundecha Brothers (Dhrupad vocal) and Pandit Sharda Sahai (tabla). He teaches music at William Paterson University, and tours nationally and internationally as a percussionist, improviser, and composer. **PN**

KEYBOARD

Kana Omori

Keyboard Clinic / Performance

Resonating Roots: Traditional Japan

Reimagined for Marimba

This performance features three original new marimba works that embody the spirit of ancient Japan, its rich culture, and the beauty of its natural landscapes. The clinic will delve into the cultural and musical elements behind these works, offering insight into traditional Japanese music from three distinct perspectives. Kana Omori will perform sections from longer pieces and full-length performances for the others. Each piece will be accompanied by a clinic presentation portion explaining various Japanese ideologies and elements found in these pieces.

Kana Omori is an international marimbist, percussionist, and composer from Japan. She has been awarded several prizes, including the First Prize and Absolute Prize at the International Percussion Competition in Italy. Kana is an associate professor at the Osaka College of Music. She has released seven albums of marimba music, and many of her arrangements and compositions are published by Edition Svitzer. As a soloist, Kana has performed with many orchestras in various countries and has given recitals and masterclasses in countries across Europe, North America, Latin America, and Asia. She is also a faculty member and a composer-in-residence of the Marimbafest, International Marimba Festival and Competition, in Australia.

Nancy Zeltsman Solo marimba: “drinking water”

By Rick Mattingly

While planning her sabbatical from teaching at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and Berklee College of Music, Nancy Zeltsman thought of the phrase “drinking water.” It seemed to fit as she was selecting music for a new concert program and recording. “A memory came to me. When my father was in his late 90s and woke from a nap, he relished savoring a sip of water to revive himself,” Nancy recalled. It occurred to her “that was exactly what I was doing with this project. I was striving to have that kind of gentle rejuvenation.” So “drinking water” became the name of her program and recording.

Weeks later, she wondered if anyone had ever written music with that title. She searched the name and found “Água de Beber” — which translates to “Drinking Water” or “Water to Drink” — by Antônio Carlos Jobim. “Most of the music I was considering was a bit obscure, and that is one of the less-often-played Jobim tunes,” she said. “So it fit.”

Given that Zeltsman’s career has spanned some 45 years, and in that time she has played a lot of music, why not do what many musicians do after they have been concertizing for many years: revisit pieces they have played in the past? They often find that after not having played a piece for several years, they approach it with a fresh perspective. “I can see it would make sense to play pieces that were written for me and that I have a close association with,” she admits, “but I wanted to do something different. I’ve always been drawn to discovering new music. I wanted to find music that would spark something in me: pieces that I’ve never heard before on marimba. I wanted this program to be an example of how you can find completely different music from what others are playing.

“One of the toughest challenges for musicians is trying to decide what to learn to play next. Students often feel drawn to the pieces in online videos that have some ‘buzz’ around them, or pieces known to be the ‘tough’ ones. You don’t have to feel pres-

sure to learn music that is already being played by others. I encourage students to visit a library with no preconceptions about what they will find. That’s tricky for students who don’t like to



CLAUDIA HANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Nancy Zeltsman

sightread, so instead they copy performances in impressive videos. But someone has already done that. Of course, we learn by copying people we admire, and if a piece really speaks to you, and you feel it would fit well into one of your programs, that's all great. But don't forget you can find your own thing."

Most of the works on Zeltsman's PASIC recital will be ones that she found, adapted and/or arranged, and learned during her fall 2024 sabbatical: "Passatempi" ("Pastime") by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, originally written for piano; "Suite in B minor, LV 65" by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, originally for harpsichord; "West Virginia Rose" / "The Water is Wide," written/improvised on piano by Fred Hersch; "Star" by Moto Fukushima, originally

pianist sort of tearing through it — it's easier for them to play fast with ten fingers! — but the piece didn't appeal to me as much then. If I had heard the fast recording before seeing the score, I might either not have been drawn to the piece at all, or figured it was too virtuosic to approach with four mallets." But Nancy had seen the score, and saw greater musical potential in it when it was approached at a gentler tempo.

"Another revelation was exploring the Baroque-period piece by Zachow, a composer and organist who had been the sole teacher of Handel. I had an opportunity to consult Joseph Gascho, a harpsichordist and early music specialist on faculty at University of Michigan, about it. Based on what I told him

I still want to help the marimba find its voice.

for six-string electric bass; an excerpt from "Bridge Over Troubled Water" by Paul Simon; and "Água de Beber" by Jobim.

Her PASIC program will contain a few pieces that Nancy has played and recorded in the past including Simon's "Amulet" and "Over There" by Carla Bley, both from the *Intermediate Masterworks for Marimba* collection (the result of a project that Nancy co-led). In honor of the 100th birthday year of Gunther Schuller — a composer with whom Nancy was very close — she will share an excerpt of "Phantasmata" for violin and marimba, dedicated to Nancy's duo Marimolin. The final movement begins with a three-minute marimba solo focused in the lower register that, compositionally, Zeltsman sees as a standout within the marimba repertoire. "Gunther's insistence on the use of soft mallets in the lowest register of the marimba to bring out the fundamental pitches was transformational in my approach to the marimba."

By the time of Zeltsman's PASIC recital, her new album, also called *drinking water*, will have been released on Bandcamp and streaming services, with program notes available on Zeltsman's website. That album will include a few additional new recordings (not on Nancy's PASIC program) by David Friedman, Manuel Ponce, and Joep Straesser.

Given that her program comprises a lot of music that was not originally written for marimba, how did she approach learning new pieces? "First, I was drawn to pieces that struck me as unusual and interesting, and that I felt would hold my interest for a long time, with much to delve into and unravel. Each piece felt like a strong musical world, with interesting or unusual harmonies and forms, that represented many styles, and that would also complement each other within a collection.

"I'm usually drawn to a piece based on sightreading it before listening to a recording," she explains. "Sometimes I would then find a recording that went in directions I didn't particularly like. Actually, that very fact could be inspiring and encourage me to delve into a piece more; maybe I could bring something new to it. For example, the Castelnuovo-Tedesco begins with the marking 'Un poco mosso' — a little motion. I heard a recording of a

stood out to me in the piece, Gascho suggested and encouraged that I could alter the register of some lines, delete or add any ornaments, and possibly even rearrange the movements, and re-meter one movement, all of which I did. I never would have thought of or dared to do most of this on my own, but learning that this was all within acceptable practices was fascinating and drew me in more deeply."

Nancy constructed her marimba version of the Jobim piece by adapting elements of an arrangement she found online by Italian jazz pianist MauColi as a skeleton for the piece. She transcribed the rhythm of the melody as Frank Sinatra had recorded it, added some smooth chromatic chord voicings David Friedman showed her in a couple of bars, and transcribed and inserted a cello solo recorded by Jaques Morelenbaum with a tinge of his wife Paula's rhythmic vocals.

"I feel like I still want to help the marimba find its voice. I would hope that people might hear a piece played on the marimba that wasn't written for marimba, and realize it sounds so natural that it could have been written for marimba. And they may hear the instrument in a new way."

Zeltsman, a PAS Hall of Fame inductee, is no stranger to PASIC. She first performed there with Marimolin in 1988 and has since performed a number of times in solo and duo settings. "This is in some ways an 'unflashy' program. I was pulled toward music with particular types of challenges that interested me. I wasn't guessing at what would be 'audience pleasing' — although it may be — or wishing to be bold. My choices came from wanting to be peaceful and less noisy than most of the world and not being pressured to be cutting-edge. I wanted to share something simple, and perhaps refreshing — like drinking water." **PN**

Elevating the Performance of Modern Masterpieces for Marimba

By Ji Hye Jung

In our time together at PASIC50 we will be discussing how to elevate your performance of modern masterpieces for marimba. The suggested repertoire includes some of my favorite pieces: “Time for Marimba” by Minoru Miki, “Dances of Earth and Fire” by Peter Klatzow, “Velocities” by Joseph Schwanter, “Two Movements” by Toshimitsu Tanaka, and “Khan Variations” by Alejandro Viñao.

My goal with this masterclass is to help performers go beyond the notes on the page to fully express themselves through their playing. More than anything, I would love to see more players connect better with the music. For me, performing music can be vulnerable, personal, and scary, but whenever I focus on how excited I am to share my love, reflection, and respect towards the piece and composer, it always seems to go better.

When I was younger, I used to think that the musical ideas all came from mastering the notes, but I have grown to believe that we need to develop our minds and ears to shape our ideas about the music. It is crucial to have a clear perspective from the earliest stages of learning a piece to achieve a personal connection with the music.

There are three steps I try to consider: knowing the score, understanding the composer’s intentions, and creating your own informed interpretation. First, try to digest everything on the page, even the smallest dots. Dynamics, expression markings, articulations, and phrase-markings all need to be observed. This is how the composers communicate with us. Sometimes, I pretend that I am a detective decoding the most important messages from the composer to solve a puzzle. Practicing and learning can be tiring and boring, so try to have fun finding the clues that the composer has left for you.

Memorization can be helpful for performance, but only if every detail of the score is present. I often feel that students are

too eager to memorize the music without having first absorbed all the information on the page. This can lead young players to



Ji Hye Jung

It is crucial to have a clear perspective from the earliest stages of learning a piece to achieve a personal connection with the music.

misunderstand the music or even misrepresent a piece. As this initial learning is happening, you can begin to convert the information on the page into sounds, colors, and expressions. Your personal interpretation of the piece begins here.

The next element I like to consider is the composer's intentions. What do composers mean when they write an accent in the music? Are all accents considered equal? Why does the piece begin with a rest? How can I perform the rest, and how do the notes around it relate to the empty space? Asking questions can lead you to clues that lead you to your interpretation.

Understanding a composer is critical too. Every piece of context you can collect is helpful. For me, this makes it easier to connect with the music. Try to research everything about a composer by learning about their lives and what informs their perspective. I find that music is most impactful when I can find a personal connection.

Program notes and websites are a great place to start and, with living composers, it is often possible to connect through email and social media. Listen to recordings of not only the piece you are learning, but other works from the same composer. I also recommend that your listening expand beyond the world of percussion, especially if a composer has written for other instruments.

If you are having difficult time connecting with the music, start by asking what you like about the piece or think about your favorite moments in the work. If you don't have one, consider what you admire or respect about the music or the composer. After living with a piece for a while, you will naturally grow to respect and appreciate it.

The final step is the most fun and one of my favorite parts of being a performer: telling stories through the music. We are using the notes, ideas, and intentions from the composer, but making something special and individual.

We may enjoy hearing a familiar piece of music, but we also like to see the live version of a particular musician. It's because we want to hear what the performer has to say: their specific interpretation, and personal touch. That makes the live performance so special and exciting for me. It's not the perfect accuracy; what makes live performance special is how performers move the audience with their story.

These are just my suggestions based on my performing and teaching experience. There are many ways to go about connecting with the pieces you are learning. I hope that you will find your own ways to guide yourself to more personal, unique, and exciting performances!

Ji Hye Jung has been acclaimed as "spectacular" by the *Los Angeles Times* and "extraordinary" by the *Ventura County Star*. She began performing in South Korea at age 9 and has since given over 100 concerts, including with major Korean orchestras. After moving to the U.S. in 2003, she won first prizes at the 2006 Linz International Marimba Competition and the 2007 Yale Gordon Concerto Competition. Committed to advancing percussion repertoire, Ms. Jung collaborates with composers and has commissioned works from various artists. For over a decade, she has been the principal percussionist for Camerata Pacifica, debuting pieces by notable composers. Recent solo performances include festivals in Ireland, Korea, Portugal, South Africa, Hong Kong, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Finland. Since 2015, she has been Associate Professor of Percussion at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and she serves as Artist Director for Chamber Music City and Nashville Marimba Sessions. **PN**

DRUMSET

Gregg Bissonette

Drumset Clinic

Drumset Grooves Every Serious Drummer Should Know

How many of these drumset grooves will you recognize? From jazz to rock to swing, from fusion to hip-hop to funk, from Latin to Afro-Cuban to R&B, Gregg Bissonette will challenge your ears to identify classic grooves that have become part of our musical lexicon. From "Wipeout" to "Sing, Sing, Sing" to contemporary classics, Gregg will share his experience in all these styles and teach everyone to be a musical drummer.

Gregg Bissonette is one of the most versatile drummers in the business. Currently touring with Ringo Starr and the All Starr Band, Bissonette has played live and on recordings with countless artists in a variety of styles, as well as in film and television. Bissonette has played with David Lee Roth, James Taylor, Santana (on his Grammy-winning album *Supernatural*), Don Henley, Joe Satriani, Andrea Bocelli, ELO, Maynard Ferguson, Spinal Tap, Steve Lukather, The Reddcoats, and countless others. Gregg has recorded for numerous films, TV shows, and the Buddy Rich Memorial Concert and video. He recently recorded video lessons for Kennan Wylie's drumset method books (Hal Leonard) and has three solo CDs. He also has an award-winning 2-disc DVD, *Musical Drumming in Different Styles* (Hudson Music).

Heart, Body, Mind: The Art of Melodic Construction

By Stefon Harris

Start with expression: what's on your heart? Can you just speak that? Just emote? Then add music to it — put a pitch to that emotion, then put chords to that emotion. This way, what's centered in the music-making process is always the human experience, not just an intellectual understanding of the science of music, nor a theoretically led approach. Usually, people learn chords then create melodies off of those; I teach people to start with melody, because melody is fundamentally the heart and soul of music.

We often overlook this fundamental role of melody, instead paying attention to technical gymnastics, or the idea that the more you know, the better. I'm an advocate of deeply understanding the fundamentals.

Part of my ambition is to create a safe space for people to be vulnerable enough to create in this direction. Rather than looking at the relationships between the notes of a melody and the notes of a chord, you have to truly learn to feel those frequencies in your heart and *skin*, connecting with your innate ability to express emotion.

Using Solfège, I teach how each individual note feels, without any harmony moving around that. To facilitate harmony, I've developed an app, Harmony Cloud, which will create amazing progressions around

those melodies, reversing that theoretically led harmony-first approach which is the hegemon. Before my PASIC session, we will have released an updated version of Harmony Cloud that covers probably 90% of all the chords in Western Harmony, including 13ths, sharp 11ths, and 9ths, while the previous version primarily covered triads. This enriched version allows for a more lush musical experience and one that is more indicative of the styles people would be playing in real-life contexts.

I approach teaching music and learning music not as a quantitative science, not about how much you know, but as a qual-

itative science, something felt and experienced.

First, we get people beyond the mind: we just sing together, closing our eyes, learning to listen and feel how we fit with one another. I will start by getting people up, vibrating together on a single pitch. We will learn how to feel the first note, then the second, then the third. We'll learn to make a melody with those notes, and we will improvise melodies together. It doesn't matter if someone has a background in musical improvisation or not. If you can sing a pitch with a group, I'll show you how to be liberated with just a few notes.



Stefon Harris

SHAHAR AZRAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Then I will gradually introduce the concept of harmony around that, using Harmony Cloud as a tool to support it. This will be equally great for percussionists because the concept and format have nothing to do with genre. It's not for jazz musicians or classical musicians or marching enthusiasts; it's for anyone exploring melody, regardless of genre. I hope that attendees will feel liberated and confident to pick up their instrument and just make music.

My aim, irrespective of who I'm presenting for, musicians or not, is to demonstrate the science of empathy, how to listen to one another, and how to empower one another. I'm hoping to inspire the type of courage and vulnerability needed to have a sense of ownership over this beautiful science.

Regarding the importance of improvisation, I'm particularly interested in the fundamental requirement for empathy when you're improvising. Particularly with another person, the first thing you have to do is quiet the ego. Understand that it's not about your ideas, which only take shape relative to how other people react to them. When we start improvising, we need to learn to put an idea out in the world, and learn to wait and see how other people react to it. When they react to it, they infuse your original idea with new ideas that you couldn't have even imagined yourself.

So that idea comes back to you completely anew. Then you contribute to it again; it's a beautiful lesson about humanity inherent in the science of improvisation. I can confidently say I'm a better father and husband as a result of having spent years improvising.

Looking at jazz specifically, the impetus for the birth of jazz was a need people had to sing the truth about themselves. In the United States, people who didn't speak the same languages nor practice the same religions were brought here involuntarily from Africa. When they arrived, they were not allowed to speak the truth about who they were. The only time they were allowed to speak this truth about what

was on their heart, and show their intelligence, would have been in church on Sundays when they were left alone.

In that church setting, one person stands up and has a short chance — a window of opportunity — to sing from the bottom of their heart what is most meaningful for them. Everyone else sits and listens then says "Amen" to chime in and support them. Then they sit down, and the next person has an opportunity. Then everyone participates. This incredible sense of community gave birth to the need for jazz in this world. It's definitely not about the individual genius; it's about projecting something that is authentic from your heart. In that process, you are actually helping other people to be and feel seen; none of us are as unique as we'd like to think.

If you are authentic and singing from your heart, you're singing the narratives of your ancestors whether you realize it or not. You're singing their dreams. When you're improvising, that is what's coming through you: the common experiences of the people in the neighborhoods where you grew up. They may have simply not cultivated the skillset or talent related to music to express that.

As musicians, as improvisers, we have the privilege and responsibility to be true to ourselves so that we can in turn be true to our communities. This is why jazz was born, and at the center of it all is empathy.

Stefon Harris is a four-time Grammy-nominated jazz vibraphonist, educator, app developer, and thought leader. He has been heralded as "one of the most important artists in jazz" (*Los Angeles Times*) and is a recipient of the prestigious Doris Duke Artist Award and the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center. Along with performing, Harris has taught at universities throughout the world, led curriculum development at the Brubeck Institute, served as a part of the jazz faculty at New York University, and formerly served as the Associate Dean and Director of Jazz Arts at Manhattan School of Music. He is currently Artistic Advisor

of Jazz Education at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), a tenured Associate Professor of Music at Rutgers University – Newark, Director of the Harmony Lab, and Co-Director of Express Newark. In 2013, he founded The Melodic Progression Institute (MPI) and created a revolutionary ear training app called Harmony Cloud, which is widely used by musicians across multiple genres. His 2012 TED Talk, "There Are No Mistakes on the Bandstand," has gained nearly 900,000 views. [PN](#)

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Portland Percussion Group

Daytime Showcase Concert

Patterns & Form by Alejandro Viñao

Beginning in 2022, the Portland Percussion Group led a commissioning consortium for the creation of a new multi-movement work by composer Alejandro Viñao for percussion octet and piano. The consortium includes a group of 25 institutions, organizations, and individuals from throughout the United States, Canada, Japan, and Sweden. "Patterns & Form" was completed in November 2024, in three movements, with a length of 25 minutes. The instrumentation is two xylophones, two vibraphones, two marimbas, glockenspiel, chimes, crotales, bongos, congas, guiro, bass drum, suspended cymbal, and piano. The Portland Percussion Group gave the world premiere on January 22, 2025 in Portland, Oregon.

The Portland Percussion Group is an Oregon-based percussion collective including Garrett Arney, Jonathan Brown, Brian Gardiner, Terry Longshore, Paul Owen, Brett Paschal, Christopher Whyte, and Mari Yoshinaga. The group formed in 2011 to invigorate new music in the city and the greater Northwest, and since then has become a mainstay in the contemporary music space in Portland. To date, the PPG has worked with composers to create over 60 new works for percussion quartet and continues to look for ways to develop new sounds, explore new spaces, and engage new audiences. The ensemble has worked closely with Tapspace Publications to release new works by emerging composers.

Flannau Duo: New Works for Piano and Percussion

By Kyle Flens and Jonathan Hannau

Flannau Duo — Jonathan Hannau, piano, and Kyle Flens, percussion — are very excited to present at a PASIC virtual concert a diverse repertory of music by some of their favorite living composers. Each composer has taken a unique approach to the piano and percussion instrumentation, and has allowed the group to explore new ways of presenting concerts to their audiences. All of the performances were filmed live at previous Flannau Duo concerts.

Han Lash's "C" is a piece about the expansion of material in a motor-like, additive process. Its anchor and beginning are the C-octaves, which spin out of the rest of the material in relentless perpetual motion. This piece is a core part of Flannau Duo's repertoire, often used as an opener for concerts to break the ice. It's fast, fun, and requires tight-knit, even playing together for the duration of the piece with little to no room for breaks.

Igor Santos is the first composer Flannau Duo commissioned. The starting point for "Carve" is the act of engraving and chiseling into various materials. Any surface featuring grooves, slits, or indentations is used on both piano and percussion to represent — in sound — this idea of carving. The object being sculpted remains ambiguous; however, the narrative focuses more on carving as a means of self-discovery, hinting at nostalgic harmonies within a textured, granular soundscape. Practically speaking, minimally prepared piano and a great selection of percussive instruments make this a fun and easy-to-prepare piece. The music consists of variations in loops of groovy motives, the rhythms interlocking between the players, a staple in Igor's compositional style.

"Teach Yourself to Fly From This Pale Blue Dot" by Boston-based composer Evan Williams was originally written for Brianna Matzke and Chris Graham for the Response Project. What came of this collaboration was a beautiful work for electronics, piano, and percussion. The piece is inspired by the con-

cept of the Golden Record, sent to deep space contained in both Voyager I and Voyager II. The piece imagines the journey of these probes through interstellar space. As they travel alone far beyond our planet, will their components degrade? Will they encounter dangerous spatial phenomena? Will they encounter



Flannau Duo

intelligent life? Or will they simply drift away never to be seen or heard from again? The music contains gestures played out of time in response to randomized electronic cues (recordings from the Golden Record). From there the piece opens up to driving ostinatos and beautiful, lush harmonies. Big tremolos and intense moments flow in and out while the electronics swirl a menagerie of interesting audio clips and space-like sounds.

Starting with an excerpt from the stream-of-consciousness of Stephen Dedalus (James Joyce's literary alter ego), "A very short space of time through very short times of space" by Hannah A. Barnes develops and reflects musical materials in different sonic spaces that accumulate, rupture, and otherwise transform. Hannah is interested in volatile and fragile materials that seem contradictory. Instead of seeking resolution, they strive for alchemical transcendence. James Joyce's poetic prose in *Ulysses* embraces the inherent volatility of life and moves rapidly, catching glimpses of everything possible between life's extremes. Materials in the piece are, like Stephen Dedalus' thoughts, mutable and constantly decontextualized, fragmented, and recombined. The piece was composed for Flannau Duo in early 2024 and came to life through collaborative exploration. Hannah hopes that performers and listeners each find something surprising in this maximalist powerhouse of a piece.

Ania Vu's "2+" focuses just on two notes: F and F-sharp. From this jumping point she imaginatively takes us through a multitude of different characters and textures, creating a spontaneous and high-energy piece with complicated rhythms and virtuosic playing. Originally written for the McCormick Duo, Flannau Duo often performs it due to its dramatic shifting moods. It's a great piece to get audiences engaged with a piece of contemporary music that focuses on one of the most dissonant intervals in Western tradition, the minor second.

Carola Bauckholt is a German composer whose works are absurd, charming, and expertly written. Unique sounds and unconventional ways of playing instruments permeate almost all her compositions. Flannau combined her two pieces "When they go low we go high" and "Geräusche" to make for a fun exploration of sound and performance practice. "When they..." is an exploration of the piano where the performers play credit cards on the tuning pins of the piano, resulting in a "frog" like sound, which eventually evolves into the use of wine corks and vocal noises. "Geräusche" was written in memoriam to John Cage where the duo plays a selection of found objects, creating for a plaintive, very "Cageian" exploration of sound and form. Both duos are examples of Jon and Kyle playing on the same instrument. "When they..." is effectively a piano duo, and "Geräusche" a percussion duo.

Alex Temple's "Sugarhocket" was originally commissioned by Jonathan's toy-piano duo "Plucky Pluckers," then brought back to life by the Flannau duo. Written for two amplified toy pianos and a reverb pedal, its charming and quirky rhythmic hockets eventually give way to the cutest bossa nova ever written. Its

engaging and challenging rhythmic features make for a good performance piece and guarantee some good chuckles from the audience along the way. This also acts as a piano duo.

We hope listeners enjoy this snapshot of what Flannau Duo does best: performing refined and artful music in a lighthearted way. Contemporary music concerts tend to be too serious/formal in our opinion, so we treat our concerts like an informal get-together with friends!

The Flannau Duo is a dynamic, new-music loving, tour-de-force ensemble combining piano, percussion, electronics, improvisation, and absurdism. Flannau Duo is made up of pianist Jonathan Hannau and percussionist Kyle Flens. The duo takes pride in eclectic programming, not adhering to any specific musical aesthetic. Flannau Duo performs in the Chicago area and beyond, exploring a multitude of sounds, styles, and moods from composers and artists from every musical corner. The duo is fiscally sponsored by Fractured Atlas. Flannau Duo was funded in 2023 by a DCASE Artist Grant. For more information visit www.flannauduo.com or follow the Instagram page at [@flannau_duo](https://www.instagram.com/flannau_duo). PN

KEYBOARD

Composite Duo

Keyboard Clinic / Performance

"Opposing Notes"

This clinic/performance will feature the world premiere of "Opposing Notes" by Parker Fritz, a new work for alto saxophone and six-mallet marimba commissioned by Composite Duo. The session will focus on the technical possibilities of advanced six-mallet marimba technique and ways to collaborate with composers to create more musical possibilities. "Opposing Notes" represents a bold collaboration between two instruments from distinct sonic worlds, utilizing the complexity of advanced six-mallet technique to expand the marimba's expressive range while interacting with the lyrical and dynamic capabilities of the saxophone.

Composite Duo, founded by percussionist Mei Shyuan Chiou and saxophonist Parker Fritz, is a collaboration focused on innovative projects that combine saxophone and six-mallet marimba music. Mei Shyuan and Parker have commissioned new music for their ensemble as well as solo music for six-mallet marimba. Through their performances and educational outreach, Composite Duo continues to push the boundaries of percussion and chamber music, offering fresh perspectives on contemporary musical expression.

Worksheets for the Win: Building Efficient Practice Routines

By W. Lee Vinson

Routine-based practicing is one of the most effective ways to stay organized and intentional in the practice room. “Worksheets for the Win” will present a systematic approach that breaks down musical material into small, repeatable patterns, organized into structured routines. The goal in our time together at PASIC50 is to help students and teachers become more productive and efficient by learning how to create their own customized practice patterns and worksheets.

The worksheets we will cover consist of five, ten, or twenty numbered patterns that are to be repeated for one to five minutes each. These time-based routines can be revisited daily or as needed, helping players track how much time and attention is being spent on specific skills, techniques, or instruments. Not only does this method address technical challenges, but it also offers space to experiment with musical ideas. And by assigning specific time limits, we maximize our focus and productivity.

For many years I found it useful to direct this approach specifically towards orchestral excerpts for the purpose of audition preparation. Over time I have tried to adapt it to a broader range of material including technical development, etudes and solo repertoire. This PASIC session

will focus on three core areas where this method is especially useful:

1. General Technique — examples: soft snare drum ruffs, tambourine fundamentals.

2. Orchestral Excerpts — examples: “Colas Breugnon” (xylophone), Tchaikovsky 4 (cymbals).

3. Etudes and Solo Repertoire — example: “Étude No. 1” from J. Delecluse’s *Douze Etudes*.

Taking the accompanying soft snare drum ruff exercise worksheet as an example, let’s describe briefly how to use it. In addition to your instrument, you will need a mirror, music stand, metronome, and stopwatch or timer of some kind.

Position a full-length mirror where you have a full view of your hands and upper body. Place the music low enough to allow full visibility of your instrument. Turn on your metronome to the desired tempo and start your stopwatch. Timing out each pattern is especially helpful in that it eliminates the need to count repetitions, leaving more headspace to focus on what you are seeing, feeling, and hearing as you play. In this case, the first six patterns on the page can be somewhat improvisatory. Twenty minutes later, your soft snare drum ornament will be better, and you’ve gotten in your soft snare drum work for the day.

At PASIC, we are also going to discuss how to create your own worksheets, something I constantly encourage my students to do. Identify what you want to work on, and start sketching out short patterns. In the case of intricate rhythms, break them into smaller, less complex pieces before reassembling them in context.

In snare drum music, I find it helpful to try removing or replacing grace notes or



W. Lee Vinson

rolls and to identify what exactly makes a passage difficult to execute. In the case of mallet percussion, reduce a figure into scale exercises that can be repeated and transposed. Multiple tempo stages can be helpful for building speed and improving

note accuracy. These are just a few ideas to you get started.

This clinic is designed for a wide range of educators and students, up to and including those preparing for orchestra auditions. Anyone can benefit from cre-

ating their own tailored routines. Whether you're building technical fluency or learning a new piece, these worksheets can help transform the way you practice.

Now it's your turn; go create your own worksheets!

SOFT RUFF EXERCISES

By W. Lee Vinson

These exercises are somewhat improvisatory with the exception of the last line. The first pattern on each line is used more as a point of departure for the specified amount of time. Practice with a stopwatch and a metronome. This routine will take 20 minutes to complete.

$\text{♩} = 120$
(2 minutes)

pp

(2 minutes)

R L R L R L R L R R L L R L L R (The Three Camps)

(4 minutes)

R L R L R R L L

(2 minutes) (2 minutes)

R L R L R L R R L L R

(2 minutes)

R L R L R L R L R L L R R L R R L R R L R L L R

(2 minutes)

R L R L R L R L R L L R R L L R etc.

(2 minutes)

R L R L R L R L R L L R R L R L R L L etc.

(30 seconds) (30 seconds) (1 minute)

R L R L R L R L R L L R R L R L R L L etc.

p

W. Lee Vinson is a classical percussionist, music educator, and snare drum historian with an extensive background in symphony orchestra work. After serving for four years in the United States Navy Band in Washington, D.C., he was a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 2007–11. He has since appeared with the orchestras of Detroit, Toronto, Houston, Atlanta, Colorado, Oregon, Kansas City, Nashville, and Alabama. Vinson was a guest lecturer at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York during the 2014–15 academic year while also serving on the music faculty of the University of Kansas in an adjunct capacity. He was previously a faculty member at Boston University, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and the Interlochen Arts Camp, and since 2017 has served as Adjunct Associate Professor of Percussion at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music in Nashville, Tenn. **PN**

The Art of Melodic Snare Drumming: Beyond the Chops

By Marcelina Suchocka

When we think of snare drumming, a word that often comes to mind is “chops.” The goal often-times for drummers is to build their technique to be able to accomplish an impressive flurry of fast notes. While these skills are undeniably important, they represent only a fraction of what a drummer can achieve. In my upcoming class at PASIC, I aim to explore the deeper dimensions of snare drumming, highlighting how true artistry lies not just in technique but in expression, musicality, and style. And just maybe, we can even play a melody on a snare drum!

Melody: a linear succession of musical tones, or pitches, that the listener perceives as a single, recognizable entity.

Historically, snare drumming evolved from military roots, where the role of the drummer was to announce military tactics and inspire the army, or to provide a pompous entrance to a king. Then it evolved to a versatile instrument that plays a crucial role in all the musical genres. A drummer's influence in an ensemble is undeniably important. The ability and choices a drummer makes oftentimes can shape an ensemble or make or break a concert! So how can we best prepare ourselves to be the best drummer we can be?

My roots in percussion started upon

attending “music school” in my home country of Poland. My family moved to Chicago, and I became a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Percussion Scholarship Group (which performed at PASIC in 2005!). I attended the Manhattan School of Music for my undergraduate and masters' degrees, and then continued on to become a Fellow at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach. I won the Principal Percussion audition of the Sarasota Orchestra in May 2022. Besides my Principal duties in Sarasota, I am also Principal Percussionist of the Britt Festival Orchestra in Jacksonville, Oregon, Coordinator of Percussion at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute in the Berkshires, and play in several chamber ensembles: Excelsis Percussion Quartet, Pathos Trio, and ensemblenewSRQ.

I believe all of these ensembles and musical “venues” have led me to become a more expressive, fulfilled player. Throughout my early musical upbringing, solid technical foundation was always stressed to be paramount, and as I continued to develop my playing and listen to recordings and performances, I came to learn that the greats played with far more than that. They always had this element of uninhibited, effortless mastery.

A solid technical foundation is paramount for any drummer. One must first

master singles, doubles, rolls, rudiments, etc. Getting rid of any “physical hitch-es” enables players to be free to express themselves on the instrument. But how can one play a melody on an instrument that has no pitch?

Melody in drumming might seem like a contradiction, but it is achievable by thinking of the instrument as similar to a human voice. Simply put, melodic snare drumming is using our embouchure — the grip — to control the phrase and note lengths to tell a story.

Embouchure: a French term that describes the way musicians use their lips,



Marcelina Suchocka

Finding your voice as a snare drummer requires a willingness to explore your musical influences and experiment with different styles.

facial muscles, tongue, and teeth to play a brass or woodwind instrument.

By utilizing varied note lengths, the angle of the snare drum tips, the strength of grip, and continuous motion, drummers can make melodic phrasing in their playing.

Finding your voice as a snare drummer involves more than just perfecting your technique; it requires a willingness to explore your musical influences and experiment with different styles. Whether you're drawn to jazz, rock, or classical music, incorporating elements from these genres can foster a more versatile approach to your playing. In fact, the more you can pull from various styles of music, the more it can "color" your playing — even with excerpts or playing in the orchestra! Listen to the jazz drumming greats, informed Baroque musicians, movie soundtracks, funk and gospel drumming, or just music that you enjoy! It's about discovering how to express your individuality through rhythm and melody, allowing your snare drum to

become a true extension of your musical identity.

Expression: an act, process, or instance of representing in a medium (such as words).

In my PASIC class, participants can expect a dynamic and interactive experience. We will cover a variety of topics, including ways to practice this idea of playing snare drum melodically. These exercises will challenge drummers to think beyond traditional patterns and explore how to create melodic phrases, develop improvisational skills, and express emotion through rhythm. The goal is to cultivate an inspiring learning environment — all jam-packed into a class in under an hour!

I will begin the clinic with some playing that demonstrates these concepts, speak briefly, and then pre-chosen participants will come up and perform selected works, and we will together discover ways to bring the pieces to life! Finally, I want everyone who attends the class to feel like they walked away with something — whether it's new information

or a rephrasing of what they already knew. While technique serves as a vital gateway to expression and creativity, it is the exploration of melody, emotion, and personal style that transforms a drummer into an artist. I invite all drummers — whether beginners or seasoned pros — to join me at PASIC and embark on this exciting journey together. Let's discover the art of melodic snare drumming and unlock the potential of this incredible instrument. **PN**





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Two is Better Than One

Repertoire that uses two timpanists

By Matthew Strauss

One of my responsibilities as the Associate Principal Timpanist of the Houston Symphony is to play all of the second timpani parts. I have had the privilege to perform many orchestral works that require at least two timpanists throughout my tenure with the orchestra. At PASIC50, the Principal Timpanist of the Houston Symphony, Leonardo Soto, and I will present my class on repertoire that uses two timpanists.

A timpanist is usually the only member of that section. However, some composers have written pieces that require

more than one timpanist. While performing these pieces, the second timpanist matches the principal timpanist's color, character, and rhythmic placement. This requires a high level of flexibility, open-mindedness, and adaptability. Leonardo Soto and I will demonstrate excerpts from the following works:

- Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique* (Mvts IV and V)
- Holst, *The Planets* (Jupiter and Uranus)
- Mahler, *Symphony No. 2* (Mvts I and V)

- Mahler, *Symphony No. 10*, Deryck Cooke Version (Mvt IV)
- Nielsen, *Symphony No. 4 (The Inextinguishable)*
- Orff, *Carmina Burana*, Mvt 7

Here are some considerations when performing as Second Timpanist:

MALLET CHOICES

Successful timpanists eventually find their voice through thoughtful exploration and diligent experimentation. One of the main ingredients of one's sound as a timpanist is mallet choice. While the mallets used by a timpanist are often chosen due to that player's individual technique and unique sound concept, second timpanists should be willing to use a similar mallet as their colleagues, regardless of their own background.

STROKE TYPE

The timpani community has various schools of thought on producing a sound when striking a drum. Multiple factors contribute to a timpanist's stroke type, including schooling, acoustics, instrument brand, drumhead material, composer, and orchestra size. Effective second timpanists can alter their stroke type to match their colleagues' sound and character.

STICKINGS

Similar to a violinist's bowings, a timpanist's stickings will directly impact the



Matthew Strauss

feel and phrasing of the music. Orchestral violinists must play their parts with the same bowing as the concertmaster to achieve a homogenous sound throughout the section. Equivalently, the second timpanist should use the same sticking choices as the principal timpanist in specific passages when playing in rhythmic unison. This concept will be demonstrated during our class when we play the ending of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. In this particular excerpt, we use cross-sticking to maintain a linear flow to the music.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Another responsibility of the second timpanist is to maintain a high level of rhythmic placement with the principal timpanist. When possible, the second timpanist's drums should be set up half a foot further back on the stage to gain added visual contact with the principal. It is (usually) best to watch the conductor while catching the other timpanist's motions through one's peripheral vision. Other times, the second timpanist should look directly at the principal to increase the chances of rhythmic uniformity.

The ending of Gustav Mahler's 3rd Symphony provides one of the best examples of direct unison playing between the timpanists. The principal should watch the conductor while the second timpanist watches the principal. Mr. Soto plays with a German setup in the Houston Symphony, while I use the American setup. The mixture of the two setups creates an advantageous circumstance where our low drums are near one another. Concert attendees might catch us exchanging a passing smile after landing on a unison pitch on both of our low drums!

CONCLUSION

An excellent timpanist contributes a strong pulse, an enhanced pitch center, and an extensive palette of colors while increasing the dramatic effect of the music. Sometimes extremes are required. For these moments, a committed timpanist is well equipped to provide a wide range of sounds, ranging from a barely audible

pedal tone to a shocking interjection of a thunderous blast. Notable composers have doubled down on these qualities originating from the timpani section, because sometimes two is better than one!

Matthew Strauss is an Associate Professor of Percussion at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His methodical yet passionate teaching style has guided many of his current and former students towards successful careers as orchestral percussionists and timpanists. Additionally, he is a cofounder and Resident Teaching Artist at the International Timpani Intensive held at Rice University. As the Associate Principal Timpanist/Section Percussionist with the Houston Symphony and the Principal Timpanist with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, he has a clear understanding of the joys and challenges of creating world-class music on a consistent basis. Strauss received his bachelor's degree in Percussion Performance from the Juilliard School and his master's degree in Performance from the Temple University. **PN**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Kimberly Council

Pre-Tenure Realities

This will be a "real-world" conversation about the realities of working in higher education in 2025, including discussion of research, teaching, service, mentorship, helping today's students find success, juggling family and work responsibilities, and working with administration.

Dr. Kimberly Council

Landing a Job in Higher Education: An Administrator's Perspective

In this session, participants will learn about the variety of universities, faculty positions, and opportunities in higher education. Conversation will include preparing for the job search, cover letter and CV preparation, and interview realities.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Brett Dietz and Hamiruge -

The LSU Percussion Group

New Percussion Literature Showcase

Every year at PASIC, the New Percussion Literature Showcase offers the latest repertoire available to high school and collegiate musicians. This concert will highlight a variety of literature written for a wide range of compositional and instrumental styles over the past five years. The performance will present a wide variety of styles, instrumentations, and ability levels, as well as underrepresented composers in our field. We will also incorporate videos of new percussion ensemble music while navigating equipment moves between the program's live performances, which will allow our audience to experience more music in the allotted time.

Brett William Dietz is the Carolyn Mattax Professor of Percussion at Louisiana State University. He is the music director of Hamiruge - The LSU Percussion Group, an ensemble at the forefront of commissioning, performing, and premiering works for percussion. This group commissions original works each academic year and shares videos across social media to encourage performances by other ensembles across the country. Hamiruge is made of students from the LSU Percussion Studio, including graduates and undergraduates, some of whom performed in the PASIC 2024 Chamber Music Competition.

Reimagining Delécluse's *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire*

By Frédéric Macarez

This November, PASIC50 will host a session that promises to be both a tribute to tradition and a bold step forward in the world of percussion. Titled Frederic Macarez and Friends, this session will feature a groundbreaking reinterpretation of Jacques Delécluse's iconic *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire*. Accompanied by three of my esteemed French colleagues and friends, we will present these celebrated études in a completely new light, transforming them from technical exercises into full-fledged concert works with the addition of percussion accompaniments composed by Franck Dentresangle.

For decades, Delécluse's *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire* have been a cornerstone of percussion pedagogy, revered for their technical rigor and educational value. Yet, beneath their surface lies a profound musicality that has often been overshadowed by their reputation as practice-room staples. With this project, we aim to elevate these études to the concert stage, showcasing their intrinsic artistry and honoring the genius of Jacques Delécluse.

THE LEGACY OF JACQUES DELÉCLUSE

To understand the significance of this project, one must first appreciate the man

behind the études. Jacques Delécluse was not only a master percussionist but also a musician of extraordinary breadth and depth. Born into a musical family — his father a renowned clarinetist — Delécluse began his career as a virtuoso pianist before transitioning to percussion. His early professional experiences were as diverse as they were formative: timpanist for the Paris Opera and the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, chamber musician with Pierre Boulez's *Domaine Musical*, and a pianist in chamber music ensembles. This eclectic background

gave Delécluse a unique perspective on music, one that seamlessly blended technical precision with artistic expression.

It is this rich musical heritage that permeates the *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire*. Each étude, while ostensibly a technical exercise, carries subtle references to the vast repertoire Delécluse knew so intimately. From operatic drama to symphonic grandeur, from chamber music delicacy to avant-garde innovation, these études are imbued with a musicality that transcends their pedagogical purpose.

Jacques Delécluse



A NEW VISION FOR THE ÉTUDES

The idea for this project was born out of a desire to explore the full artistic potential of Delécluse's études. What if these works, long confined to the practice room, could be reimagined as concert pieces? What if their inherent musicality could be brought to the forefront, allowing audiences to experience them not as exercises but as dynamic, engaging performances?

To bring this vision to life, I turned to Franck Dentresangle, a composer and percussionist whose creativity and sensitivity made him the ideal collaborator. Dentresangle has crafted accompaniments for three percussionists that complement and enhance the original snare drum parts, transforming the études into multi-dimensional works of art. These accompaniments do not merely add texture or color; they engage in a dialogue with the snare drum, amplifying its expressive potential and highlighting the musical ideas embedded in Delécluse's writing.

The result is a series of pieces that retain the technical challenges of the original études while elevating them to a new level of artistic expression. By presenting these works in a concert setting, we hope to shift the perception of Delécluse's études from technical exercises to masterpieces worthy of the best stages.

FRÉDÉRIC MACAREZ AND FRIENDS

An exceptional ensemble of world-class percussionists, Frederic Macarez and Friends brings together four masters of their craft, all teachers at the Paris Conservatory-CRR, for the highly anticipated PASIC50.

The group is led by Frédéric Macarez, a former student of Jacques Delécluse, who served as the Principal Timpanist of the Orchestre de Paris (beside Delécluse) and is the Director of Percussion Studies at the Paris Conservatory-CRR. Macarez, who shared a close professional and personal relationship with Delécluse

for over 40 years, is joined by three of his own accomplished students:

Franck Dentresangle, a jazz vibraphone virtuoso and composer specializing in Brazilian and jazz music, merges his diverse musical expertise with his teaching roles in Paris.

Vitier Vivas, originally from Caracas, Venezuela, brings a wealth of experience from his international orchestral career, which includes collaborations with some

of the world's most renowned conductors.

Frédéric Gauthier, a marimba player and member of the France Air Force Orchestra, combines his performance career with teaching at the Rosny-sous-Bois Conservatory.

Together, this ensemble represents a unique blend of technical mastery, artistic vision, and pedagogical excellence, making their PASIC performance a must-see event.

HONORING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE FUTURE

This project is not just about reinterpreting Delécluse's work; it is also about celebrating his enduring legacy. For generations of percussionists, the *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire* have been a rite of passage, a benchmark of technical and musical development. By reimagining



Frédéric Macarez



Vitier Vivas



Franck Dentresangle



Frédéric Gauthier

these études as concert pieces, we aim to honor Delécluse's genius while ensuring that his work continues to inspire future generations.

At the same time, this project is a testament to the evolving nature of percussion as an art form. It reflects a broader trend in the percussion community: the blurring of lines between pedagogy and performance, between technical mastery and artistic expression. In this sense, Frederic Macarez and Friends is not just a tribute to Delécluse but also a celebration of the creativity and innovation that define our field.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT PASIC

Our PASIC session will feature live performances of several études from the *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire* in their new arrangements. Each performance will be accompanied by insights into the creative process behind the project, including the challenges and opportunities of adapting Delécluse's work for a chamber ensemble. We will also explore the musical references and inspirations that shaped Delécluse's writing, offering a deeper understanding of these études and their place in the percussion repertoire.

For those unable to attend PASIC, this article serves as both an introduction to the project and an invitation to reexamine Delécluse's études in your own practice and performance. Whether you are a student, educator, or performer, we hope this new vision of the *Douze Études pour Caisse Claire* will inspire you to approach these works with fresh eyes and ears.

Frédéric Macarez is a renowned percussionist, educator, and conductor. Former Principal Timpanist of the Orchestre de Paris, he is a passionate advocate for the advancement of percussion as an art form. Macarez has performed and taught around the world, inspiring generations of percussionists with his artistry and dedication. **PN**

DRUMSET

Greg Hersey

Drumset Clinic / Performance

A Fresh Approach to Multi-Percussion

Discover the art of blending drumset and auxiliary percussion in this session that explores the intersection of drumset, orchestral percussion, and auxiliary percussion instruments. This clinic emphasizes the significance of being a versatile and well-rounded musician and how various multi-percussion setups will challenge you as a percussionist and drumset player.

Greg Hersey is a percussionist and educational artist who is the Director of Instrumental Music and Performing Arts Department Chair at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville. He is a graduate of the University of North Florida School of Music and holds a master's degree in Percussion Performance. Greg performed at the 2023 Essence Music Festival of Culture in New Orleans with hip-hop legend Doug E. Fresh. He is an artist for YurtRock music loop library. His social media presence with over 420k followers has significantly impacted the hip-hop and drumming communities.

Brandon Green

Virtual Drumset Masterclass

Play Pain-Free: The Science of Drumming Ergonomics

This session is designed to help drummers play smarter, stronger, and pain-free for life. This hands-on workshop combines ergonomics, anatomy, and physics, giving you tools to optimize your setup, prevent injuries, and build the resilience needed for long-term success. You'll receive real-time assessments and tailored solutions to address your specific challenges. We'll evaluate your setup, posture, and technique to fix inefficiencies and solve discomfort or pain on the spot. This event is for drummers of all levels who want to play with greater ease and efficiency, address pain or discomfort with real-time solutions, and build strength, endurance, and longevity behind the kit.

Brandon Green is a biomechanics expert, fitness professional, and drumming enthusiast with over 20 years of experience helping individuals optimize their performance and longevity. As the founder of Drum Mechanics and the Drum Forever Fitness program, he specializes in blending science-based fitness, ergonomics, and drumming-specific training to help drummers play pain-free and sustainably for life.

Murray Piper

Drumset Clinic

Rhythm, A Way of Life

The rhythm of life is the way of life that brings our needs, desires, and talents into harmony. The result of this is passion and energy. Five key points I will break down about Rhythm, A Way of Life. 1. It's not just routine. 2. Natural cycles. 3. Mindful awareness. 4. Balance. 5. Personalization. I will also break down research provided by Johns Hopkins University. Studies show having music and rhythm in everyday life provides a better and healthy way of living. Based on research and my studies, I've created grooves that help and address the positive emotional effects and attitudes.

Murray S. Piper is a performer, instructor, clinician, and adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University Peabody Institute. He is the founder and director of Passionate Drumming & Music Lessons, and he is a teaching artist for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Orch-kids & Arts Everyday program. Piper has led percussion programs for the University of Maryland Baltimore County dance department. Piper is an Emmy-nominated drummer for his role in the Stage Musical *Oh Gospel*, *The Evolution of Gospel Music*.

FUNdamentals First!

By Oliver Molina

Each year at PASIC, the PAS Education Committee presents its signature FUNdamentals series — a showcase of engaging and accessible clinics designed to reinforce the building blocks of percussion education. This year's lineup brings an exciting mix of in-person and virtual presentations from leading percussion educators and performers that will deepen understanding, spark curiosity, and strengthen foundational skills.

The 2025 series features in-person sessions from Jamie Whitmarsh, Christopher Rosas, and Damon Grant, along with virtual offerings from Justin Alexander and Shawn Mativetsky. Whether you're a student, private instructor, classroom teacher, or ensemble director, these clinics offer something valuable for everyone. While designed with students and emerging percussionists in mind, the concepts presented are relevant and enriching for musicians at all levels. The FUNdamentals series deliberately centers on core concepts and practical techniques whether in keyboard percussion, world drumming, drumset, or creative musicianship. Each session is interactive, participatory, and packed with ideas, exercises, and resources that can be applied immediately in the classroom, studio, or practice room.

In addition to new content, PAS members can access a growing library of past

FUNdamentals handouts online with a treasure trove of charts, worksheets, and pedagogical tools curated by years of top-notch clinicians. https://pas.org/resources/?_search2=fundamentals&_publication=instructional-resource

The FUNdamentals series is more than a beginner's toolkit — it's a celebration of core techniques, global traditions, and inclusive pedagogy. Each session provides practical, forward-thinking tools that percussionists and educators can immediately apply. Whether you're attending PASIC in person or tuning in from across the globe, these clinics are sure to enrich your musicianship, inspire your teaching, and elevate your approach to percussion education.

LIVE SESSIONS

JAMIE WHITMARSH

A Practical Guide to Developing Your Composition Technique

In this session, Dr. Jamie Wind Whitmarsh will lead participants through a wide-ranging exploration of the compositional process for musicians of all backgrounds and experience levels. The clinic focuses on developing a healthy creative mindset, generating new material through live sketching, and organizing ideas using material sheets and formal diagrams. Dr. Whitmarsh also demonstrates how to refine and develop musical themes using the elements of music, such

as rhythm, texture, and form, so composers can expand, shape, and deepen their ideas with confidence. Participants will leave with a flexible "loose curriculum" to continue their growth well after PASIC ends.

Dr. Jamie Wind Whitmarsh is a composer, percussionist, and educator based in Oklahoma City. Known for his versatility and creative voice, he has won numerous awards, including the PAS Composition Competition (2012, 2013), the MTNA Young Artist National Composition Competition (2014), and recognition from the American Prize and 48-Hour Film Proj-



Jamie Whitmarsh

ect. His works span concert hall, film, and video games. Whitmarsh is chair of the PAS Composition Committee and has led educational outreach and workshops internationally, including programs in Lebanon, Egypt, and Kurdistan.

CHRISTOPHER ROSAS

Frame Drum FUNDamentals: Exploring the Rich Heritage and Techniques of the Riq

Christopher Rosas presents a highly interactive workshop introducing the



Christopher Rosas

frame drum, with a focus on the riq, a tambourine-like instrument central to Middle Eastern music traditions. This session combines historical background with practical instruction on technique, tone production, and rhythm. Participants will explore posture, holding positions, and core playing techniques while also learning how to use frame drums in classroom and ensemble settings. Rosas also addresses the broader educational impact of frame drums, highlighting their affordability, cultural richness, and potential to expand inclusivity in music programs. Attendees will receive digital handouts including rhythm charts, teaching strategies, and a curated list of instructional resources.

Christopher Rosas is the Director of Percussion at Tomball High School in Texas. He holds a Master of Music in Percussion Performance degree from the University of Tennessee, where he served as graduate teaching assistant, and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education degree from Texas Lutheran University. At UT, he performed with the wind ensemble and Ensemble Knox, appearing at the CBDNA and TMEA conferences. A WGI World Finalist and gold medalist with 5points Independent Percussion, Rosas was also selected for the 2021 National Intercollegiate Band.

DAMON GRANT

Building Your Independence!

In this engaging and practical session, Damon Grant explores limb independence and coordination through the lens of pop percussion performance. Drawing on real-world experiences from working with *The Voice*, *American Idol*, and major touring artists, Grant walks participants through grooves, patterns, and layering techniques that are essential in both live and studio settings. He explains how to adapt folkloric rhythms for pop music,



Damon Grant

PANEL DISCUSSION

World Percussion Committee Panel: Deep Resonances: The Gong Cultures of Asia

In many parts of Asia, a gong culture is deeply embedded in the way of life. Gongs can be played on various occasions, such as formal rituals and community celebrations. Gongs can be played to communicate and transmit messages, for healing sickness, and for invoking the divine. This panel seeks to explore the centrality of the gong in music traditions in Asia. It will focus on how — in countries like India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, and Thailand — there are many places where playing the gongs are considered sacred, powerful expressions of musical identity that is indispensable in the community. The discussion will include how social and economic changes affect the transmission and context in which these gongs are performed. The panel will discuss the impact of the gong culture in percussion performance practice, and the emerging musical trends happening locally and globally because of these gong traditions.

Dr. Brandon Bell, Ms. Laura Dunaway, Dr. Brady Spitz: Finding Pathways for Performances

Professional percussionists from every genre and in every stage of their careers can struggle with how to establish strong professional relationships among management, arts presenters, and community stakeholders. This panel will speak about preparing stand-out electronic press kits and riders, building a successful network of relationships within your arts community, and highlighting how you can attract positive attention in a crowded field. This session will present pragmatic advice on building a successful performance career, told from the perspective of music presenters and artist management. Led by Dr. Brady Spitz, this panel will feature Dr. Brandon Bell, General Manager of DACAMERA Chamber Music and Jazz, and Laura Dunaway, Artist Manager and Booking Agent with MKI Artists, speaking about how to get your creative projects from the rehearsal hall to the stage.

create and transcribe parts, and approach music production from the perspective of a working sideman. Attendees will also gain insights into using electronics, building solo vocabulary, and managing their careers in today's music industry.

Damon Grant is a professional percussionist, recording artist, and educator with a remarkable breadth of experience. He has recorded on Grammy-nominated albums and performed with high-profile artists including Madonna, Mary J. Blige, Marc Broussard, and Eric Hutchinson. Damon has been featured in *Modern Drummer* and *Latin Beat*, played at two Summer Olympics, and was an original cast member of *Blast!*, which won both Emmy and Tony Awards. In addition to his onstage work, he is known for mentoring musicians and sharing knowledge about the music business, technology, and creative collaboration.

VIRTUAL SESSION

JUSTIN ALEXANDER AND SHAWN MATIVETSKY

Rudimentaál: Indian Rhythmic Concepts through Snare Drum Pedagogy

Presented virtually, this innovative session bridges global rhythmic traditions by applying concepts from North Indian tabla drumming to rudimental snare drum pedagogy. Justin Alexander and Shawn Mativetsky demonstrate how rhythmic devices such as *taal* (cyclical rhythmic structures), *tihai* (cadential phrases), and *kaida* (theme and variation) can enhance sticking control, phrasing, and musicality in Western percussion training. Drawing from Mativetsky's book *Rudimentaál*, the session offers a model for integrating non-Western approaches into traditional pedagogy without compromising either tradition. Attendees will learn how these concepts foster creativity, improve technique, and deepen rhythmic understanding.

Dr. Justin Alexander is Associate Professor of Percussion at Virginia Commonwealth University and an internationally active performer. With degrees from Florida State University, he has appeared

in Belgium, Australia, Sweden, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. His teaching and performance emphasize both traditional and innovative percussion practices.

Shawn Mativetsky is one of Canada's leading tabla performers and a pioneer in blending Indian classical music with Western percussion. He teaches at McGill University and is known for his deep commitment to cross-cultural education.



Justin Alexander



Shawn Mativetsky

Mativetsky regularly presents workshops, lectures, and performances across the globe.

Dr. Oliver Molina is an Associate Professor of Music at Northwestern State University of Louisiana where he serves as the Director of Percussion Studies. He is chair of the PAS Education Committee and treasurer of the Louisiana PAS Chapter. [PN](#)

PANEL DISCUSSION

Music Technology Committee Panel Tech from the Top Down: Technical Concepts Using Musical Language

Music technology is a broad topic that acts as an umbrella term for a variety of endeavors, ranging from live sound reinforcement to the recording arts. Each of these topics can take years to master individually, and musicians are generally spread far too thin to engage deeply with all of them. This panel will discuss the broad goals, outcomes, and concepts associated with four of the primary ways we use music technology in percussion circles: recording, live sound reinforcement (to include the marching arts), composition, and digital signal processing. We will approach each topic from the "top down": identifying key factors in each use of music technology, noting how these concepts either differ or relate to concepts more common to percussionists, and providing a sense of curiosity and encouragement to musicians who might not feel comfortable stepping into music tech-heavy endeavors.

PHOTO BY CURTIS PERRY

Addressing Holistic Student Needs: Strategies for Success in the Music Classroom

By Dr. Andrew Richardson

This panel discussion, organized by the PAS Education Committee, will explore practical approaches to addressing the current needs of percussion students in the classroom and private studio environments. Educators at all levels are increasingly tasked with supporting students who face socio-economic challenges, physical and mental health concerns, and other unique circumstances, all while fostering musical growth and performance excellence. This session is designed specifically for music educators, with insights tailored to percussionists and the unique dynamics of percussion pedagogy. Panelists will share real-world strategies

- Supporting the physical and mental health needs of student musicians to optimize learning and performance.
- Effective teaching methods for all learners.
- Creative strategies to foster collaboration, community, and a sense of belonging within percussion ensembles.

The committee has curated a series of questions for each specific area. Examples include: How do your retention strategies for student involvement differ based on the socio-economic needs of the students? How do you work around unique issues such as outside work or childcare needs? What are some cre-

Many educators have felt a growing need to address student health and well-being.

for building inclusive, supportive, and equitable music classrooms representing several areas of music education such as middle/high school, university percussion, private teaching, student wellness.

Dr. Andrew Richardson will moderate the discussion. Panelists will include: Diane Downs, Founder, Executive and Artistic Director of The Louisville Leopard Percussionists; Kim Brower, Social Emotional Arts Therapist and Owner of Pulse Drumming; Dr. Brad Meyer, Associate Professor of Percussion at Stephen F. Austin State University; Riley Warren, Director of Percussion at Forney High School.

Topics will include:

- Addressing socio-economic barriers to music education, including access to instruments and resources.

ative ways to develop belonging in ensembles? What does music, or percussion specifically, offer as a program in comparison to other options, such as sports, scouts, and other extra-curricular activities?

Many educators have felt a growing need to address student health and well-being. Students are pulled in many directions during their school years and may face pressures — placed on themselves or from other people — of enrolling in many AP/honors courses, achieving success in other extra-curricular activities in addition to music, as well as an ever-distracting online and social media landscape. We hope to present actionable ideas about how to help students progress both musically and personally. In this way, teachers can help students have more control of their education and development. We hope to ex-

plore ways that educators can balance pushing students to be their best, explore new areas of music, and be active members of the ensemble/studio, while also recognizing when fear of trying something new may be a symptom of other anxieties, pressures, or other holistic wellness concerns.

Attendees will leave with actionable ideas for creating positive, student-centered learning environments. Whether you're an educator, administrator, or policymaker, this panel will inspire new approaches to empowering student musicians to thrive both in and out of the classroom.

Dr. Andrew Richardson is Assistant Professor of Percussion at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tenn. His students have gone on to successful careers as percussion specialists, band and orchestra directors, professional performers, and university faculty. Andrew is published by Tapspace Publications, Marimba Publications, Inc., Boxfish Music, and in *Percussive Notes*. He serves on the PAS Education Committee, is a member of the Black Swamp Percussion Educator Network, and is a past-president of the Oklahoma PAS Chapter. [PN](#)

DRUMSET

Dave Weckl

Drumset Clinic

For over 40 years, Dave Weckl has developed and maintained a reputation among fans, peers, and the international music community as one of the great living drummers. His contributions to iconic music, music education, and the gear that drummers use are many. *Modern Drummer* magazine inducted Weckl into their Hall of Fame (2000) and named him "one of the 25 best drummers of all time." These honors, in addition to many more bestowed by the music community, are the product of Weckl's commitment to excellence. His dynamic and diverse drumming, which has inspired musicians worldwide, is built on a foundation of knowledge and passion.

Peter Erskine recommended Weckl for his first "big gig" with the group French Toast, which featured electric bass player Anthony Jackson. Jackson then recommended Weckl for the 1983 Simon and Garfunkel reunion tour. This led to many session opportunities, including radio and TV jingles, soundtrack sessions, and top recording dates with George Benson, Peabo Bryson, Diana Ross, Robert Plant, and many more. In 1985, Weckl began performing with Chick Corea's Elektric Band. In 1990, his solo career began with the release of *Master Plan*, followed by nine other solo/leader recordings to date. In 1998, Weckl formed The Dave Weckl Band, which released five studio records. Instructional videos have played a big role in Weckl's career, and recently he returned to touring with the Elektric Band, Mike Stern, and Oz Noy, while completing sessions in his home studio.

DRUMSET

Marc Dicciani and Nick Costa

Drumset Clinic / Performance

Practice Makes Permanent: Teaching and Learning Through Focus

Drumming skills are developed in many ways, but sometimes we choose strategies that aren't the most effective. Breakthroughs in neuroscience have improved our understanding of brain and nervous systems function and motor skill acquisition, and applying these principles help us develop our abilities quicker. Effective practice involves the what and the how, and this session will present advanced protocols to improve our drumming. Topics include purposeful practice and play; differential learning; habit/skill; the context principle; using drum books creatively; building your practice grid; comfort/learning zone; the 4 F's; teaching K-12 educators and their students; innovation/tradition; motoric variability; genetic entrainment; E-kits and VR; our bilateral motor system (handedness); repetitions, error correction, and neural plasticity; 1% marginal gains rule; placebo and mindset.

Nick Costa is an independent drummer, clinician, and drum technician with national and international touring experience. Nick has focused on providing ways to integrate drumset studies into K-12 Music curriculum to bridge the gap between general and instrumental music studies, and he is an active session musician engineering and recording drum tracks remotely from his studio.

JP Bouvet

Drumset Clinic

How to Teach Improvisation on the Drums

After having specialized for years in teaching improvisation to thousands of students at my online drum school, JPBouvetMethod.com, in this clinic I'll break down (a) my approach to learning and teaching improvisation, (b) the underlying psychology that makes it possible, and (c) specific approaches for teaching and learning improvisation.

JP Bouvet is a drummer and teacher, and runs the educational website JPBouvetMethod.com, where he specializes in creating courses that teach improvisation with step-by-step methods. He is the author of *On Drumming: The Psychology and Philosophy of Improvisation*, and creator of the rhythmic training app RhythmBot. He has toured with such artists as Steve Vai, Zakk Wylde, Periphery, and more. He also runs his own band, Childish Japes.

Unlocking the Power of Coaching in Education

By Dr. Brian Zator

In the ever-evolving world of music education, one of the greatest challenges we face isn't tied to technique, repertoire, or rehearsal management — it's communication and connection. As educators, we often find ourselves defaulting to giving advice, solving problems, and being the expert in the room. But what if a more effective, sustainable, and empowering approach exists?

At this year's Virtual PASIC, I'll present a session titled "Unlocking the Power of Coaching in Education," inspired by Michael Bungay Stanier's transformative and best-selling book *The Coaching Habit*. This clinic introduces a set of simple yet powerful coaching strategies that can help educators make meaningful shifts in their interactions with students and colleagues. The goal? To build trust, strengthen communication, and unlock the potential of those around us, while also reclaiming some of the time, energy, and joy we may have lost along the way.

THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

During the clinic, I'll introduce seven core coaching questions that can guide any conversation — from a brief hallway chat to a more serious discussion about career plans, motivation, or conflict. Each one is designed to replace the reflex to "fix" with a habit of inquiry. These are not

just rhetorical tools, they are conversation game-changers. They provide clarity, provoke reflection, and help others discover solutions on their own. At the heart of these questions are what Stanier calls the Irresistible 1-2-3 Question Combo:

1. Kickstart Question: *What's on your mind?*
2. AWE Question: *And what else?*
3. Focus Question: *What's the real challenge here for you?*

This trio of questions is designed to get to the heart of an issue quickly and effec-

tively, without veering into the trap of simply giving advice. Together, they lay the foundation for a coaching approach that shifts the focus from directing others to empowering them.

WHY COACHING?

In rehearsal, we must often be the authority, the guide, the voice of certainty. But outside of rehearsal, especially in one-on-one or small group conversations, the coaching model offers a radically different and impactful approach. It's rooted in curiosity, patience, and a sincere desire to see others grow on their own terms. It doesn't mean abandoning leadership; it means shifting *how* we lead.

In *The Coaching Habit*, Stanier argues that habitual advice-giving can lead to three common leadership pitfalls:

- **Overdependence:** When students or colleagues become reliant on you for answers, they miss out on learning how to think independently.
- **Overwhelm:** If you are constantly solving everyone's problems, your own work (and well-being) can suffer.
- **Disconnection:** When you're stretched too thin, it becomes easy to lose sight of what you truly love about your job.

In contrast, coaching helps develop others' potential by encouraging them



Brian Zator

The simple act of asking better questions can reshape your professional life.

to take ownership of their challenges. It's not about withholding your expertise; it's about timing it more thoughtfully and leading with curiosity first.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

To make these concepts practical and relatable, the session will include live examples of "Before Coaching" and "After Coaching" conversations. These will highlight a typical student-faculty conversation, followed by a coaching-style version of the same topic exchange. Through these vignettes, attendees will witness the subtle but powerful ways in which coaching can shift the dynamic, deepen the connection, and ultimately lead to more lasting growth.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE RIGHT AWAY

This clinic is not about learning new scripts or memorizing formulas. It's about adopting a mindset and acquiring tools that you can bring into your world immediately. Some additional strategies include:

- How to **tame your "Advice Monster"** — that inner urge to jump in with solutions.
- How to **embrace silence**, allowing others the space to think and respond.
- How to ask **"lazy questions"** that drive engagement and responsibility.
- How to respond with **"I'm curious..."** as a lead-in to deeper conversation.

By the end of the session, attendees will leave with a set of coaching tools that are immediately applicable in student conversations, faculty meetings, rehearsals, and even personal relationships.

A SESSION FOR EVERYONE

While this session is rooted in the world of percussion and music education, its principles are universal. Whether you

are a seasoned university professor, a high school band director, a studio teacher, or even a student leader, the coaching approach has something to offer. It's especially timely as educators continue to navigate increasing demands, shifting student needs, and their own desire for balance and fulfillment. This isn't about becoming a certified coach; it's about becoming a better communicator, listener, and mentor. It's about doing more by talking less.

Join me and discover how the simple act of asking better questions can reshape your professional life. Although this is part of the Virtual PASIC series, I will be present and actively engaged during the initial presentation to answer questions, offer clarification, and connect with attendees in real time. Whether you attend live or watch the replay, you'll gain insights that will help you connect more deeply, lead more effectively, and continue making a meaningful impact through the work you love. I welcome conversations following the session and would love the opportunity to work with individuals or groups interested in applying these coaching principles more deeply.

(If you're looking to bring this content into your studio, school, or program, I'd be happy to discuss options for one-on-one or group consulting tailored to your needs.)

Dr. Brian Zator is a Regents Professor and the Director of Percussion at East Texas A&M University, currently in his 25th year. He is a past-president of PAS and the founder of the PAS Leadership Academy. In addition to performances, he has presented clinics around the world on percussion education, leadership, and communication strategies for educators and students. **PN**

COMPOSITION

Glenn Kotche

Composition Clinic

The Monkey Chant for Solo Drumset at 20

Glenn Kotche's drumkit solo, the "Monkey Chant," is an arrangement of the Balinese Ketjak — a rhythmically fascinating performance artwork based on the Hindu epic Ramayana story. He researched multiple versions as well as the text of the Ramayana tale for his unique interpretation of a retelling of the story through percussion with specific sound sources on the kit playing the parts of the main characters.

Glenn Kotche has been the drummer of Wilco since 2001. As a composer, he's released seven solo albums and has been commissioned by many artists including Kronos Quartet, The Silk Road Ensemble, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Eighth Blackbird, So Percussion, Third Coast Percussion, Carnegie Hall, the Chicago Youth Symphony, and Roomful of Teeth. Kotche has played on over 180 recordings by such artists as Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, KD Lang, Neko Case, First Aid Kit, Phil Selway, Ed O'Brien, Andrew Bird, Iron and Wine, On Fillmore, Neil Finn, and Low and Beck. In 2013 he released his book, *A Beat A Week*.

INTERNATIONAL PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

COMPETITION WINNERS

BAK Middle School of the Arts
Chris Murray, director

Braswell High School
Alan Miller, director

Hebron High School
Ben Koch, director

Heritage High School
Alan Brawdy, director

Michigan State University
Gwendolyn Dease, director

Texas Christian University
Brian West, director

University of North Texas
Dave Hall, director

NGC Trinidad & Tobago Sweet Tassa International

By Rohan Abraham

“Tassa” is a percussion style found in India and within the East Indian diaspora in various parts of the world.

The ensemble consists of kettle drums accompanied by cylindrical bass drums and brass cymbals. Although various Indian communities worldwide may include tassa as part of their cultural celebrations, no other country in the world can boast of tassa’s popularity, advancement, and preeminence than the islands of Trinidad & Tobago.

During the mid-19th century, the British colonialists introduced “indentured” labor to various countries. Most of that indentured labor came from India. The British West Indies was a primary destination for this labor and, as a result, countries like Jamaica, Guyana, Belize, and especially Trinidad & Tobago received a sizeable population of East Indians until the early 20th century, when indentured labor was abolished. Little did many know that East Indians would influence West Indian culture to what it is today.

Aside from cuisine and fashion, Indian music in Trinidad plays a heavy part in local culture like a flourished tree, and a fruit of that tree is tassa drumming. Traditionally, the kettle drums were made of clay and goatskin, the bass drum made of wood and goatskin, and the cymbals made of brass. Prior to a performance, the skin of the ket-

tle drums was required to be heated for expansion to achieve the proper tone. However, within the past 30 years, advancements were made to adopt stronger materials (e.g., metal), synthetic skins, and a nut-and-bolt tuning system; this adoption allowed for convenience, durability, and longevity in performing. The majority of the Trinidadian tassa bands of today utilize this system, although this innovation was already adopted in India in the early to mid-20th century.

There are many tassa bands in Trinidad, but the band that honors itself as the global ambassador for tassa drumming is the NGC

Trinidad & Tobago Sweet Tassa International band. This band was founded by Ustad Lenny Kumar, HBM, a professional tassa drummer with over 50 years of experience. Kumar is a fifth-generation tassa drummer, coming from a rare musical bloodline similar to that of the late tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussein. Kumar started training at the age of five and became a professional player by the age of eight. His youth drumming skills afforded him a well-earned reputation as a local musical prodigy, playing alongside his father and many local professionals. As the years went by, Kumar, his father, and his siblings had a family-based tassa band, which won numerous awards.

Fast-forward to the early 2000s: Kumar started to envision tassa on a global rather than local scale. Starting from scratch with his daughter on cymbals and a friend on bass drum, humble beginnings brought this band into inception. Today the band consists of a senior group (in which Kumar is the lead drummer), the first-ever all-female band, in which two of the members are his own daughters, a junior section, an academy, and a U.S.-based group located in the greater Tampa Bay region of Florida.

NGC Trinidad & Tobago Sweet Tassa doesn’t function only as a band, but as an organization. Kumar has traveled the world showcasing tassa in countries like Poland, Italy, India, and Germany. In addition to performances, he conducted discourses at



Lenny Kumar

the University of Florida, Indiana University in both Bloomington and Indianapolis, and Northern Illinois University, to name a few.

Aside from performing, teaching, and lecturing, Kumar also specializes in engineering and manufacturing the ensemble's instruments for personal use and purchase. Kumar and the band have also made a historical breakthrough, publishing the first ever sheet-music book for *tassa* (soon to be released), which will allow musicians/percussionists from all over the world to learn the rhythms.

In 2022, the Office of the President of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago awarded Kumar with the rare Hummingbird Gold Medal, which is the highest rank, due to his lifelong contributions to the *tassa* artform.

Kumar and the band are no strangers to PASIC, as he and the Florida crew attended and performed at PASIC 2011 along with steel pan maestro Liam Teague and the Steel Pan Orchestra. The band also attended and performed at PAS Days of Percussion at the University of South Florida and West Virginia University. They also attended PASIC 2013, by conducting a clinic and master-class.

NGC Trinidad & Tobago Sweet Tassa International credits itself with becoming the first *tassa* group ever to get involved with PAS, as well as attending and performing at PASIC. The band is honored and excited to perform and connect with many at PASIC50.

For more information, visit www.sweet-tassa.edu.com/about. **PN**

WORLD

Jeremy Wade

World Workshop

Developing Your Bodhrán Toolkit

Every percussionist has a built-in musical toolkit — a functional vocabulary of musical concepts. Whether you are just beginning your journey or have been performing for years, you can leverage your preexisting knowledge to effectively play the bodhrán in a variety of contexts. This workshop will explore how fundamental elements of bodhrán performance can be combined with personal experiences in fresh and creative ways. We will begin with a crash course in technique before digging into an analysis of an Irish reel. We will learn how to play a basic “motor rhythm,” and discuss methods for incorporating space, voicing, sticking, and ornamentation to bring the music to life. There will be a selection of drums and sticks available for participants, but you are welcome to bring your own bodhrán/frame drum.

Jeremy Wade is an educator, composer, and performer who serves as the percussion instructor for Transylvania University and Lexington Christian Academy, and as a teaching artist for the Lexington Philharmonic. Jeremy teaches dance for the Kentucky McTegart Irish Dancers (KMID) and is Co-Director of the Kentucky Irish Music Academy. Jeremy has presented bodhrán workshops at schools/festivals throughout the region, including the 2024 PAS Days of Percussion in Kentucky and Tennessee. Jeremy plays bodhrán as one half of Irish trad duo Set Course, and serves as an accompanist at local feiseanna and céilí events.

TNTeague Duo

World Daytime Showcase Concert

The Magic of the Steelpan

TNTeague duo will offer an eclectic and unique blend of original music and adaptations that highlight the profundity and versatility of the steelpan in tandem with non-steelpan instruments (piano, marimba); this will include original steelpan compositions by Liam Teague, Kevin Bobo, and Gary Gibson, plus Trinidadian calypsos, jazz standards, classical music, ragtime, and tango.

TNTeague, the father-and-son duo of Liam Teague and Jaden Teague-Núñez, offers a blend of music that includes calypso, jazz, classical and ragtime. Sixteen-year-old Jaden Teague-Núñez is a multi-instrumentalist (steelpan, piano, and percussion) and recently became the first steelpan player to win the 2024 Crain-Maling Foundation Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Young Artists Competition, and he was recently recognized as National 2025 YoungArts winner with distinction in classical/percussion by the National Foundation for the Advancement of Artists. Liam Teague is one of the world's leading steelpan virtuosos and serves as professor of music and director of steelpan studies at Northern Illinois University.

Indigenous Vibes Band

Virtual World Daytime Showcase Concert

African Authentic Music Fusion

Indigenous Vibes Band won the 2022 Traditional Artiste of the Year Award at the Ghana music Awards. The ensemble combines authentic African rhythms with various world music. The group believes it is time to take their unique performance, which is influenced by music from different parts of the world, to global audiences. In Ghana they have performed at many popular entertainment centers and festivals and shared stages with respected Ghanaian artists such as Pat Thomas, Kojo Antwi, Gyedu Blay, Nat Brew Ambolley, Kwame Yeboah, and Paa Kow.

A Legacy of Brazilian Percussion with Mestre Jorge Alabê

By Carl Dixon

The PASIC50 Daytime Showcase Concert features internationally recognized Mestre Jorge Alabê in a program of Brazilian musical traditions never before performed at PASIC. The concert will showcase Jorge's authoritative mastery of Candomblé, samba de roda, pagode, and samba enredo, illustrating the history, evolution, and musical connections of these Afro-diasporic artforms.

Supporting Jorge is a lineup of dozens of percussionists from across the country who have studied with Jorge and continue to pass down his knowledge to new generations. The professional drummers, dancers, singers, and cavaquinho players participating owe much of their training and understanding of the culture to Jorge, and their presence in the concert offers a more complete picture of traditional culture, framing the drumming rhythms with song, dance, and the cultural context in which these traditions developed. This all-star lineup will be directed by Carl Dixon, who has directed shows with Jorge Alabê at festivals and concerts across the country.

CANDOMBLÉ

Afro-Brazilian Candomblé is a living religion derived from the varied fragments of West and Central African reli-

gion and culture as it was reconstructed in Bahia, Brazil during the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and colonial era spanning the 16th–19th centuries. Passed across generations of practitioners, percussionists, dancers, and storytellers, it carries the histories of African people through song, rhythm, and dance.

Although the rhythms have been appropriated across the musical traditions of Brazil, Candomblé is at its core a religious tradition, sharing energy, spirituality, and

life to those who practice. The rhythms act as anchors to recognize and tell the stories of the deities that guide practitioners.

Candomblé is organized around Olodumará, the supreme being and manifestation of the universe and everything in it. An indecipherable being, Olodumará can only be reached through the mediating deities known as Orixás. In ceremony, the Orixás are called upon and honored as a way to acknowledge Olodumará and the



Carl Dixon



Mestre Jorge Alabê

vast connections that exist beyond individual perceptions.

Candomblé liturgy uses call-and-response song form that can be traced to the musics of the Fon, Yoruba, and Bantu in West and Central Africa. The characteristic percussion calls, patterns, and improvisations are focused on the songs that salute the orixás.

The rhythms are played by a percussion battery, including a double bell (gan, or agogo) and a set of three drums. The repeating rhythm patterns played on the gan create the foundational timeline around which the drumming patterns and songs are organized. The three drums that comprise the Candomblé percussion battery are collectively called *atabaques*. The three sizes of the drums correspond to their relative pitch. From high to low they are named *lê*, *rumpi*, and *rum* (pronounced “whom”).

The *lê* and *rumpi* are typically played with two sticks called *aguidavi*, made from branches of the guava tree. These drums perform a supporting role in the music, often doubling each other in a rhythm that embellishes the basic gan pattern. The *rum* is the lead drum in the ensemble and is typically played with one hand and one stick, although some rhythms are played without sticks. The sonic vocabulary is much larger, and the technical level is much more demanding on the *rum* because of the combinations possible between the stick and the hand (Miller, 2025).

While each musician in Candomblé has a role in the traditional call-and-response, “Ogan Alabê is a high title bestowed on the performers of ritual singing and drumming who have demonstrated their mastery of the liturgy” (Miller, 2025). The Alabê leads all of the singing and drumming during a ceremony and acts as an intermediary between the *iawo* or congregation and the Orixas.

JORGE ALABÊ

Jorge Bezerra Alabê was born in Rio de Janeiro and was selected at ten years old to begin a musical apprenticeship into

Candomblé, joining a lineage with direct roots to *Casa Branca*, the first and most important Candomblé house. In addition to this position of high honor, Jorge has performed all over the world. He was a lead singer with the Filhos de Gandhi in Rio de Janeiro and later became the rhythm director (*mestre de bateria*) of the Minas Gerais Samba School in Belo Horizonte. He recorded with such Brazilian music stars as Milton Nascimento and Mirtinho da Vila and made regular appearances on the Globo TV program *Brasil Pandeiro* from 1978–80. In 1984, Jorge became the percussion director of the internationally touring Brazilian performing group, Oba Oba. Over a 15-year span, the group toured through Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States, playing some of the most renowned theaters in the world.

Since 1996, Jorge has lived in the United States, conducting samba groups and teaching workshops on Brazilian music and dance at universities and community organizations throughout the country. Currently based in Oakland, California, he has taught many in the U.S. who specialize in Brazilian percussion.

CONCERT

The PASIC50 concert will open with Candomblé drumming, song, and dance in a salute to the Orixás. Jorge will lead a chorus in song while simultaneously playing the *rum*, the lead drum of the trio of *atabaques*. Rhythms and songs dedicated to several different orixa will be presented, including songs from Jorge’s landmark recording *Cantigas e Ritmos dos Orixas: The Music of Candomblé*. Special guest dancers will perform traditional movements honoring the orixa, showing the direct connection and communication of the rhythms, calls, and improvisations of the drums to the dance movements.

The concert will move into a *roda de samba* (samba circle), starting with the rhythm *samba de roda* and flowing into the popular music style of *pagode*. This highly improvisational and communicative backyard party music is played on

a unique set of percussion instruments including the pandeiro, surdo, tantan, tamborim, reco-reco, and cavaquinho. Drawing on samba rhythms heard during Carnaval, these songs are meant to inspire a sense of joy and inclusivity.

The finale features a thunderous *bateria* (percussion section of a samba school) playing all aspects of music present in a samba school Carnaval parade. The *esquenta*, commonly performed at the beginning of a show or parade, features Jorge’s unmatched skill and creativity improvising on the *repique* (*repenique*) and warming up the *bateria* in preparation for the finale. The *bateria* medley will include rhythms from several prominent samba schools in Rio and will be accompanied by a samba dance show demonstrating the connection between rhythms of the drums and the traditional movements that have evolved from Candomblé and *roda de samba* into the Rio style dance known worldwide. The program will culminate in *samba enredo*, the form of song performed in Carnaval parades, with the tremendous energy of the combined forces.

Special thanks to Andy Miller whose forthcoming book, *Cantigas e Ritmos dos Orixás: The Language of Drumming in Afro-Brazilian Candomblé Ketu* (available at PASIC), details the life and music of Jorge Alabê and his contributions to the Candomblé traditions.

Carl Dixon serves as Assistant Teaching Professor of percussion at the University of Colorado-Boulder, where he directs the Brazilian Bateria Directors Symposium. He is also Musical Director of the Boulder Samba School and the founder of Virada Drums. **PN**

Bringing the Pulse of Flamenco to the Cajón: A Rhythmic Exploration

By Cassandra Kocoshis

Flamenco, with its rich rhythmic tradition and expressive forms, known as *palos*, offers percussionists a dynamic entry point into the intersection of rhythm, melody, harmony, and cultural identity. Among these forms, *Bulerías* stands out as one of the most rhythmically vibrant and improvisatory *palos*. In this article (and PASIC50 workshop), we'll explore how the cajón contributes to flamenco's evolution and how percussionists can engage deeply with *Bulerías* as both a traditional and contemporary form.

THE CAJÓN IN FLAMENCO

Though now a staple in flamenco, the cajón is a relatively recent addition to the genre. Originally an Afro-Peruvian instrument, the cajón was introduced to flamenco in the late 1970s when legendary Spanish guitarist Paco de Lucía encountered it during a tour in Peru. He received a cajón as a gift from renowned Afro-Peruvian percussionist Caitro Soto. Impressed by its sound, Paco brought the instrument back to Spain and shared it with his percussionist, Rubem Dantas.

Dantas quickly integrated the cajón into flamenco, adapting its natural, woody timbre to the complex rhythms of the genre. Over the past five decades, flamenco artists have developed a unique technique and vocabulary for the cajón, making it a central voice in modern flamenco performance.

UNDERSTANDING BULERÍAS

Bulerías is one of the most iconic and rhythmically complex *palos* in flamenco. Originating from the Romani (*Gitano*) communities of Jerez de la Frontera in Andalusia, Spain, *Bulerías* is traditionally performed in festive, communal settings where singers, dancers, and musicians take turns contributing spontaneously. The name comes from the Spanish verb *burlar*, mean-

ing "to mock" or "to jest," reflecting the playful and improvisational nature of the form.

In contemporary concert settings, *Bulerías* is often used as a closing number or encore, providing space for virtuosic displays of rhythm, movement, and musical dialogue.



Kassandra Kocoshis

MELODY AND HARMONY IN BULERÍAS

The harmonic foundation of Bulerías often centers around the Phrygian mode, with one of the most common progressions being:

A – – | B-flat – – | B-flat – | B-flat – | A –

This is a basic starting point, but in practice, the harmony is fluid and can shift to support different sections of a performance.

A typical Bulerías performance may include the following sections:

- **Entrada** – Introductory material, often instrumental;
- **Falseta** – A composed or improvised guitar solo;
- **Marcaje/Paso de Bulerías** – Standard rhythmic patterns and grooves;
- **Letra** – Sung verses;
- **Escobilla** – Rhythmic footwork, usually by the dancer;
- **Llamada** – A rhythmic cue signaling a transition or highlighting a dancer's phrase;
- **Salida** – A closing or exit section.

Each section offers a different rhythmic function and calls for distinct cajón accompaniment styles.

RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE: THE HEART OF BULERÍAS

Bulerías is built on a 12-beat rhythmic cycle, but its internal accents and phrasing give it a uniquely syncopated feel. Unlike Western metrical thinking, in flamenco, the 12th beat is often felt as the downbeat, which can be disorienting for new players.

A common way to feel the groove is:

[12] 1 2 [3] 4 5 [6] 7 [8] 9 [10] 11

The accents (shown in brackets) are crucial to understanding the *compás* (rhythmic cycle). These accented beats – often reinforced with *golpes* (strikes) on the cajón – create the propulsion and swing that define the groove.

The cajón player's role in Bulerías is highly interactive. They must respond in real time to the dancer's footwork, the guitarist's phrasing, and the singer's lines. It requires a deep internalization of the *compás*, an ear for subtle shifts, and a sensitivity to the energy of the performance.

In our workshop, we will break down specific cajón patterns for each section of Bulerías, focusing on groove, articulation, and musical conversation with the ensemble.

IN CONCLUSION

Bringing the pulse of flamenco to the cajón is not just about mastering patterns; it's about listening, responding, and becoming part of a living tradition. Bulerías, with its rhythmic depth and improvisational spirit, offers a powerful way for percussionists to engage with flamenco at its core. Whether you're new to the cajón or looking to deepen your connection to flamenco rhythm, exploring Bulerías is an essential step in the journey.

Kassandra Kocoshis is a Los Angeles-based percussionist specializing in flamenco. She began studying flamenco in 2004 with Francisco "El Yiyi" Orozco Fernandez and has since performed with renowned artists including Carmela Greco, Alfonso Cid, Jose Cortes "Pansequito Hijo," Ensemble Español, Adam del Monte, Kai Narezo, Juan Murube, and Las Guitarras de España. A founding member of the flamenco trio *Idilio*, she is also a contributor to the educational platform *Flamenco Explained* and has toured internationally with Persian music legend Ebi. Kassandra holds degrees from DePaul University and California Institute of the Arts, where she earned her MFA in World Percussion. In addition to her flamenco work, she freelances across genres in L.A., bringing flamenco's rhythmic language into a wide range of musical settings. She is an Assistant Professor of Music at Los Angeles City College. [PN](#)

WORLD

Iúri Oliveira

Virtual World Clinic / Performance

Hybrid Percussion Approach

When artists and bands don't want a drummer or a sideman percussionist, what do you do? Use a hybrid percussion setup – so many approaches, grooves, ways of thinking everything to fill and take music to another level

Iúri Oliveira stands out for his innovative approach based on his own sounds, which are rich in comprehensive techniques, leading him to work with musicians and composers from different musical genres from many parts of the world, and also on soundtracks for films. He is currently working on *Manifesto*, a solo album where he undertakes a deep and authentic immersion in wood, leather, and steel instruments, without resorting to loops or other electronic devices.

Jamey Haddad and Friends

Clinic/Performance

Percussionist/drummer Jamey Haddad has been featured on more than 350 recordings. He has been the percussionist for Paul Simon for more than 25 years and has collaborated with Sting, Michael League of Snarky Puppy, Bokanté, Osvaldo Golijov, YoYo Ma, Dawn Upshaw, Esperanza Spalding, Joe Lovano, Billy Drewes, Dave Liebman, Elliot Goldenthal, Francis Ford Coppola, the Assad Brothers, Simon Shaheen, The Paul Winter Consort, Betty Buckley, Leo Blanco, Tino Derado, Arooj Aftab, among many others. Jamey is a full professor at The Oberlin Conservatory where he heads the Performance and Improvisation program, and he also teaches at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He will be inducted into the PAS Hall of Fame at PASIC50.

Interactive Drumming and Experiential Wellness

By Robert J. Damm

The world's most inspiring gathering of rhythm, culture, and connection is calling you! PASIC is proud to offer interactive drumming workshops, clinics, and experiential wellness sessions that highlight how percussion can be a powerful tool to build community, foster wellness, enhance communication, and promote human rights.

STEVE TURNER

Sharing Rhythm and Spirit with our Special-Needs Communities

This interactive session will empower facilitators to connect with individuals with disabilities through rhythm-based activities that inspire inclusion, joy, and self-expression. Steve's Giving Tree Music has provided interactive and team building drum circles around the USA for over 25 years. He works with schools, hospitals, corporate groups, seniors, and special-needs groups. He uses drums as the vehicle to transport a group of people to a place of stronger community and to foster deeper connections with each other. This workshop is about how to facilitate teamwork, respect, understanding, empathy, and accessibility through drumming.

ARIN LEVY

Community Sonic Meditations and Sound Bath

This will be a transformative exploration of sound using instruments beloved

in yoga studios worldwide: gongs, crystal and Himalayan singing bowls, Koshi chimes, and more. As sound baths and "sound healing" gain global momentum,



Steve Turner



Arin Levy

this clinic offers the opportunity for participants to immerse themselves in the therapeutic power of vibration and resonance. Dr. Arin Levy (they/them) is a Denver-based percussionist, sound artist, and educator of Cuban-American heritage, dedicated to crafting immersive sonic experiences that inspire reflection and connection. As the founder of Enso Sounds & Healing Arts, Arin tours throughout Colorado and across the U.S., performing over 50 sound meditation events each year.

CINDY JONES

Calling of the Women in Drum Circle

This workshop will explore the role of world drumming as it relates to history, culture, and human rights. This session is about drumming as a tool for communication and teaching participants to listen,



Cindy Jones

respond, and express in deeply human ways. Cindy, a drummer for over 25 years, embodies contagious enthusiasm. She is described as a “warrior-facilitator of unrestrained playfulness!”

M'BEMBA BANGOURA

Traditional Djembe Drumming

The IDC is honored to present M'Bemba Bangoura, a world-renowned master drummer from Guinea, West Africa, in a powerful session on traditional djembe drumming. M'Bemba will share rhythms passed down for generations and offer insights into their cultural significance and community-building impact.

LATE NIGHT DRUM CIRCLES AND CLOSING DRUM CIRCLE

These events are available for PASIC attendees who want to be creative, improvise, and express themselves musically in a safe, judgment-free environment. Drumming together creates a sense of unity and shared rhythm, helping people feel connected regardless of background or experience.

DRUM CIRCLE FACILITATORS WORKSHOP

The annual Drum Circle Facilitators Workshop will be led by legendary percussionist Leon Mobley. Known for his work with Ben Harper and his lifelong dedication to West African drumming, Mobley's session will focus on djembe traditions.

Wednesday, Nov. 12; 1:00–5:00 P.M.; \$50.00.

What you will learn: Djembe History and Origin; Drumming As Communication; Djembe Components and Maintenance; Basic Djembe Technique (Interactive); Introduction to Rhythms (Interactive); Practice a piece to record or perform live (Interactive).

Who Should Attend: Music educators; Percussion students and professionals; Community drummers; Anyone interested in global rhythm traditions. No experience necessary — just bring your hands and your energy!

About Leon Mobley: At age seven, Leon studied under the tutelage of Babatunde Olatunji, world renowned Nigerian master drummer. By age ten, Leon was a cast member on the Emmy award winning PBS program ZOOM. Leon went on to study music and education at UMass Boston before moving to California, where he started his dance company Djembe West African Drummers and Dancers. He also began his own musical group, Leon Mobley and Da Lion, which produced six albums and countless performances throughout the United States. He recorded and performed with many notable artists including Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones, Mick Jagger, Madonna, Damian and Stephen Marley, the Temptations, Dave Matthews, Joss Stone, and Stevie Wonder. **PN**

WORLD

Ruairi Glasheen

Virtual World Clinic

The Drum Speaks: Documenting the Language of Rhythm in Film

In this presentation, I will take you on a journey into the incredible world of rhythm, sharing stories from my travels, showcasing compelling documentary footage, and offering practical demonstrations to bring these traditions to life. We'll explore the religious devotional drumming of Southern Italy, the intricate codes and complex patterns of Carnatic rhythm in South India, and the resilience of Iran's drummers, whose traditions persist despite restrictions that forbid them from drumming. We'll journey to Japan to experience the power and precision of taiko, where the physicality of the performance is as striking as the sound, and back to my home in Ireland, where the bodhrán carries the heartbeat of traditional music, connecting players and listeners through its timeless rhythms. Through these diverse perspectives, we'll examine the differences and shared threads that make rhythm a universal language.

Ruairi Glasheen has performed globally, including with John Williams at Shakespeare's Globe, Come From Away in London's West End, and at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall, The Barbican, and Union Chapel. His documentary *Hidden Drummers of Iran* won awards and aired internationally, followed by projects on Southern Indian percussion, Italian tambourines, and the Irish bodhrán. In 2024, he collaborated with taiko drummers in Japan for a new series. Ruairi contributes to BBC Radio 4's Add to Playlist and BBC Radio 6 Music, and runs a YouTube channel with 3M+ views. He leads educational projects with a variety of organizations.



M'Bemba Bangoura



Leon Mobley

Health & Wellness Happenings at PASIC50

By Dr. Laurel Black

The PAS Health & Wellness committee will contribute to and complement the exciting offerings at PASIC50.

MID-DAY MOVEMENT Angela Kepley

Let's come together for Mid-Day Movement! After hours of sitting for fantastic PASIC sessions, come enjoy some movement flow and dynamic stretches. Wake up your body and mind so you can enjoy even more of PASIC for the remainder of the day! Prioritize your Health and Wellness, and let's move!

PN: What should participants expect, and how can they best prepare for the session?

Angela Kepley: Ideally, participants will have comfortable clothing that allows them to move freely. However, people may modify movements or select the elements in which to participate. Please bring water. We'll try not to get sweaty so you can still feel fresh for the rest of the day, but movement does build some heat, so let's stay hydrated!

PN: What would you hope participants take away from your session?

Kepley: I hope participants leave the

session refreshed so they can enjoy the rest of PASIC with energy and focus. Participants can also take away some movements, stretches, or exercises to incorporate into their daily routine. Our bodies require continual awareness and regular attention so we can

perform at our best, so please take, use, share, teach, or repeat any movement patterns or combinations from our session.

PN: Is this your first presentation at PASIC?

Kepley: I have not presented at PASIC before. However, my very first PASIC was a performance with the Millikin University Percussion Ensemble in 2003. Since then, I have attended all but one PASIC. I am thrilled to share my experience and energy with all of you this year at PASIC 50! Let's move!



Angela Kepley

Angela Kepley has built and maintained a full private teaching studio in the Chicagoland area for 20 years, including an ensemble program currently in its 17th year. Angela also works as the percussion specialist and drumline instructor at Lyons Township High School and is the Percussion Ensemble director at Gurrie Middle School; previously, she taught classes at Moraine Valley Community College. She is an Educational Artist through Marimba One and is a published composer through C. Alan Publications of solo and ensemble pieces. Angela previously served as President and Vice-President of the Illinois PAS Chapter. Learn more about Angela at angelakepley.com.

INJURY PREVENTION IN DRUMSET EDUCATION

Dr. Nadia Azar

From Nadia: Playing-related musculoskeletal disorders (PRMDs) are very common in drummers. Educators are ideally positioned to influence their students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards preventing and managing PRMDs. However, recent research has identified barriers that may hinder educators' ability to adequately address these issues with their students.

This clinic was designed to begin to address these barriers. Attendees will receive a brief overview of the latest research on PRMDs in drummers, the general risk factors for developing PRMDs and how they apply to playing the drumset, and strategies for identifying and managing these risk factors. Approaches for addressing these topics with drumset students will be introduced, and attendees will engage in discussions on these subjects during the clinic. The goal of the clinic is to inform and empower drumset

educators to develop or enhance this area of their curriculum and to continue these discussions within their own peer networks.

Dr. Nadia Azar is an Associate Professor of Biomechanics and Ergonomics at the University of Windsor. As the founder and director of the Drummer Mechanics & Ergonomics Research (DRUMMER) Lab, her overall research goal is to help drummers to achieve their peak performance while reducing their risk of injuries. She has presented at premier conferences (e.g., PASIC, Performing Arts Medicine Association Annual Symposium) and published in top peer-reviewed journals in the field (e.g., *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, *Frontiers in Psychology – Performance Science*); and has successfully translated this work to members of the music community at large (e.g., CBC Radio, Drum Talk TV, the Drumeo Beat, and interviews on multiple podcasts). Dr. Azar has received research funding from the Grammy Museum and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Follow her work on social media @DrNadiaAzar ([Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [X](#)).

HEALTH & WELLNESS POP-UP SPACES

This year, in place of early morning runs, be on the lookout for quiet spaces in the convention center devoted to resting brains, ears, and bodies. These can be used for meditation, stretching, yoga, or just sitting quietly. If your nervous system fatigues from the excitement and stimulation from everything happening at PASIC50 (I know mine will!), find a space to recharge so you can deeply enjoy everything there is to offer.

HEARING TESTS

Free hearing tests are traditionally held on the Friday of the convention. These are in the works with our usual partner, Butler University, so keep your eyes – and ears – open for continued updates! **PN**

WORLD

Ivan Llanes

World Clinic / Performance

Hybrid Kit (Timbal and Drumset)

This clinic/performance offers a deep dive into the art of playing a hybrid percussion kit, combining the timbal and drumset, and explores its versatility across a variety of world music styles. I will guide the audience on a journey of discovery, starting with the origins and development of this innovative kit and its unique application in diverse musical contexts. I will showcase how I use the hybrid kit in Latin Jazz compositions as well as in the fusion of Brazilian music, pop, soul, R&B, and electronic genres. Attendees will gain insight into integrating these musical styles, emphasizing adaptability and creativity within a unified percussive setup. A key focus will be on soloing techniques that blend the distinct languages of the timbal and drumset.

Ivan Llanes is a Cuban-American percussionist and singer. Ivan has earned acclaim for his versatile percussion skills, distinctive voice, and creative songwriting. He is a featured member of jazz pianist Matthew Whitaker's quintet. As lead vocalist for the Latin supergroup People of Earth, Ivan has shared the stage with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and New World Symphony. Before relocating to the U.S., Ivan toured extensively with famed Cuban flutist Maraca. Since then, he has collaborated with such artists as Arturo O'Farrill, Nella, and Katreese Barnes.



Dr. Nadia Azar

When UX Meets Drum Education

How digital notation tools are changing the way we learn and teach

By Derek Lee

For many drum educators, lesson preparation can feel like a juggling act: pulling from multiple books, handwriting exercises, or struggling with notation software that has a steep learning curve or takes too much time to implement, even for the simplest ideas. Students also face their own hurdles: first, learning to read notation well enough to start playing, and later, understanding it well enough to explore and craft their own ideas. These barriers can slow progress, limit creativity, and take the focus away from actually making music.

While digital tools promise efficiency, fundamental transformations happen when thoughtful User Experience (UX) design actively removes these learning barriers, making notation more intuitive, faster to create, and more engaging to use. Drawing on my work developing Drum Notation by Beat Note, I've seen firsthand how the following four UX principles can transform the way we teach, learn, and create with digital notation.

KEY SHIFT 1

From Hard-to-Access Knowledge to Onboarding Through Design

Principle

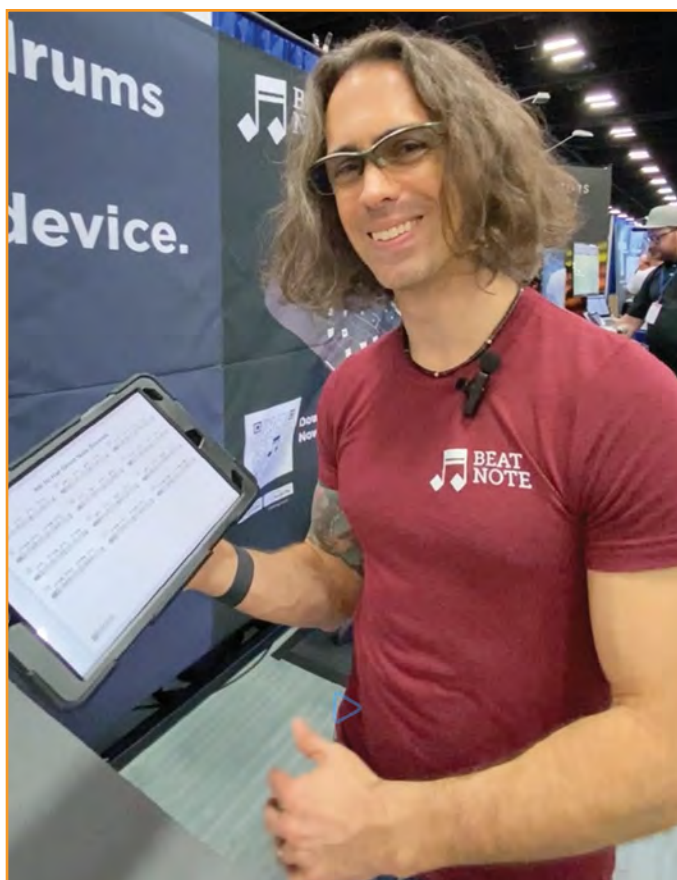
Reducing cognitive load at the start encourages immediate participation.

The Challenge

Composing drumset notation has traditionally required prior knowledge: note and rest values, where each instrument sits on the staff, time signatures, subdivisions, and many other fundamental music conventions. Without this foundation, many students can't fully participate in reading or composition, forcing educators to either spend significant lesson time on mechanics or default to learning by ear before introducing creative work.

A Digital Approach

To enable experiential learning, a composition interface should let users start creating immediately, introducing proper notation through visual cues, contextual hints, and real-time playback – teaching notation through doing, without formal



Derek Lee

prerequisites. By allowing subdivisions to be changed simply by choosing the desired number of notes, enabling instrument selection through visual icons rather than staff position, and prompting for articulations at the moment of composition, the system can both teach and guide the learner through the act of real-time creation.

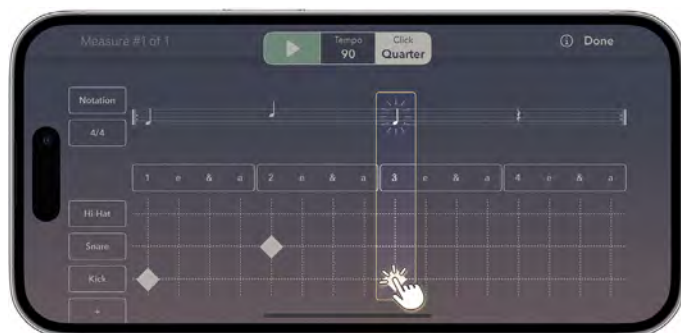
For instance, students creating their first beat might simply tap inside a rhythmic grid similar to a drum machine, not only hearing the results immediately, but also seeing how it displays on the staff — learning notation through discovery rather than memorization.

Impacts

For educators: integrate composition earlier, tailor the depth of notation instruction to each student's readiness, and spend class time on creative exploration.

For students: begin composing immediately, building notation literacy naturally while staying engaged in the music-making process.

Beat Note's composition interface features diamond-shaped grid points that naturally guide the eye to exact intersection points for instrument selection (horizontal) and note placement (vertical). Users can tap anywhere to place notes, immediately hearing results while seeing proper notation appear above and understanding how to read each note position (1 e & a), enabling composition without formal prerequisites



KEY SHIFT 2

From Static Exercises to Interactive Practice Environments

Principle

Making practice adaptable without rewriting the content increases engagement and accelerates learning.

The Challenge

Paper or PDF notation is fixed: one layout, no playback, and no way to adjust what you see to match how you learn. If you can't already read notation fluently, the rhythms and musical intent remain locked on the page, like a language you haven't yet learned how to read. Even for fluent readers, looping tricky sections or adjusting difficulty requires manual work, often slowing progress and discouraging efficient practice.

A Digital Approach

Interactive notation environments should enable educators to provide a single, well-crafted exercise that students can adapt

to meet their individual needs. Playback makes the rhythm and feel immediately apparent. Tempo controls allow gradual progression from slow accuracy to full performance speed. Looping removes downtime between repetitions. Muting or isolating parts focuses attention where it's needed most. Visual indicators that track the music in real time connect what students see with what they hear. This adaptive approach caters to multiple skill levels without the need for separate versions, supporting growth from beginner to advanced using the same source material.

A challenging syncopated pattern that frustrates at full tempo becomes approachable when looped at a moderate tempo, building confidence before increasing speed.

Impacts

For educators: compose or adapt an exercise once, and give students the ability to explore it in multiple ways — saving preparation time while providing richer learning experiences without creating separate versions.

For students: gain a clear aural model, practice at a comfortable pace, focus on problem spots, and progress naturally — all from a single, interactive version.

Beat Note's real-time playback highlights both the current measure and the specific note being played at that moment. Interactive controls at the top provide tempo adjustment, looping, timing tools, and separate audio controls for drums and click track, transforming static notation into an adaptive practice environment.



KEY SHIFT 3

From Local Lesson Rooms to Global, Shareable Formats

Principle

Design for multi-format delivery from a single source.

The Challenge

Learning materials are often tied to a single format or location. A handout might work well in an in-person lesson, but it loses impact in a remote class, on social media, or in an online course. Adapting the same content for different contexts is time-consuming and often means sacrificing quality or features.

A Digital Approach

Well-designed notation tools enable export of the same exercise as an interactive link with playback and real-time controls, a printable PDF, an image (including transparent backgrounds),

an animated video with audio, or a pure audio file. This flexibility means one composition can be instantly adapted for live lessons, remote students, online courses, and social media, without having to rebuild it for each use case.

The same linear exercise becomes homework for a student (via an interactive link), social media content (in an animated video), and method book material (printed from a PDF) — all from the same composition.

Impacts

For educators: create once and deliver anywhere. An exercise can be shared with a student as an interactive link, posted as an animated video on social media to attract new learners, or included in an online course, all while maintaining consistency and saving hours of adaptation work.

For students: choose the format that best supports your learning — the interactivity of a live link, the clarity of printed notation, the step-by-step visual guidance of animated video, or the focus of an audio track.

KEY SHIFT 4

From One-Size-Fits-All to Personalized Learning Journeys

Principle

Enable quick customization to match individual learning needs.

The Challenge

Every drummer learns differently. Some thrive on visual cues, others on auditory repetition, and yet others through experimentation. Traditional notation and method books present material in a fixed way, which can leave specific learners disengaged or struggling to adapt.

A Digital Approach

Interactive tools can enable educators to adjust the complexity, instrumentation, articulations, sticking, and voicing in seconds, based on a student's needs and goals, without rewriting the entire exercise. The same foundational piece can be instantly adapted to highlight different skills, emphasize specific techniques, or match the learner's preferred style and sound.

A basic rock beat instantly becomes a Latin groove, a ghost-note study, or a limb independence exercise with simple parameter changes.

Impacts

For educators: instantly tailor the same exercise to match the goals, skill levels, and learning styles of each student. This keeps lessons engaging and appropriately challenging while maximizing the usefulness of a single composition.

For students: receive music that's "just right" for the moment: relevant, achievable, and motivating.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Together, these four shifts represent a fundamental change in how we approach educational technology — from feature-rich complexity to user-centered design. When digital tools actively remove learning barriers rather than create new ones, teachers and students can both focus on what matters most: making music.

UX isn't just about making an app attractive; it's about aligning design with how people learn. By lowering entry barriers, making practice interactive, opening new avenues for sharing content, and enabling personalization, digital notation tools can transform drumming education for teachers, students, and online content creators alike.

At PASIC, I'll expand on these principles with live demonstrations, case studies, and practical workflows you can adapt immediately to your teaching or practice. Whether you're in the lesson room, on stage, or sharing online, the right combination of design and technology can bridge the gap between instruction and practice — and spark lasting musical growth.

I look forward to connecting with you at PASIC to explore how these principles can transform your teaching or playing.

Derek Lee is a drummer, software engineer, and entrepreneur who builds innovative tools that empower drummers and educators. He is the founder of Drum Notation by Beat Note (www.beat-note.app), a modern, community-driven platform for interactive drum notation. Derek's work blends musical expertise with user-centered design to make notation more accessible, engaging, and effective. **PN**

ELECTRONIC / TECHNOLOGY

Music Tech Committee

Electronic/Technology Workshop

Music Tech Petting Zoo and Help Desk

This workshop offers a unique, hands-on experience for PASIC attendees to explore cutting-edge music technology hardware designed for diverse applications, including the marching arts, digital music composition, live music performance, and music education. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with devices such as USB interfaces, mixers, loop pedals, MIDI controllers, and digital instruments. The workshop doubles as a "help desk," where members of the PAS Music Technology Committee will be available to answer questions and provide troubleshooting assistance. Whether attendees need help setting up equipment, optimizing workflows, or learning about new tools, this workshop is designed to meet their needs.

The PAS Music Technology Committee is comprised of subcommittees that address areas of outreach, "hands-on" technology labs, listening lab, and publications with respective subcommittee chairs who develop publications and PASIC presentations as well as conduct reviews of products and other related materials.

Mitchell Beck: Original Music for Live Looped Percussion

By Javi Garza

Mitchell Beck is a well-known percussionist based in Seattle. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in percussion performance from Indiana University. Since 2012, he has performed in solo, chamber, orchestral, and experimental settings, with a strong focus on live looping. He's passionate about electroacoustic composition, audio processing, and multimedia collaboration.

Javi Garza: Tell us a little bit about your background and how that's influenced your area of expertise.



Mitchell Beck

Mitchell Beck: In college I got really into electronic artists like Aphex Twin. I was curious; how do they make these sounds? That interest pushed me to explore electronic music and technology, especially in graduate school. The composition side of things was early on in my undergraduate. I kept writing contemporary classical pieces throughout school. Graduate school is where I got into the tech side of things. Some of my friends were into audio production, so I started exploring that world. By the end of graduate school, I was just starting to get deeper into it.

Garza: How much did you learn in a classroom setting versus going out to the real world on a gig and performing trial and error?

Beck: A lot of the aspects like composition or writing songs were supported through lessons and feedback. One of my percussion teachers helped a lot with composition alongside playing. And then I took composition lessons for a few years in school. So, there's a lot of crediting some of my decision-making as a composer to more of studying it in school with someone. But as far as technology is concerned, a lot of that was after I graduated. It's basically just YouTube University. There are many resources out there, so I did a lot of

self-learning. It was right in the pandemic area era too, so, I had a lot of time to just sit at home and learn about that stuff.

Garza: What can people expect from your PASIC session?

Beck: As the title indicates, it's heavily based on the use of live looping to create music. A lot of the looping is going to be percussion-based, but also voice looping and software synthesizers, so some is electronic. I will be looping percussion and applying live processing such as re-pitching sounds through MainStage. I will demonstrate how several tunes are constructed and performed in this way, so it should be fun. My session will include different styles,

**Tribute video
included in the
web version
of this article.**



which should offer a little something for everyone there.

Garza: How did you choose this specific topic for PASIC?

Beck: It's what I'm most passionate about right now. I started using loop pedals in grad school. I was inspired by the band El Ten Eleven. The guitarist uses a double-neck guitar and loops, and the drummer brings in electronics. I thought, "What would that look like with percussion?" It became my favorite way to perform.

Garza: Walk us through your typical setup for a live loop percussion performance. Tell us about your go-to instruments, interfaces, and software.

Beck: The setup is no bigger than hauling my drumset somewhere. I use a lot of found-object instruments like bottles and pans, smaller percussion instruments like maracas, and a vibraphone, which is essential to the setup. I started incorporating a kick drum, too. In addition to the instrumental aspect, I do vocal performance. I run everything through a Scarlett interface and MainStage, then into a Boss RC-300 loop station, and out to a P.A.

The setup is always changing. I've homed in on the vibraphone, and my found objects are consistent these days, but I continue to switch other things out now and then. I also use this for singer-songwriter sets with smaller instruments like the ukulele. I like how flexible it is. I don't think I'll ever reach a point where I'm always using the same things.

Garza: When you're creating live looping, how do you approach your layering and your structure?

Beck: Mostly, I improvise. I pick a rhythm or groove and layer from there. I'll explore for 30 minutes, then condense it into a short piece. I rarely write full pieces in advance; the setup really encourages improvisation.

Garza: Would you say your music has a distinct sound?

Beck: For sure; I think some of that lends itself to the setup and instruments and how it changes depending on what I'm doing. I find myself being attracted to certain types of sounds, such as diverse types of found objects. And again, the vibraphone is very integrated as my melodic and harmonic percussion in-

strument. Those sounds create a cohesive sound world that I use a lot. In that way, I can reflect contemporary, progressive, and ensemble compositional elements. Perhaps because I did a good bit of Afro-Cuban playing in school, a lot of my music is in six or in three.

Garza: What kind of experience are you hoping to create for the audience at your session?

Beck: My session will be performance-driven. My goal is to demonstrate the musical capabilities of this type of technology integrated with percussion. I will stop occasionally to explain things, especially for people unfamiliar with looping. I hope everyone finds something to connect with. In terms of education, I am going to explain a lot of my process on a very fundamental level. I am hoping to cover a large variety of styles and sounds so that everyone can enjoy it.

Garza: Will people need experience with tech or looping to enjoy it?

Beck: Not at all. Through different genres and sounds, I can get into the experimental side of things deeply, so this session should have music that just about anyone in the audience can enjoy. I have always wanted to be experimental but still be accessible to a general audience with the way I write and perform. A constant philosophy for me is trying to write music that pushes boundaries in a way that anyone could enjoy or at least appreciate. The challenge is blending the experimental, pop, and rock influences in a way people can connect with each other.

Garza: What challenges came up while preparing this presentation?

Beck: We have talked about trying to create a session's worth of music that an audience member can relate to in some way. Staying accessible in some way and appealing to a wide audience is always a challenge. In a more technical sense, performing with the loop



pedals is very enjoyable, and it is obviously based on recording small snippets of sound that continue to record or play back. As a performer, the difficulty can be to get lost in adding layers to the loop and then, all of a sudden, it's been ten minutes on the same developing line. That can get really boring for an audience, especially when it's really redundant. In looping, you develop ideas, but you don't want the listeners to start wondering if it's going to go anywhere. Building form through this structure can be a little bit tricky sometimes. You have to develop ideas in a concise way to let the song truly evolve and continue forward like a piece of music should. I want to maintain an interesting form, without any idea overstaying its welcome. It feels like a puzzle. This is really one of my first deep dives into using MainStage. I've always been aware of it and used it a little bit, but this was a really good chance to build out a full session in a full concert file on MainStage.

Garza: Do you have any advice for percussionists hesitant about technology?

Beck: Start small. There is a ton of information online. I learned most of it from YouTube. Pick something that interests you and take it one step at a time.

Garza: What do you hope your session adds to the field?

Beck: I want to show that percussion can be central to more than just concert music. Technology opens new ways to compose and perform. I hope it expands people's ideas of what percussion can be.

LINKS

mitchellbeckmusic.com

Instagram: [@mitchellbeckmusic](https://www.instagram.com/mitchellbeckmusic)

VIDEO

<https://vimeo.com/1110363679?share=copy#t=0>

Javier Garza is a percussion educator and performer based in the Manhattan, Kansas area. Javier holds bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Percussion Performance from Texas Tech University and is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance at Kansas State University under Dr. Kurt Gartner. **PN**

ELECTRONIC / TECHNOLOGY

Kevin Zetina

Electronic/Technology

Clinic / Performance

Polyrhythms Through Pop Music:

Advanced Snare and Tape Solos

Set to Popular Music

This session explores the snare drum + tape pieces featured in my book, *Polyrhythms Through Pop Music*, accompanied by corresponding video projections for each piece. Published through Liquidrum, the book includes seven snare drum solos, each scored to a song in a distinct popular style, with genres ranging from mathcore to microtonal EDM to hip-hop. These solos present a fresh approach to phrase development, emphasizing tension and release through nested tuplets and polyrhythms that interact with the tape and video elements. While the snare writing can be complex, the electronics keep the rhythms grounded in simple meters, making the pulse and groove more accessible. The book includes exercises designed to target specific measures in each solo as well as broader rhythmic concepts found throughout the book.

Kevin Zetina is a performer, composer, and arranger specializing in contemporary music. He has collaborated with members of such renowned groups as Eighth Blackbird, Ensemble Signal, the JACK Quartet, and the Bang on a Can All-Stars. Kevin serves as Lecturer of Percussion at the Natalie L. Haslam College of Music at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he directs the UT Chamber Percussion Ensemble, teaches applied lessons, and fulfills a variety of other duties for the college. He also serves as percussion faculty at the Nief-Norf Summer Festival.

ELECTRONIC / TECHNOLOGY

James Mauck

Clinic / Performance

Forebeat: Improvisation through

Acoustic-Electronics

James will briefly explain the process behind his project Forebeat, how to incorporate electronics into your acoustic setup, and demonstrate how he utilizes electronics in his improvisations. James uses Forebeat as a means to explore the relationship between rhythm and texture, either balancing the two or treating one as accompaniment to the other. The goal of this session is to showcase the freedom and musicianship that can be developed when you introduce electronics and looping into your improvising practice and performance.

Since developing Forebeat, James Mauck has brought his project to clubs, festivals, farmers markets, and art exhibitions, and he often collaborates with the University of Illinois Dance Department as a composer and accompanist. James has brought Forebeat into higher academia by showcasing the musical possibilities of combining electronics with acoustic instruments as a professor of percussion at Illinois Wesleyan University and Eastern Illinois University. In January 2025, James released his sophomore album, *Stages of Growth*, a collection of prepared pieces and improvisations that explore the processes of overcoming substance dependency and self-improvement through introspection.

The Charles Brooks Collective

Virtual Clinic / Performance

A Modern Approach to Vibraphone Performance

In June 2024, *Percussive Notes* published Charles Brooks' article "A Modern Approach to Vibraphone Performance through Electronic Manipulation, Modulation and Amplification." He will demonstrate live performance practice discussed in the article and new techniques he continually discovers through live performance. The session will consist of performance examples, education on technological approach, and focus on explaining how he achieves a particular sound and for what musical purpose.

Grant Writing for Musicians: Leveraging AI to Enhance Funding Requests

By Erin Walker Bliss

In today's arts landscape, grant writing is an essential skill for musicians. Securing support — whether for a commission or an outreach program — often comes down to how effectively a proposal is written. When used critically and creatively, artificial intelligence (AI) tools can help musicians refine their writing and better align their proposals with funder priorities.

With over \$2 million in grants raised for programming at the Central Music Academy (CMA) in Lexington, Kentucky, I've seen firsthand how AI can transform the grant writing process. My PASIC session will delve deeper into these tactics; what follows introduces the core strategies and approaches that will be explored further in the session.

AI TOOLS

AI refers to technologies designed to handle tasks that typically require human thought — things like generating text, editing, and organizing ideas. A common form of AI used in writing is a GPT (Generative Pretrained Transformer), a model trained to understand and generate human-like text. Programs like ChatGPT (developed by OpenAI) and Gemini (from Google) are examples of AI-powered writing assistants. When us-

ers type in a prompt, tools like ChatGPT or Gemini generate text by identifying statistical patterns in language, not by understanding meaning. While these systems lack true comprehension, they can still support the writing process — for example, by restructuring a disorganized passage or suggesting alternative phrasing.

MATCHING MISSION TO FUNDING

The first step in successful grant writing is identifying the most compatible funders for your proposal. I recommend

starting with a searchable database like Instrumentl or Guidestar. These platforms allow you to narrow your search based on the kinds of projects you do or the communities you serve. The process can be taken a step further by integrating AI into the search.

For example, publicly available GPTs, such as GrantStation's Grant Fit Evaluator GPT, can evaluate a project description and provide CFP (call for proposal) alignment feedback based on a funder's published criteria. This tool helps you determine alignment with a funder's values, which can save time and lead to a more focused, compelling pitch.

WRITING WITH PRECISION

As musicians, we're often required to translate the value of our creative work into clear outcomes that resonate with funders. This means connecting the artistic to the civic: describing how a new marimba commission fosters cultural dialogue, or how a school steel band addresses inequities in music education.

AI tools can help clarify tone and suggest improvements to the overall organization of your text. One effective strategy is to use specific prompts, such as "Act as a grant reviewer," to evaluate your drafts before submission. This allows you to



Erin Walker Bliss

simulate the funder's perspective and strengthen alignment with their expectations. Publicly available GPTs, such as GrantStation's Proposal Reviewer GPT, can also aid in this process.

Alternatively, using a prompt like "Ask me questions..." can be a helpful way to develop a section that feels vague or incomplete. For instance, you might ask the GPT to help you articulate the need for a community drumming program. This approach — often described as letting the AI "lead the process" — invites the tool to guide the conversation by asking targeted follow-up questions.

BUILDING CUSTOM GPTS AND USING AI PROJECTS

For recurring grant activities, building a custom GPT can be transformative. A custom GPT is a version of ChatGPT trained on your organization's language, mission, previous proposals, and program details. You can upload files such as donor letters, budget templates, or assessment documents, and the GPT will reference that material to generate more tailored responses in the current session or project. This keeps your messaging consistent and cuts down on repetitive writing.

Likewise, the Projects feature in ChatGPT allows users to create a centralized workspace for each grant (available with a ChatGPT Plus subscription as of mid-2025). You can upload an RFP (Request For Proposal), narrative templates, and supplementary materials. The AI tool then helps organize and draft your responses based on the funder's language and the structure of the RFP. This is particularly useful for large-scale applications such as those required by the National Endowment for the Arts or state arts councils.

These approaches also support collaborative work. When several team members are involved in drafting a proposal, Projects allows all files and discussions to remain in one place, which helps preserve version accuracy and prevents conflicting edits.

MEASURING AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT

Evaluating the impact of a program is one of the more demanding parts of grant writing. Funders often expect to receive both qualitative and quantitative evidence demonstrating a project's success. AI tools can assist in organizing this information and drafting early versions of evaluation sections.

To support program evaluation, musicians can use AI to surface key insights from student reflections or to visualize participation data over time. For example, I've used prompts such as "source student quotes that show the emotional impact of taking private lessons at CMA" or "create a visual for year-over-year participation growth in ensembles," in the past. AI can also assist in turning narrative feedback and participation records into cohesive summaries that highlight both engagement and outcomes.

That said, these outputs should always be reviewed for accuracy and tone. AI may misinterpret nuanced feedback, misread uploaded documents, or inflate claims, so human oversight is essential.

USING AI RESPONSIBLY

Despite its power, AI is not without limitations. Its outputs can be biased or inaccurate, and it cannot substitute for the insight, creativity, and cultural context that musicians bring to their work. Overreliance on automated tools can result in proposals that feel generic or disconnected from the people behind them; a well-chosen personal anecdote or firsthand example always helps ground a request in human experience.

Grant writers — especially those new to the process — will benefit from studying sample grant proposals to observe what makes some applications compelling and others less effective. Revisiting the fundamentals of clear writing will, of course, also sharpen any draft; in this way, a grammar or style reference book, such as *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White, is an invaluable companion.

Finally, the environmental impact of AI

use is worth considering. Large language models, such as GPTs, rely on powerful cloud-based servers to process requests, and running these models at scale requires substantial computing power. This server-side demand contributes significantly to overall energy consumption and carbon emissions. Being mindful of sustainability — particularly when using AI for early drafts or repetitive tasks — can help strike a balance between efficiency and responsibility.

CONCLUSION

AI will never write your best grant proposal, but it can help you write it more clearly, strategically, and efficiently. As a musician working at the intersection of artistry, education, and advocacy, I have found AI most useful when paired with thoughtful intention and a strong sense of mission. Whether you're applying for a small community grant or a major federal opportunity, AI can serve as a collaborative tool in your creative and administrative toolkit.

Musicians already know how to rehearse, revise, and respond. Bringing that same discipline to the grant writing process — with a little help from AI — can open new doors for your music, your organization, and the communities you serve.

Erin Walker Bliss is a Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology at the University of Kentucky, who holds a DMA in Percussion Performance and a PhD in Musicology/Ethnomusicology. She has presented research on Scottish pipe bands and collective identity at international conferences for the International Bagpipe Organisation, Musica Scotica, Music in 19th-Century Britain, IASPM, SEM, CMS, PAS, and Berklee City Music Network. Erin also serves as the Executive Director of the Central Music Academy, a non-profit offering free music programs for underserved youth. In that capacity, she consults on arts leadership and philanthropy and has reviewed grants for the NEA, South Arts, and local agencies. **PN**

PASIC50 Scholarly Research Overview

By Lisa Rogers

The 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), 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.

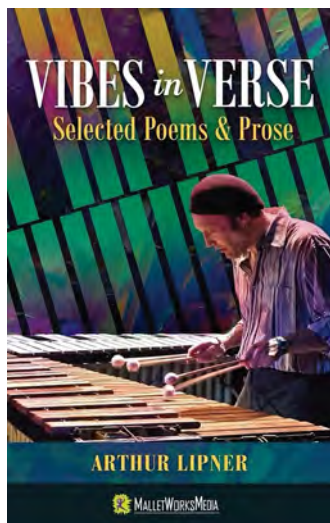
New Percussion Literature and Recordings

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Difficulty Rating Scale

I-II	Elementary
III-IV	Intermediate
V-VI	Advanced
VI+	Difficult

GENERAL REFERENCE



Vibes in Verse: Selected Poems & Prose
 Arthur Lipner
 \$18.00 digital/\$23.00 print
 MalletWorks Music

Arthur Lipner has enjoyed decades of success as a keyboard percussion performer, composer,

and clinician, and he draws upon those experiences in this literary work. One might be tempted to call *Vibes in Verse* a memoir, but memoirs aren't typically suffused with poetry, song lyrics, and answering-machine greetings. Instead, *Vibes in Verse* reads more like an autobiographical rhapsody, with the soul of a Jack Kerouac essay and the grinning self-promotional flair of *Barnum's Own Story*. Of course, P.T. Barnum never provided QR codes to original music tracks.

With tracks like "Brazil's Hold on Me" and "Through All the Years," and prose titles such as "Soybeans in Da Hood," it's obvious that Lipner had fun putting this project together. The book is as well-paced as a good set list, switching gears between short-and-sweet and deep thoughts faster than you can say "Talking Sticks." In fact, the unpredictability of every page turn makes the book compelling; where else can you read about broken glass beakers of urine samples catching fire, and then on the next page dive into a surprisingly well-considered treatise on the important geometry of food shapes? And then the next page begins with one of the greatest standalone sentences in the annals of the written word: "A nose is a nose except when it sprays like a hose."

The book winds back to percussion music-making eventually, and the musical tracks are unreservedly joyful and well-produced, but they're only one facet of this dizzying journey through decades of artistic experiences and the thoughts they have inspired. Alternately serious and silly, *Vibes in Verse* might be the greatest set of expanded liner notes the world has ever seen. At the very least, it's worth picking up to peek inside the mind — and heart — of a well-travelled pro.

—Brian Graiser

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION SOLO

Leventikos V

Christopher Gable
 \$18.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba

Web: [audio recording](#)

According to Christopher Gable, this "joyful marimba solo" is based on a traditional Macedonian dance rhythm that alternates between 9/8 and 7/8. "The entire pattern adds up to 16 eighth

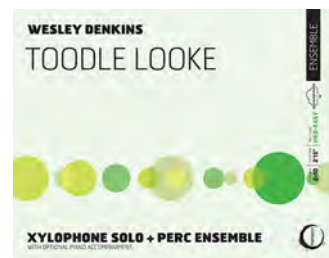
notes, which allows for fun polyrhythmic and cross-rhythm possibilities."

Written at a "Fast and Joyful" 200 bpm, the piece opens with a demonstration of the 9/8 and 7/8 groove through the clicking of mallet shafts. The main theme contains repeated ascending and descending eighth notes in the right hand accompanied by the rhythmic pattern in the left hand. Different takes on this idea present themselves, such as the right hand taking over the rhythmic pattern, double vertical strokes that add additional color, and interludes of fast eighth notes simultaneously in both hands. Save for two fermatas, the piece has no breaks. This, combined with the counterpoint between the hands, draws similarities to Christopher Deane's "The Process of Invention." Mastery of single independent strokes, double-vertical strokes, right hand/left hand coordination, and overall technical endurance are imperative to perform this work.

If you are looking for a five-minute marimba solo with intriguing grooves and musical ideas that push your technical skills and endurance, this piece is definitely worth checking out.

—Tim Feerst

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION SOLO WITH ACCOMPANIMENT



Toodle Looke III

Wesley Denkins
 \$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (2-10 Players): solo xylophone, 4.3- or 5-octave marimba, 4-octave marimba, glockenspiel, triangle, bass drum, snare drum, tambourine, 2 woodblocks, optional siren whistle, optional piano

Web: [score sample, audio and video recordings](#)

Wesley Denkins pays homage to Scott Joplin and George Hamilton Green with this work for solo xylophone and percussion ensemble. Originally composed for piano, this piece can be played as a xylophone solo with piano accompaniment (the piano part is downloadable), solo with mallet instruments only, full ensemble of eight to ten players, or any combination of the percussion parts with the piano or mallet accompaniment versions. "Toodle Looke" is suitable for inexperienced players and provides a good entryway into more advanced ragtime xylophone music. The mallet parts (other than the solo xylophone) are equal in difficulty, and include mostly double stops with short, sometimes syncopated, scalar lines.

The piece is in a clear ABA form (with some variation in the second A) with a key change from F major to B-flat major for the B section. The mallet parts and solo are mostly diatonic, and I hear quotes from Joplin's "The Entertainer." The non-mallet percussion parts can be performed by a minimum of three players, with options to expand it to four or five players if a drumset isn't used. Expected ragtime characteristics occur throughout, including syncopated rhythms and accents, repetition, a strong "two" feel, scalar passages, and solo breaks in the xylophone (including syncopated double stops).

Everything is explained and notated clearly, and a setup diagram is included. I recommend this to performers looking for a less intimidating entry into ragtime xylophone music compared with Green and others.

—Joseph Van Hassel

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION DUO

Trade Winds III

Benjamin Holmes

\$30.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 2 vibraphones

Web: [video recording](#)

This is a fine introduction to duet playing in its use of accessible motifs, beautiful harmonies, and moments that force the performers to listen. As a two-mallet duet with pedaling being the only vibraphone-specific technique, this is perfect for high school or college students who are new to the instrument. The two vibraphone parts are of equal difficulty and take turns being the lead voice. At 4½ minutes in length, it is perfect for any performance setting.

At first glance, some rhythms may make this piece seem more advanced than it is, but with a second look at the tempos, performers will realize that these sections are very doable. Benjamin Holmes is not trying to be tricky with anything in the piece; its simplicity is a big part of its charm and beauty. With that said, this work has a few challenging moments that rely on a strong sense of pulse. These include sections of syncopation,

splitting of sextuplets and thirty-second notes, and multiple tempo changes; in particular, there are several ritardandos in already very slow tempos. These moments will require a keen ear and feel for both musicians.

This piece has the potential to be a favorite among young students. The importance of listening for blend and musicality should also make it a popular choice for teachers.

—Stephen Busath

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Chile Molina III–IV

Arr. Tiffany Nicely

\$20.00

Per-Mus Publications

Instrumentation (5 players): 4.3-octave marimba, 5-octave marimba, optional drumset

Web: [video recording](#)

"Chile Molina," as arranged by Tiffany Nicely, is perfect for those looking to perform traditional Costa Rican marimba music but who lack the traditional instruments. Nicely states, "Chile Molina" is a traditional danza. In Costa Rica, this style of music is played by two or more people sharing a marimba with a small drumset. This version uses two players on each marimba, or more if parts are doubled."

The arrangement is straightforward but allows room for extending the arrangement for soloists or a percussion break. The four marimba parts include two melodic parts, a chord part, and a bass marimba part. With the exception of the chorded part, these can be performed with two mallets and would be accessible to intermediate players. The bass part is possible for a performer who is closer to a beginner. The chorded part requires basic double verticals and chords in several inversions. The optional drumset is written out and would be great for a player who has less experience, but it offers plenty for a seasoned professional.

My favorite part of this arrangement is the specific mallet requirements, which create a very traditional texture on contemporary instruments. I highly recommend "Chile Molina"; its accessibility to a wide variety of players is a welcome addition to the traditional marimba ensemble.

—Joe Millea

Flapjack III

J.C. Bach and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf

Arr. Brian Slawson

\$39.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (8 players): chimes, xylophone, vibraphone, 4-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba, 4 timpani

Web: [score sample](#), [audio recording](#)

Now and then, one encounters a piece of music that shrugs off any semblance of a relationship

with its title, and in 2025 that piece appears to be "Flapjack." Brian Slawson's clever 3½-minute mashup of two themes by J.C. Bach and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf is satisfying to listen to and will undoubtedly provide rich opportunities for musical growth when rehearsed and performed by students in middle school or high school. This light-yet-refined arrangement might even feel right at home as a processional for a graduation, convocation, or wedding ceremony. But who would want to walk down the aisle to a piece called "Flapjack"?

As far as percussion ensemble pieces go, this one knows exactly what it's doing and where it's going. This piece will be a great "sizzle reel" introduction to Classical-era music for younger students, and the deliberate speed and overt polyphony will make for a nice change of pace on programs otherwise filled with keyboard licks and drum impacts. The most challenging part may lie in the timpani, as there are a few tuning changes to be navigated (albeit with plenty of time to do so). The arranger explains in the program notes the inside joke behind the "Flapjack" name, but wouldn't you rather live in a world where mystery endures?

All in all, it's a very clever, pedagogically aware arrangement, and I recommend it to ensemble directors looking for a change-up to add to their middle school or high school percussion ensemble program.

—Brian Graiser



Graffiti V

Chad Heiny

\$45.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (6 players): glockenspiel, snare drum, field drum, 2 marching snare drums, bongos, 3 toms, mounted kick drum, kick drum with pedal, concert bass drum, trash cymbal stack, 2 splash cymbals, sizzle cymbal, 2 Jam Blocks, 2 pedal trash metals, Zil-bel, 2 cowbells, 3 guiros, 5 tuned pipes

Web: [score sample](#), [audio and video recordings](#)

Chad Heiny has written a number of fun and accessible pieces at a variety of difficulty levels. "Graffiti" sits on the more challenging side, combining fast splits over toms, bongos, and a bass drum a la "Eight on 3 and Nine on 2" with a supporting cast of metallic timbres and intricate interlocking rhythms. It is a challenging work to put together and needs quite a few non-pitched percussion instruments.

"Graffiti" incorporates a combination of typical

band-room percussion instruments with some unusual combinations, like the need for three guiros, two separate kick drums, or five pipes tuned to specific pitches; Heiny provides alternatives in the score if your ensemble does not have the correct pipes. The middle two players need the most technical and rhythmic timing skills, but the outside four players all have relatively challenging parts as well, making this piece more suitable for an advanced high school or university-level ensemble. Although most of the rhythms are sixteenth-note based, the main rhythmic challenge for all players is the quick changing meters and interlocking split passages.

The piece takes inspiration from a graffiti tunnel in London where artwork is layered into the walls and ceiling. Heiny does a wonderful job of developing a kaleidoscope of sounds throughout the piece, at times creating an effect of raw colors colliding without clear boundaries or barriers. This could lead to some difficulties for the performers. The numerous dense, syncopated rhythmic passages and non-homogenous timbres create challenges for alignment and balance. The fast-paced sextet is just over five minutes long and requires a rhythmically strong and musically mature group; otherwise, the overlaying rhythms and interlocking patterns fight with each other instead of supporting the bigger picture.

—Matthew Geiger

In the Bleak Midwinter II

Gustav Holst

Arr. Brian Slawson

\$32.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: glockenspiel, 4.3-octave marimba, vibraphone, timpani, drumset

Web: [score sample](#), [audio recording](#)

This is a great arrangement for a beginning percussion ensemble — especially if you have players with various comfort levels with mallet percussion. While there are a few notably independent parts, “In the Bleak Midwinter” features scoring that lines up rhythmically with very slight syncopation, making this manageable for a variety of percussion ensembles.

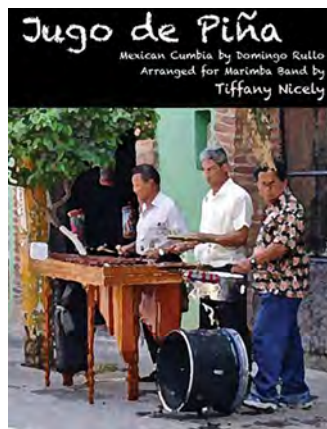
One of the strengths of Brian Slawson’s writing is his ability to write interesting music that is accessible for less experienced players. He provides many types of rhythmic support, starting with the drumset, to support the pulse for the mallet players. Additional rhythmic support can be found in the vibraphone and marimba parts, which often divide the pulse for longer sustained notes and, from measure 31 to the end, subdivide the pulse with eighth-note melodic lines. In addition, the timpani part is well-written for young players, as each pitch is in the middle of the range for that drum. This will allow the player and the director to focus on getting a great timpani sound, balancing the sound across drums and within the ensemble. Likewise, in beginning ensembles, the level of familiarity with mallet percussion often varies. Slawson writes with this in mind by crafting glockenspiel and Marimba 2 parts that are repetitive and useful for building confidence in less experienced mallet players.

The vibraphone is the principal melodic instrument, with pedaling left up to the performer, making this a great part for a strong mallet player. While the piece is straightforward, there are some trickier spots where the eighth notes enter in the vibes and marimba parts, and the frequent

use of double stops, which often change intervals. Other challenges can be found in the drumset part, which uses a bossa-like soft-rock style. This groove features repeated notes on the kick drum that may be a challenge for newer drummers. Lastly, Slawson arranges both marimba parts to fit on a shared low-A marimba, making this piece accessible for a variety of programs.

“In the Bleak Midwinter” would make a great addition to a percussion ensemble or other concert program seeking a soothing piece that is straightforward to prepare. It would also be a great resource for a college percussion methods course.

—Quintin Mallette



Jugo de Piña III

Domingo Rullo

Arr. Tiffany Nicely

\$20.00

Per-Mus Publications

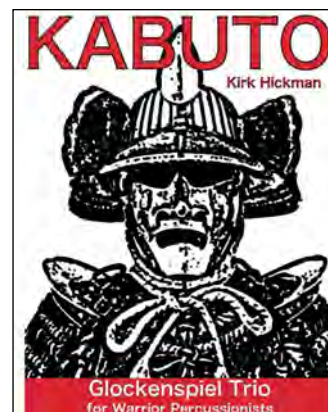
Instrumentation (2+ players): 4-octave marimba, 5-octave marimba, drumset

Web: [video recording](#)

“Jugo de Piña” (“Pineapple Juice”) is a fun and flexible arrangement of a cumbia dance tune. It can be performed with as few as two players (Marimba 1 and bass/chords) up through the more familiar Mexican marimba arrangement of four performers on two marimbas. There is additional flexibility if parts are doubled and drumset or auxiliary percussion are added. The individual parts are also presented with options for four- or two-mallet chords, as well as treble and bass clef parts for the chords and bass line. There is also a part that is just the melody, labelled “lead sheet.”

“Jugo de Piña” mostly calls for two-mallet playing and includes rolls and fast-moving double stops, as well as syncopated rhythms at times. Of the mallet parts, Marimba 1 is the most challenging and active. The chord part has the option of using two or four mallets, and it is exclusively block chords. The drumset part is notated with flexibility regarding instruments used (it could be an auxiliary percussion setup) and room for soloing. The mallet players also have the option to improvise a solo. “Jugo de Piña” would be a great addition to a percussion ensemble concert and would also work well for a children’s concert.

—Joseph Van Hassel



Kabuto I

Kirk Hickman

\$15.00

Per-Mus Publications

Instrumentation (3 players): 3 glockenspiels

“Kabuto” is a short ensemble work for three percussionists in their early years of study. The piece is inspired by a Samurai’s helmet, with each musical section representing part of the warrior’s training day. It is suitable for middle school students and serves as a fun introduction to mallet percussion. Kirk Hickman provides significant detail within the program notes and explicitly states the meaning behind each section. This helps teachers and students make musical connections to bring the piece’s story to life.

All three parts are equal in difficulty and only require two-mallet technique. Concepts such as dynamic shifts, first and second endings, key signature and tempo changes, and double stops are present, offering plenty of educational benefits. Hickman also includes an optional implement change from hard plastic to rubber, adding another layer of challenge if needed. Labeled as a glockenspiel trio for “warrior percussionists,” “Kabuto” is an exciting way to introduce students to both chamber music and mallet percussion.

—Danielle Moreau

Lightweaver V

Russell Wharton

\$48.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (4 players): 4.3-octave marimba, 5-octave marimba

Web: [audio](#) and [video recordings](#)

Inspired by the works of psychologist Carl Jung and author Brandon Sanderson, “Lightweaver” is a technically challenging and sonically pleasing work for marimba quartet. The composer states, “The piece moves from rhythmic tension and dark moods toward clarity and integration. Built on driving rhythms and expressive harmonies, it reflects the inner struggle and resolution of confronting personal shadows.”

The piece begins with an over-the-barline figure in the upper voice, followed by a layering in of the other parts. While the lowest voice provides reliable downbeats, players will need to have a mature sense of pulse, as none of the parts are in unison and are often subject to hemiola and rhythmic diminution. The middle sections move through metric modulations with slightly less complicated rhythmic interplay, arriving at a climax point where the composer instructs the

player to “emulate torturous cries of one experiencing overwhelming grief and distress.” This is followed by a brief restatement of the opening figure in the upper voice and the last two minutes of the piece being in mostly rhythmic unison, concluding with a triumphant, almost organ-like quality.

While moments of chromaticism and harmonic dissonance play into the programmatic ideas on which the piece is based, the majority of the writing is tonal in a way that would be engaging for a wide variety of audiences. Only one part requires four mallets to handle wide melodic intervals and double stops. While the piece can be played on four instruments, a greater intimacy and cohesion might be achieved with the use of two, as evidenced by the masterful video performance on the publisher’s website.

—Jason Baker

Motion No. 3 IV

Nicholas V. Hall

\$30.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (2 players): mounted kick drum (shared), 6 glass bottles, small and large China cymbals

Web: [score sample, audio and video recordings](#)

If you’re looking for a high-energy, groovy duo, “Motion No. 3” is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser. Just under four minutes in length, the piece features punchy bass drum grooves, cheeky hocketed patterns on bottles, flashy splits, and driving accelerandos. Equally at home on a young college student recital or a professional program, the composition has a great balance of flash and substance, making it gratifying to play and to hear.

This is an excellent introduction to multi-percussion repertoire for young college students. The instrumentation is limited, with a shared bass drum and three bottles and cymbal each, making it less intimidating to set up and decipher the notation. Students have to take ownership of their sound selection as well, choosing bottles that are graduated in pitch but balanced in sound production and clarity. The challenge of playing hocketed lines between two players is alleviated by the running sixteenth notes in both parts, which is a good tool for anyone uncomfortable with splits.

An additional challenge for young players is the variety of metric modulations utilized. While most of the metric modulations hold the big beat steady (ex. 12/8 to 4/4 with dotted-quarter = quarter), there is one instance where a dotted-eighth note in 3/8 becomes a quarter in 4/4. At that point, the players have to interpret three sixteenth notes in the previous tempo as triplets in the new tempo. Hall uses accents strategically in the 3/8 measure to assist with this modulation, making it more easily digestible for players not accustomed to more complicated modulations.

Educational benefits aside, the piece is a clever and entertaining duo that’s sure to be a hit with audiences. For professionals and students alike, “Motion No. 3” makes for a great addition to a recital, with high entertainment value, a relatively small setup, and a quick runtime that could work as a concert piece or short encore.

—Hannah Weaver



Motion No. 7 IV

Nicholas V. Hall

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (2 players): concert bass drum, snare drum, splash cymbal, tom-toms, bongos, wood slats (small, large), crotales, tuned pipes (C, D, E-flat, G)

Web: [score sample, audio and video recordings](#)

“Motion No. 7” is for two percussionists on a shared setup. The seventh and final in a series of works for percussion duo, the piece shares the groove-based qualities of its earlier counterparts. Largely composed of clear, repeating rhythmic material, a performance at the written tempo with all notated repeats will last between nine and ten minutes.

The piece opens with a sparse groove in 5/4, gradually thickening the texture through an additive process, usually after three repeats of each measure, coming to a head with a unison crescendo before starting the process over with a more complex groove. A drumline-esque split crescendos into a transitional section where a variation of the original 5/4 groove trades off with measures of splits. A slightly slower section follows via metric modulation, featuring extended unison passages of constantly changing tuplets. We return to the original tempo with driving four-against-three polyrhythms and the introduction of the pitched crotales and tuned pipe sounds. These sounds contribute to a more sprawling, 8/4 groove reminiscent of the opening material in its additive process, but providing a much different feel because of the new timbres. This continues building in density and intensity, eventually adding back in the drums and driving to the end.

While the individual parts of “Motion No. 7” are not exceptionally difficult in isolation, the piece requires two performers who are comfortable with polyrhythms and odd subdivisions, with the stamina to maintain a constant, energetic groove for nearly ten minutes. The accessible instrumentation helps this piece be a possibility for a wide variety of ensembles, from high school to professional levels. This piece is a nice project for two university or high school percussionists who like to groove, or a professional duo looking for a piece they can fit into a car!

—Marco Schirripa

Mucura II–III

Traditional

Arr. Tiffany Nicely

\$20.00

Per-Mus Publications

Instrumentation (4–5 players): two 4.3-octave marimbas (optional 5-octave marimba), optional drumset

“Mucura” is a traditional cumbia dance tune, and in Mexico, this style is played by two or more people sharing a marimba. For this arrangement,

Tiffany Nicely scored for four players spread out on two marimbas. She indicates that the drumset and other accessory parts are optional, and that instruments can be swapped out, such as a string bass in place of bass marimba.

From a rhythmic and technical aspect, this arrangement is very accessible, with nothing more complex than sixteenth notes, and no awkward deviations from the key/tonal center used for any particular section of music. All but one of the parts can be played with two mallets, and the four-mallet chord part has a two-mallet alternate page that a player can utilize. Additionally, the bass marimba part has a treble-clef version for younger players who might not have bass-clef experience.

Not a lot of flashy fireworks from this 2½-minute piece, but it has appeal. There are also music history angles that could be approached from a pedagogical perspective.

—Joshua D. Smith

Palenque

Arr. Tiffany Nicely

\$20.00

Per-Mus Publications

Instrumentation (5 players): three 4.3-octave marimbas, 5-octave marimba, drumset

Web: [video recording](#)

Tiffany Nicely’s arrangement of the traditional Mexican song “Palenque” brings energy and cultural richness to the diverse percussion repertoire. Rooted in the festive spirit of the Mayan ballgame, the work reflects its folk origins, while scored for marimba quartet and drumset. The intentional voicing in the orchestration allows each part to sing — in fact, I came away from this singing every part! They are all clear lines that serve a direct purpose for the song. The drumset functions as an integral part of the texture, providing stability and color in a way that reflects the communal character of the music.

Nicely balances accessibility and challenge, ensuring that all players are engaged while maintaining authenticity to the original tune. The contrast between the A and B sections is a great opportunity for performers to explore variety in tone and performance style. Overall, “Palenque” is a vibrant piece that is educationally valuable and rewarding in performance, making it a welcome addition to marimba quartet repertoire — and surely a favorite for performers and audiences alike.

—Cassie Bunting

Strum II

Brian Slawson

\$39.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (9–10 players): glockenspiel, chimes, vibraphone, xylophone, 4.3-octave marimba, 4 timpani, drumset, ukulele, optional electric bass guitar

Web: [score sample, audio and video recordings](#)

“Strum” is a fun and accessible work for percussion ensemble that strives to sound like a chart-topping song from a pop band. As the composer writes, “The challenge here is simple: sound like a band on a recording. Create a colorful blend while the simple infectious groove takes care of the rest — and “Strum” is sure to go platinum at your next outing!”

The thread that connects the piece throughout is a driving rhythm on the ukulele performed

through tapping the strings with an implement (the composer suggests chopsticks). From there, the marimba states the main melody as the rest of the ensemble slowly enters, coloring the marimba. Finally, at Rehearsal C the full ensemble is in. This section along with the song's bridge repeats, before transitional material moves the song back to the verse and then to an energetic coda.

All the parts are highly idiomatic and fit well with the medium-easy level the publisher lists the piece as. The scoring supports this by having multiple parts written with similar material when everyone is playing, allowing for a supportive listening environment that will be easy for the ensemble to perform together. The addition of timpani and drumset allows for many different percussion skill sets to be explored.

Overall, this is a great addition to the percussion ensemble repertoire for early students. With its unique colors, idiomatic writing, and pop-inspired hooks, it would work well for any middle school or high school percussion ensemble program.

—Brian Nozny

Subliminal Thoughts IV

Wesley Denkins

\$45.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (13 players): crotales (2 octaves), chimes, glock, 2 vibraphones, xylophone, 4-octave marimba, 4.6-octave marimba, 5-octave marimba, 4 to 5 timpani, snare drum, hi-hat, ribbon crasher, suspended cymbal, Mark Tree, 2 triangles, 4 toms, China cymbal, bongos, vibra-tone

Web: [score sample](#), [audio recording](#)

What a cool piece for percussion ensemble! This funky and fun work can help bring students to the next level. "Subliminal Thoughts" has eight keyboard parts, four percussion parts, and one timpani part. The main theme is a groovy, sixteenth-note melody from the keyboards with support from percussion and timpani. Most of the piece is carried by the keyboards, but there is a nice middle section allowing the percussion to have some fun, with a short timpani solo at the very end. With a performance length of only four minutes, it delivers a lot of fun in an efficient way.

Although most of the piece is in 4/4, the intro has some alternating 5/4 measures peppered in with a dash of 7/8, allowing for some interesting variation in the melody. There are also plenty of opportunities for extended technique to influence the sound and vibe of the piece with crotales bowing and pitch-bending on vibraphone.

The tough part for some programs may be the instrumentation, with a requirement of two octaves of crotales, two vibraphones, and three marimbas (including a 5-octave). This piece could work well in larger high school programs, college programs, or district/state-level events.

—Ben Cantrell

Synchronize V

Anthony Chmielewski

\$40.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (4 players): 5-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba, one or two 4-octave marimbas

Web: [score sample](#), [audio and video recordings](#)

"Synchronize" is a groovy and energetic work that, ironically, sounds very un-synchronized at times due to the heavy use of syncopation from

each player. However, this makes the climactic moments where the ensemble lines up all the more satisfying.

Anthony Chmielewski presents the music in three ways. The primary way is through highly syncopated grooves and melodies. The best example is the introductory section in which the bass marimba lays down a groove with a broken-sixteenth-note pattern. The top marimba then has the first melodic idea, which is syncopated to the point of sounding improvised, seemingly unsynchronized from the bass. The fact that this melody is based on the blues scale, along with most of the material, adds to the feeling of spontaneity. Soon, the top marimba switches to a counter-groove against the bass, and the middle players have the melody in rhythmic unison, which adds to the challenge of the work, but also to the impressiveness of the performance when done successfully.

The second musical device is the gradual synchronizing of the parts. Most climactic moments of this piece occur when the parts shift to straight sixteenth notes on a single pitch that crescendo towards the arrival point. In some of these cases, unison accents are included to keep the feeling of the syncopated groove.

The third, and most scarcely utilized device, is the use of rubato figures. In the middle of the piece, after a breath of silence, three players take turns playing the same measure of melody in a rubato style. This is an opportunity for each performer to shape this figure as they see fit. It's a shame that this section is so brief, because almost immediately after the third iteration of this figure, the primary groove returns, and the quartet is driving once again until the end.

Although the publisher categorizes this piece as "medium-advanced," the heavy syncopation in the main thematic areas and the use of an impressive split figure at the end of the work makes this lean more to the "advanced" side, even considering that each player only uses two mallets. In the hands of players who are rhythmically confident, this is a fun piece that is a great listen for any audience.

—Kyle Cherwinski

Walkabout II

Chad Heiny

\$40.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (13 players): glockenspiel, chimes, xylophone, vibraphone, 4.3-octave marimba, 4 timpani, kick drum (mounted), snare drum, bongos, 2 congas, suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, tam-tam, rainstick, claves, cabasa

Web: [score sample](#), [audio and video recordings](#)

True to the title, "Walkabout" asks the players to walk throughout the setup and switch instruments occasionally. As Chad Heiny says in the program notes, "I wrote this piece as a means of exposing younger students to the concept of versatility, and I hope it gets them excited to learn all of the wonderful instruments in our percussion family." He includes a set of "performance parts" that can stay on a single music stand and has markers that allow moving players to find their spot on the page. However, the piece is also designed to be played without moving around. There is a separate set of parts for this option.

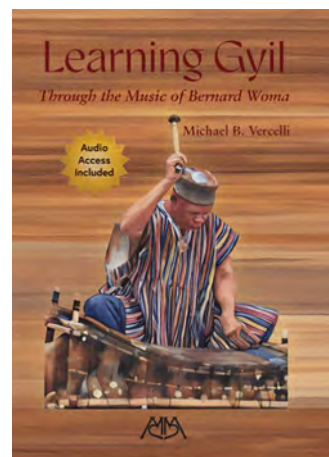
Aside from the logistical beauty of the work, the musical content is accessible to performers and listeners, covers a wide range of concepts

(dynamics, accents, syncopation), and allows for moments of independence. The music has an underlying groove that has impact without being too heavy, even with 13 players. Both pitched and non-pitched parts include *piano* to *forte* dynamics with lots of changes. A quiet, intense, simmering groove can be tough for young players. Finally, multiple drum breaks give players a moment to shine outside of the full instrumentation.

I recommend this piece for any young, developing percussion ensemble looking for a fun, engaging work. This piece would work well as a concert opener, closer, or even an interlude during a band concert. The specific concepts of improving versatility and requiring instrument changes gives this piece a unique pedagogical strength that will benefit any group of students.

—Justin Bunting

WORLD PERCUSSION



Learning Gylil Through the Music of Bernard Woma

Michael B. Vercelli

\$29.95

Meredith Music

What began as a collaborative project between a PAS Hall of Fame member and his 16-year student, colleague, and friend, became a tribute to honor the traditions and influence of a master and a gateway text into the study of gylil, its music, and its cultural traditions. Assisted by extensive recordings with Bernard Woma about the gylil and its practice, with input from Jerome Balsab (Woma's colleague at the Dagra Music Center), Dr. Michael B. Vercelli, an accomplished professor of world music, has assembled an exceptional text and collection of audio and musical examples able to provide any percussion student with an introduction to Dagra music and a foundational understanding of gylil pedagogy and performance.

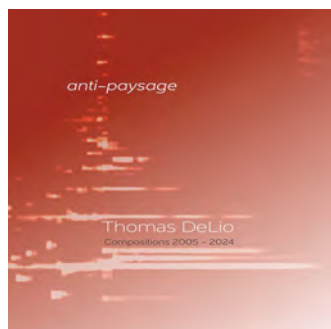
The foreword, acknowledgements, and introduction to the text are particularly worth reading in understanding the conditions that initiated this project and the heartfelt intent and painstaking effort behind its completion. Also in the introduction and continuing in the first chapter are key details about who the Dagra people are,

the region in which they live and their lifestyle, what is the gyl and the family of instruments that fall under that name, and the basics of technique and practice on the instrument.

Chapters two through eight use musical works composed or arranged by Woma to illustrate formal structures of Dagra music for gyl, the different layers of voices within ensemble performance, and the practice of adapting the music for solo performance on the instrument. In Chapter nine, Vercelli provides a brief exploration of the kuor drum that often accompanies gyl in ensemble performance. Chapter 10 provides a brief conclusion to reiterate the profound influence of the Dagra Music Center on this project and the four voices or layers that combine to constitute a gyl ensemble work, and an explanation of the final steps taken to ensure that this text is appropriately accurate and respectful to the man and institution that inspired it. Not only is this text a suitable tribute to Woma but also a carefully crafted, easily understandable, and inspiring introduction to the gyl.

—Josh Gottry

RECORDINGS



anti-paysage

Thomas DeLio

Neuma Records

This two-disc collection features 16 works composed between 2005 and 2024. The tracks alternate between electro-acoustic pieces and those for acoustic instruments: percussion, voice, piano, and bass flute. Four works feature percussion. "Sound / Shivering / Silence" is a five-movement, vibraphone-heavy piece for solo percussion performed by Zeca Lacerda. "Sound / Shivering / Silence III" is a nine-movement work performed by the Penn State Percussion Ensemble (Lee Hinkle, director) that prominently features the vibraphone with the use of non-pitched instruments in its later movements. "Klingend II," scored for piano and percussion duo, features percussionist Lee Hinkle and engages vibraphone, rattle, suspended cymbal, bongos, and xylophone in an interplay against sparse statements from the piano. "From This Condensery II" is set in eight movements for percussion ensemble (again featuring Penn State) and soprano. Of particular interest are the "Interlude" movements scored entirely for solo rattle and the penultimate movement, "Song No. 4 (July, waxwings)," that features the fullest simultaneous orchestration of vibraphone, glock-

enspiel, marimba, non-pitched percussion, and voice.

Many of the works seem organically connected through their use of extended space and silence, recurring gestures, and repeated percussion orchestration. The pacing of the album is highlighted by the alternation of electro-acoustic and "live" performances, leading me to consider it as less of a collection of discrete works and more of a larger single construction, composed over the course of 19 years, that would be best experienced in a single, marathon listening session with the aid of high quality headphones or speakers that best communicate the subtlety and nuance in this music.

—Jason Baker



The Big Room

Joe Farnsworth

Smoke Sessions Records

The "big room" is a term used to denote a state of artistic mastery. More specifically, it is the seemingly magical experience that occurs on the bandstand when one's performance transcends their training and practice. Joe Farnsworth learned about this concept from his mentors. He is now inspiring today's up-and-coming jazz musicians, allowing them to find their way into the "big room."

Farnsworth called upon Jeremy Pelt (trumpet), Sarah Hanahan (alto saxophone), Joel Ross (vibraphone), and Emmet Cohen (piano), to not only perform with the ensemble, but also provide compositions. The ensemble is rounded out by bassist Yasushi Nakamura. The album opens with Hanahan's "Continuance," an up-tempo, Coltrane-inspired tune that sets the tone of the album. Hanahan, Pelt, Ross, Cohen, and Farnsworth shine on their solos while the rhythm section simmers underneath. Ross contributes two tunes: "What Am I Waiting For?," a beautiful ballad, and "Radical," a high-energy, swinging piece. Pelt composed "All Said and Done," a bluesy swing tune with an undeniable foot-tapping feel. Cohen's "You Already Know" is an up-tempo swing piece that showcases the soloists. Nakamura's driving feel propels each tune. He also takes a melodic solo on "All Said and Done."

Farnsworth composed the title track, "The Big Room," a duet with Ross. The two musicians get a chance to stretch out, free from the confines of a larger ensemble. Farnsworth also penned "Prime Time," a straight-eighth-note tune reminiscent of Lee Morgan's "The Sidewinder." Farnsworth's playing is energetic and inspiring throughout the album. Highlights of the recording include his extended solos on "Radical" and "You Already Know."

Writing about the "big room" concept could possibly be an exercise in futility. By definition, the "big room" must be experienced. The best way to experience it is being in the audience. The next best way is immersing oneself in this album!

—Jeff W. Johnson



My Latin Heart

Roger Glenn

Patois Records

This CD features multifaceted jazz vibraphone soloist Roger Glenn, who also doubles on jazz flute, alto flute, alto saxophone, and congas, performing his own original Afro-Caribbean music. The CD contains eight tracks: "Zambo's Mambo," "Cal's Guajira," "Brother Marshall," "A Night of Love," "Energizer," "Congo Square," "Angola," and "Samba De Carnaval." Each has its own back story and unique style.

In celebration of his 80th birthday in 2025, Glenn provides a panoramic display of his versatility, reflecting his musicianship as a composer who skillfully showcases his own music as a masterful jazz improviser — particularly on vibraphone and flute. His backup musicians include pianist David K. Mathews (known for his association with Santana), guitarist Ray Ohiedo, bassist David BeLove, the late drumset performer Paul van Wageningen, and conga players Derek Rolando and John Santos. It is an outstanding, enduring happy CD.

—Jim Lambert

Old School Drum Cadences and Poems

Isham (Ike) W. Alexander

Self-Released

This album combines solo drum performances with spoken-word voiceovers. The first half of the recording contains old-school rudimental cadences reminiscent of Robert W. Buggert's solos in complexity and style. The solo tracks are long and repetitive, as one would experience when playing a piece with numerous repeats and *da capo* markings. Every cadence begins with a roll-off.

"Bunny's Groove" is a nine-minute snare and bass drum solo with a 6/8 feel. The remaining solo drum tracks have a 2/4 feel. "Carli's Groove" features syncopated snare drum accents with a driving bass drum part. "The Force — Ike's Groove" has a similar feel, but it incorporates sixteenth-note triplets into the cadence. "Ike's Death March" is slower than the other cadences, but it has a decisive, foot-tapping groove.

The remainder of the album is comprised of poems narrated over drum solos. These pieces are significantly shorter than the drum cadences. "Do You Fear the Wind," "Myself," "Be the Best

of *Whatever You Are*, “*Invictus*,” and “*Keep-a-Goin’*,” and “*Pull ‘Em Up*,” are inspirational poems. Poets quoted include Hamlin Garland, Edgar A. Guest, Douglas Malloch, Frank L. Stanton, William Ernest Henley, and a poet credited as “Ms. Bunny.”

The audio is recorded well, with no apparent special effects, noise gates, or excessive reverb. This in itself is a refreshing change from many of today’s ultra-processed recordings.

This album can be appreciated by all, but it seems to be geared toward a younger audience. For example, “*Pull ‘Em Up*” encourages youths to stay in school and make their mothers proud. This recording will especially appeal to listeners seeking a drum-related inspirational experience.

—Jeff W. Johnson



Transition(s)

Phil Haynes and Ben Monder

Corner Store Jazz

Drummer Phil Haynes and guitarist Ben Monder would get together to improvise during their early days in New York. A staple of their jam sessions was the John Coltrane classic “*Transition*.” They recently reunited for another improvisational session. This time, it was recorded.

The album’s 13 tracks include duo pieces as well as three solo guitar pieces by Monder (“*Ben I*,” “*Ben II*,” “*Ben III*”) and two solo drum pieces by Haynes (“*Phills II*,” “*Phills III*”). Both musicians improvise in a free-form fashion, exploring the sonic possibilities of their instruments. The pieces range from atmospheric to intense, with the musicians stretching out quite a bit.

The tune “*Transition*” was obviously a part of the session, since the piece had an emotional meaning for both musicians. A departure from the free nature of much of the album is the classic ballad “*I Fall In Love Too Easily*.” Monder pays special attention to the melody and pulse of the tune, not straying far from either. Much of this album is very much in the avant-garde vein. The atmospheric, sonic textures often evoke a tingling, ASMR-type response. This album is an immersive journey, perfect for listeners seeking avant-garde music in a duo setting.

—Jeff W. Johnson

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Contact information for publishers whose products are reviewed in this issue.

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Arthur Press Scholarship

Avedis Zildjian Co. Scholarship

George P. Contreras, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

James A. Sewrey Scholarship

Jim Coffin Scholarship

Live From My Drum Room Scholarship

Ludwig Industries Scholarship

Remo, Inc. Scholarship

Remo, Inc. /

California Chapter Scholarship

Steve Ettleson Memorial Scholarship

Val and Venus Eddy Scholarship

William F. Ludwig, Jr.

Memorial Scholarship

Other PAS Funds

Past Presidents Fund

\$499 – \$250

John H. Beck + *

\$249 – \$100

John R. Beck + *

Gary J. Olmstead + *

Garwood Whaley *

Ralph Pace Museum Fund

\$999 – \$500

Kent T. Hillman +

PAS Endowment

If you have questions about donating to an existing fund or starting a new endowed fund, please contact Joshua Simonds, PAS Executive Director, at jsimonds@pas.org.

PAS

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE COMPETITION & FESTIVAL

Give your percussionists the educational experience they deserve in the regional PAS Percussion Ensemble Competition & Festival series! Open to high school and middle school percussion ensembles on a first-come first-serve basis, this is an incredible participatory learning experience adjudicated and taught by master percussionists.

- Give students access to world-renowned clinicians and adjudicators
- Performance-based learning
- Plan ahead for school support

2026 PECAF DATES AND LOCATIONS

February 27-28 North Texas Percussion Festival hosted by Forney ISD presented by PAS at Forney High School

February 28 University of Tennessee Percussion Festival at University of Tennessee

March 7 Utah Valley University

March 14 University of Missouri

April 6 UCF Celebrates the Arts at University of Central Florida

April 11 The University of Texas at San Antonio

April 18 Portland State University

April 24-25 Southeastern Percussion Ensemble Symposium at Lassiter High School

April 25 McCallum High School (Austin, Texas)

May 9 Langham Creek High School (Houston, Texas)

April 25 Colorado State University

PERCUSSIVE
ARTS SOCIETY

REGISTRATION OPENS
December 8, 2025 at Noon Eastern.



**COMPETITIONS
FILL UP QUICKLY!**
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REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



**Nov. 12-15, 2025
INDIANAPOLIS**

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