

PERCUSSIVE NOTES

Vol. 58, No.1, February 2020

Justifying
Percussion
Ensemble

I've Been Hired
as a College
Percussion
Instructor:
What Now?

Creating Positive
Mental Health
Strategies

Focus: In the
Percussion
Studio



CONDUCTED BY GORDON STOUT

2020 INTERNATIONAL MARIMBA ORCHESTRA

The Percussive Arts Society is pleased to announce the 2020 International Marimba Orchestra, which will perform a showcase concert at PASIC 2020 in Indianapolis, IN conducted by Gordon Stout, internationally-acclaimed performer, composer, and pedagogue.

Members selected to perform in the International Marimba Orchestra will receive a 4-day attendee badge for PASIC 2020.

Requirements:

- All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and active PAS Members.
- In order to assure the highest level of preparation, members selected to participate must attend rehearsals at The Center for Mallet Percussion Research at Kutztown University of PA on November 6-7, 2020 as well as a public concert on November 8, 2020. A dress rehearsal at PASIC is scheduled for November 11, 2020 with a 50-minute showcase concert on November 12, 2020.
- Marimbas will be available both at Kutztown University and PASIC in Indianapolis for all performing members.
- Members selected to participate in the International Marimba Orchestra will be responsible for their own travel, lodging, and food.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO APPLY
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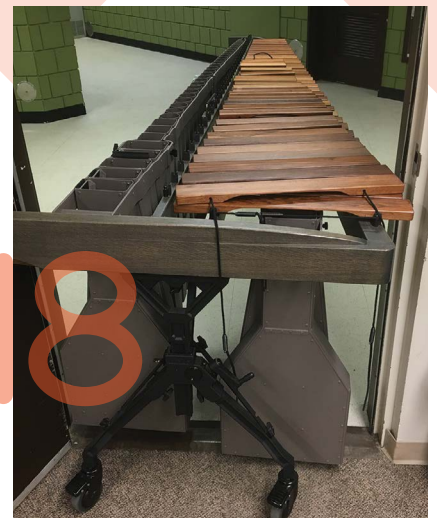
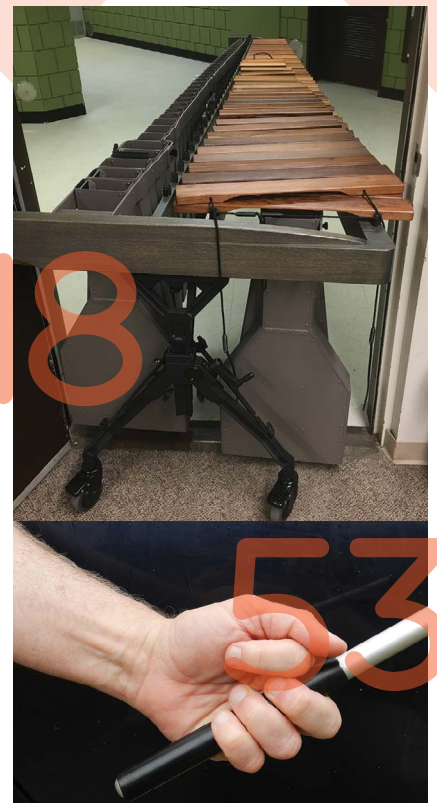
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College Teaching and Community



It seems like only yesterday that I started my position as Director of Percussion at Stephen F. Austin State University. That was almost 28 years ago. I was fresh out of doctoral school, and I still remember the excitement and fear I simultaneously felt as I moved to Nacogdoches, Texas, to begin my college teaching adventure.

I am excited to see this issue of *Percussive Notes*, and I hope it will be a valuable resource to those who aspire to teach at the collegiate level and to those who are just starting their first job. While reading the articles I was quickly transported to those early days of developing a percussion studio that included working with my new students, faculty, administration, the community, public schools, and local professional musicians and teachers.

My adventure in Texas was short-lived. After three years I moved to West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where I have resided ever since. I directed the percussion program for 13 years, served as a department chair for nine years, and for the past three years I have been Dean of the Wells School of Music. Teaching in higher education has been a wonderful journey filled with incredible moments, both high and low!

I was fortunate to have a few tools along the way that helped. The first was Gary Cook's text, *Teaching Percussion*, lovingly referred to by my students as "the cookbook." Gary's pedagogical insights were incredibly valuable as I was developing my teaching style and curriculum. His

recommended repertoire and instrument lists helped me advocate for my program.

Another tool was *Percussive Notes*. If you have read my messages from past journals, you will know how fondly I speak of authors and specific articles that helped me in many ways—pre-internet, folks! Lastly, and I have also mentioned this in past writings, the percussion community was integral to my development. I regularly contacted my past teachers and colleagues with conversations that started with, "I have this student who (fill in the blank), and I just don't know what to do." You get the picture. One of those past teachers is featured in this issue of PN: Dr. Douglas Wm. Walter. Dr. Walter counseled me at great length about learning what motivates students and how to inspire them to love music and music-making.

Our community has grown! In today's world there are numerous supporting organizations like the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy (see page 40), the many Facebook groups, including University Percussion Teachers, Steel Band Directors, Orchestral Percussion Talk, Percussion Ensemble Music, PAS Chapters, PAS University Student Networking, PAS Leadership Academy, and many industry sites with inspirational videos and content.

The problem for some of us becomes where to focus our energies. There is so much to teach our students, so much content, and a limited time frame in which to accomplish our goals, along with massive

distractions that can get in the way of student progress. Even with all of these challenges, the bar continues to be raised. Anyone of my generation will tell you that in all genres, the quality of percussion repertoire and the level of performance has grown exponentially over the past 30 years.

On the administrative front, universities are now faced with looming issues of declining enrollment, intense competition for fewer students choosing a career in music, falling retention rates, and consistently declining financial support from public sources, while the cost of doing business continues to rise. Luckily for us, percussion is a part of almost every facet of musical performance and is essential to the success of any university program. The information presented in this journal highlights how to successfully navigate the waters of higher education, become leaders of our industry, and develop into great teachers and mentors along the way.

Special thanks to John R. Beck, Jim Campbell, Shane Jones, Dan Piccolo, and Lisa Rogers for working closely with our wonderful editorial directors Paul Buyer and Julie Hill to put together this terrific collection of articles. Every day, we should wake up and celebrate our community of percussion educators, I certainly do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris C. O'Neil". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Building a University Percussion Program

By Erin Elstner

What does it take to build a great university percussion program? Are you just starting out completely from scratch? Maybe you are picking up the baton from a predecessor or perhaps you have already been working at this for a number of years. I would like to offer some ideas and approaches from my own experiences over 10 years of university teaching, which I hope will be helpful, encouraging, and inspiring. You may notice a theme throughout; being the sole drum set or percussion instructor is like working within an ensemble. It requires collaboration, communication, flexibility, and the building of relationships within your musical community.

REGARDING THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF PERCUSSION NEEDS AND NON-PERCUSSIONIST ADMINISTRATORS

Don't assume that anyone and everyone knows the intricacies we deal with daily regarding equipment needs, even if they are musicians themselves. There is no other musical department that needs as many and as varied a collection of instruments. This brings me to my first piece of advice: *always make an effort to collaborate with other departments in per-*

formance or projects. Not only does this generate good will and provide opportunities to broaden student experience, it also serves to justify things like further equipment requests and highlights the benefits of supporting your program. Knowing that our dean used to play the drums, for example, I invited him to perform on one of our concerts, to the delight of all in attendance. We also did several collaborative performances with the dance department. When you need those extra congas or djembes for the upcoming drum and dance collective performance, it becomes a more viable request. Make some players available for the choral concert, and when the piece requires a frame drum that the school does not own, it becomes a necessity. Do not forget that the drum and percussion department and its students support all of the music department performance needs, and often the drama, theater, and dance departments as well. What benefits you also benefits them and so justifying your case can be easier than you might think. *"Slam poetry and bowed crotales duet anyone?"*

Most colleges and universities require something along these lines, but the creation of a 5-year instrument acquisition plan is extremely helpful. Be sure you are focusing on the core instruments necessary before moving on to things that are more obscure. Even non-percussionist

administrators who are still musicians may not appreciate the scope and the necessity for ongoing maintenance, repair, and periodic replacement of instruments and instrument components. Expectations need to be managed through communication and conversation, careful documentation of inventory and usage, and emphasis on graduating total percussionists who have had access to the appropriate equipment on which to develop their skills.

COLLEGIATE PERCUSSION EQUIPMENT ESSENTIALS

When I first started my professorship at my university, the collection of percussion equipment with which I was met consisted of some old broken cymbal stands fashioned together with duct tape and some keyboard mallet instruments that had seen better days. One of the school's glockenspiels was affectionately referred to by the students as the "sunk-en ship bells," and the lone slapstick was a couple of old splintery 2x4s with "SLAPSTICK" written across it in the same jagged font used by the band Def Leppard. As far as drum kits, there were a couple of run-of-the-mill entry-level sets and then a hodgepodge of mismatched drums from great vintage sets. None of the kits were completely intact, and some of the toms had been converted into lion's roars.

Rube Goldberg and Victor Frankenstein would have been proud.

The good news is, I had total support from the Dean of the College of Fine Arts, who was a drummer in his youth and was completely on board with bringing the percussion and drum collection up to speed and into the 21st century, as well as the support of the head of instrumental studies. This is my second piece of advice: *always cultivate great relationships with the people who make executive decisions that affect what you are trying to accomplish.* Although he expressed his support and understanding early on, from the beginning and throughout my dealings with him, I continued to keep the dean informed about our instrumental needs, including why we needed them, what they would

whenever they are moved. When we show respect for our instruments, we model that to our students and to our colleagues. Too often drums are used as tables with things stacked on top in storage, people set food and drinks on them, they are dropped, and the shells are compromised. It is our responsibility to model diligence, care, and vigilance.

There are many options when it comes to selecting drum kits and a wealth of research and information available online and through word of mouth. It is important to do your research and seek advice, considering things like drum sizes and kits for different applications, types of material, and types of drumheads as well as cymbal selection. Is there a need for a small club jazz drumkit? Do you want something

have a separate jazz program, equipping all students with the basics of drum set playing is paramount to a complete and well-rounded education. Collegiate percussionists will regularly need to play drum set within percussion ensemble repertoire, chamber music, and musical theater as well as obtain the skills needed to be future music educators.

If your school has a separate jazz department, it is highly advised to develop relationships with the head of that department and the jazz drum teachers for the purpose of sharing equipment and joining efforts for equipment acquisition, especially drumkits, sets of vibes, and Latin percussion instruments. It is never a good idea to isolate yourself or your students from other departments in the music school as a whole; you never know when you may need assistance from another discipline, and you don't want to limit possible student experiences cross-departmentally.

In addition to drum kits, your instrument collection should include *at the very least*:

- Two complete sets of timpani with a fifth drum and a timpani throne
- Two concert snare drums, a field drum and a piccolo drum
- Two pairs of concert toms (graduated)
- Two concert bass drums
- A cymbal cradle with several pairs of handheld crash cymbals, varying sizes and colors
- Two suspended cymbals
- A tam-tam
- A set of chimes
- Two 4.3-octave (minimum) marimbas. Ideally you would work to acquire a 4.5- or 5-octave instrument. The more keyboard mallet instruments, especially marimbas, the more possibilities with programming.
- Two xylophones
- Two vibraphones
- Two glockenspiels
- An octave of crotales
- Two concert tambourines

Always cultivate great relationships with the people who make executive decisions that affect what you are trying to accomplish.

be used for, and how it would impact our program. Communication really is key, and when it is clear you are invested in the program, administration and faculty are motivated to invest in you.

Every program should have at least a few collegiate level drum kits: one for the studio, one or two for performances, and one or two for practice rooms. Depending on the size of the school, some may just have kits without cymbals in the practice rooms where the students must bring their own cymbals to practice; this does make sense, as college students should own, at the very least, a pair of hi-hats, a crash, and a ride. They should also be used to, or start getting used, to bringing their stick and cymbal bags with them regularly.

Whichever drum sets you choose for your program, it is imperative that you get protective cases for all drums to use

more general purpose that can work in a big band or percussion ensemble too? Are you going to be teaching heavy rock drumming or drums for musical theater? What are the acoustic and environmental considerations? Are the practice and performance spaces dead or lively? Do you need the drums and cymbals to really project, or would they be better if they were more subdued? If you know your rehearsal/performance spaces are live, it may be prudent to go with cymbals that are a bit drier and more articulate. Another factor to consider is whether or not there is adequate soundproofing between adjacent spaces. Consider the needs specific to your school that meet the needs of all of the students and programs.

It is critical to incorporate the drum set into percussion studies at the university level. Although your school may

- A mountable headless tambourine
- Five triangles of varying sizes
- Three woodblocks of varying sizes
- A set of temple blocks
- A set of wind chimes (mark tree)
- A pair of finger cymbals
- A set of machine castanets
- A whip (slapstick)
- A set of sleighbells
- A ratchet
- A brake drum
- A pair of bongos
- A pair of congas
- A pair of timbales
- A djembe
- A guiro
- Three cowbells of varying sizes
- A pair of claves
- A pair of maracas
- A shaker

Many more instruments are needed to play advanced percussion ensemble pieces, and an ongoing number of instruments being developed and used in contemporary composition. Although it likely goes without saying, the necessary hardware, covers, and cases for all of these instruments should also be considered when budgeting. Some items may cost considerably more but possess greater longevity, such as copper timpani and keyboard mallet instruments. Other things, like drumheads, need to be changed frequently but cost much less. Be sure not to presume that your students have experience with changing and tuning drumheads; this is an important skill to reinforce. There is also potential here to solicit the experience and knowledge of top-call drummers in your city to come in and do masterclasses on drumhead tuning or any other tips they may have to offer.

The appropriate sticks and mallets to play all of the instruments listed above are also required. The school should own a pair of tam-tam and bass drum beaters and a pair of chime hammers. At the university level, all students should be expected to own and bring a stick bag at all times. This should include a pair of concert snare drum sticks, drum set sticks

and brushes, a pair of timpani mallets, a set of four marimba and vibe mallets, plus a pair of xylo/bell mallets.

INSTRUMENT MAINTENANCE, STORAGE AND REPAIR

The issue of instrument maintenance, storage, repair, and usage often feels underestimated within budgets and can be a daunting task to manage. At almost any institution, instruments that are left out are highly at risk for being damaged or stolen. You must find ways to secure everything, including plenty of locked storage, clear labeling, an accurate and updated inventory and a clearly defined protocol for instrument check out, usage and return. There are so many ways to go about doing this, but a good starting point is maintaining an Excel spreadsheet of all inventory and adding every new acquisition to it upon arrival. This document can and should be shared with all instructors, heads of the music department, and any building representatives monitoring lobbies and exterior doors. It is not foolproof, but at least it gives everyone an itemized list of what should be on site. Additionally, any equipment that is being moved around or out of the building should be requested in advance in writing, and that request should be shared with all instructors and building representatives.

Ideally, there should be video cameras on all exterior doors; this cannot stop someone hiding something in their bag, but can stop something large from being stolen. Having said that, I feel that having cameras in studio and storage spaces within the building is over-surveillance. You need to engender some level of trust, respect, honor, and responsibility in your students. It is wise, however, to limit who the keyholders are to the various storage and practice rooms.

Some amount of maintenance management is to be expected as part of the job; it comes with the territory. However, once the time needed to keep equipment adequately maintained becomes significant, a separate stipend for this work should be requested. Do not be shy about

approaching your department chair with reasonable requests.

I recommend that you cultivate relationships with local drum and music stores for spares, repairs, and replacements. Do not underestimate their value to you—and yours to them—and communicate and explain this to your students. For more specialized repairs such as mallet instrument re-tuning and so on, you will need to work with one of the mallet-instrument service companies. Figure out who your preferred or nearest one is and cultivate a relationship with them. Be aware that waiting lists and turnaround times can be long.

INCORPORATING A SPECIALIZED AREA IN A COLLEGE CURRICULUM

There are a number of ways to incorporate specialized areas into your curriculum. You will most likely have to employ more than one of them, selecting the most appropriate for each occasion. You should take advantage of any and all opportunities for ongoing self-development: learn online, from books and from recordings, at conferences, masterclasses, etc. Once you are proficient enough in new areas, you will be able to teach them yourself. You can also exchange skills or time with colleagues at other schools. Your expertise in one area may fill a gap in theirs, and vice versa. Even within your own wheelhouse, there may be new insight to be gained from a different perspective, especially if it is cross-disciplinary, so don't write off what may at first appear to be an inexact fit or undervalue what you can offer to others.

Many times, of course, bringing in outside teachers and performers who are experts in their field is the way to go. This could be a paid engagement or a reciprocal situation. Build a network with local, national, and international artists and educators to expand the possibilities here. Touring artists often have down time in their schedules or are happy to earn a little extra during the day before they have to go and sound-check or gig

in your town. They are getting a bonus opportunity to earn, and you are effectively giving them and their gig a little extra promotion, so they are sometimes amenable to discounting their fee. Don't forget that other departments may be interested in collaborating here and in other clinic or masterclass scenarios. You could bring in the rhythm section or the whole band, not just the drummer. The clinic could have wider appeal than you may realize. This could help you get the funding to make it happen, help provide a room to host the event, and swell the attendance numbers to encourage a return visit from the artist another year or in a different capacity, such as a residency. Your students may also benefit from having students of other disciplines involved in a Q&A session.

Local private teachers may also be keen to present a masterclass and may do so for free or for a reduced fee, given that their talents and services will be exposed to all of your students, and maybe to others too if you promote and open the event to wider circles. Teachers from further afield who include online tuition as part of their offering (for example, via Skype) may also be interested in visiting and presenting in your school for the same mutual-benefit reasons.

FINDING ADEQUATE REHEARSAL TIME

Finding adequate rehearsal time is always a challenge. Your students' schedules will most likely be overloaded. Additionally, some of the students may not even be majoring or minoring in music, and so their schedule grid could be highly incompatible with those of your music majors. As a result, you will undoubtedly require flexibility and creativity in scheduling. Communicate early with your students and find out when their free windows of time are and work with them. This may change each semester and require rescheduling each time. You might have to resort to splitting ensemble rehearsals into two or more groups in order to make things work. It is well

worth putting in extra rehearsals during breaks if it all possible. You will need all the time you can find, as there may be unavoidable instances where not everyone is able to attend. Again, communicate early before people start making other plans, and always be willing to be flexible.

Your students may need to earn credits from playing in other ensembles, like wind ensemble, but they might not have much extra time in their schedules. The wind ensemble always needs percussionists; one idea would be to negotiate with the conductor and with your students to possibly structure the rehearsals so that the percussionists attend, say, one out of every three wind ensemble rehearsals and you rehearse percussion ensemble during the other two. This may help you solve your own scheduling jigsaw puzzle and provide players and further performance opportunities for everyone. Again, it is important to be creative, flexible and to negotiate with colleagues and students when there is a greater need so that everyone benefits.

MANAGING ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

As with equipment maintenance, the weight of administrative tasks should not be underestimated. Managing equipment booking request forms, check-out and check-in of instruments, assigning, marking, and photocopying parts, managing email and voicemail, getting books from the library, ordering or retrieving music, grading, meetings, scheduling, setting up for rehearsals, performances, receptions, and so on will take up a lot of your time. Thankfully, they form a subset of regular necessities, some of which can easily be covered by an assistant who may not even need to be on the university payroll. The position presents an ideal opportunity for a work-study student or a music-ed major wanting to intern and gain experience. Opportunities could also be created for assistance in return for extra credit or extra lessons.

Put simple and regulated systems in

place for managing all of this admin, so that the tasks can be easily delegated. As each week proceeds, keep a running list of things that you need to have done so that there are always ongoing tasks for your assistant.

JUSTIFICATION FOR RELEASE TIME AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Equipment, repertoire, playing techniques, and pedagogical methods are constantly developing and evolving. It is vital that you keep up to date with these advancements so that your own skills and knowledge continue to expand and stay current. This will also directly benefit your students, as well as the standing of your program and department. In order to do this, it is important to attend conventions, clinics, masterclasses, and other events at the local, state-wide, national, and even international level. Your school should support you in this personal and professional development by allowing you the time to attend and providing or aiding in the funding to cover your expenses.

Some of these events are of great benefit to your students as well—PAS days of percussion and PASIC being wonderful examples! I heartily recommend trying to find ways to obtain funding to help your students attend these events. There may be alumni funds or student government or grant funds available to help make this possible. In my university, the student government association was always amenable to helping out financially, which allowed students to attend, who would otherwise have been unable. Besides the obvious benefits, it was also good experience for the students to individually present their cases to the council to request funding, and it encouraged the reinforcement of their learning and take-away from PASIC by having to report on their experiences afterwards.

In addition to the knowledge you can gain at these events, they are also hugely valuable in terms of networking: meeting your peers, building relationships with

artists, composers, equipment manufacturers, publishers and retailers, and even promoting yourself, your program, your department, your school, and your institution. It should be easy to make the case for attending these events and receiving support.

DOS AND DON'TS FOR PRE-TENURED FACULTY

In addition to building bridges with colleagues from your own and other departments and with key building staff, I advise you to make connections with local drummers, local private teachers, and employees at other local musical institutions—from high schools to symphonies, from music bars and coffee shops to concert halls. *Join or build the community here.* There is a wealth of resources and possibilities to be nurtured, all of which will be mutually beneficial in the long run. Your efforts will help to build and nourish the local music and percussion ecosystem, upon which you and your students depend. It will also serve to bolster your recruiting efforts down the road. There will surely come a time when you need to borrow or rent a Waterphone, or need a second MalletKAT for a concert. Local drummers may need subs from time to time, you may wish to bring someone in to present a masterclass, that local drum store might help to sponsor and promote an event at your school—the list goes on, and your students can reap the benefits of these connections. Again, if you do the legwork, you may not need to depend upon, nor be limited by, the financial support of your school.

Conversely, do not burn any bridges, as it will neither serve you nor your students well. You never know when somebody might be the gatekeeper to something you need, whether now or at some point down the line. My advice is be professional, friendly, and reasonable at all times. This really is a small world in which we operate as music educators and performers. Leave the creation of nemeses to Hollywood scriptwriters!

Do not impose limitations where there

may not be any. Don't assume that things cannot be done or cannot be changed. There might just be extra money in the budget for that one special purchase or event. There is no harm in asking, or in presenting ideas for novel and creative solutions to make things happen.

There may also be opportunities to incrementally expand your purview and salary, even if a tenured position is currently unavailable. There is an unfortunate trend in today's world towards ever decreasing numbers of tenured positions and bloated proportions of adjunct positions taking the strain. Yet there could still be scope to negotiate the addition of some elements of the typical tenured position's benefits package to an adjunct position if you prove your worth, grow the department, and enhance the reputation and intake of the school. Never underestimate what is possible and what you might cultivate that could create visibility for you at your school or by another institution with a vacancy, should you want to relocate. Research the facilities, posts, and salary packages at neighboring institutions. Your school needs to provide both you and your students with a competitive prospect, otherwise the school will lose out in the long term. Make them want to keep you and be invested in helping you grow.

Hopefully these anecdotes and insights prove useful at the onset of your professorial journey! Be tireless in pursuit of your vision and remember to reach out to your colleagues when you need advice or guidance; they were all once in your shoes. With dedication, passion, and hard work comes the potential to cultivate a successful program that endures far beyond your tenure. [PN](#)

Erin Elstner is a professor and head of the percussion department at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, where she directs the percussion ensembles and teaches percussion methods courses. She also teaches applied lessons there and at Maryville University. Erin received her B.M. in Percussion Performance at Mannes College of Music in New York (The New School University), a Music Education certification from the University of Missouri–St. Louis, and M.M. in Orchestral Conducting at Webster University. Her numerous achievements as a performer include playing percussion with the International Women's Brass Conference, the new music ensemble Synchronia, the Brazilian drum groups The Sambistas and the Sambanditos, "The True Heart" with Glen Velez, and the VH-1 Fashion Awards in New York with the group De La Guarda. She has also performed with *Motown the Musical*, Peter Cetera of Chicago, the Joffrey Ballet, the Grateful Dead, "Weird" Al Yankovic and The Who.





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I've Been Hired as a College Percussion Instructor: What Now?

By Jonathan R. Latta

You have spent many years in college looking forward to becoming a college percussion instructor. Now you have reached that goal and you have many questions about your new position. The following interviews were conducted with experienced college percussion instructors from around the country to provide suggestions on being prepared and successful during the pre-tenure period of your new career.

The contributors bring a wealth of knowledge as well as experiences in different geographic areas of the United States. Dr. Robert Brudvig coordinates all percussion activities, teaches music theory, and directs the Concert Band at Oregon State University. Dr. Paul Buyer is Director of Percussion and Associate Professor of Music in the Department of Performing Arts at Clemson University. Prof. Gary Cook is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Arizona and Immediate Past President of PAS. Dr. Julia Gaines

is PAS Secretary and Assistant Professor of Percussion at the University of Missouri, where she conducts the University Percussion Ensemble and the World Percussion Ensemble, and teaches Percussion Techniques and applied percussion lessons. Dr. Steven Hemphill is Professor of Music and Director of the Percussion Studies Program at Northern Arizona University. Dr. Alison Shaw is currently on the music faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and Chair of the PAS College Pedagogy Committee.

Latta: *Many first-time instructors inherit a percussion program with a long and varied history. What are some ways to aid in a smooth transition to your teaching methods and philosophies?*

Cook: In his book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey states as the seventh habit, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." This is the best advice I can offer, which means communicate with faculty, stu-

dents, administration, anyone you can find to help you understand the history of the program. Study extant programs, videos, recordings, and handbooks to understand what the history has been, then move tactfully toward implementing your philosophies and standards. Tact is important and can be very challenging and delicate. Be honest and true to yourself, and your beliefs and your integrity will speak volumes.

Buyer: First of all, you have to have patience. Anytime there is a change in leadership there will be an adjustment period for the students. It's all about earning their respect and trust, especially the seniors and graduate students who have been there for a while. If you can get your core group of students to believe in what you're doing and buy into your philosophy, you have put yourself in position to be successful. Depending on the situation, this will take time. Buy-in is one of the most important, yet elusive qualities of building a successful program.

Shaw: There are several things to consider here. First of all, listen to your students. Try to understand where they are coming from. The more serious students will actually try to help you understand the environment and the needs of the program. They can help you understand the strengths of are, it most likely has nothing to do with you. You must let the students



"If you can establish an environment of respect, your students will be more willing to try new things, even if they are not used to your style or philosophy."
—Alison Shaw

make the transition in their own way and on their own timeline. They will come on board with your philosophy as they experience good results in their playing and see good results in their peers. In the meantime, simply carry out your agenda in a positive manner and students will eventually adjust to the changes. It helps if you are consistent and patient. If you can establish an environment of respect, your students will be more willing to try new things, even if they are not used to your style or philosophy.

Latta: *Upon inheriting the program, there is often a need for recruitment. What are your suggestions towards a successful recruitment plan?*

Gaines: Have a great website, be active in the state PAS chapter, go to your state music educators' convention and meet the all-state performers, give free percussion clinics to the area high schools and junior highs, promote your percussion ensemble concerts well, and be a great teacher!

Hemphill: Communicate with other faculty and immediate administrators to identify successful recruitment practices in that environment. Join the state MENC organization, attend state conferences, meet and visit with instrumental directors of both public and private high school institutions. Establish visibility through performance, clinical presentation, adjudication, and social functions, when appropriate. Volunteer to contribute to studies and redesign of regional educational practices and programs. Join memberships of associated organizations: jazz, state PAS, MTNA, etc. Collaborate with band/orchestra/jazz/world/choral directors regarding activities and events that bring students to campus. Be actively involved.

Latta: *What are some suggestions about the retention of students in your program?*

Brudvig: As their percussion instructor,



“Constant and honest goal-setting and assessment with your students will gain and ensure their respect and commitment to the program—and you.”
—Gary Cook

you most likely have more contact with the students than any other professor. Care and concern for your students, not only in their percussion studies, is paramount. Do what you can do to enable a successful undergraduate career; meet with them in advising situations, keep track of how they are doing in other classes. Be a good role model; you are there to help them learn music and encourage their growth.

Shaw: Retention is a difficult issue. It has been my experience that students who wish to leave the program usually are making a good choice. They have a change of heart about majoring in music, or simply want to enter a different field. Remember that they have benefited from you regardless of whether or not they finish the program.

Cook: Honest communication with your students is essential. Constant and honest goal-setting and assessment with your students will gain and ensure their respect and commitment to the program—and you. Too often, students are run “through the mill” without honest acknowledgment along the way. I would also say innovation is critical for retention. This includes finding ways to integrate technology as a tool in your teaching and as many aspects of percussion as you can fit into your situation in the present and with a constant eye on the future. It is your obligation as a pedagogue and mentor to your students in the 21st century.

Latta: *In the early stages of a new position a new instructor often wishes to*

upgrade the current instruments or add new instruments to the inventory. What are some aspects of budgeting and fundraising that you can suggest to a new percussion instructor?

Hemphill: First, research and identify the “rules of the road” regarding fundraising in your institution’s environment; avoid overstepping pre-delineated boundaries in institutional development. This would include all levels: school, college, and university. Next, investigate basic budget knowledge and current practice, course-related fees, lesson-related fees, instrumental rental fees, and non-institutional affiliations. Explore percussion clubs or separate group activities that might produce or offset funding, such as small performance groups—steel band, marimba band, parks and recreation activities for youth, sports related opportunities, etc. At PASICs, interact and discuss such issues with a widely diverse population of “experts.”

Gaines: Get to know the funding opportunities on your campus. If the Chair says “no,” have two or three other places you can go to ask— with the Chair’s approval. At big institutions there is money everywhere, you just need to know where to look. I got \$30,000 for steel drums through the Student Fee Capital Improvements Committee. Go figure! Just be persistent and aware of all the opportunities on your campus. Most of the opportunities will pay off far greater than any bake sale or benefit concert you give.

Buyer: Learn how to write excellent grant proposals. Grants opportunities can be found within departments for smaller purchases and for larger requests—steel drums, marimbas, etc.—within the college and university.

Latta: *One aspect that is not often covered in graduate school for the new teacher is the aspect of paperwork. What have been some of your experiences in regards to the paperwork needed in being a successful college instructor, and how have you dealt with these needs?*

Shaw: *Be organized!* Start right away trying to establish good office habits and keep your work ordered. Once you get files set up, you never have to do it again, and things will get easier over time. It is unfortunate, but this kind of work is part of the job. Nobody likes to do it, but it is better to set aside a little time every day to keep it up rather than let it pile up. Keep an “in box” on your desk. Anything you think is high priority should go in that box, and you should try to take care of it within 24 hours.

Brudvig: With this I will include e-mail. Like in graduate school, you have to be organized. Set time aside weekly/daily for the task of paperwork so items won't get through the cracks. Verbal communication with others is vital.

Cook: Like the Nike ad says, “Just do it.” You will work hardest your first few years, and a lot of this—even beyond your first few years—unfortunately, is paperwork. You can be creative about having students help you with some things and they, in turn, learn from that

mentoring. And, of course, a TA can be helpful. Success in this profession is greatly contingent on your successful organization and implementation, and a lot of this involves paperwork. But save your letters and templates, etc., for once you have things like recruitment letters and e-mails, you recycle them and don't have to reinvent the wheel!

Latta: *For many young instructors, tenure seems to be in the far distant future. What are some things instructors in their first few years of teaching should be doing to help aid in successfully achieving tenure when that time does arrive?*

Hemphill: At the outset, download and read the institution's guidelines and policies for the tenure path; often times this can include multiple resources and on-line locations. One helpful tool is to immediately set up a binder with all relevant divider-tabs in proper order and design content as required by the institution. Make inquiries as questions arise from reading the policies, then identify and attend workshops for tenure/promotion achievement offered by the institution. This helps to acquire insight early in the game. Select an empty drawer to “dump” all records of professional activity and growth; continuously update the résumé several times a year. Plan to achieve more than is required, and meet expectations well above and beyond the call of duty. Consistently strive to make yourself “indispensable” regarding your contribution and value to the department or program. Finally, there are numerous books on tenure. Peruse several and

combine offered strategies, usually not related to the arts. These often can be found in the institutional library or at the office of faculty development.

Buyer: Don't think about it too much. Focus on your students, not on getting tenure. If you are doing things for the purpose of achieving tenure, your priorities will get out of whack. Our job as educators is to make a difference in the lives of our students, add value to them, and provide them with the best experience possible. If you show up for work each day with this motivation, tenure will be a natural end result. This is an uncommon mindset, but one that is based on excellent leadership and intrinsic motivation. That said, you still have to embrace the tenure process, develop positive relationships with your colleagues, and build an excellent program and record of teaching, creative activity and scholarship, and service.

Latta: *Today's freshmen come in to college with a wide variety of backgrounds. What are some techniques you have found helpful in aiding in the young student's transition to college as well as to that student's study of percussion at the collegiate level?*

Gaines: I give group lessons to all the freshmen at least once every other week. That way, they interact with each other a lot and see where they fit in the studio. I pair them up with a sight-reading buddy for the semester, and they have to get together and sight-read one hour each week. This is a definite weakness of incoming freshmen. Also, the students and I talk a lot. I want to make sure this is the field they want to be in and make sure they feel comfortable talking to me if they want out. As mentioned before, there are too many good drummers for you to be in this field if you don't love it.

Brudvig: Since most of my students enter my school with very limited abilities, I have found that during the first term/first year it is good to just focus on technical issues. We mostly work on key-



“At big institutions there is money everywhere, you just need to know where to look.”
—Julia Gaines

board sight-reading and developing technique. Also, I help in keeping track that they are not over-committing on performance ensembles.

Shaw: Be clear. Students need to know exactly what you expect, and in some cases you may have to help them understand how much work it may take for them to meet those expectations. A comprehensive syllabus that outlines materials, repertoire, and grading in language that is easy to understand can be very helpful. Many students also need help learning how to practice. Establish an environment where students can share their experiences with one another and help each other practice during the hours you are not around. Peer instruction and sharing can be very useful. I also like to assign “percussion buddies.” I always pair up each freshman with an older student for the first semester. This buddy system requires the older student to be available to the younger student for everything from helping to figure out a multiple-percussion setup for a band part to listening to each other in the practice room. I have had excellent results with this system.

Latta: *In being a college percussion instructor, you will have more private instruction time with an individual student than any other teacher during that student’s time at your school. How do you approach the different aspects of this role, being both teacher as well as mentor to your students?*

Cook: You must be both a mentor and a teacher. For the record, we don’t “teach” our students anything; we “facilitate” their learning. If you keep this in mind as your credo and realize that because of the one-on-one relationship you have with students, you can be most effective by being their friend and mentor while still serving as their learning facilitator. The best way to do this is to establish rapport, understand their learning strategies—visual, aural, kinesthetic, and others—and help them



**“Time management is about knowing what has to be done and when it has to be done. Keep with deadlines and know your limits.”
—Robert Brudvig**

learn. I always thought of my students as colleagues, especially grad students, and treated them with appropriate respect. I never bought into the “teacher-student” role game. We’re all human beings and equals and should respect each other accordingly and as appropriate in the learning process and environments. This is not to say be a “best friend” to every student, but respect them for the unique being they are and do your best to help them achieve their self realization as a musician, percussionist, and person.

Hemphill: It is helpful to know your institution and its resources for students. Draw from your own experiences as examples and create a personal touch, but take the time to investigate within the institution for direct answers and resources. Be sensitive to personal scenarios; know when to refer the student to more appropriate personnel at the institution, do not overextend your relationship, and be aware of policy and legal requirements of an institutional employee/agent. Also, never over-estimate the importance of confidentiality with administrators, faculty, and students. It is important to stress to never let down your guard in this important area of interpersonal skills. One should also be aware of the intent of FERPA laws: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Latta: *A new teacher can often have issues with time management. It is not uncommon to want to give everything you have to your students as well as to your colleagues. What suggestions do you have*

in regards to time management as a new percussion instructor?

Brudvig: Keep a schedule! Time management is about knowing what has to be done and when it has to be done. Keep with deadlines and know your limits.

Buyer: My advice to new teachers: 1. Learn to say “no” sometimes. If you are overwhelmed and become a workaholic, this is not healthy and quality will decline. You can only spin so many plates. 2. Have balance in your life. Rest, exercise, play golf, watch a game, go to lunch with friends. As Stephen Covey says, “Sharpen the Saw.” It’s one of the 7 *Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Latta: *As the world continues to change, what aspects of technology have you found helpful in your teaching? Are there any non-traditional teaching methods that you have also found to be helpful?*

Shaw: It is very easy to record performances digitally and e-mail them to students with comments. Having students view themselves as they play is very revealing, as is recording and listening. I have also enjoyed sharing juries over the Internet using “Skype” with my teaching colleagues at other universities. It is very interesting to observe my students’ jury preparation when they know they will be viewed by someone over the web.

Gaines: I use iChat a lot to let my students hear from other instructors for clinics or during juries. This is a great way to communicate with other percussion faculty. Often at a school there is only one percussion instructor where there may be multiple brass, woodwind,



“Trying to stay ahead of the game day by day during the actual presentation of the course usually leads to “just getting by” or even, perhaps, to inferior instruction.”
—Steven Hemphill



“Don’t think about it too much. Focus on your students, not on getting tenure. If you are doing things for the purpose of achieving tenure, your priorities will get out of whack.”
—Paul Buyer

I have to be out of town, the students send me their “lesson” material via a recording and I can give comments when I am available. Then I don’t necessarily make up that lesson.

Latta: *A new instructor is often called upon to teach classes outside of percussion, e.g., music appreciation, music theory, or non-western music. What are some ways to prepare for teaching these classes?*

Hemphill: This question truly should be a focus at the master’s or doctorate level of study before stepping into one’s first academic position. If this area of professional engagement is personally challenging, the pre-tenured faculty member may be required—through self-discipline or based on fear!—to schedule major course-preparation time during coveted downtime, including the winter holiday, spring break, and summer months. Trying to stay

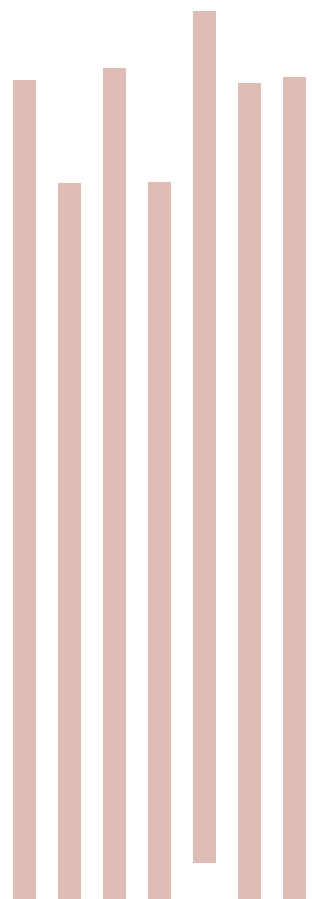
their syllabi, talk to them in their office, and sit in and observe them teach. I had never taught world music before, so I learned through reading the text, listening to the CDs, and watching videos. I learned along with the students. You can count on revising your approach, textbook, and quantity of content the more you teach a class.

Latta: *Finally, what was one piece of valuable advice that was given to you that helped in you become a successful, tenured percussion professor?*

Brudvig: I believe it is helpful to keep things in perspective. On a day-to-day basis it is easy to get bogged down in the paperwork and demands of the profession. Keep your perspective and the ultimate goal: doing the right thing and developing as an individual. Get along with your colleagues, be cooperative, and work together towards the mission of developing future educators.

Cook: F.J. Taylor, President of Louisiana Tech University in 1972 said, “Do the best you can with what you have.” I was later told by Jimmie Howard Reynolds, former Director of Bands at Louisiana Tech University, “Go after your dreams and build a percussion dynasty.” What you learn along the way from so many people you’ll never anticipate, even as you plan ahead five years or more, but when you look back at what you accomplished—and especially the success of your students—that is most gratifying and what life in this profession is all about.

Jonathan R. Latta is Instructor of Percussion and Non-Western Music at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Arizona and also has degrees from the University of the Pacific and East Carolina University. Jonathan spent four years in the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West as a percussionist in the concert band and drumset player in the jazz ensemble. He is a member of the PAS Education Committee and the PAS College Pedagogy Committee. [PN](#)



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Justifying Percussion Ensemble

By Dr. Shane Jones

As percussion performers and educators, we understand and deal with the unique factors of our instrument every day. The reality is that the percussion instrument family is made of hundreds of instruments, each with different techniques and musical backgrounds, and many of which are large, difficult to move, and require regular maintenance. These factors create a trickle-down effect that takes percussion students and teachers extra time, expertise, logistical organization, and storage space to maintain a high-functioning percussion studio.

I have found myself needing to justify the unique requirements of the percussion studio to my department, including budgetary needs, faculty workload, storage space requirements, student staff/graduate assistants, and percussion ensemble requirements/rehearsal time. This particular article addresses the unique challenges and needs of the percussion ensemble, as compared to other ensembles in the college music school, both from a curricular and logistical standpoint. I argue that regular percussion ensemble participation and additional rehearsal time are essential parts of a percussion student's musical education.

CURRICULAR NEEDS

Percussion ensemble provides more hands-on time for students to rehearse and perform on the multitude of instruments in which they are required to be proficient in the professional field. Percussion is not a single instrument, but a large instrument family that is often juxtaposed alongside single-instrument studios such as violin, trumpet, or clarinet. For example, in a typical college music school setting, students will typically choose to play a singular woodwind instrument (excluding doubling degrees), such as the flute, and are expected to achieve proficiency on that one instrument and not the entire woodwind family. The same would be true for a brass player or a string player. A percussionist, however, is expected to be competent on many instruments, including keyboard percussion (marimba, vibra-

phone, xylophone, glockenspiel, etc.), accessory percussion (tambourine, triangle, crash cymbals, bass drum, etc.), timpani, and often times drum set and hand drums. Not only is this a large list of instruments to learn, each of which requires vastly different techniques, but this list is constantly growing as the definition of percussion in music continues to expand.

From a practical standpoint, percussionists are frequently required to perform on heterogenous setups, sometimes referred to as multi-percussion setups. This is extremely popular in commercial music settings such as musical theater and recording as well as solo percussion. Multi-setups are also becoming more and more common in various chamber and large ensembles as the budget for these organizations shrinks and the desire for percussion sounds in music grows. It is common for one percussionist to be asked to play a combination of instruments that would usually be covered by multiple players, such as bass drum and cymbals, multiple keyboard instruments, and a mix of accessories and drums. Percussion ensemble gives students the opportunity to play and perform on heterogenous setups, better preparing them for success in the work environment.

Percussionists are at risk of developing deficiencies in core musical areas such as pitch, melody, and harmony because a large portion of their experience is in playing rhythms and sound effects on non-pitched instruments. Students do acquire some pitch, melody, and harmony experience with keyboard percussion and timpani playing, but this makes up only a fraction of their overall experience. Opportunities for percussionists to play pitched material in ensembles is rare. For example, in jazz band there is an entire section of trumpet players playing melody and harmony, but only one vibraphone player handling pitched percussion, and the vibraphonist usually trades off with guitar and piano. In the wind ensemble, there is an entire section of flutes playing melodic material, where there may be anywhere from zero to three keyboard percussion players. Percussion ensemble gives students the opportunity to further develop their core mu-

sicianship skills by playing and performing in melodic, harmonic, and bass roles within an ensemble.

INSTRUMENTATION AND SETUP

Percussion ensemble has no standard instrumentation or setup. It is a heterogenous ensemble that can function as either a large, mid-size, or small ensemble. Take steelband, for example, which in many schools falls under the percussion ensemble course. In many regards, the steelband functions more like a big band than anything else, with melody and harmony instruments, strum patterns, bass, and drums/percussion. The marimba choir can place a large focus on tone, timbre, blend, balance, and tonal voicings like a chorus. Percussion ensemble can also function in a small, uncondacted chamber setting with duos, trios, and quartets, as well as large-scale heterogenous setups. This is extremely unique compared to other ensembles in the school and contributes to many logistical challenges.

As stated above, the sheer number of instruments and musical styles that percussion students are required to learn often warrants the need for percussion ensemble to take on these many ensemble forms. Even if a given percussion student has been registered for multiple semesters in wind ensemble, orchestra, jazz band, and mixed chamber ensembles, depending on the number of concerts given, part assignments, and repertoire programmed, it is likely that this percussion student will have not had sufficient



opportunity to perform on all of the standard percussion instruments and standard musical styles mentioned previously. Percussion ensemble augments the standard music ensemble curriculum, giving percussionists adequate performance opportunities on the many instruments they are required to learn.

REHEARSAL TIME

Percussion ensembles require additional rehearsal meetings and rehearsal time than other ensembles in the music school due

A BOOK OF ÉTUDES - for marimba and vibraphone

A Book of Études, by the Norwegian composer and percussionist Kjell Samkopf, is a set of variations in 45 movements, in which all the movements together make up an entire work. This is not a set of variations in the sense of a theme with ensuing variations, but a work in which all of the movements are based and constructed on a common fundamental material. This material is twofold, consisting of the sentence *Semper idem, sed non eodem modo* (Eng. *always the same, but never in the same manner*), and nine rows of 61 or 37 numbers (relating to the number of bars of a five octave marimba and a three octave vibraphone), following the pattern of Marcel Duchamp's *Musical Erratum*. The work consists of 45 études of which 18 are for solo marimba, 18 for solo vibraphone, and 9 that can be played on either instrument. A performance would normally consist of a selection of some of the études, although the entire work with all 45 movements can be played. The total performance time for the 45 études is just over three hours.

A Book of Études is recorded on a tripple CD. 33 marimba and vibraphone players from Norway and Sweden took part in this frist recording, playing one or two études each; making this 3-CD set a must for all mallet keyboard collectors.

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Converted into a row of numbers, the sentence *Semper idem, sed non eodem modo*, looks like this:

S	E	M	P	E	R		I	D	E	M	,	S	E	D		N	O	N		E	O	D	E	M		M	O	D	O
1	5	4	7	5	9		9	4	5	4		1	5	4		5	6	5		5	6	4	5	4		4	6	4	6

Regular percussion ensemble participation and additional rehearsal time are essential parts of a percussion student's musical education.

to both the additional setup logistics that are required and the varied ensemble formations. First, let us consider the setup logistics. As mentioned previously, percussion instruments are large and can be cumbersome to move. In an ideal situation where all percussion instruments needed are in the same room as the rehearsal, setup would likely take ten minutes minimum. However, many percussion studios are required to have their instruments spaced out in a variety of storage rooms and practice rooms around the building, sometimes on multiple floors. Additionally, many doorways are not wide enough to fit marimbas and timpani, so these instruments must be disassembled, or doorframes must be removed. These factors can create extensive setup times that inevitably take up rehearsal time.

There is also the consideration of the ensemble formation. The average percussion rehearsal room (typically a band room or large chamber room) is large enough to fit one percussion ensemble setup at a time. Depending on the repertoire, it is possible

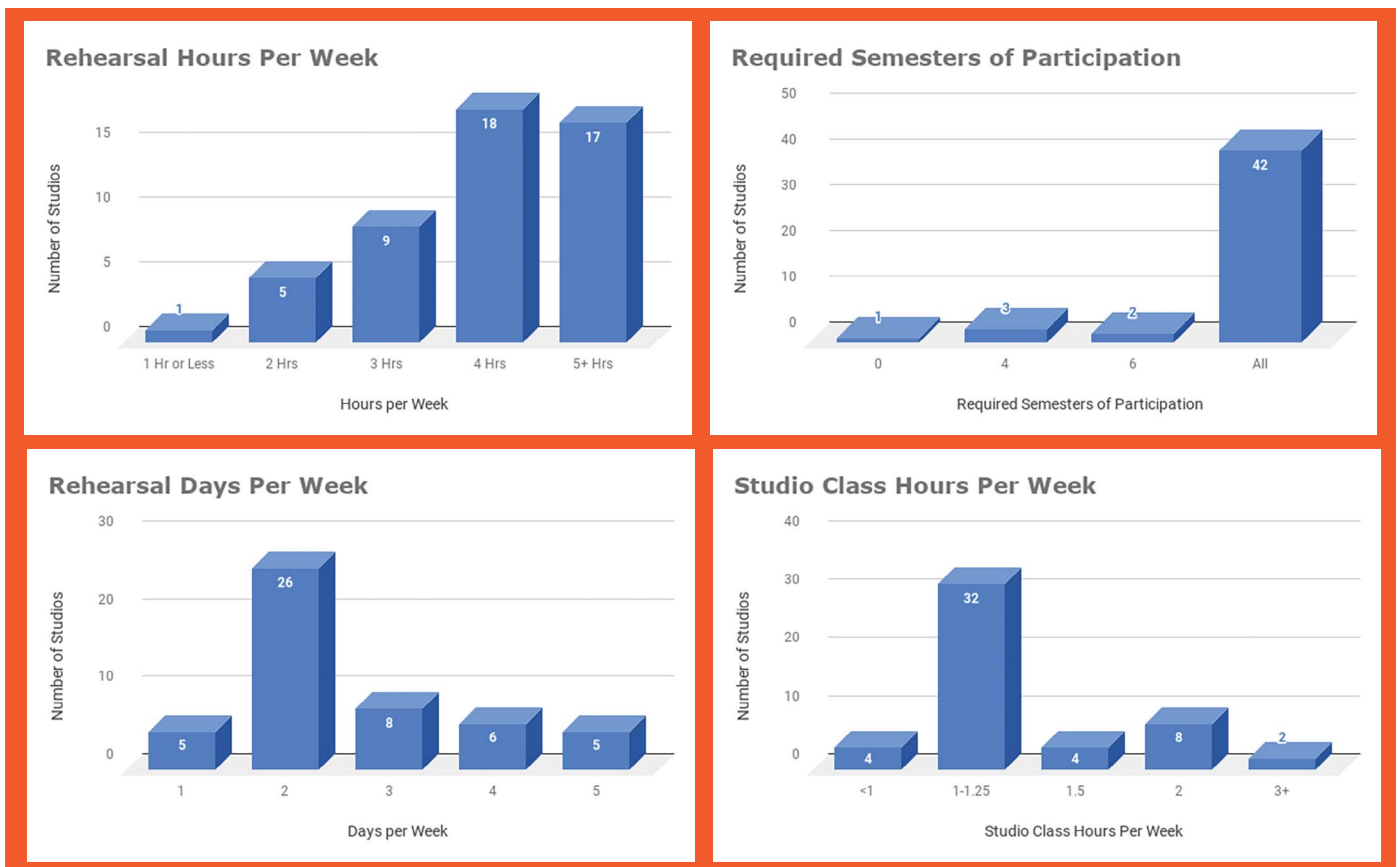
that the percussion studio would not have enough equipment to set up multiple pieces at the same time. Some schools are fortunate enough to have duplicates of equipment and dedicated large practice spaces. However, for many schools, the combination of equipment shortages, room size, and setup logistics make it very impractical for a percussion ensemble to rehearse more than one piece in a given rehearsal period. This is why many schools have found success offering percussion ensemble three to five days per week instead of one to two days per week.

SURVEY RESULTS

In 2018, I surveyed collegiate percussion directors across the United States about their percussion ensemble programs to see trends in the following areas: number of rehearsal hours and days per week of percussion ensemble, number of semesters the ensemble is required or strongly encouraged by studio teachers, and the amount of studio class hours per week. I received responses from 50 diverse studios including large universities, small liberal-arts colleges, and conservatories. The results are shared below.

CONCLUSION

Because the skills developed in percussion ensemble are essential to a percussionist's education, percussion ensemble is necessary for percussion majors. Percussion directors should consider setup time, varied instrumentation, and program curriculum when developing an ensemble rehearsal schedule. If we accept that percussion ensemble is an essential part of percussionists'



music education and that the ensemble needs to rehearse for an above average number of hours per week for reasons mentioned above, it should be noted that not all students are required to be in rehearsal that entire time. Due to the many ensemble formations used in percussion ensemble, much of the time is spent with smaller and uncondacted chamber setups that only require a fraction of the studio. This means that even though percussion ensemble might meet for four or more hours per week on the schedule, the average student would typically only be present for one to two hours of rehearsal per week, which is equivalent to the amount of rehearsal time other instrumentalists would spend in their respective chamber ensembles.

Each music school and percussion program is unique. The material in this article is meant to illustrate challenges that are unique to percussion studios so that it can be used to help percussion educators advocating for their programs, helping their colleagues and administrators better understand the needs of percussion in a collegiate setting.

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University Pedagogy: Writing Syllabi

By Jason Kihle and Julie M. Licata

This is the first in a series of articles by members of the PAS University Pedagogy Committee on issues related to the organizational aspects of teaching percussion at the university level. With the understanding that the various teaching situations that exist in our field often require unique solutions, our goal is to articulate pertinent questions that inform how we address administrative scenarios and provide some potential solutions, rather than to give specific answers. As these articles are focused on the administrative aspects of teaching, topics such as course descriptions, objectives, curriculum and four-year degree planning will not be addressed. This article will address syllabi for percussion ensemble and private lessons.

 On the first day of classes, after spending all summer changing heads, rethreading marimbas, and hearing drumline auditions, all professors are required to provide syllabi for each course they teach. Syllabi are complex and ever-evolving documents that can change in response to the successes and failures of previous semesters, and whose priorities may differ depending on the degree and type of student at a given institution. Unfortunately, the nuances of writing syllabi are rarely addressed in graduate studies.

Before you begin crafting your syllabi, you must first have a clear vision of your personal teaching philosophies and priorities. Then, you must figure out how to articulate those priorities into well-crafted policies within your syllabi. Clarity is critically important. A poorly written syllabus can have various impacts, including poor student evaluations, student grade appeals, conflicts with other faculty, and negative comments in annual reviews.

WHAT IS A SYLLABUS?

First and foremost, a syllabus is a contract between you and your students; both parties agree to all provisions within, including expectations and consequences for not fulfilling those expectations. The professor is obligated to commit to what is stated, especially when it comes to grading. A general rule for syllabi is that if you are not absolutely sure you are going to follow through with something, either write it with some type of caveat or consider not including it. With that said, it can also be helpful to leave some points intentionally vague to allow you flexibility. One way to do this is to include a “syllabus is subject to change” clause so students know changes may happen for various reasons. It is also important to remind students that what is written in the syllabus, not what the professor says, is the binding contract. Students may say,

“But you said this and that conflicts with the syllabus.” An appropriate response is, “Don’t go by what I say, go by what is written in the syllabus.” We can all relate to the absent-minded professor syndrome sometimes!

It is particularly challenging to create syllabi for music courses because of the diversity of majors you may have participating and that these courses are often repeated numerous times (whether or not the course numbering is the same). There needs to be a balance of specific and generalized policies that make your expectations clear and fair for everyone involved. Most important to remember is that all syllabi content (i.e., your course content) must have a clear pedagogical reason for existing. Before you commit to any policy or requirement, make sure you are clear on your objectives for its inclusion.

WHERE TO START University or Department Requirements

Your first step should be to consult with your department chair or faculty in your department for information regarding university or department syllabi templates, samples, requirements, etc. It is important to follow any prescribed layouts because deviation may result in negative comments in your annual review. Most universities have standard required con-

tent, such as: discrimination statements, disability policies, evacuation policies, etc. You may also need to include college handbook course descriptions or departmental accreditation equivalencies. Once you have drafted your syllabi, seek feedback from faculty in your department to ensure you are on the right track.

Course specific contents

The bulk of your syllabi will be materials particular to your courses, so your next step is to craft policies for your syllabi regarding those items. Components specific to percussion lesson and ensemble syllabi commonly include: required course materials, performance dates and policies, attendance and tardiness policies, rehearsal and practice expectations, assignments, grading policies, and weighting of assignments, among others. Particularly with courses that are repeated or have overlapping enrollments—as

is often the case with lessons and ensembles—consistent course policies in these areas can be very helpful for both the instructor and the students.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: TO LIST (OR NOT)

Determining required course materials for lessons and ensembles can be difficult considering the variety of instruments played and repertoire studied each semester. You may want to list everything you expect students to have by the time they

prepare financially. But this may not be relevant for all students and could be off-putting to non-majors who are only around for one semester. It may also turn away students who cannot afford to purchase \$500 worth of equipment in their first semester. Another solution is to list just the basics as requirements within your syllabi: a metronome (or a metronome app), concert snare sticks, drum set sticks, one set of two or four mallets, a set of timpani mallets, as you see fit. Follow the list with a statement such as,

All syllabi content must have a clear pedagogical reason for existing.

graduate, possibly suggesting a chronological order of purchases throughout their four-year program to help students

“...depending on literature and part assignments determined by the end of the first week of classes,” and you have room



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for even more flexibility. You may also elect to list required and recommended materials in two separate lists, or a semester-by-semester required materials list.

In addition to material objects, another thing to consider is whether or not you will require PAS membership. If so, how will you use it in your class? By when does membership need to be acquired? Is membership primarily intended to get students into PASIC, or do you have course assignments that require your students to use things like the Siwe guide, *Percussive Notes* archives, the discussion forums, etc.? Again, always ask the question, “What is the pedagogical reason for including this?”

PERFORMANCES

Providing performance, jury, and recital dates in your syllabi is essential. Not doing so gives students the excuse to miss due to work or other class conflicts. These time conflicts are real, and you want to provide your students every chance to fully participate and succeed in your course, so it is your responsibility to give them all the information up front. Additionally, policies for various contingencies (e.g., dealing with conflicts, additional and rescheduled performances) will clarify to students early on that performances are equivalent to the midterms and final exams they have in other courses. You may also want to reiterate how a missed performance affects their grade with an accountability statement such as, “Students who miss a performance will have earned a failing grade for the semester.” While this may be obvious to music majors, it could be less so to non-majors in your lessons and ensembles.

DEALING WITH ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE REQUESTS

So, during the third week of the fall semester, the College President’s office asks you to provide an ensemble for an alumni event to be held in late November, or a community organization reaches out to you in February asking for your steel drum band to perform at their fundrais-

ing event the week after Spring Break. What is your process for dealing with this request after your syllabi are distributed? How will those graded performances be tallied into their final grade calculations? A simple policy solution may be something like the following, “Students will be consulted before any additional performances are scheduled. However, once committed to the additional obligation, students are expected to attend all rehearsals/performances and will be graded as with any other required performance.”

Performance conflicts with other courses

Another issue that may come up, particularly if you have numerous non-majors participating in your ensembles or taking lessons, is scheduled performances conflicting with other class meeting times (especially evening classes). How will you address these conflicts? How will you notify other instructors of the conflict in a timely manner? What will you do if the other professor is not able to excuse the student?

One possible solution may be to include a statement like the following in your syllabi: “Check your calendar at the start of the semester. If you have a conflict with a performance or dress rehearsal time, you must email me the following information, no less than six weeks before the event (INSERT SPECIFIC DATE): course meeting time and title, and the professor’s name and email address. I will then contact your professors to request they excuse you from any classes that would be missed due to performances or rehearsals for this course. My request is not a guarantee that you will be excused from their class. If they are unable to excuse you for any reason, you will be required to withdraw from class (either this course, or the other class, at your discretion), as missing a performance will result in a failing grade in this course. If the requested absence is approved, you are responsible for communicating with your professors about your absence and making up any

materials missed during these dates/times.”

It may be lengthy, but this policy dictates that students are in charge of their schedules early in the semester and are responsible for initiating contact with you in a timely manner. This way you can respectfully communicate with your colleagues when requesting they excuse students from their courses.

ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS POLICIES

Having and enforcing an attendance policy is important, though there are many approaches one may take. You will have to decide how flexible you want to be when rescheduling lessons and/or rehearsals. Consider what policies support your teaching philosophy. For both lessons and ensembles, you may want to incorporate a very strict policy of giving failing grades for any absence. If you want to make provisions for the fact that sometimes serious issues do come up (illness, family emergencies, etc.), you may consider allowing opportunities to reschedule if students give 24-hour notice or devise a policy that allows students an absence without penalty (no questions asked). You could also keep it simple by stating, “Missing more than two lessons or rehearsals will result in a failing grade for the semester.” In any case, without a clearly articulated attendance policy—whether strict or lenient—you can spend the semester descending down a rabbit hole of excuses and rescheduling, and soon the entire studio is in on Sunday doing makeups!

With only one lesson per week, or minimal rehearsal time, tardiness can seriously affect productivity. One way to deter lateness is to make sure it affects a student’s grade. You may find a version of the following policy to suit your teaching philosophy: “If students are not prepared to play within the first five minutes of the scheduled lesson or rehearsal, their daily grade will be lowered by 10%. If a student is more than 15 minutes late, he or she will receive a failing grade for the day.”

Notice that this statement requires students to be ready to play in the first five minutes of rehearsal, not just be in the room on time. This ensures that students understand the importance of being prepared, not just present. If it takes them 15 minutes to set up, they will have to get to class early to avoid penalty.

CONCLUSION

The items covered in this article are a good starting point for putting teaching philosophies and priorities into actionable policies. “What is the pedagogical reason for including this?” is the question you should fall back on at every turn. Balance must be found between writing rules for every possible contingency and writing so vaguely that nothing is enforceable. Finding this balance while articulating your expectations (and then sticking to them!) will provide the foundation for a successful working relationship between you and your students. **PN**

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band, and pep band. Dr. Kihle has been published in *Early Music Colorado Quarterly*, *The Instrumentalist*, *The Educator's Companion*, and *Percussive Notes*. He has been a presenter at the Minot State University Northwest International Festival of Music, the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, the state music education association conferences of North Dakota, Wyoming, California, and Iowa, and the NAFME National Conference. Dr. Kihle has performed with the Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Wind Ensemble, Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra, the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, and the Laredo Philharmonic Orchestra. He has performed at the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, the International Double Reed Society Convention, Texas Music Educators Association, the National Flute Association Convention, College Music Society National and Regional Conferences, the Montreaux Jazz Festival, and the International Thespian Festival. He commissioned “Silencio” for solo marimba from Nathan Daughtrey and gave its world premiere in the fall of 2016. Along with Elizabeth Janzen, he commissioned “ANS” for flute and marimba from Trevor Weston for the College Music Society 2019 National Convention. His compositions are published by Bachovich Publications. Dr. Kihle is a member of the PAS University Pedagogy Committee.

Julie Licata is Associate Professor of Percussion at State University of New York, College at Oneonta, where she teaches percussion ensembles,



percussion lessons, and courses in world music. Over the past 15 years, Julie has focused on presenting solo and chamber percussion recitals across the U.S., commissioning and premiering works by rising and prominent composers with performances ranging from acoustic improvisational soundscapes and works with interactive computer processing, to solo marimba, orchestra and theater pit orchestra, to West African drum and dance ensembles and Indonesian folk music. Julie received a DMA in Percussion Performance from the University of North Texas (2009), an MM from University of South Carolina (2005), and a BM from Capital University (2002). Julie is a new literature reviewer for *Percussive Notes*, a member of the PAS University Pedagogy Committee and Diversity Committee, and the Secretary/Treasurer of the New York PAS Chapter.

Teaching Sustainable Practice Skills to Undergraduate Percussion Students

By Jason Baker, Teddy Hall, and Aaron Ragsdale

Skills such as time management, work ethic, and goal-setting can be challenging for any undergraduate college student. The multiple instrument and ensemble workload encountered by percussion students can be especially daunting, and there is clearly no “one size fits all” approach that works for every student in every school. College percussion teachers Sarah Burke (Blinn College), Gene Fambrough (University of Alabama at Birmingham), Pedro Orey (Bethune Cookman University), and Lisa Rogers (Texas Tech University) have provided answers to several questions pertaining to this topic. As a variety of institutional sizes and models are represented by these teachers, it is intended that this article will provide fresh ideas, perspectives, and material for discussion between both college percussion faculty and students.

Please describe what makes your student body or institutional mission unique and the most common challenges you encounter in helping students establish and maintain sustainable practice habits. What tactics have you used with the most success in addressing this? What have you tried in the past that has not worked?

Burke: Blinn College is a two-year/junior college, thus making our mission a complicated one. We service a very diverse student population. Our typical students come to us for one of several reasons: a deficiency in their performance skills that prevented them from successfully auditioning into a four-year program, a lack of funds (often times these are extremely talented students who could not afford a four-year school), and students who want or need a stepping stone, either because they want a more personalized setting, or because they require more one-on-one assistance with academics.

Because each of our students tends to be from a unique situation, a one-size-fits-all approach does not work well. The biggest challenge is adjusting students to the pace of a collegiate music program. Students are accustomed to learning one piece a semester, or perhaps a handful of all-region/all state etudes, and this is what they assume the work load will be. Teaching these students how to effectively utilize their time and to set up strategies for success is the biggest challenge. I have attempted several required activities such as practice journals, online assignments, and other written

activities, but find that it is typically a combination of things that works best. I have also learned that what works best for me may not be the answer for a student, and vice versa.

Fambrough: The type of student who attends UAB has changed drastically over the 18 years I’ve been teaching, due to several main factors: 1. stricter academic admission requirements, 2. establishment of an audition process to enroll as a music major (we are a very young department, and initially we only offered a Bachelor of Arts degree to which anyone could claim as a major, regardless of experience), and 3. the gradual transition from a “commuter” school to more of a traditional college campus.

The biggest challenge our students face is the sudden onset of freedom in their daily schedule, and being able to manage that time successfully. At the beginning of the semester, I help them create their own “week-at-a-glance” schedule, using mine as an example, and I urge them to schedule their own practice time every day. Seeing those practice sessions as required class time is the most important step, though, and this is where most students don’t succeed. I’ve tried the “daily practice log” in the past, and I didn’t feel as though

it worked as well as it should. Students would either forget to use them, or worse, not fill them out truthfully. It would be painfully obvious when the amount listed on the log was not reflected in the progress shown in the lesson. I've been thinking about revisiting this idea lately, but modifying it to include a "self-analysis" grade they will give themselves—both to reflect their week of practice and the actual lesson itself.

Orey: Bethune Cookman University is a small institution with a population of approximately 3,500 students, which affords the students smaller class sizes than the major universities. Our mission is focused on serving a diverse student body, which includes diversity in ethnicity, economics, and academic preparation. The students are faced with the challenge of multitasking with their participation in band (marching/concert, in which they receive scholarships), percussion ensemble/marimba ensemble, and applied lessons. It is a challenge sometimes communicating to students that participating in the band program is only a small part of being a "music major" and that "band practice" does not equate to individual practice and preparation for the applied percussion lesson. Although the department is small and the percussion area has a designated rehearsal room, we face challenges with individual practice space/rooms that can accommodate the percussion instruments (timpani, marimba, drum set, etc.). Because of the limited facility, students must utilize other parts of the building when the percussion rehearsal area is occupied, which includes the band room, hallway, or outside the building. Unfortunately, the section of the music building where the percussion room is located is a main traffic area for the department and institution. Therefore, it can become a social hangout area, which diminishes the productivity of the student practicing.

Rogers: I believe our challenges at Texas Tech University (TTU) are unique, as our overall number of music majors has grown in the last 10 years from roughly 450 to 600 majors in a building and facility that was built to comfortably house 275 majors. Furthermore, as we've grown in the number of students and then the number of ensemble and class offerings, our ability to have enough practical space for meaningful rehearsals, classes, and performances is compromised. As one TTU faculty member said, "We are rats in a maze." I'm always trying to reconfigure the space we have for the percussion inventory while still meeting the students' needs. We've tried to expand practice space by allowing percussion students to practice on marimbas in the hallways of our building. However, this measure did not work, as students didn't experience focused "solid" practice, and the hallways became social hangs. Therefore, we've had to redirect students to find early morning times in our practice rooms to practice.

What would you identify as the key/initial skill that students must establish first when they arrive on your program? What is the building block of their practice program?

Burke: Just like getting off the couch to hit the gym, I think the hardest part for our students is getting themselves into the practice room. For most of these students this is the very first time in their lives that they are responsible for determining larger portions of their day-to-day schedule. This newfound freedom can lead to a squandering of time staying up late, playing video games, hanging out, etc. So, the very first thing I do with students who seem to be struggling with getting in the time, is to have them schedule their practice time like they do their classes. I have them bring in a grid with all their class and work schedules written out—old school

pencil and paper only! Then we talk about strategies for when and how they should schedule their practice blocks.

Fambrough: Other than the time management skill addressed previously, I find that many students don't know how to actually practice, other than just playing the same passage over and over again. This includes everything from warm-ups and technique building, to the nuts and bolts of learning a piece. I'll take a studio class and walk them through my warm-up routine, but explaining what I'm doing



Sarah Burke:
"While some students seem to work best when told they should be practicing 'X' hours a day, younger students tend to progress faster when they work toward meeting daily goals."

and what I'm listening for during each step. As tedious as it sounds, showing the steps of taking a permutation or arpeggio exercise through all 12 keys is important for them to see and hear in person, rather than me just telling them to do it.

Something I've picked up on lately is understanding different "modes" of practice, especially on keyboard instruments. This expands the idea of having goals in your practice sessions by entering a specific frame of mind before you start. The three modes are: 1. note-learning (very slow, tedious, and time-consuming for some), 2. continuity (getting from measure to measure, section to section, or the entire piece without stopping), and 3. cleaning (right notes, consistent sound, meaningful approach to interpretation). I've found that many peo-

ple just start at the beginning and see what happens without any strategy beyond simply "I hope it goes well." There's also a difference between shifting modes on purpose and doing it without knowing; i.e., what may start out as a run-through for continuity suddenly becomes cleaning, or note-learning may shift to continuity before transitions are completely worked out.

Orey: The main skill the students must master is time management. We have a very active band program, and the students must learn how to divide their time accordingly so that they can be productive and matriculate with success. Furthermore, we highly encourage our percussion students to create a daily practice routine that will enable them to develop skill sets on various percussion instruments (snare drum, mallets, timpani, drum set) in a concise yet methodical manner.

Rogers: For the first time, everything is about music in these students' lives—study and focus. Therefore, time management and the word "no" needs to become part of their vocabularies. It is important that each student sets up a schedule to follow including everything from classes, ensemble rehearsals, and practice time to even eating, sleeping, exercising, working a part-time job, and socializing. Everything has to be planned, and each student needs to follow his or her specific plan.

How do you recommend students divide their practice time between various instruments on a daily or weekly basis? How can they best balance this with academic work?

Burke: I typically suggest students experiment with goal-based practice versus time-based practice. While some students seem to work best when told they should be practicing "X" hours a day, it has been my experience that younger students tend to progress faster when they work toward meeting daily goals. These goals are de-

signed to help them achieve a larger weekly lesson goal. Sometimes it's as simple as learning two or three lines of an etude a day, or a goal may be to play technical exercises or etudes for a set amount of time each day. When students first enter the studio, I may help them define and set these goals; however, older students are expected to create these strategies for themselves. Because I mostly work with younger collegiate students, we are primarily concerned with developing skill and musicianship on the "Big 3": snare drum, timpani, and mallet instruments. I encourage students to diversify their practice time, and make sure that the bulk of their time is spent with the instruments on which they are the weakest. Most of our students are from drumline-centered programs and are weaker on mallet percussion, so it is fairly common for our students to practice mallet percussion every day and alternate snare drum and timpani daily, so Monday might be snare drum and marimba, and Tuesday would be timpani and marimba. I also encourage those who struggle with time management to schedule blocks of time for homework.

Fambrough: I suggest a general goal of dividing each hour as follows: 5 minutes for sight-reading, 10 minutes for technique, and 45 minutes for literature. This will change for everyone based on individual needs and ability, but I feel it's a good place to start. As obvious as it is to us sometimes, students often don't understand the correlation between cause and effect—i.e., the more you do something, the better at it you'll get:

Student: I don't feel like my sight-reading is very good.

Teacher: How much do you practice sight-reading?

Student: I don't.

Teacher: Well, maybe you should sight-read more often.

Balancing practice with academics is tricky, but the students need to



Gene Fambrough:
 "Many students don't know how to actually practice, other than just playing the same passage over and over again."

understand that in music it is one and the same. I do compare practice with studying, though, in that the more often you review the material for an upcoming test, the less you'll have to cram the night before and the deeper you'll understand the material. Same thing goes for practicing; 30 minutes each day is much better than waiting until a three-hour cram session the night before your lesson.

Orey: I recommend that the students develop a practice log or goal log for their daily and weekly practice. It must be noted that the length of time the students outline can be adjusted as they progress through their practice, as they may need more or less time to reach their individual goals. The idea with the goal log is to keep the students focused on the goal(s) to be attained so they don't spend all their time on one instrument during their practice session when they plan to practice on several instruments. The practice/goal log has been successful with some students, but others have found it to be challenging to maintain. However, it has proven to give the students a perspective on how to manage their time. Students who are successful with balancing academic work, rehearsal preparation, and individual skill development have indirectly created a log by being consistent in their daily preparation for class and practice.

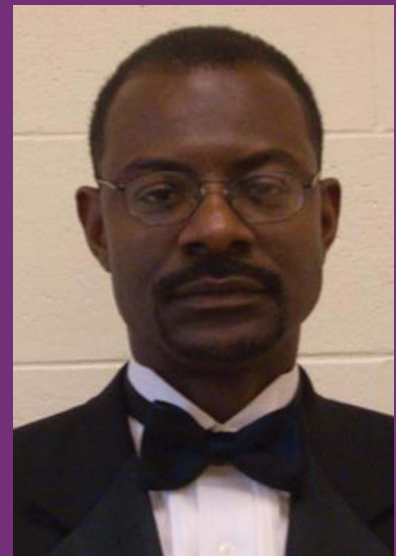
Rogers: Fellow TTU Percussion Professor Alan Shinn and I tell the students that to be successful in life and music, they need to practice a minimum of two hours a day on their applied lessons materials. This does not include time for ensemble preparation. Ensemble preparation would be in addition to practicing for lessons. Typically, most of our students are studying two to three areas of percussion each semester with a suggested split of one hour of drumming and one hour of keyboard percussion preparation a day. Again, everything

must be scheduled, including time to study, and must be followed.

Do you require practice journals or use technology as part of your grading system for documenting practice routines? If so, what requirements or format do you find the most effective?

Burke: I rarely require practice journals. As a kid, I *hated* using a practice journal, so I am hesitant to force my students to use it. That being stated, I have required a few students to use one, and some of them really love it. One thing I have recently started utilizing is having students send me video clips of them practicing/performing a piece. I use this as an option for working at a faster pace, or if we just didn't make it to a particular piece during a lesson. I also use this when a student needs to reschedule a lesson, and we simply cannot make our schedules match up. This allows a student to get feedback more quickly, and often it leads them to really working hard on a problem spot because they do not want to send in a bad recording. I have also used video in larger ensemble settings to encourage being prepared. For example, in drumline, students are required to meet with their sub-sections once a week. This year we required each section to video their group performing a specific feature at tempo with a metronome prior to us rehearsing it as a full drumline. Once all the groups had submitted their videos, we rehearsed the work together. This made sure the students could all execute their parts individually, before we leapt in with the full group. It was an effective way of flipping the classroom. I also have requested the use of video/slow-mo, and play-along tracks—using popular music as a metronome, etc.—in practice sessions.

Fambrough: I'm going to revisit the practice journal with some minor changes. I've been using Microsoft OneNote as an effective way for the



Pedro Orey: “It is a challenge sometimes communicating to students that participating in the band program is only a small part of being a music major.”

students to keep up with assignments and for me to keep track of lesson progress through the semester. I've tried a few practice apps recently, but have never been really pleased with any of them. If anyone has discovered one they really like, please let me know! I think a huge part of successful practicing is for the student to learn to enjoy the process of getting better; this can be tedious and boring much of the time, but students need to be okay with that and be patient with their own progress. There may be days or weeks that you don't notice any improvement, but keep “chopping wood” and eventually the tree falls down.

Orey: I have required students to keep a practice log/goal log in which they should evaluate their progress at the end of the day or practice session to see if their goals were attainable or not, did they allow for enough time to reach their goal for each instrument, what adjustments did they make, etc. I will periodically ask to see their logs and discuss whether the success or non-success of their lesson was based on good or not-so-good preparation. I have not integrated technology as

part of my grading system.

Rogers: We currently don't use practice journals as part of our grading system; however, we do encourage students to use practice journals, both old school "pen and paper" (i.e., piano practice journals that Professor Shinn gifts especially first-year students) and/or the Practice Notes Music Journal & Practice Tools application, which has been very effective for some of my students. I've seen both the old school "pen and paper" method as well as technology work. We allow the students to make those choices for themselves.

students about taking side gigs with church or choir because it's something that will go on their resume as professionally-related experience and not another section of "line cook" or "golf course maintenance."

Orey: The answer to this question is as diverse as the student population that matriculates at the university. Because of the social economic backgrounds and musical experiences of the students, it is about 50/50. Most students' concentration or background in music is centered on the marching band with limited experiences in other ensembles, concert band, percussion ensemble, solo and ensemble competition, etc. Therefore, I spend a lot of time talking about stylistic approaches to music, expression, and so on. I continuously have discussion with students about their well-being and how they're doing in general. Some students have a lot of emotional challenges trying to balance school, a job, issues at home, and peer pressure. Sometimes they need someone to just listen to them and other times they need guidance about dealing with life. In all, I try to encourage them to do the best that they can in all their endeavors, and when they get knocked down, frustrated, or feel as though things are not progressing like they want them to, continue to push forward and remember what their ultimate goal is. Life will always throw you a curve ball but how you react to it makes the difference.

Rogers: I would say I spend 65% of my time on teaching musical strategies and 35% on non-musical "life skill" strategies, which is a slight change from 10 to 15 years ago. The percentage 10 to 15 years ago would have been 75% teaching musical strategies and 25% on non-musical "life skill" strategies.

Do you use older students to serve as peer models to their fellow students to reinforce positive practice habits?

What percentage of time do you find yourself teaching musical strategies vs. working on non-musical "life skill" strategies?

Burke: Initially, I would say it is almost 50/50. I feel like once students find a few strategies that work for them, we tend to have it shift to almost entirely musical discussion, but in the early stages, it can be tough for students to figure out what works best for them. I am still trying to remember to ask students what they feel like they did well in practicing and what simply did not help on a week-to-week basis during the early portions of the year. I also try to do this if students have a particularly successful week, and I encourage them to note what they did differently.

Fambrough: We spend so much of our time with students in a one-on-one basis that it's impossible not to address some non-musical things with them, so I would venture that upwards of half our time together is addressing issues outside of the lesson material. I often end my lessons asking how their classes are going, what they're doing over the summer, or how their jobs are treating them, and they usually end up with some story I tell them from when I was a student in the same types of situations. Just recently, I talked with two different



Lisa Rogers: "It is important that each student sets up a schedule to follow including everything from classes, ensemble rehearsals, and practice time to eating, sleeping, exercising, working a part-time job, and socializing."

Burke: Unfortunately, with a two-year program, our older students are still figuring out what works best for them. We do have a handful of excellent, organized leaders. However, they too are often still developing good strategies for success.

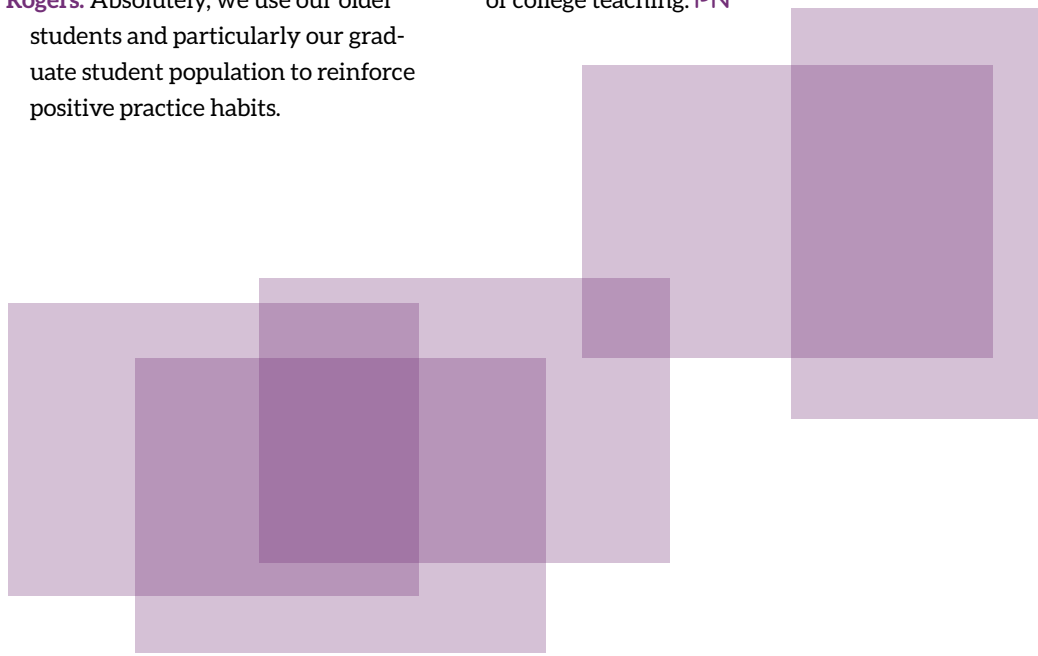
Fambrough: I have on occasion, with varying degrees of success. It really depends on the older student, though, and his or her desire to see this through. Sometimes, their own classes and practice load gets in the way, or their level of patience isn't necessarily up to the challenge. I do think peer motivation is a big factor, though, and ultimately you want to create an environment of healthy competition where the students encourage strong practice habits and support each other in their common goals.

Orey: Yes, the older students reinforce positive practice habits and time management. I have also assigned several students the same etude/solo to de-

velop a community to reinforce each other's progress and development, to stimulate healthy competition, and to help each other in their discovery of learning various techniques required in performing the piece.

Rogers: Absolutely, we use our older students and particularly our graduate student population to reinforce positive practice habits.

Jason Baker, Teddy Hall, and Aaron Ragsdale are members of the PAS University Pedagogy Committee, which promotes and enhances the exploration, improvement, elevation, and facilitation of the craft of percussion at every level of college teaching. [PN](#)



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Non-Western Percussion in the Applied Studio

By Justin Alexander and Dan Piccolo

Percussion is diverse by nature. Most university-level percussion programs embrace a wide range of musical idioms and instrumental specializations, including symphonic percussion, solo literature, chamber music, marching percussion, and jazz and popular musics. As the world grows more connected, approaches to musical pedagogy in higher education continue to develop. Collegiate percussion professors have a unique opportunity to contribute to this growth, diversifying their programs through the inclusion of techniques and pedagogical methods of non-Western musics. Although most percussion programs revolve around the core percussion curriculum of snare drum, multi-percussion, keyboard percussion, timpani, and orchestral accessory instruments, many students are interested in exploring music beyond these important pillars. Indeed, many percussion programs around the country are already incorporating “world music” into their curricula. This approach helps develop musical skills not traditionally covered in a solely Western approach, exposing students to new methods of music-making, new ways of thinking about music, and giving both students and teachers an avenue for personal and musical growth.

However, while the trend in recent

years has certainly been towards increased inclusion of non-Western musical genres—and there are many justifications for doing so—there are also a host of problems associated with this approach. Students and professors in university percussion programs are already faced with the challenging task of covering vast amounts of content across multiple disciplines and instruments in a limited amount of time. Adding additional content could increase logistical challenges and detract from the foundational study of more typically Western percussion instruments that are crucial to students’ development at this stage. Similarly, one could argue that each area of non-Western music deserves its own entire curriculum, and that a brief survey does not allow students to gain adequate proficiency, nor to fully comprehend the musical, aesthetic, or socio/cultural sophistication of these art forms. This could have the adverse effect of further marginalizing non-Western musics in the eyes of our students, which is entirely antithetical to the idea of providing an opportunity for students to broaden their worldview.¹

Despite these challenges, we believe that non-Western music can play an essential role in the college percussion program. The goal of our approach is not to simply add non-Western percussion to our curriculums to provide a token mark-

er of diversity, but to enhance our students’ learning experience and strengthen their overall musicianship. What follows is our vision for a newly-imagined, holistic undergraduate percussion curriculum that embraces non-Western musics, integrating their study alongside the standard conservatory repertoire.

WHY INCLUDE NON-WESTERN PRACTICES IN THE APPLIED CURRICULUM?

For the Students

There are a number of excellent reasons for including more non-Western percussion study in the university curriculum. Students are increasingly asking for (and sometimes demanding) more diverse and inclusive musical experiences, ranging from historical performance practice to popular or commercial music and non-Western musics. In addition to broadening your students’ skill sets and encouraging new and challenging approaches to music-making, incorporating non-Western percussion in your studio can provide a unique perspective for recruiting students to your program, while also expanding opportunities for non-music majors to participate in the music department.

A percussion curriculum that includes significant non-Western experiences familiarizes students with valuable histor-

ical and stylistic concepts that may not otherwise be covered in the applied lesson structure. Despite the unprecedented access to information that we enjoy today, many young students have not been exposed to forms of music outside of their immediate experience. Exposure to new forms of music can help students make connections between their own experiences and those of people from other geographic areas. In addition, they build an awareness of the broader historical context of Western music. After all, most (if not all) of our instruments have roots that extend beyond the European tradition, and we know that percussion was originally introduced to the orchestra as a way to evoke the “exotic,” through the use of Turkish instruments. In some ways, then, a knowledge of music from around the world has always been central to being a successful percussionist!

Another justification for exposing students to a wide range of music is the potential benefit that it could have for their professional careers. As we will discuss later, we have both been able to incorporate our experiences with non-Western musics as we continue to build our respective professional reputations. Similarly, we cannot predict our students’ career paths, and any one of them could decide to venture into a career as a performer where a specialized skill set in non-Western percussion is an asset. This “deep bag” of percussive skills is at the heart of the “total percussion” approach to collegiate teaching that we embrace.

At Virginia Commonwealth University, for example, the Instructor of Afro-Cuban percussion, Hector “Coco” Barez, spends at least one semester with each of our Performance, Music Education, and Jazz Studies majors (primary instrument: drum set) teaching the techniques and rhythms traditionally played on congas, bongos, and timbales. This study allows students to not only perform appropriately and confidently on these instruments, but to take this knowledge back to the drum set for a deeper understanding of Latin styles. Additionally, Prof. Barez

teaches how these instruments and styles have developed, the prominent performers of each era, and how contemporary performers are blending techniques and styles in today’s music.

At Bowling Green State University, our approach (outlined below) has helped students in a number of ways, but primarily by helping them develop core musical skills such as rhythmic awareness, time, groove, phrasing, ensemble playing, and sound production. While the specific approach to these concepts certainly varies from one system of music to another, they are all “universal” concepts, in the sense that each musical system addresses them in one way or another. We all learn differently, so by providing students with multiple ways to approach musical concepts we create more avenues for them to

For the Teacher

An in-depth study of non-Western music is a viable research angle and can aid in developing a strong research profile during your probationary period, in finding inter- and cross-disciplinary collaborators, and in securing research funds. Studying non-Western musical cultures offers ample opportunities for collaboration both within the university (Language Arts, World Studies, and your university’s Global Education Office) as well as in your local community. Finding these opportunities can lead to valuable service-learning opportunities for students which fosters important university-community relationships.

In Richmond, I am very fortunate to have several master musicians in the community that we have hired to teach

Incorporating non-Western percussion can provide a unique perspective for recruiting students to your program, while also expanding opportunities for non-music majors to participate in the music department.

discover their own understanding of the material. Specifically, I have seen great impact through the use of rote learning, which is employed in many non-Western musics. It engages students’ minds in a different way, which they can then connect back to the more familiar area of reading music from a written score.

Studying non-Western music opens students up to new and different ways of performing, thinking about, and experiencing music. In addition to learning new techniques, rhythms, and styles, students’ knowledge about composition, improvisation, groove-building, mixed meters, ear training, and other fundamentals of musicianship are enhanced through the study of non-Western musics.

and/or collaborated with for different projects. Gamelan Raga Kusuma (GRK), a community gamelan ensemble run by Dr. Andy McGraw, Associate Professor of Music at the University of Richmond, allows students and community members to learn about Javanese and Balinese gamelan music and performs regularly throughout the Richmond area. Several members of the VCU Percussion Studio collaborated with GRK last year to perform Evan Ziporyn’s “Ngaben” for gamelan and orchestra with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, with the composer in attendance. This collaboration allowed the VCU students to gain some familiarity and comfort with Balinese gamelan instruments, and it gave them the opportunity to perform on stage with a professional symphony orchestra

in a unique environment. Through my own interest in gamelan and Dr. McGraw's generous invitation, the students were able to participate in an important educational and musical opportunity. This experience led to the creation of our own Javanese gamelan ensemble at VCU.

Incorporating non-Western music can also help your program align with your university's strategic plans, mission statements, and budget models. Every university is different, and I can only speak about my home institution. VCU's current strategic plan includes the following "pillars," which guide the mission of the university:

- I. Research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve human health
- II. Diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist, and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust
- III. Sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world.

In each of these areas, I have provided evidence to my supervisors that the work I am doing helps the university achieve its mission. This attention to the broad mission of the university is valuable during the tenure-eligible period of your career, and it has opened funding avenues for instruments, adjunct instructors, and guest artists at VCU.

If you are unsure or timid about your own experience with non-Western music, it has never been easier to connect with master musicians via the internet. Although I had basic knowledge of Afro-Cuban music through my familiarity with drum set, I did not begin to pursue this approach seriously until after I was employed at VCU. It's very important to note that, in the cases of music,

styles, and instruments with which I am not familiar, I always hire an expert to teach students and lead ensembles. These musicians bring mastery on their instruments and in their teaching that is often removed from Western training. It is valuable and important to recognize their musicianship and pedagogy in academia.

In addition to the internal professional development opportunities that studies of non-Western music can provide, these research specialties can also help you to build your presence in professional circles. Dr. Piccolo's studies of North Indian classical music have allowed him to present clinics, concerts, and workshops at universities throughout the United States and Canada. He has also been selected to present two sessions at PASIC and published an article in *Percussive Notes* in conjunction with one of those appearances. These activities have been paramount to building his professional profile during the early stages of his career.

WHAT WE ARE DOING At Virginia Commonwealth University

At VCU, I have developed a curriculum that includes the study of non-Western percussion and music during a student's first four semesters. This is by no means an exhaustive program of study, but it does allow the students to develop familiarity with several non-Western forms of music as appropriate with my own interest/expertise and that of my colleagues in the percussion program. If a student is interested in studying beyond what I or my colleagues can offer, I can direct them to a number of online programs and teachers with whom they can study.

Each of these "modules" works in tandem with their study of Western percussion. In a given semester, each student is focusing on three "areas"—two Western-focused and one non-Western focused. Below, I outline the non-Western music they study in each semester

and how it can enhance their overall musicianship. I also supplement this study with established pieces that can reinforce the connection between Western and non-Western music. Examples of solo pieces include Valerie Naranjo's gyl transcriptions for marimba and Bob Becker's snare drum pieces based on tabla compositions. There is also an opportunity to include non-Western music in percussion ensemble.

Freshman, First Semester: South Indian Solkattu. The practice of solkattu, which includes reciting, composing, and calculating rhythms while keeping *tala* (hand signals related to the meter) has proven to be a challenging, fun, and rewarding method for my students to develop stronger rhythm, coordination, improvisation, and composition skills in their first semester of study. Additionally, they begin to learn about Indian Classical Music (both North and South) and become familiar with some terms, sounds, and ideas associated with this music. In addition to the rhythmic development that solkattu can help develop, the students gain comfort "singing" complex rhythmic phrases. My students' sense of time and rhythm has become more grounded. This practice has helped ease some of the nervousness around singing melodic phrases when studying other percussion instruments.

Freshman, Second Semester: Basic conga technique. Working with VCU Instructor of Afro-Cuban percussion Hector "Coco" Barez, I have developed a one-semester approach to basic conga techniques and patterns that can be built upon during a student's junior and senior years when they have the opportunity to study with Hector directly. Beginning this study early in their education gives students the tools to handle basic hand drumming parts in large ensembles, in the occasional choral piece, and in percussion ensemble. Additionally, students build on the rhythmic improvisational skills developed in their first semester, learn the basics of establishing and maintaining a groove, and

are exposed to the rich variety of styles in Afro-Cuban music.

Sophomore, First Semester: Introduction to frame drumming. With the influence of Turkish, Arabic, and Indian music on modern frame drumming, this semester allows students to continue developing their ability to groove and solo, while also gaining a deeper knowledge of non-Western drumming techniques, compositions, and improvisational ideas.

Sophomore, Second Semester: Introduction to dombek and riq. This semester is a continuation of the introduction to frame drumming semester, focusing on the traditional Arabic percussion instruments while developing an understanding of the traditional rhythms and contemporary performance.

Following their sophomore year, students can continue to engage in non-Western study through applied lessons with our instructors and participation in our ensembles, specifically, the VCU Taiko, Gamelan, West African, and Samba ensembles. Combined with the ensembles, this curriculum provides a rich exposure to several non-Western styles in a systematic and measured approach, allowing for the continued study of the core components of percussion associated with a conservatory-style program. Additionally, working with com-

munity members and groups allows the students to get a bigger picture of the importance of their contributions to their local community.

At Bowling Green State University

At BGSU I am lucky to have a number of non-Western ensembles that are available to my students, including Steel Drum Ensemble, Afro-Caribbean Ensemble, Taiko Ensemble, and Gamelan Ensemble. In addition, we run a course for rotating topics based on instructor expertise, ranging from Balkan Ensemble to Old Time Ensemble. My percussion students are encouraged to participate in these ensembles throughout their studies, but I also incorporate non-Western percussion in their studies in the following ways.

Samba: I incorporate Brazilian samba in our percussion ensemble at least every-other semester. I prefer this approach because the learning curve is not as steep as it is with other non-Western musics, mainly due to the similarity of the playing techniques. That is not to say that samba music cannot be performed at a remarkably high level, of course, but rather the nature of the ensemble is such that I can get the students playing something fairly convincing in one rehearsal.

al. Samba allows us to engage with the university and surrounding communities much more easily through outreach activities, and the ensemble has even been contracted for gigs that have raised money for our Student Percussion Association. We have also received financial support to purchase instruments and to bring in guest artists to work with our group. In order to avoid the undesired outcome of students viewing Brazilian music as “easy,” or otherwise inferior to Western music, I always take some time to discuss the cultural context of the specific type of samba we are learning. I assign videos for students to view outside of class, and I make sure they understand the circumstances surrounding the development of the music.

Group Lessons: In each of the first four semesters of applied study for both undergraduate and masters students, I include a weekly group lesson in addition to private study. Two of these group lessons, the third and fourth in the sequence, focus on non-Western musics. The first examines the musics of North and South India and the Arab world, emphasizing vocalizations and complex rhythmic patterns. Later in the semester we learn basic frame drum patterns, connecting these to the syllabic rhythmic vocabulary that we have es-

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tablished. We also draw on the “hybrid” approach of Glen Velez, incorporating vocalizations, movement, and hand patterns to develop a heightened physical awareness of pulse and groove.

The second semester of group lessons focuses on dominant percussion techniques of the African diaspora, including West Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. Similar to the first semester, the emphasis of these sessions is on the rhythmic concepts found in these musics. We learn polyrhythmic exercises, experiment with basic sounds on hand drums, and “perform” elementary patterns of West African and Afro-Caribbean music. I always take some time to discuss the connections to the music of Steve Reich. One of my classes learned “Music for Pieces of Wood” by rote during their group lessons, which they later performed on a percussion ensemble concert.

In order to avoid detracting from their private studies, which remain focused on the Western percussion canon, I keep outside assignments to a minimum. I split class time between listening and discussion on one hand, and hands-on instruction on the other. We venture into playing techniques to some degree, but my current approach is to limit this aspect, allowing students to continue to focus on their technical development as Western percussionists during their individual practice time. If students have the desire to venture further into the study of non-Western percussion techniques, they have that opportunity in their upper-level private lessons during their junior and senior years.

Private Study: I am always looking for ways to incorporate non-Western concepts in my private teaching. The specifics certainly vary from student to student, and there are almost limitless possibilities, but two common methods are the use of vocalization techniques, and the incorporation of repertoire from or inspired by another musical culture. South Indian Solkattu is a valuable teaching tool when working on chal-

lenging rhythmic groupings or odd meters, and it can be employed in a number of ways. Also, this concept can be extended by having students sing phrases using syllables that reflect their desired articulation, similar to the tabla bols of North Indian music.

I make an effort to assign repertoire that is reflective of this broad worldview. Using marimba as an example, I often assign Brazilian choros to students who are working on their two-mallet playing. These pieces are challenging while still proving accessible for many younger students, and they provide an opportunity for supplemental research in Brazilian music. They also create an opportunity for the teacher to musically engage with the student; I always keep a pandeiro in my studio so that I can jump in and accompany a choro! This can be incredibly helpful in helping students find the right feel for that music, but it also helps establish a sense of playful discovery during lessons.

Alternatively, a student working on fundamental four-mallet technique could learn Alice Gomez’s “Mbira Song,” which references a non-Western instrument and musical tradition while employing idiomatic techniques that are essential to the developing marimbist. Again, this assignment facilitates a discussion between teacher and student about a musical culture with which the student is most likely unfamiliar.

CONCLUSION

While we are fortunate to have administrations and departments who see the value in our work, we realize these options may not all be available to everyone in a university teaching position. However, we hope that this article may illuminate some ways for you to develop a broader, more inclusive curriculum that incorporates non-Western music into you and your students’ practice in a thoughtful, consistent manner that is in line with your vision. Our students have benefited greatly from this approach, and we are excited to continue this con-

versation and find new ways to develop our students’ passions, creativity, and musicianship.

ENDNOTE

1. Kathy Thompson, “A Critical Discourse Analysis of World Music as the ‘Other’ in Education,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 19 (2002), 16; Bennett Reimer, ed., *World Musics and Music Education: Facing the Issues* (Reston, VA: MENC, The National Association for Music Education, 2002), 63.

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Justin has performed throughout the United States and the world, with recent performances in Belgium, Australia, Sweden, Costa Rica, and The Dominican Republic.



Dan Piccolo has recorded and toured internationally as a concert percussionist, jazz drummer, and world percussion specialist. Dr. Piccolo frequently appears as a clinician at universities throughout the

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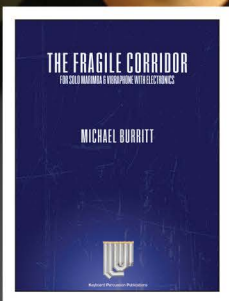
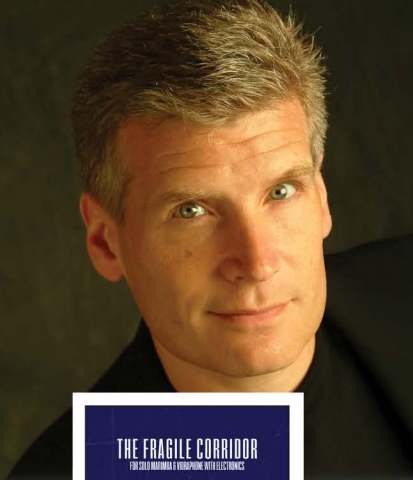
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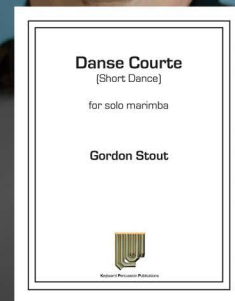
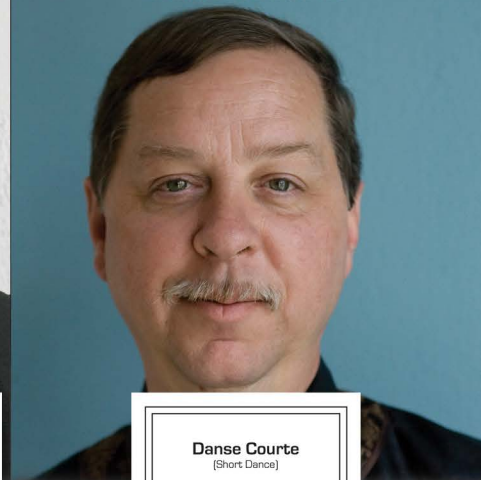
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The One Thing: Building Culture in a University Percussion Studio

By Michael Sammons

While a diverse array of factors determine the success of any organization, the value of culture cannot be overstated: it is the converging point for all other factors. This article will address the importance of culture to the university percussion program. Culture is the bass drum of a successful percussion program, so to speak. All successful directors, coaches, or CEOs consistently work on the culture of their organization, whether it is their first year or their twentieth, whether they are inheriting a good or a bad culture, whether they have already established a good culture or feel they need to make changes. The culture of the percussion studio is constantly evolving, developing, and even changing, based mostly on the cycle of graduating and incoming students.

In their best-selling book *The One Thing*, authors Gary Keller and Jay Papanasan challenge us to find the one thing that we can do that will make everything else either easier or unnecessary. I often think of this like dominos. What one domino can I knock down that will subsequently knock down as many other dominos as possible? Establishing a successful culture is that one thing.

Speaking of success, it is important to note that the definition of success is different for each individual person and program, and it is consistently evolving based on any number of factors, including philosophy, professional goals, broader university culture/directives, and many others. As university percussion directors, it is imperative that we spend time within ourselves to think about what kind of culture we want to establish realistically, logically, and logistically for our current time and place. We must define what our definition of success is now, six months from now, one year from now, and five years from now, no matter where we currently are in building our percussion culture. As my dear friend and colleague Dr. Paul Buyer (Clemson University) states, "Begin with the end in mind."

In my first year of teaching, one of my definitions of success was that students were set up on time for percussion ensemble rehearsal with all of the required instruments. When that happened, the students and I celebrated and then raised the standard for the definition of success. As the program develops, so does your definition.

By defining culture as the "one thing" within our percussion program, we now

have to define not only what we want our culture to be, but more importantly (and also more elusively), how to implement changes.

THE WHAT – DEFINING OUR CULTURE

Look up any "how to" book on building culture within businesses or other organizations, and you will find, in no particular order, references to words such as:

- Leadership
- Respect
- Positive Attitude
- Organized Goals
- Service
- Integrity/Character

These and other words characterizing a successful culture are important to think about, and are a great starting point for further discussion and implementation. I often refer to such words as our value words for the over-arching umbrella of our culture. However, in order to exert action in the development of our culture, we must weave these words into our everyday interactions within the percussion studio in an inclusive and, I dare say, *fun* way. I have found this to be the best way to implement change that is memorable and effective, and that the students themselves can

use, reference, and claim ownership of. This ownership is crucial in making lasting change, as the students will begin to hold each other accountable in a positive way without going against the culture you are trying to build.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRAND

For me and the programs I have worked with, there is an additional step beyond culture that has had a profound effect on the ability to create highly motivated, positive, and intrinsic cultures from within: the Brand. It has been our “one thing” that encapsulates not only the *what*, but also the *how* and the *why* of our successful cultures.

Why has it been successful?

- Shared vocabulary amongst all members of the studio, including faculty.
 - * Allows for mentorship between older and newer members of the studio.
- Brand has been defined by the percussion studio itself. Each semester, we add to the vocabulary from within.
 - * Students feel a sense of ownership.
 - * We set aside time for group discussion, personal/group reflection, and faculty guidance. This includes studio class, rehearsals, and applied lessons.
- Focuses on positive goals rather than undesired or negative behavior.
- Can be used quickly and effectively. I can have a 20-minute conversation with just a couple of words from our established brand.
- Can be used in any environment, be it a full drumline rehearsal to a percussion ensemble rehearsal to a private lesson.
- Speaks to both musical and personal aspects.
- Can be applied to our group culture as well as individual student aspirations and goals. Students are asked to come up with their own personal

brand. They even design their own logo. Many of them hang their logos somewhere in their homes where they will see it on a consistent basis (the bathroom mirror is a popular place amongst the studio).

EXAMPLES OF OUR BRAND

I refer to the day-to-day vocabulary used to implement and evolve our culture as our *brand* words. Most, if not all, of our brand words point directly back to the over-arching culture. Our brand words come from a wide variety of sources. The ones I hear students use the most are the funny ones that often come from humorous moments in rehearsal. These are the brand words graduating students will tell me they remember the most or that they use in their own teaching situations. Of course, most of these words have come from students. It has become a badge of honor for someone to “make the brand head.”

Highlighted brand words from the University of Utah percussion program

OVER-ARCHING

“Passion”

- The One Thing.
- “Drum bug”
- i.e., Passion. Do you have the drum bug?
- “Ride for the Brand”
- Represent the group and your role within the group.

THE FUN ONES

“Purple”

- Sound quality; balance and blend.
- “Get me to the 20”
- Refers to student preparation and includes a football reference. Their job individually is to get me/us to the 20-yard line so that we can score touchdowns!

“Be the gardner”

- Take care of our people, yourself, and the studio, both musically and professionally. Reap what we sow.
- “Just groove!”

- Nike states “Just Do It.” We state: “Just groove!”
- “Live on the party deck”
- Look up. Don’t stare at your music. Find your partner or the conductor. Play like a chamber musician.
- “Push the rock”
- Don’t worry about where you currently are on the mountain, just keep pushing the rock upwards. This reflects a process-oriented work ethic.
- “Over prepare, then free-fall”
- Trust your preparation and the process in performance. Relax, have fun. Take risks.
- “Don’t worry about the mule going blind, just load the wagon”
- Be present. Control what you can control in the moment.
- “Clean and green”
- How we keep the studio looking. Organization, instrument maintenance.
- “Crock pot”
- How to practice/performance preparation.
- “We want the sun”
- Just a fun way to deal with the heat!
- “Ruth’s Chris”
- Great steaks, great brand.
- “The Price of poke is always going up.”
- Never settle. Always take your performance to the next level. Each year/semester, we ramp up the challenges.
- “Cold Reps”
- Simulate performance
- “Keep your head down and feet moving”
- Dealing with adversity. Life/percussion is not a race. Process not product driven in personal practice.
- MORE SERIOUS
- “Vulnerability”
- Take risks in rehearsal and performance, with staff and with each other.
- “Model of Music Education”
- Pay attention to how we rehearse. Become a true pedagogue and spread the word.

The National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy

By Lisa Rogers and Lance Drege

The National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy (NCPD) will celebrate its twentieth anniversary during its conference slated for May 17–19, 2020. Current NCPD Executive Director Lisa Rogers along with Alan Shinn will host the conference at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. The beginnings of the organization were born out of discussions by NCPD Board Member, Past Executive Director, and Founder Dr. Cort McClaren with college students, college percussion teachers, and elementary and secondary music educators at various meetings and conferences including PASIC. McClaren believed there needed to be a conference devoted to in-depth conversations, discussions, and exchanges of ideas and concepts regarding percussion pedagogy.¹

The resultant NCPD organization and conference has indeed allowed for concentrated time for discussions, presentations of research, percussion literature related performances, and the creation of pedagogical materials such as the National Standards for Percussion Equipment and Facilities. Additionally, McClaren organized a NCPD Board of Advisors whose membership reflected percussion pedagogues at multiple career stages, music education specialists, and composers who all had vested interests in percussion pedagogy.

Original NCPD Board of Advisors and Executive Director

Lance Drege – University of Oklahoma
Dennis Fisher – University of North Texas
Richard Gipson – University of Oklahoma
Robert Lee – Haven, Kansas
Cort McClaren – Executive Director, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Laura (Phillips) Franklin – Brevard College
Bill (William) Rice – James Madison University
Lisa Rogers – Texas Tech University
Joe Shively – University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Pat (P. Thomas) Tallarico – Bowling Green State University

Current NCPD Board of Advisors and Executive Director

Lisa Rogers – Executive Director, Texas Tech University
Josh Armstrong – Delta State University
Lance Drege – University of Oklahoma (retired)
Laura Franklin – Lewis University

Josh Knight – Missouri Western State University
Cort McClaren – C. Alan Publications
Chal Ragsdale – University of Arkansas
Joseph Shively – Oakland University²

The inaugural NCPD was held on the University of North Carolina at Greensboro campus in 2000. This conference and subsequent conferences were loosely modeled on sessions presented at such conferences and conventions as the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, National Association for Music Education Conference, and state-level music education conventions. Research presentations, lightning talks, open and panel discussion sessions, smaller breakout sessions, conducting workshops, “how to” performance practice sessions, and solo/chamber/and percussion ensemble performances related to specific literature parameters are/were just a few of the session formats that have been included throughout the years. Although the conferences do not include exhibits and exhibitors, percussion-related companies such as Vic Firth/Zildjian, Yamaha, and Ludwig-Musser have offered their generous support of the conference through assistance with daily refreshments and evening receptions, as well as individual presenters.

Founder McClaren said of the conference: “NCPD has proven to be an ideal source for educators and performers to share ideas about teaching/learning music. Three days of intense discussion, where everyone operates on an equal basis, is a remarkable undertaking. Every year the conference inspires percussion teachers to rethink our approaches and our goals. Most importantly, the camaraderie developed over the past 20 years has encouraged improved communication and information. It’s been a joy to experience.³

The conference was held somewhat bi-annually from 2000 to 2009 and then annually starting in 2009. NCPD has been held at various sites including the University of Arkansas, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of Oklahoma, University of Texas at San Antonio, and Texas Tech University.

The purpose of NCPD has remained the same over the past 20 years guiding the NCPD Board of Advisors and is visible for conference attendees on each conference program and on the organization’s website.

PURPOSE: The National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy is designed to provide a forum for elementary and secondary music educators, university percussion pedagogues,

professional percussionists, university music education specialists, and undergraduate and graduate students to explore the status of percussion pedagogy in the United States as well as to outline strategies for improving the teaching and learning of percussion instruments. The conference will provide a forum to increase awareness of “what is happening,” to guide us toward identifying “what should happen,” and the means for “making it happen.”⁴

NCPP attendees and their school affiliations reflect participation from across the United States as well as North and South America, including such provinces and countries as Manitoba, Canada, and Patagonia. Many of the attendees through the years are/were PAS members as well. Some of the attendees who have attended eight or more conferences include David P. Eyler, Randy Fluman, Kathleen Kastner, Neil Larrivee, Tom Morgan, James Strain, and Pete Zambito.⁵

Throughout the 20 years, NCPP has tackled specific areas of percussion pedagogy by creating the following documents for percussionists to examine and utilize such as the National Standards for Percussion Equipment and Facilities (2008) and the Marimba Performance Standards (2014), and *The Journal of Percussion Pedagogy*, Vol. 1 (2008) and Vol. 2 (2012). Articles found in *The Journals* that may be of particular interest include: “Rethinking a Pedagogy of Beginning Four-Mallet Technique” by Kathleen Kastner, “Understanding the College/University Percussion Program” by Laura Franklin, Dennis Fisher, and Chalon Ragsdale, and “Music Wellness & Injury Prevention: Healthy Practice & Performance Measures for the Percussionist” by Susan Martin Tariq and Sherry Rubins.⁶

By the summer of 2016, the organization had its own website, percussionpedagogy.org, housing all documents, previous conference programs, and in particular research abstracts and other handouts from sessions presented at conferences starting with the 2017 conference. Research abstracts and session handouts that may be of interest are: “Inventory, Repair, and Maintenance, Parts 1 and 2” by David P. Eyler, “Available Smart Phone Technology for Enhanced Practice and Performance” by Oliver Molina, and “Understanding and Helping Young Percussionists with Mental Health and Wellness Issues” by Brad Meyer.⁷ Also in 2016, the organization started its own Facebook page entitled National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy at <https://www.facebook.com/percussionpedagogy/>.

The 2008 National Standards for Percussion Equipment and Facilities continue to educate and inspire college-level percussion teachers for further collaboration with administrators to ensure adequate facilities and equipment at the collegiate level. These standards are also available on the

PAS website under resources-education-pedagogy (<https://www.pas.org/resources/education/pedagogy>).⁸

Good news! The NCPP Board of Advisors has recently revised the National Standards for Percussion Equipment and Facilities to reflect more current collegiate needs. These revised standards will first be available at NCPP 2020, May 17–19, 2020, at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. The NCPP Board hopes to see you there; let’s continue the percussion pedagogy discussion!

ENDNOTES

1. Dr. Cort McClaren, phone conversation with Lisa Rogers, December 30, 2019.
2. “Past Conferences,” National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, accessed November 18, 2019, <https://percussionpedagogy.org/past-conferences>.
3. Dr. Cort McClaren, email message to Lisa Rogers, December 31, 2019.
4. “Past Conferences,” National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, accessed December 1, 2019, <https://percussionpedagogy.org/past-conferences>.
5. Lance Drege, email message to Lisa Rogers, December 30, 2019.
6. “Publications,” National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://percussionpedagogy.org/publications>.
7. “NCPP Handouts,” National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://percussionpedagogy.org/ncpp-2017-handouts>.
8. “NCPP Percussion Equipment and Facilities National Standards established by the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, Percussive Arts Society, accessed December 29, 2019, <https://www.pas.org/resources/education/pedagogy>.

Lisa Rogers and **Lance Drege** have served on the National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy (NCPP) Board of Advisors since its inception in 2000. Additionally, they served as NCPP Co-Executive Directors for approximately three years. Rogers is Professor of Percussion Studies at Texas Tech University (Lubbock, Texas), NCPP Executive Director, and a Past President of PAS. Drege served as Professor of Percussion Studies at the University of Oklahoma. **PN**

“Inspire”

- Performance prowess.

“Cycle of trust”

- Defines the way we take instruction

“Intrinsic”

- Play for ourselves.

“Intellectual resiliency”

- Mental toughness mindset.

“Grateful/Appreciation”

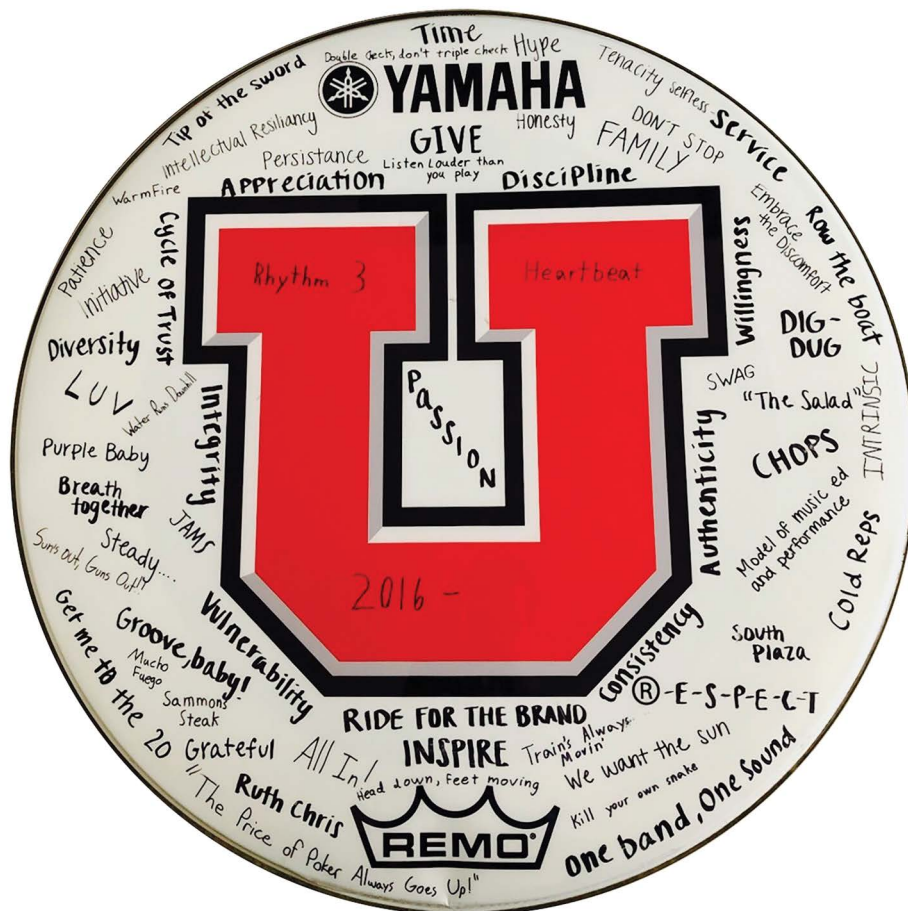
- What we do is a privilege and we are only in college a short time. Be humble and take advantage.

“Time”

- How are we using our time? Rehearsal time? Time together? Practice Time? Time Management? Be on time!

“Tip of the sword”

- Percussion section/drumline is always leading everything. First to learn, first to refine, first to drill set, first to rehearsal, etc.



TIPS FOR USING/CREATING YOUR BRAND

Find/create a logo that represents your percussion studio.

For us, it is the big red U (university logo) on the 32-inch marching bass drum head. The drumline and percussion studio each have their own head. While there is much crossover, there are certain brand words that are specific to those ensembles and not all members are in both groups.

Hang it somewhere where it can be seen, referenced, and added to in rehearsals or lessons.

Keep it simple: user-friendly; ensures ease of use in conversation, rehearsal or lesson.

Make it memorable—ensures students will use it.

From within. Guide the students to begin with and then let them take over.

Have fun with it! Humor is good and ensures positivity, memorability, ownership, and use of the brand ultimately leading to the development of a successful culture.

Use it constantly!

THE ONE THING APPLIED TO OTHER ASPECTS WITHIN THE PERCUSSION STUDIO

This concept can be applied to many different aspects of administering a program beyond the specific topic of building a successful culture. Below, I offer a few thoughts on aspects that are important to me, and challenge you to come up with other areas of application for your program.

Rehearsals

Our rehearsal mantra is “Get me to the 20.” No matter how much rehearsal time we have, we always want more. We rehearse once per week for one and a half hours in the fall semester, and once per week for three hours in the spring semester. I keep rehearsals within these parameters because I want a culture of professional preparation and ownership of the students’ role in the ensemble. Given my philosophy and these defined parameters and expectations, my role is

to increase students’ awareness of their individual performance as well as the group as a whole. With a positive and strong culture, students are motivated to perform at a high level and want to be successful within the group and as an ensemble. Tim Gallwey defines learning in his book, *The Inner Game of Golf*, as “an increased awareness of what is.”

My “one thing” in rehearsal is to facilitate this awareness. From there, 80% of the improvement of the ensemble will happen naturally within rehearsal and during outside practice. Only 20% will come from actual instruction.

Curriculum

From electronics and newly developed instruments to diverse musics from around the world, the professional demand of knowledge for percussionists is at an all-time high. Not only are we responsible for performance aspects of this knowledge, but also the education of others. As university percussion

teachers, we are compelled to prepare our students for a modern music industry. However, while there are more demands on knowledge of graduating students, we are not afforded more time for instruction. How do we get to all of it and adequately prepare our students?

The answer is the “one thing.” What is the one thing (actually a series of one things) I can teach that will provide a strong fundamental experience for the students to then take to their individual career aspirations? What are the essential skill sets required of a modern music industry, and how can I address them as efficiently as possible? What are the core pedagogical values of percussion that students can individualize for their own artistic goals? The hardest decisions I have to make as a university percussion teacher are the questions of what not to teach, at least in a direct sense.

Private Lessons

Similar to the curriculum conundrum, the private lesson delves into more of the human element of teaching. Given the curriculum factors illustrated above, I believe that reaching beyond percussion is paramount. We must facilitate the development of life skills in our students, despite the fact that this might be a cliché talking point in college pedagogy. Specifically, and this is the “one thing” for private studies, how can we maximize students’ human potential? Intellectual resiliency and emotional intelligence are key components to this development. We must be facilitators of learning through experiential processes, creating awareness so that our students can become their own best teachers. The snare drum roll will take care of itself.

CONCLUSION

Facilitating the development of a successful culture within a percussion program is about empowering your students and, ultimately, the quality of their education and experience as they move on to their future careers, inside or outside of the music industry. It is a selfless act.

It is not about us, the teacher, our studio, or our brand. It is always about the students.

Michael Sammons D.M.A. serves as the Percussion Area Head at the University of Utah. Sammons is recognized as a versatile performer in solo, chamber, symphonic, marching percussion, and non-western musical styles. In addition to his work with the Utah Symphony Orchestra, he regularly performs with various touring shows, including the national Broadway tour of *Aladdin*, the Utah Opera, and Ballet West, and has appeared as guest artist with Utah Chamber Artists and the NOVA New Music Chamber Series. His work can be heard on ABC, ESPN, TNT, and local media outlets as well as diverse recording projects for Warner Bros Chappell Music and the Utah Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Sammons previously served as director for the NBA’s Utah Jazz Street Beats Drumline. **PN**

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Earning Your Keep: The University Drumline Instructor in a Non-Tenure Earning Position

By Gene Fambrough

Many individuals who aim to teach at the collegiate level think that “tenure” is one of the primary goals of those who work in academia. The security that tenure offers is indeed very desirable, and it also offers recognition by colleagues and peers that you “belong” among them. It also can serve to strengthen your own self-worth, in that your accomplishments are seen as worthwhile and have value to others.

Although tenure-track positions are very desirable, there are increasingly more non-tenure-track jobs that demand a wide range of skills from today’s professionals. These non-tenure faculty positions are nothing to shy away from, and they can be very fruitful with the right attitude and approach. This article will shed some light on ways to make a non-tenure position a good fit for you if the opportunity arises.

Some background first: I am in my 19th year at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in a non-tenure earning (NTE) faculty position as Assistant Director of Bands and Percussion Instructor. From my understanding, this position was created only five years before I was hired, in a time when the football team had just been formed (it would have been unwise to have a tenured marching band director and drumline

instructor if football had not been successful). My contracts have been in gradually increasing terms—1 year, 2 years each (for three terms), 3 years each (for three terms), etc.—so the security aspect has certainly been improved through longevity. I have also been eligible for promotion just as a tenure-earning faculty member would be; I was hired at the Instructor level, and am now at Associate Professor, with one more rank to achieve. Many of these types of positions will be focused on the marching percussion aspect, with other duties assigned as needed and as your experience allows.

So, what steps should you take to secure your longevity in a contract-type position such as this? First and foremost is to do the absolute best job that you can in your required duties. Recruiting and retention result in growth, which is by far the most noticeable positive outcome you can achieve. From growth comes the next (and arguably most important) phase of quality. Create a positive atmosphere, one that the students talk about to other faculty members and in their student evaluations.

Beyond this, however, the most obvious answer is to go above and beyond what is expected, and there are some specific ways to approach that aspect. In terms of official faculty duties, I am only required to work in two primary

areas: teaching and service. The category of research/creative activity is not required of the NTE position at UAB, but many of the things I do fall into this category. I believe it is important to maintain an active personal commitment to research and creative activity, mainly because those are the things that made me want to teach at the university level. I would likely be doing these things anyway—performing, writing articles, and composing music—but this is the “icing on the cake” in my dossier when it is reviewed.

When considering a colleague’s file for retention, many faculty members aren’t necessarily concerned with just going above and beyond what you are asked, but they would also consider the ways in which you seek to improve both yourself and the university. Beginning in my first year, I took advantage of two different opportunities to gain additional funding for our area: grant money and library development. With grant programs at our school, I was able to build a solid inventory of electronic percussion instruments and start an Electro-Acoustic Percussion Group that met over the summer semester. I also took advantage of available funding in order to build the collection of percussion materials in our library.

As the Assistant Director of Bands,

it is also in my job description to assist wherever and whenever possible. This means being able to conduct a concert band, run a marching band rehearsal, coordinate the basketball band, and assist with honor bands and festivals as needed. This is all in addition to applied percussion, percussion ensemble, and drumline duties. Being flexible in these areas allowed me the opportunity to serve as the Interim Director of Bands a few years ago, which I now see as one of the biggest service projects I could possibly have undertaken.

OTHER VOICES

I have solicited input from others in the field who are in similar NTE or contract positions, and I'd like to offer their words here as well.

Cory Doran

Cory is an adjunct instructor of percussion at Texas A&M-Commerce and is currently the Front Ensemble coordinator and instructor for the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps. He has served as the Interim Professor of Percussion at Kent State University and Ensemble Instructor for Matrix Indoor.

I am very fortunate to have created such a wonderful relationship with Bri-

an Zator at TAMU-C. From my time as a grad student to our now professional relationship and friendship, I've tried to do my best to serve the program and the university. I think this has been my biggest focus over the years: do good work and work thanklessly, maintain good relationships, and invest in the program. I've not specifically detailed my work ethic around keeping my position (though that is always the hope), moreso that my work ethic is considered irreplaceable. I was hired as an adjunct to fill positions that would be best served by my specific expertise. Over the past few years, I have made it a priority to develop and expand these skill sets to better serve the program as well as continue to help the program grow. If I am fully invested in the maintenance, growth, and sustainability of the program, then my position hopefully becomes irreplaceable.

It is also important to develop an inspired, professional relationship with the members of the studio. Fortunately, I have the lifestyle and ability to be present in the studio more often than a typical adjunct faculty member. There's no right or wrong way to serve your time as an adjunct, as we're only paid for the certain hours we teach. I've found a way

to structure my personal career development around my teaching schedule and office time at the university. I think this has also contributed to a positive presence as an adjunct.

If I were to give advice to a newly appointed adjunct it would be this:

Communicate with your director about his or her expectations of you. If you are able, give as much time to the development of the studio as your wallet will allow. Remember, though, that you signed up to be a teacher because you want to influence young musicians, not just collect a paycheck. It will be difficult at first to fill in the financial gaps; however, your positive relationships will help with this. Don't lose faith and don't give up. Do good work and work thanklessly, maintain good relationships, and invest in the program. "Fly the flag and drink the Kool-aid," as they say.

Joshua Watkins

Josh is Assistant Professor of percussion at the University of Trinidad and Tobago. He is the founding president of the Trinidad and Tobago PAS chapter and an active member of the PAS International Committee. Although he does not have any marching percussion duties, many of the approaches are very similar.

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The advertisement features a purple background with a gold and blue ornate chair. Eric Singer is seated in the chair, wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans. A white drumhead with the Attack logo is visible in the foreground. The text is arranged in a hierarchy, with the name 'ERIC SINGER' in large white letters and the 'Royal' logo in gold script.

I broke down the job responsibilities at UTT and made sure that all of the individual elements were covered. We all have the basic tools and skills to do the job. It is the social skills that add to the complexity of the job and is beyond what is typically taught in school. Be very supportive of faculty, administration, and students. Don't silo yourself into just the percussion studio. I offered to work the door and be a stage manager

Non-tenure faculty positions are nothing to shy away from.

for concerts that I was not scheduled to perform. This is the way that I met other faculty and showed them that I was serious about supporting their projects. When other faculty need help with juries, tests, etc., I do my best to accommodate them. Chances are that you will need another faculty member to help you during juries, testing, or concerts.

As the semester progresses, don't over-extend yourself. We are all a bit guilty of this. I aim for balance and try to reel it back in when I become overwhelmed. The resulting burnout and frustration that builds with trying to do everything is more disastrous than taking a step back. Our studios are filled with eager students ready to help and gain experience; all we have to do is ask. However, it is important to not overwhelm students during peak times of the semester.

I don't look at these things as exclusive to staying secure in a non-tenure track job. Rather, they are fundamentals of working well within an institution. The one piece of advice mostly relevant to non-tenure track jobs is to be comfortable with a bit of insecurity.

Andy P. Smith

Andy is Director of Percussion Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso. He directed the Middle Tennessee State University Drumline from 1997 until 2007,

winning two PASIC International College Drumline Championships. Smith taught the Crossmen Drumline in 1997 under Thom Hannum and Colin McNutt. Also under Hannum and McNutt, he was a performing member of the UMass Drumline and Star of Indiana.

As Director of Percussion Studies, I oversee the University Drumline in addition to my teaching load, service, and creative work. I view instructional time

with the drumline as invaluable; it provides opportunity to teach musicianship and professionalism, to model pedagogical techniques, and to build culture within the UTEP Percussion Community. With the members' time commitment to marching band in mind, the quality of that time spent is of critical importance. To ensure a successful experience for the members, I prioritize high-caliber instruction and music arranging.

While I do not receive load credit for my work with the drumline, I'm rewarded via the benefits to my studio, a supportive department, and positive feedback from area percussion specialists, potential recruits, and the scholastic community.

I mentor a team combining a graduate teaching assistant, student volunteers, and member leadership. Staff members gain valuable experience arranging for the group, hearing their parts performed, and receiving coaching from the band director and me. I select outside arrangers, ensuring caliber and appropriateness. Dr. Brian Tinkel contributes one exemplary show per season. I arrange select shows, pregame materials, cadences, and other materials to meet the goals of the ensemble. In terms of rehearsal time, I prioritize sectionals and game-day rehearsals, as I can make the most impact in those instances. I men-

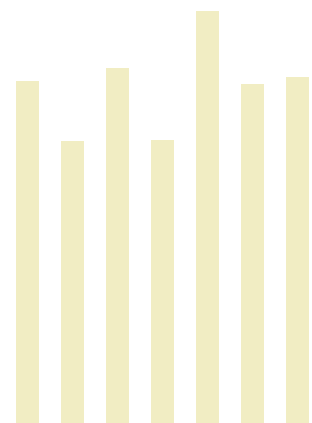
tor the staff on their daily teaching and provide student leaders opportunity to assume ownership.

At the University of Texas at El Paso, we are currently budgeting for a dedicated drumline staff instructor to provide leadership for the team on a day-to-day basis and alleviate some of the time commitment of the percussion director. I advise any percussion professor to stay involved in the drumline, however. Your musicianship and pedagogical experience is irreplaceable, and your presence is impactful in terms of solidarity within your percussion program.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I believe it is important to make the most of your time in every way possible, regardless of tenure status. We should all strive to be enthusiastic about our work and to contribute to our school (and our profession) in ways that benefit others. Keeping your own creative outlet fresh and inspiring is important too, no matter what form it takes. Many of the "extra" activities I pursue (performing, composing, etc.) would happen regardless of whether or not it was required, and, most importantly, remember why you chose this as a career in the first place.

Gene Fambrough is Assistant Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Percussion at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). He directs the Percussion Ensemble, Steel Band, Drumline, and Electro-Acoustic ensemble and assists with all aspects of the UAB Band program. He holds degrees from the University of Georgia, East Carolina University, and the University of Alabama. [PN](#)



Creating Positive Mental Health Strategies

By Dr. Brad Meyer

The spring semester marks the beginning of a new year, and that can be a time for all percussionists and drummers to create a better routine for good mental health. Below are several strategies that come from mental health research. While I am not a mental health counselor/therapist, many of the suggestions come from professionals who have significant experience and research in the field of mental health. Much of what will be discussed applies directly to high school and college percussionists, but the concepts can be applied to other ages and professions.

STATISTICS

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 75% of lifetime cases of mental conditions begin by age 24, one in four young adults between 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness, and students cited depression and anxiety among the top impediments for academic performance in 2011 (cited from <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>).

THERAPIST/COUNSELORS

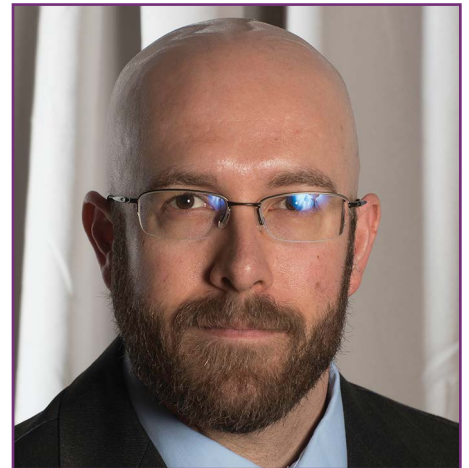
Many schools and colleges offer free or significantly reduced rates for therapy/counseling. One of the best things a person can do is go to therapy at least once

or twice a month. Historically, there has been a stigma associated with therapy, and it was only sought out by a narrow segment of the population. Over time, mental health professionals have worked hard to show that therapy can benefit everyone.

Seeing a therapist on a regular basis helps people learn how to manage anxiety, learn to set reasonable goals, inform them on how their brain can turn small issues into unnecessarily big issues, and more. To locate the health services department at a school, simply type into a search engine the name of the school along with “mental health counseling,” and one of the first results will most likely take you to the place where you can find the location of the mental health center, its contact information, and much more.

GOAL SETTING

It has been shown that people are easily overwhelmed when given a big goal to accomplish over a long period of time, such as the typical senior recital in college. Goal setting is one of the best ways to chop up a large goal into smaller, bite-sized chunks that are more easily attainable. When a person reaches a goal, even a tiny goal, that person is more likely to continue onto the next goal with more energy and excitement. Here is an ex-



ample of how to break down a large goal (40-minute senior recital) into small, daily tasks:

End Goal: 40 minutes of music consisting of five pieces with three months (12 weeks) until the recital.

Smaller Goal: Learn one piece every two weeks; last two weeks are for cleaning and “confidence runs.”

Smaller Goal: Break each piece down into two one-week goals; first week to learn the solo, and second week to get the solo worked up to tempo and cleaned.

Smaller Goal: The first solo is seven pages, so learn one page a day and review any material already learned.

Smaller Goal: On the first day, there are two hours to practice the solo and the first page is in four small sections, so set

Seeing a therapist on a regular basis helps people learn how to manage anxiety, learn to set reasonable goals, inform them on how their brain can turn small issues into unnecessarily big issues, and more.

a timer and learn one section every 30 minutes.

This breakdown of a recital into beginning with a two-hour practice session is a simplified version of what it will actually look like to break down a recital. Every solo takes different amounts of time to learn/perfect, and every individual learns at a different pace. When goal setting, consider as many factors as possible to help create a realistic timeline of goals leading to a great, confident recital.

The same process can be applied to many other tasks involving deadlines. By being in control of a big deadline, people feel better when they complete small tasks on a daily basis, as opposed to thinking about all of the materials that need to be worked up to an extremely high level. This idea is similar to how marathon runners think of running one mile 26 times, rather than thinking about running all 26 miles once.

EAT, SLEEP, AND EXERCISE

Also known as the “big three,” eating right, sleeping enough, and exercising regularly have all been linked to improving one’s mental health. Everyone is different, but taking time to consume quality food on a regular, daily schedule, sleeping the amount needed for quality rest and recovery for optimal mental and physical performance, and exercising on a consistent, weekly basis will all increase one’s ability to create a better sense of mental health.

I recommend meal prepping at night to create nutritious meals that are easily accessible, so that things like fast food can be avoided. Sleeping regularly can be aided by alarms, for example: the

iPhone has a “Bedtime Alarm,” which can be especially helpful for people who lose track of time at night watching Netflix, playing on the computer, or scrolling through social media. Lastly, exercise should be added into a weekly calendar so that it is scheduled and not thought of something that is “fit in when possible.” Everyone is different; some people work out better at night, some people work out better in the mornings, and some people work out better mid-day. Try different workout times until you find the one that works best for you.

REDUCE/ELIMINATE ELECTRONICS TIME

Numerous articles and studies discuss how reducing or eliminating social media and other things (gaming, video apps/services, etc.) can improve one’s mental health. The hard part of quitting social media and other electronics is how they have specifically been made to be addictive. Netflix’s chief executive, Reed Hastings, said, “When you watch a show from Netflix and you get addicted to it, you stay up late at night. We’re competing with sleep, on the margin. And so, it’s a very large pool of time.” Quitting/reducing time with electronics can help with getting into a regular sleep routine and can also boost self-esteem.

People use social media as a way to show off the highlights of their day, but they generally do not include the regular, and sometimes negative, things in daily life. This can create negative feelings of self-worth from a viewer who may have had a regular day, but that person’s day does not seem as amazing as the person who posted about a new

relationship, fancy car, professional achievement, new clothes, etc. Reducing or eliminating the constant barrage of hundreds and thousands of people’s singular highlights will help in keeping a level head and improve one’s ability to know what is truly important instead of simply superficial.

BUILD YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

Another major cause of mental anguish is money. With the rise of student debt, it is common for many young adults to feel overwhelmed by financial insecurity. There are numerous ways to deal with finances, but the best thing a person can do is to get started with a singular task. Just like practicing for a recital, if you think too far into the future, it can be easy to get overwhelmed and not start at all.

The most common way to create a sense of control over finances is to create a budget (income vs. expenses). After that, you can work on other helpful financial goals, such as building an emergency fund, eliminating debts one at a time, and then planning for the future (retirement savings, house, car, family, etc.). I recommend reading my article “*Financial Advice for Young Percussionists*” in the May 2018 issue of *Percussive Notes* as well as looking into Dave Ramsey’s “Seven Baby Steps” or his “Financial Peace University.” There are many other great resources about helping build financial knowledge, so ask some people you know who are good with their finances.

TIME MANAGEMENT

One of the best ways to feel in control of one’s mental health is to be in control of one’s schedule. Calendars (iCal, Google Calendars, paper calendars, etc.) should be used to map out days, months, weeks, and even years. Musicians are known to have complex schedules that can vary drastically from week to week. Having a schedule that is updated constantly can give one a sense of healthy control for

one's mental health. A detailed calendar allows for planning of academic, professional, and personal events. Scheduling times to eat, sleep, relax, hang with friends/family, and other personal events allows a person to plan each day so that it can be maximally productive, without being overwhelming. Calendars are a great place to put practice times (with practice goals), study times (with study goals), and other things that are not as fixed as classes, rehearsals, concerts, and lessons.

Do not feel as if the calendar is a boss; instead, treat a calendar as a tool that can help build a great day. Try mixing up your practice and study times to see what works best. Some people find they practiced better at night, but as they grow older, they may practice better in the morning or mid-day. Also, a calen-

dar/schedule does not have to always be the same from day to day. Lastly, mental health activities, such as therapy, mindfulness practice, meditation, body scans, etc., can be added into a calendar as well.

ONE THING AT A TIME

The hardest thing about improving one's self is how overwhelming it can feel to start the process. A lot of change in a short period of time can cause a person to abandon the idea of change at all, even if he or she knows it is for the best. Try taking one thing: therapy, goal setting, time management, "the big three," or reducing/eliminating electronics, and start working on it one day at a time.

Creating a positive environment to improve mental health is a life-long process. There are always setbacks to creating a better sense of mental health, so

expect them, deal with them, learn from them, and become even stronger from them. If things get too hard, schedule an appointment with a therapist, talk with a close friend or family member, or if it is a life-threatening emergency, contact the appropriate authority (911, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255, Crisis Text Line: text "CONNECT to 741741). Everyone needs help from time to time, so make sure to watch out for fellow percussionists, drummers, and other musicians by being observant and available to help, even if it is just to listen.

Dr. Brad Meyer is Chair of the PAS Health & Wellness Committee and Director of Percussion Studies at Stephen F. Austin State University (Nacogdoches, Texas). [PN](#)

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PAS Leadership Academy: Focus On...

By Dr. Brian Zator

Current music professionals, think back to when you were in college; do any of these phrases describe you? “I lived in the music building.” “I practiced six hours a day to prepare for that audition.” “The upperclassmen really pushed me to be a better player.” If you have a career in music as a teacher, performer, businessperson, or a combination of all of these, you have spent an exorbitant amount of time perfecting your craft. Hours have been dedicated in practice rooms working on paradiddles, marimba solos, drum set grooves, orchestral excerpts, and more. However, how many hours were devoted to developing your personal approach to life and scheduling purposeful study to become a leader?

Establishing a good work ethic through a practice schedule is good, but has this concept been applied to balancing your work, life, and volunteer schedule? Staying positive in a rehearsal as a performer allows the ensemble to improve, but what has specifically been done to adapt this trait as a teacher to keep students motivated? Those reading this article will have achieved several or many career goals through hard work and determination. But once you have the job, what’s the next goal? Are you content with winning and keeping a job, or are you working to thrive in your job and life? Here is a short breakdown of many career paths in any field.

Attitude/ Action	Result
Hard-work, Practice	Winning the job
Dedication, Commitment	Keeping the job
Learning, Adapting, Improving	Thriving in the job

As leaders in our job, we are a constant advertisement to our students and coworkers. Even though we all “won” our position in one way or another, our title doesn’t define who we are as

leaders. We must display an attitude of growth, self-reflection, and purposeful direction. Just like we all prepared a plan to improve our “Lieutenant Kije” excerpt, we must also prepare our own plan of improving our personal attitude, influence, and balance to become refined, productive, and effective leaders.

FOCUS ON GROWING

Personal Development is a choice that requires purposeful dedication to learn, grow, and improve. Do you want to be a manager or a leader? Do you want to lead others based on your title or your attitude? Do you want to serve or receive? Are you ready to practice your leadership skills like you practiced your paradiddles? Being a lifelong learner takes patience, grit, and intentional action.

One of the four PAS priorities is “Interactive Experiences,” and our organization is dedicated to serving all of our constituents, including current and growing professionals, not just students. With this in mind and through the work of a large group of PAS members and leaders, the PAS Leadership Academy was formed. Key areas of focus for this group include: being leaders in everything we do, not just teaching; providing support for young teachers; sharing information; PAS is about the people; and, providing a way to connect our community together.

We had a successful 2019 but are ready to step things up a notch for 2020. Plans for this year include:

- a. Expanded Facebook Group with more members - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PASLeadershipAcademy/>
- b. Webinars on the Facebook Group. Confirmed speakers:
 - i. Mindy Abovitz, Founder of TomTom magazine
 - ii. Dr. Brad Kent, Director of UIL Music in Texas
- c. Mentorship – Structured setup with regular connections and updates between mentor/mentee
- d. Book study

Take action: Sign up for the Facebook Group and become involved with the PAS Leadership Academy. Discover your own resources for intentional personal growth.

FOCUS ON YOURSELF

In my third or fourth year teaching at Texas A&M-Commerce, Dr. Dan Moore was invited to campus as an Alumni Ambassador. He gave me great advice that I still remember and work to implement. Dr. Moore said, “In this job, you have to be a little bit selfish. Not in a negative way, but there are times when you need to focus on what you need most, both professionally and personal well-being. Remain dedicated to your students but set boundaries so that you can work on you.” Several small group discussions at the PASIC 2019 Leadership Academy meeting focused on this theme of personal development; here are several of these topics.

Priorities – Influencers focus their time for maximum effectiveness.

Everyone is busy. Being busy can seem like a badge of honor. After all, if you aren’t busy, others might think you are lazy or just not doing your job. Wearing multiple hats and balancing work, home, and volunteer life is a challenge. My “badges of honor” range from working at Texas A&M-Commerce to being a school board member in Royse City, to being chair of a Texas music list committee, to serving as PAS officer, as well as being a husband and dad. Trust me, I know balancing many activities is *hard work!* Working out a defined approach for success and organizing your priorities will save you from being over-worked, over-stressed, and over-burdened.

Saying “no” to more things is the easiest way to organize your priorities, but as you can tell, I am not a good representation of this. I have, however, learned how to delegate more, assist others in projects and learn an effective way of establishing priorities. I use a “Priority/Urgency” chart to help me make decisions based

<p>HP/HU (High Priority/High Urgency) The most important “to-do” items go here. These are things that must be done above all other things.</p>	<p>HP/LU (High Priority/Low Urgency) These are important, but their deadlines are not immediate. Work these into pockets of time with your schedule.</p>
<p>LP/HU (Low Priority/High Urgency) Items here require quick, efficient methods of completion. Or delegate some of these to an assistant.</p>	<p>LP/LU (Low Priority/Low Urgency) These things could include project ideas for the future or busy work that doesn’t directly affect your day-to-day schedule. Some of these items may never be completed. (Personally, I have three things on my list that have been there for two years, but I don’t feel guilty for not getting to them because they are not High Priority items.)</p>

on importance and time. This is much more than a to-do list. It is a clear way to prioritize my to-do list into certain categories. To stay organized and focused, I update this list every week or two, depending on how many things are completed within that time frame. (I borrowed this tool from John Maxwell’s book, *Developing the Leader Within You*.)

Take action: Assess your current method of your Priorities/To-Do List and make necessary adjustments to become more efficient. How often do you think to prioritize your life? How do you decide whether something is urgent, important, or unimportant? What is your personal system to remain focused and organized? What are your to-do systems or how do you manage yourself?

Attitude – A leader’s attitude must exemplify resolve, tenacity, focus, determination and commitment.

Our attitude defines the culture for our circle of influence. Whether our circle includes students, co-workers, or both, people will remember us more for our attitude than our accomplishments. We all have bad days, but if we are intentional about how we handle them, our circle of influence will recognize this trait. John Maxwell constantly says, “Leadership is Influence.” As leaders, we define the culture of our program or job situation by our actions. These actions will affect the group either positively or negatively, depending on the leader’s attitude.

Having a positive attitude doesn’t mean perfection and doesn’t mean life is always going to be butterflies and unicorns. Attitude is a trait that can be learned, adjusted, and improved. Andrew Eldridge brought up the psychological concept of “Locus of Control: Internal or External” on a book study call last year. The basic concept is: people believing in internal control feel they can make adjustments to their own approach, while external control people blame other factors for their problems. Knowing and adjusting your mindset is key to self-assessment and growth.

Take action: Answer the following questions, write them down in a notebook or on a sticky note by your desk. Start making small adjustments in different situations. As a leader, how can your attitude impact those around you? How can leaders effectively balance modeling a positive attitude with the need to give constructive criticism or handle discipline with their people?

Two other character traits we discussed at the PASIC meeting were:

Problem-Solving – Problems never stop, but people can stop problems.

Self-Discipline – The first victory great leaders win is the battle over themselves.

Note: The materials found in the “Focus on Yourself” section can be found in the John Maxwell book, *Developing the Leader Within You*. You can find additional information in the resources section at the end of this article.

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

Jim Collins, the author of *Good to Great*, said, “Who comes first, What comes second.” The people you surround yourself with matter more than the projects, recordings, and accomplishments. The percussion community is a small, interconnected world that can open doors for unique interactions. I met Ryan McClausland, the drummer for the touring cast of *Dear Evan Hansen*, who knew one my former students in Houston. Ryan is also good friends with Sean McDaniel, the drummer for Broadway’s *Frozen* show, who I met the year before and saw perform in New York this past summer. These connections are not so rare in our wonderful circle of drummers; we all need to take advantage of these opportunities to meet with and learn from their experiences.

Tackling any task is easier with direction, guidance, and assistance from someone who has done it before. Young leaders should feel comfortable reaching out for help, and experienced leaders should feel compelled to reach out to help. The lyrics of a Casting Crowns song say, “It was the fire of the young ones. It was the wisdom of the old.” We need these connections to help our entire field move forward. This is the story that needs to be told to ensure community foundations are built even stronger.

Too many young professionals attempt to figure everything out on their own, afraid to ask questions because it might show signs of weakness. This is absolutely not true, as young professionals are in a position that is completely new and unyielding. On the flip side, the experienced professionals want to help but don’t want to be over-burdened or don’t know how to reach out to help. Taking time to talk to and answer questions based on years of experience will help our future percussion community grow stronger and more connect.

Take action: PAS will have a structured Mentorship Program available later this year. Be on the lookout and then sign up to become a mentor or mentee.

Finally, the Academy charge is, “The Leadership Academy provides personal growth opportunities for current and aspiring leaders in all area of the percussion field.” Be intentional about your personal growth journey and allow the PAS Leadership Academy to help guide you through your career to focus on growth, yourself, and community.

RESOURCES

Website Groups

PAS Leadership Academy <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PASLeadershipAcademy>

Coaching For Leaders (Free membership with incredible leadership resources) <https://coachingforleaders.com>

Books

There are hundreds of Leadership Development books, but here are a few that have impacted me.

John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (I prefer the first version, rather than 2.0)

Paul Buyer, *Working Toward Excellence*

Rich Redmond, *C.R.A.S.H. Course for Success*

Tommy Newberry, *Success is Not an Accident*

Jon Gordon, *The Power of a Positive Team*

Podcasts

“The Learning Leaders Show with Ryan Hawk”

“Dose of Leadership”

“Unleash Your Greatness Within”

“The Women’s Leadership Podcast”

“Hacking Your Leadership”

“Coaching for Leaders”

Daily Encouragement

Minute with Maxwell videos, <https://johnmaxwellteam.com/minute/>

All Pro Dad Daily Email, <https://www.allprodad.com/subscribe/>

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Dr. Brian Zator is in his 19th year as Director of Percussion at Texas A&M University-Commerce. He serves as Immediate Past-President for PAS and is a founder of the PAS Leadership Academy. Zator is also a School Board Trustee for the Royse City Independent School District, Chair of the Texas Percussion Prescribed Music List Selection Committee, and the Keyboard Editor for *Percussive Notes*. **PN**

Introducing the Walter Grip

By Douglas Wm. Walter

My hometown is a tough one. A tussle with a “pal” almost ended my percussion career at age nine, and the deep knife wound in my left wrist still throbs in its scar when I play. So, left-hand technique challenged me ever since that “most unkindest cut,” and I tried many exercises to fix it. Weightlifting with the left arm alone seemed smart until it yanked my spine out of alignment. Left-handed racquetball taught me concepts of weight transfer, but little else. Massage therapy, ice, and drugs all taught me how to treat injuries, but my left hand lagged behind. I compensated through endless practice,

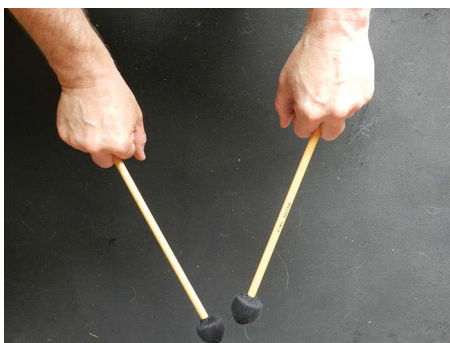
but my left hand frustrated me till I developed another way of holding two mallets or sticks in the 1990s.

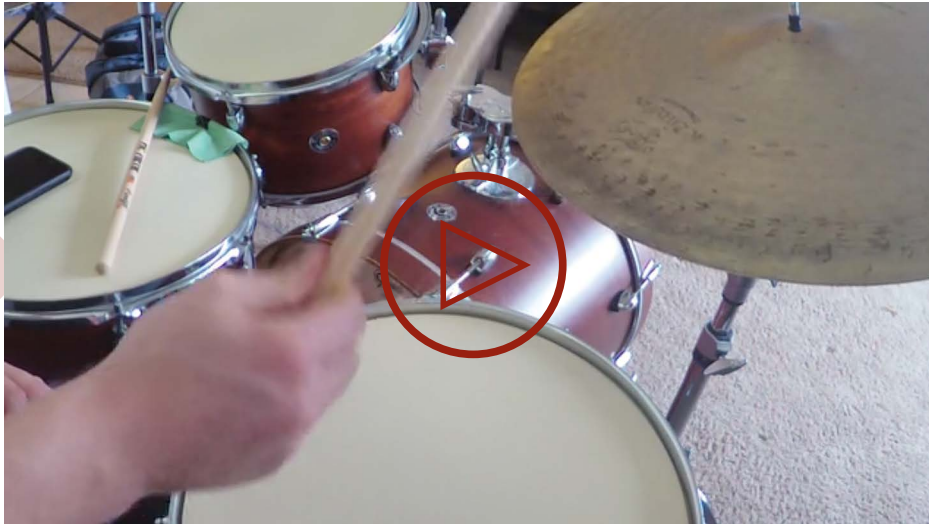
The term “matched grip” is unfortunately vague; it doesn’t describe how each hand works. It comes in as many variations as players and has worked for virtually every drummer in history. Its stick-holding position, mirrored in both hands, is so ubiquitous it has many names, even just “the grip,” but clarifying terms helps. For this article I will call it the “hammer grip,” as that name describes how it is used.

Though counterintuitive, my grip works. Here’s the proof: Three of my

students who use Walter Grip have won concerto competitions playing Creston or Hovhaness. The unique Walter Grip encourages finger strength, stamina, confidence, flexibility, and resonance. Here’s what my students and I have learned so far.

The basic concept is simple: hold the mallet/stick between index and middle fingers. The wrist hinges up, lifting the stick to prepare the stroke, but the middle finger leads the down stroke, often with help from the ring finger and pinky. Thumb position matters, usually resting against the index, but it does not touch the stick. Find the fulcrum point that feels





best and away you go. Notice the back of the hand flattening horizontally and the stick becoming a natural extension of the forearm.

Though simple to start, developing my grip takes time. We don't usually hold things between our index and middle fingers, so the grip seems loose. The grip's novelty is unnerving until we are comfortable. But, as it helps us develop and become sensitive to hand muscles in new ways, these new ways become excellent resources for motion.¹

The gap between the index and middle fingers has less natural strength than the one between the index and thumb. Try this test: with your left thumb and index finger, pinch the mound of flesh at the base of your right thumb—strongly! (Don't hurt yourself.) Feel and judge the pressure applied. Now, squeeze that right-hand mound with the knuckles of your left-hand index and middle fingers. Pinch as hard as you can! You can't pinch as hard with those fingers as you can with your thumb and index, but you can apply enough force to play well while looser! That's the idea.

You might object: "The thumb is so strong and useful in many jobs. Why give up its power?" The hammer grip thumb pushes sideways against the up-and-down plane in which we want the stick to move. As climbers know, our thumb,

the strongest digit, is not much use for climbing because its power flows sideways. Many climbers don't use thumbs; they support their body weight with just four fingers. Muscles are most efficient when they *pull* towards your center, not when they *push*. The next strongest finger, the middle one, works well for drumming (and climbing) because its strength lines up and pulls through forearm tendons actuating finger motion.² It is *centered* in the hand (thus balancing sideways force better than the lopsided hammer grip) and in line with the all-important hinging action of the wrist. Since Walter Grip doesn't push sideways against the hinge, the wrist is freer. Try this test: wave "bye-bye" with floppy fingers and wrist, and then push your thumb against your index as you wave. Notice the feeling of tightening of the tendons in the hand and the immediate restriction of motion in the hinging wrist. Excess tension slows us.

Unrelenting, inappropriately located, or excess tensions create problems. Smooth technique works best with less muscle tension, but every tool has a range of efficient motion, strength and flexibility, according to the designer's intentions. The hammer grip has a wider range of brawn than mine does, the thumb being stronger than any other finger. But the important question is,

"What is the range of strength one needs to perform well?" Raw strength means nothing by itself.³ With hammer grip the thumb can squeeze snare sticks more than is needed or desirable, and that excess or incorrectly aimed force creates problems. It promotes inaccuracy, shaking, or loss of sonic resonance. The holding strength in my grip, created by the position of the finger bones, in conjunction with tonus (slight, continuous, and passive muscle contraction), keeps sticks in place and eliminates the need for willful tension. Double, triple, even quadruple bounces are in a more comfortable range of squeezing with my grip, and it's easier to segue between them.

To push your hammer grip thumb against the stick you have to move it into position and *willfully* squeeze the stick with just the right amount of force. Under the heated stress of performance, anxiety may lead you to misjudge and squeeze too hard. Conscious thought can confuse muscle control. My grip holds the fingers in place by the natural grasp of tendons and bones in a resting position; you don't "will" the stick into a proper fulcrum position. Skeletal structure, functioning unconsciously as my grip's basis, leads to more physically relaxed, steadier motion than using willfully controlled muscles. Using a physical autopilot frees the mind for other tasks.⁴

If the stick is thick enough, the shaft pushes apart the index and middle fingers, creating a grip that holds, autonomously. This self-actuated grip gives confidence.⁵

Finally, hammer grip is more complicated, using three or four fingers that don't line up to hold and balance the forces on the stick. This stifles resonance. In my grip, two fingers naturally use almost equal pressure to balance the two sides evenly, so the wrist and fingers are free to work. You use less lateral tension to hold the stick, which flies straight up and down with a more purely hinged wrist motion. After you develop and align the grip, you may acquire a straighter (less wobbly) stroke.⁶

SPECIFIC ADVANTAGES OF WALTER GRIP ⁷

To execute a crescendo roll on snare drum, our arms increase their speed and/or force of grip as the sticks rise higher to increase volume. As we play louder, to control the stick, our grip often tightens to compensate for the increased force of the stick's momentum and bounce. This chokes the tone of the stick and the drum. But as my grip holds sticks through a natural structural position of finger bones, the squeezing stays about the same during increased volume or faster speed. See the accompanying video.

With my grip your fingers don't have to squeeze as much. This means when ending a bounce roll, you are less likely to add the flourish of faster bounces that often occurs just before the end of a roll as you lift-squeeze to end it. Also, since the tendency to over-squeeze is reduced in rolling, you may have more endurance in lengthy rolls. Further, as the fingers are more evenly balanced against one another, second and third bounces are naturally closer in volume to the first stroke. The accent that commonly occurs on the first tap of a multiple bounce naturally happens less often. And the normal decline in volume of second or third bounces (or taps!) is mitigated. Last, less finger tension means more drum, cymbal, and even stick resonance.

In Walter Grip, the fingers actuating the stick can curl more than in hammer grip and place the force (the tip of middle and ring fingers) closer to the fulcrum pivoting point. This creates a mechanical advantage for speed and endurance when bouncing. With a lever long enough and a fulcrum to place it on, Archimedes could move the world. With a shorter lever you can bounce faster and more times in a row. So instead of modifying the squeeze to change the number of rebounds played, you can change the placement of the fingers or their tips. This may mean less tension overall, with heightened sensitivity to the stick in your fingers and perhaps faster bounces.



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Modern two-mallet marimba music makes us play notes increasingly farther apart. Hammer grip points the mallets slightly “in” when fingers are in the most relaxed position. My grip holds the stick more straight ahead from the forearm, without added muscular tension. The mallet becomes more a linear extension of the arm with longer reach to the sides. This extra reach helps when the hands are separated between 32-inch and 23-inch kettles or octaves apart on marimba. Hammer grip can also aim the stick straight ahead, but that position may require willful, excess finger tension.

A thrilling sensation on timpani occurs when the hand feels as if it’s just guiding the mallet up and down between gravity’s tug and the head’s rebound. My grip balances the force between just two fingers, so this loose-grip feeling, in which the stick seems to soar by itself, is easier to obtain than with a lopsided grip. Holding with less voluntary tension gives more freedom of motion and sound—*more ring*.

Because the Walter Grip places the stick nearer the center of the longitudinal axis of the arm, it especially facilitates the development of the fingers used in Burton Grip. But since it strengthens the back fingers and transverse hand muscles, if used for cross-training it can help solidify any four-mallet marimba technique. Cross-training with my grip gives you feedback on the strength or flexibility of each finger so you can better understand and feel how your hands work. This information helps develop your weaker limb and can also be used to equalize the hands. And the exercises required to develop my grip automatically strengthen the middle, ring, and pinky fingers.

SOME DISADVANTAGES OF WALTER GRIP

Walter Grip holds the stick in a shape the fingers mold themselves into, so it takes longer to develop rolls and grace notes for snare drum. Single strokes are easy with both hammer grip and mine.

It’s simple to grab a stick like a hammer and play, but until you’re comfortable with my grip, it may feel out of control when doing multiple bounces. When you start to play viola, holding it is awkward. My grip is like that. It takes time to mold the hand into the form for rolls.

Since it doesn’t use the “mighty thumb,” Walter Grip does not suit thundering music. Heavy power strokes could injure the fingers—chiefly the ring or pinky. This grip aids finesse, so super-loud drum set or playing with heavy sticks might harm you. Walter Grip probably is not appropriate for concert bass drum or large tam-tams.

Yes, you will develop new callouses with my grip because you have not used that part of your skin’s surface before. They won’t hurt you; they’re just the dues you pay.

For snare drum (but not marimba or timpani), it appears you must warm up longer with my grip. Its heightened touch sensitivity and variability, combined with the fact that more of the hand (not just the thumb side) is used to control the stick, means that until the fingers warm up to coordinated suppleness, the stick feels too loose.

The individual freedom of my grip may make it less useful for marching drumlines where players in a section must look exactly the same; no one has tried Walter Grip in a drumline that I know of.

Walter Grip encourages variation of touch, sensitivity, dynamic contrast, lightness, ringing tone, and freedom. Its forte is not playing evenly in a mechanical way. If the goal is to play with machine-like solidity, other grips will work better to that end.

WHY TRY THIS GRIP?

I discovered my grip while premiering a work with the Santa Fe Opera that had such fast glockenspiel licks, I couldn’t play them with hammer grip. Vexed, I stuck the mallets between middle and index fingers, and the ensuing looseness enabled me to play fast enough. Since

the muscle-bound thumb hindered my speed, I did without it. Walter Grip helps my students and me play faster and more relaxed.

Students challenged with stiffness or twisting motion instead of the preferred hinging motion in the wrists have practiced my grip as therapy to help align and loosen their wrists to move more freely. Most also continue using hammer grip.

After one uses my grip and finds how easy it is to play octaves or double octaves on marimba, improvisers and composers alike may play and write more double octaves. They sound especially good on marimba because they reinforce the main harmonic.

If you practice my grip for a while, your fingers will get used to pulling directly into your palm with less tension, which frees your wrist and eventually makes it hinge more smoothly and accurately, even when you are holding mallets with other grips. The thumb often rests lightly against the index, but it can squeeze for more power.

MANY WON’T NEED WALTER GRIP

Walter Grip changes many things and isn’t for everyone. My students and I have worked on it for years, and the results prove it merits consideration, but it’s still uniquely different. Except for some percussionists, it’s just experimental. So, if you play well when performing the music you love, keep your grip. But if you want to play many instruments, my grip can help via its flexibility, sensitivity, and cross-training applications. Performing with my grip works, but even just practicing with it can align muscles and develop finger strength and wrist flexibility to help you play any grip better. Hammer grip obviously works superbly with practice in spite of its sideways pressure, but any sideways pressure can complicate flow. My grip demonstrates that fingers work better when contracting straight back into the palm. It explores muscle flow, tactile sen-

sitivity, and how hands/fingers basically move. Although still exploratory in some ways, it works as a helpful cross-training and finger strengthening or aligning method.

I felt odd writing this article emphasizing technique, as it strays far from my basic expressive-thoughtful-musicality focus. But technique and musicality can become one in this incarnational world, and my grip aids musical expression through enhanced physical motion. The knife wound and other injuries handicapped my chops. However, though injured, I won the NYC Concert Artists Guild Award and played thousands of orchestra, drum set, church, jazz or flamenco gigs, marimba recitals, and command performances—including solo recitals at three PASICs—thus confirming that musical accomplishment can transcend physical limitations. Physical solutions help us play more musically. Walter Grip lets my students and me move more freely.

There are many details of how my grip works, how to practice it, and how to modify it for different instruments that I don't have space in which to elaborate here. But you now have an introduction in how to try Walter Grip. Check it out and let me know what you learn!

ENDNOTES

1. Many excellent users of hammer grip effectually put the fulcrum between the thumb and middle finger, with the index serving as a pointer or static plane for the thumb to rest against, while the middle finger controls the actual pivoting action. These players use the middle finger foundationally in their grip, but in a mechanically different way from mine.
2. Climbers, weightlifters, and other athletes argue about which finger is strongest. What really matters is: "How do I need to use the strength of this specific finger?" The goal of using fingers as tools is to perform confidently the task you've chosen.
3. We all know people who have too much muscle. We call them muscle-bound; they can't move smoothly or play instruments

well. Thumbs, by constant use, can develop problems of too much squeeze or stiffness if not also balanced with flexibility.

4. Any time you can form your hands so that they are in the correct position without having to think about how much to squeeze, you prevent the "two halves of the brain" type problems that are addressed in books like *The Inner Game of Tennis* and *The Inner Game of Music*. My students who won marimba competitions said my grip kept nervousness from causing them to tense up as much in their hands, so they felt more free to move and sing musically.
5. Choose stick thickness wisely. Because muscle tonus holds the stick, the distance between your index and middle fingers determines the correct stick thickness. For most adult hands, my grip needs thicker sticks. 7A sticks and triangle beaters may be awkward (as I learned playing "La Sylphide" with the Colorado Ballet; it's a triangle overdose).
6. We've seen porters carry loads on their heads through a well-aligned spine and neck. Likewise, our bones support weight through alignment. Balancing stabilizer muscles takes time to develop, but millions do it. It takes longer to develop rolls because the stick is held less via strength and more by finger alignment. Roll success demands proper form.
7. Each grip has its own advantages, specific to *repertoire* (some pieces written for Stevens Grip require it), *style* (improvisation's un-choreographed motions explain why many jazz vibists use Burton Grip), *culture* (German and French timpani grips reflect the aesthetic taste, musical traditions, and language of each nation), *heritage* (traditional grip on a slanted, slung field drum aids the left elbow), and *flow* (using traditional grip for brushes gives each hand its own "flight path"). All these advantages are adaptable, but each grip has innate tendencies. I like pure research, not replicating what others believe. I like digging deep into the belly of things to find new, basic ideas that truly help. My grip takes as much practice as any other.

Douglas Wm. Walter has an international reputation as a marimba-vibes artist in the classical and jazz fields. The first marimbist to win the Concert Artists Guild Award, Dr. Walter has performed 300+ solo recitals and 14 different concerti in 38 states and 10 countries. His solo recitals at three PASICs received standing ovations. Walter's jazz work includes the NTSU 1:00 Lab Band recording, *LAB 75*—the first Grammy-nominated university recording, the Keystick Duo, the Pagan-Walter Duo, and the University of Colorado Faculty Jazz Quintet. His unique solo jazz improvisations and flamenco marimba work with Steve Mullins in their quartet, Rim of the Well, have received warm receptions from musicians and the general public in Europe and the USA. Dr. Walter has performed for decades with the Colorado Music Festival, Sunriver, Westminster Brass, Flint, Fort Worth, Colorado Ballet, Oregon, Terre Haute, Santa Fe Opera, and Boulder Philharmonic Orchestras, among other orchestras. He earned a double degree in music ed. and theory *summa cum laude* at NTSU. His master's degrees in orchestral conducting and percussion with C. Owens are from the University of Michigan. He studied with Alan Abel and Dave Samuels during his DMA at Temple University. His twofold BA in French Literature and Western Civilization from CU Boulder is also *summa cum laude*. Director of Percussion Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder, Dr. Walter teaches students from around the world. All of his percussion DMA students who graduated are tenured professors.

His 110-page book of exercises and etudes for left-hand development at the marimba, *No Left Hand Behind*, has been released by Vapmedia. **PN**

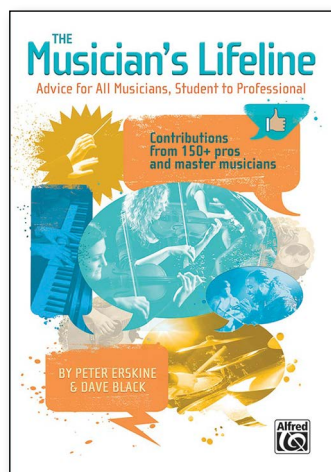
New Percussion Literature and Recordings

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Difficulty Rating Scale

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

GENERAL REFERENCE



The Musician's Lifeline: Advice for All Musicians, Student to Professional

Peter Erskine and Dave Black

\$16.99

Alfred Music

Web: [sample pages](#)

Peter Erskine and Dave Black have teamed up for another book (see previous review of *The Drummer's Lifeline*, PN, March 2018). This time, the target audience is not just drummers, but all musicians. *The Musician's Lifeline* offers useful advice for every step of one's musical journey. While Erskine and Black have enough combined

knowledge to fill volumes, they sought out the expertise of over 150 professional musicians. Each contributed by answering a set of questions regarding music performance, sight-reading, business, touring/travel, and people skills. They were also asked about the best advice they have been given as well as the best advice they could offer to the readers.

Musicians of all levels will benefit from the suggestions regarding practice and sight-reading. Tips on auditioning, interviewing, and resumé writing are also included. The inclusion of topics such as networking, self-promotion, business etiquette, and copyright policies ensure that the business side of music is not overlooked.

The book is filled with quotes from the contributing professionals. Any one quote could be a potential game changer, or at the least, put one in a positive frame of mind for a practice session, rehearsal, or concert. This is not a book to read once and put away. It is one to keep on hand as a source of advice and inspiration.

—Jeff W. Johnson

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION SOLO

Blue Identity V

She-e Wu

\$19.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba

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

Originally written as a marimba feature with percussion ensemble, this version of "Blue Identity" is for solo marimba only. The marimba part is almost exactly the same, minus several non-marimba interludes from the rest of the ensemble. The title "Blue Identity" comes from the composer's admiration of the film *The Bourne Identity*, along with her "blue" emotional state at the time of composition. Perhaps the opening, including a short chorale section that returns later in the work, is meant to represent the "blue" aspect of the title, and the very fast tempi and rhythms that make up most of the piece represent the energy, drama, and action of *The Bourne Identity*. These fast sections still maintain the harmony of the opening, giving the work a clear degree of continuity.

"Blue Identity" is probably best suited for an advanced undergraduate or graduate level recital, as there are technical and musical challenges

throughout. The performer must have well-developed chops to execute the interval changes and rotation strokes that permeate much of the piece. There is also lots of room for expression, especially in the slower-moving sections. The repetitive nature of the harmonic material will also necessitate a mature performance, in order to add variety and keep audiences engaged.

—Joseph Van Hassel

Classical Gas IV

Mason Williams

Arr. Rick Mattingly

\$3.99

Alfred/Total Sheet Music

Web: [score sample](#)

Instrumentation: 4-octave marimba

This arrangement of the 1968 classic instrumental tune has been skillfully arranged to capture both the lyrical quality and rhythmic energy of the marimba. It follows the original material, performed by classical guitarist/composer Mason Williams with members of the "Wrecking Crew" exactly — with the most obvious and understandable difference being a thinned-out orchestration that instead focuses on the guitar melody with idiomatically written basslines and occasional harmonies.

Scored for a 4-octave marimba with four mallets, a few sections require a 4.3-octave (low-A) instrument. The arranger suggests the notes affected be played an octave higher. He also makes suggestions for how certain sections can be played in a lower octave if a larger instrument is available, or for performers to use their own personal preferences in performances. Certainly, all good transcriptions exist with a certain level of intuitive flexibility and freedom such as this.

Whether the performer is a diehard classic rock fan or experiencing this music for the first time, Rick Mattingly's arrangement of "Classical Gas" will certainly engage audiences as an intermediate recital piece or encore presented by an advanced/professional marimbist.

Note: This arrangement is available only as a digital download at Alfred's Total Sheet Music website.

—Jason Baker

Memories IV+

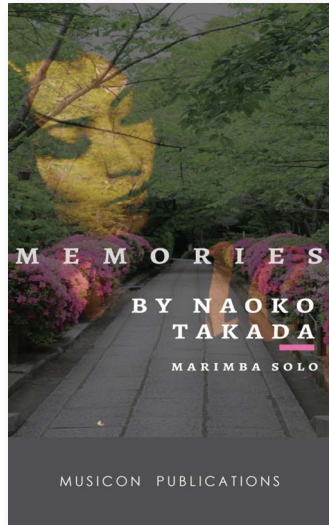
Naoko Takada

\$17.00

Musicon Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba

Web: [video recording](#)



"Memories" is a beautiful new marimba solo by performer and composer Naoko Takada that should interest college students looking for a short (ca. four minutes), challenging, four-mallet piece. The sound of the piece reminds this reviewer of a 1970s movie score (think *The Deer Hunter*, *Papillon*, *The Godfather*). There are technical and musical challenges throughout, including a nearly ubiquitous moving line in the left hand that primarily (if not exclusively) serves a harmonic accompaniment role. The right hand/top line of the piece typically presents a melody that is subjected to improvisatory variations. "Memories" is quite tonal, making accuracy a notable challenge, and nearly every phrase is eight measures. This straight-forwardness of form and tonality gives performers ample opportunity to work on musicality, especially within the repetitive nature of the melodic variations and harmony. Crafting an engaging and varied performance using the limited material will also present a challenge—one that will be well worth it for the performer!

—Joseph Van Hassel

Midnight Moon III

Justin Doute

\$15.00

Tapspace Publications

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

This solo, four-mallet marimba work will challenge advanced high school or undergraduate students. The piece opens with a haunting lullaby that explores harmonic language over a slow melody. It requires ripples and an ease of moving big distances on the instrument. This section is very sparse in notes, leaving space for the harmonies to sit on the listener's ear.

The middle section is faster, centered on an ostinato that changes with the harmonies as the melodic material is brought out through tenuto accent markings. The player will need to be very adept at bringing out melodic material in the faster moving notes, and have a firm grasp of the four-mallet techniques required. The piece ends with a return to the opening lullaby material,

coming full circle back to the haunting sounds.

This work would go well in the middle of a recital — a chance for the audience to sit back and reflect. The composer mentions that the piece was written during a "trying time" in his life, and the music definitely has this dark hopefulness to it, as if trying to find the light in the darkness.

—Josh Armstrong

Saga VI

Brian Mueller

\$18.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba

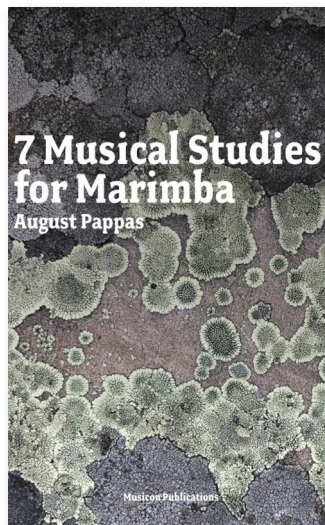
Web: [score sample](#), [video recording](#)

This advanced solo is a fantastic addition to the repertoire and will be a worthy challenge for any advanced student or professional. Beautiful and powerful, it will take both listener and performer on a musical "Saga."

Mueller structures the loosely programmatic work in five sections — not truly separate movements, but simply suggesting stages of the adventure. Mueller gives several instructions for particular points of the work (spots that may raise technical questions) but leaves the narrative itself up for interpretation. As one might expect, this journey will require physical and mental endurance: the 10-minute solo expects mastery of most standard marimba techniques and will push advanced players to dust off every one of their skillsets during the learning process.

The solo is simply gorgeous; this reviewer highly recommends "Saga."

—Rebecca McDaniel



7 Musical Studies for Marimba III

August Pappas

\$25.00

Musicon Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba

Web: [video recording](#)

This is a collection of seven relatively short pieces for the intermediate to advanced marimbist. The composer includes program notes about each of the seven "studies": Prelude, Hunt,

Breath, Flight, Murmur, Strobe, and Dusk. Each study has its own inspiration and character.

"Prelude" is comprised entirely of two-voice counterpoint moving in contrary motion. "Hunt" is a stream of steady sixteenth notes with accent patterns, centered around the pitch F-sharp. "Breath" is based on the polyrhythm 3:2. Written in 9/8, the right hand plays eighth notes while the left hand plays dotted-eighth notes. "Flight" is composed in odd meters and includes sixteenth notes that leap further from a central pitch, unlike "Hunt" "Murmur," as is appropriate, sounds soft and flowing. "Strobe" has an interesting odd-meter groove, alternating between 7/8 and 5/8. Finally, "Dusk" is highlighted by a haunting melody that fades as the piece continues.

The studies are programmatic in nature, and those programs are communicated clearly and effectively in the music. I highly recommend this collection for a college percussionist performing in a recital. The pieces are distinct and lengthy enough that one could select a suite to perform as opposed to playing all seven at once — not to say performing all seven at once is out of the question. There is great music to be made through these studies!

—Justin Bunting

Three Pieces for Marimba V

Brian Blume

\$16.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba

Web: [audio and video recordings](#)

This advanced work for solo marimba, lasting around eight minutes, was born from improvisation. The work can be played in its entirety or with movements excerpted individually or in pairs.

The first movement exhibits the improvisatory foundation most clearly, as the composer's use of rhythm, register, technique, and dynamics borders on sporadic (though not incoherent). A variety of colors are utilized throughout, from punctuated bursts of energy to smooth linear swirls. Blume's use of articulation markings will help guide performers as they learn the piece.

The second movement is the star of the work. Requiring the utmost control from the performer, the bubbling rumble underpinning the movement is a fascinating aesthetic. The single swift chromatic gesture in the bottom octave that begins the piece serves as a driving force as additional elements are incorporated. This movement serves as a single arc of ever-increasing intensity, volume, and activity, which then recedes over the course of the second half. The composer has expertly paced the arrival of each new element or addition, and the performer's task is to maintain that balance amidst the marimba gymnastics.

Rounding out the work, the last movement is quite short (though not necessarily sweet). At a swift tempo of 176 beats per minute, it is darkly energetic, dancing across the keys with a lopsided, sardonic gait. There is a darkly humorous quality to this movement, like a twisted music

box being cranked to its maximum speed.

Overall, "Three Pieces for Marimba" is a satisfying musical experience. If there is one complaint, it is that the outer movements (particularly the last movement) could be a little longer. At the same time, it is always better to keep the audience wanting more than to overstay one's welcome. Individual movements (particularly the third) could find their home as an encore or as a short and impressive instrument demonstration. Technical mastery of the instrument is required to perform this piece well, but more importantly, a mature musical understanding of the intended character of each movement will be required to bring this work to life.

—Jamie Whitmarsh

Waterfall IV

Dustin Schulze

\$15.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 4.3-octave marimba

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

This virtuosic work consists of about five minutes of constant sixteenth notes that include a large dynamic range, accents, and various permutations. The musical and expressive opportunities in this piece are quite extensive. The composer states, "This piece depicts the continuous and percussive flow of a waterfall. The amorphous beads of water striking the bottom of the waterfall create a deluge of rhythms and pitches, amplifying Mother Nature's eternal melody."

The program of the piece is clearly evident from the beginning. The constant flow of notes building in volume have irregular accents placed throughout. This amplifies the flowing water aesthetic with single large drops of water. The flow of the music (water) includes an underlying sense of harmonic and melodic motion throughout. This adds to the program of the constant motion of water creating a waterfall. There is some push and pull in the tempo of the notes through accelerandi and rallentandi. The piece ends with a single pitch, F3, dissolving away into a roll.

This would be a great piece for a college percussionist performing in a studio class, or on a student recital or degree recital. There are sticking, and thus harmonic, patterns to latch onto during the note-learning process, but the occasional irregularity will present a welcome challenge.

—Justin Bunting

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION SOLO WITH ACCOMPANIMENT

Kreisler for Xylophone IV

Fritz Kreisler

Arr. George Hamilton Green

\$14.99

Carl Fischer

Instrumentation: xylophone, piano

Xylophone virtuoso George Hamilton Green was well known for transforming popular pieces for other instruments into showcases for solo xylophone. The four titles included in this collection ("Tambourin Chinois," "The Old Refrain," "Liebesfreud," and "Caprice Viennois") were originally composed by violinist Fritz Kreisler in the early 20th century (with the exception of "The

Old Refrain," which is taken from the operetta *Der Opernball* by Richard Heuberger). All were performed by Green during his career, with his arrangement of "Tambourin Chinois" being especially well-known to percussionists.

All of the pieces require two mallets, except for "The Old Refrain," which is scored for four (rolled chords throughout). Sticking indications are included where helpful, and the publication comes with a score and solo xylophone part. The xylophone writing is what you would expect — moderately challenging, yet achievable by a decent undergraduate or advanced high school student. The piano part is clearly presented and would not pose any problems to an accompanist trying to put it together with minimal rehearsal time. As there is no indication of an editor in the score, we can assume that all the markings are taken directly from Green's original arrangements.

—Jason Baker



Two-Beat Tango II

Brian Slawson

\$12.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: any 2-octave mallet instrument, optional piano accompaniment

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

Check this out if you are looking for a two-minute mallet solo for your beginning percussionists! With melodic and harmonic material based on Hungarian folk music traditions, this ABA composition doesn't contain rhythms more complex than eighth notes, has a melodic range of only 1.5 octaves, and can be played with two mallets.

The opening and closing sections center around A-minor with a melody written in stepwise motion with an "oom-pah" piano accompaniment pattern. The B-section is slower, requires rolled notes from the performer, and is cast in A-major. This change of pace complements the A sections and even evokes images of traditional Spanish music. While the composer states that the piano accompaniment is optional, incorporating it into a performance would benefit the percussionist greatly in terms of maintaining tempo integrity, successfully playing in the genre and style of the music, and musical collaboration.

—Joshua D. Smith

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION DUO

Fantaisie-Impromptu VI

Frederic Chopin

Arr. Alex Stopa

\$26.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba, vibraphone

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

For those interested in the historical background of this work, the performance notes inform us that the original composition for piano was composed in 1834, but it was never published. Chopin instructed that that none of his unpublished works be published after his death. It is a positive thing that this one work has become available, as it appears on piano recital programs often.

This arrangement is scored for two players, each performing on a marimba and doubling on a vibraphone. The work is in a three-part form, written in C-sharp minor. After a very brief intro, the piece opens with Player 2 performing arpeggiated sextuplets, which serve as a base or foundation of the harmonic material. Player 1 performs the melodic material. The B section is more lyrical and is in D-flat major. For this section, Player 1 performs on vibraphone. The majority of this section is written in a single line, but there are several nuances including trills and grace notes, all providing a rich section with beautiful lines. The work returns to the A section material, again in C-sharp minor, and provides an excellent close of the theme. There is a brief coda, where the second player quickly moves to the vibraphone, to support the final cadence.

A great feature of this publication is that the parts are available via a CD, which also contains an excellent recording of the work.

—George Frock

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Classical Music Mashup IV

Grant Woolard

Arr. Brian Blume

\$40.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (6 players): xylophone, glockenspiel, 2 vibraphones, 3 marimbas (one 4.3-octave, one 5-octave, and one 4.3- or 5-octave)

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

Brian Blume's keyboard percussion arrangement of the music from the viral YouTube video *Classical Music Mashup* is tailor-made to meet the youngest generation of audience where they live: the piece is fast-paced, humorous, and requires multiple "views" to fully appreciate the complexity of the product. Like the original video, which is an arrangement for three pianos by Grant Woolard, this arrangement packs over 50 more-or-less-recognizable themes from the entirety of classical music history into a seven-minute frenzy that swerves from idea to idea faster than you can say "hashtag." In some cases, the themes are obscured by the amount of competing activity taking place, or by the fact that they aren't always presented in the outer voices of the arrangement, which makes for a surprisingly compelling listening experience. The work

is essentially a litany of aural “Easter eggs,” and makes no artistic claims to the contrary, but it is entertaining and will allow self-satisfied audience members to knowingly nod to one another on several occasions.

Aside from a few brief moments, no 4-mallet technique is required (although holding four mallets might allow for some easier playing options in a few instances). The biggest challenge lies in the constantly shifting styles and tempi, and in proactively achieving the needed ensemble balance for any given theme to be heard when its moment comes. Educators looking for ways to introduce their students to the classical music masterworks of yesteryear will find plenty to talk about, and ideally listen to, when rehearsing this piece. Blume even has the foresight to include a complete list of pieces and their composers, in order of occurrence, to be reproduced in future program notes, and the equipment demand is such that most high schools should have no trouble putting this piece together (especially considering the ossia option for the second 4.3-octave marimba).

While I wouldn't necessarily place this piece as the highest representative of experimental art music in the 21st century (it's exactly the sort of thing I would have expected to see on stage had Spike Jones gone into music education instead of broadcast music), I would absolutely recommend it as an entertaining high school-level project for a spring “pops” concert that will thrill audiences and (hopefully) pique the curiosity of the performers to seek out more information about some of the themes that come across their pages.

—Brian Graiser

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik IV

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Arr. Mark Hunter

\$32.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (4 players): xylophone, 4-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba, shared 4.3-octave marimba or two 4-octave marimbas

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

Mozart's “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” is arguably one of the most iconic and recognizable works from the Classical period. Though often performed by string orchestras, this 1787 composition was originally scored for two violins, viola, and cello with an optional double bass. This instrumentation naturally lends itself to a setting for mallet percussion, resulting in a masterfully arranged quartet by Mark Hunter. With a tremendous amount of musical and technical benefit, this edition is appropriate for advanced high school or undergraduate-level students.

Hunter includes helpful historical context and interpretive considerations in the work's program notes. For example, he discusses the importance of appropriate instrumentation and mallet choice to best replicate the sound of a string quartet. Furthermore, he details how trills should be interpreted based on Mozart's original intentions, as well as modern-day performance approaches to sonata form. This maintains historical relevance and encourages discussion on the topic.

In many ways, this arrangement is true to the original work. Dynamics and phrase markings are clearly indicated but provide plenty of opportunity for ensembles to make their own musical decisions. While parts for Players 1 and 2 are

more challenging than Players 3 and 4, all material is idiomatic for our instrument. Finally, the tempo range and optional repeats make the work very assessable for performers and audiences. This is an excellent and highly recommended addition to the chamber repertoire for keyboard percussion.

—Danielle Moreau



Marimba Trio #1 - Abyssal Creatures V

Tetsuya Takeno

\$40.00

Self-Published

Instrumentation (3 players): 3 marimbas (5-octave, two 4.3-octave)

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

This three-section work uses metric modulation to take the musical material through a number of different tempos, from a slow cannon at the beginning through faster speeds as each modulation occurs, finally returning to the opening material. The piece requires only two-mallet technique from all players, and while three marimbas can be used, the composer provides modifications so that Players 1 and 3 can share a 5-octave instrument.

Utilizing a number of different textures including dead strokes, ghost notes, use of the mallet shaft on bars, and playing the end boards (with options to use a muted tom-tom or bongo), the composer creates a number of interesting colors. Other techniques include a polyrhythmic and polymetric sections as well as unison areas and more traditional homophonic writing.

Tetsuya Takeno has created an interesting contribution to the repertoire with this piece. With the analysis given by the composer on how the piece is put together, it would have been nice to get some insight into why the piece was written or the significance of the title. Regardless, the roughly eight-minute piece will fit well on an undergraduate or graduate percussion ensemble program.

—Brian Nozny

Neither Here nor There III

Paul Millette

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (4 players): xylophone, vibraphone, 4-octave marimba, 4.5-octave marimba

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

Based on simplicity of harmony and rhythm, this five-minute quartet showcases wonderfully charming musical ideas and gestures while utilizing only a limited amount of material. All of the parts can be played with two mallets, and performers need only an introductory level of music reading ability to present a successful performance.

From a tonal perspective, the instruments hover around scale degrees 1, 3, 5, and 7 of a G-Major scale while dancing around each other

as the parts interlock to create ideas and phrases. The intellectual appeal of this piece stems from the rhythmic interplay that exists between the four parts. While there is almost always a quarter-note ostinato present in one of the parts, most of the complexity occurs when music from other players shifts by a sixteenth-note, overlays triplets, or finishes a phrase by repeating a single note that colors the harmonic texture. Hinting at music of the same nature by Christopher Deane, this work carries an accessibility that will be embraced by a broad range of listeners.

—Joshua D. Smith

Ruslan and Lyumila III

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka

Arr. Naoya Wada

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: 5-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba

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

This arrangement of the overture to Glinka's second opera offers a fun and showy quartet to open or close any performance. The piece has fast scalar passages moving around the keyboards, with a more lyrical middle section to balance it out.

The work only requires the performers to use two mallets throughout, and it uses two players on each marimba. Players 1 and 2 should be very adept at moving quickly around the keyboard, as they have more of the faster passages. However, players 3 and 4 will occasionally perform faster parts as well. The work is very well arranged, and it will challenge the performers in the areas of listening and communication in an ensemble setting.

Overall, Naoya Wada has created a wonderful arrangement of a fun overture that would be perfect for advanced high school groups and undergraduate quartets. The performers will be challenged musically and technically throughout, and the faster nature of the opening and closing sections would make for a wonderful way showcase those skills.

—Josh Armstrong

Tesserae IV-V

Mason Lynass

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (3-4 players): vibraphone, sizzle cymbal, 5-octave marimba, shaker, 2 toms, bongos, pedal bass drum, glockenspiel, suspended cymbal, optional drum set

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

“Tesserae” is written so that it can be performed by three or four players and still hold its laid-back, groovy feel. This piece was the winning work in Portland Percussion Group's 2017 Call for Scores and was premiered in 2017 at the Shout House in Portland, Oregon.

The broad influences that inspired the piece serve it very well, with Mason Lynass writing, “Some musical inspiration behind this work came from DJ Rashad, Mark Ernestus' Ndagga Rhythm Force, DJ Paypal, and Steve Reich.” It has elements of minimalism and “drum'n'bass” grooves. These elements blend together to create an excellent funky and forward-leaning groove.

Lynass has done a clever job with the groove, specifically in “Tesserae.” Depending on whether it's performed as a trio or a quartet, the piece can

be felt in two different ways: if performed by three players, the piece can be felt in 12/8 time; if performed by four players, the piece can be felt in 3/4 time.

This would be an excellent piece for players and ensembles who are looking to work on their groove and cohesion, as well as those looking to maintain depth of concept in their programming. And the equipment demands are very reasonable. I highly recommend this piece for any chamber percussion ensemble setting.

—Joe Millea

Water Music, "Alla Hornpipe" – Suite No. 2 in D Major (HWV 349) III

George Frideric Handel

Arr. John Herndon

\$36.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (8 Players): glockenspiel, xylophone, 2 vibraphones, 4-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba

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

John Herndon's arrangement of the second movement of Handel's second "Water Music" suite is written for eight players (four on two marimbas, and one each on glockenspiel, xylophone, and two vibraphones). The score includes a clear setup diagram, as well as a disc that includes a recording and parts. The movement is in a clear ABA form, moving from D-major to B-minor and back again. This repetition will help younger mallet players learn their parts quickly, as the material is fairly limited. Throughout most of the arrangement, the xylophone and first marimba parts have the most challenging material. However, every part is well within the range of a strong high-school percussionist, which is convenient, as the required instruments are common in many high schools.

I especially like the arranger's sensitivity to dynamic contrast, as he takes into consideration the sonic tendencies of the instruments. He often notates glockenspiel and xylophone softer than the other instruments, although I believe the end result should be a balanced ensemble. All parts are playable with two mallets, and the marimba parts all utilize rolls. Vibraphone pedaling is not indicated, leaving the interpretation up to the performer and/or instructor. I recommend this piece for a strong high school or undergraduate mallet ensemble.

—Joseph Van Hassel

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Altered Gates V

Jim Casella

\$45.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (5 players): marching tenors (aka "quints"), 4 graduated toms, kick drum, 2 graduated cowbells, 4 graduated jam blocks, bongos, congas, snare drum, 2 splash cymbals, opera gong, hi-hat, resonant metal

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

This energetic piece includes a wide variety of sounds and requires a high level of dexterity and musical cooperation from all five players. Throughout its nearly six-minute runtime, it maintains a rhythmic drive that keeps listeners

captivated and performers focused.

The driving factor of the work is a diddle-based drone that is constant throughout the work. While other rhythmic and melodic material is presented, one or more of the performers are playing sixteenth-note double strokes at a low dynamic. These are sometimes played on the rims of any of the drums with bundle-sticks. This element alone can make this piece a challenge, since all of the performers will need to be capable of maintaining rhythmic and technical consistency under these circumstances. However, when performed properly it provides the forward motion that supports the grooves and melodies that develop.

The motivic material makes significant use of rhythmic interplay between the players. Several of the melodic ideas are a team effort, requiring all performers to know what the entirety of a particular line sounds like in order to properly place the notes they are responsible for. The brisk tempo and the plethora of instruments that are in the setup makes for both a challenging exercise and an impressive performance. Jim Casella also utilizes several four-against-three rhythms to add to the complexity of the work, which lends well to the energetic character and instrumentation.

"Altered Gates" is a lively work, best suited for mature players with strong double-stroke and dynamic control. Its energetic character and impressive writing would be ideal as an opener for any percussion ensemble concert.

—Kyle Cherwinski

Amazing Grace III-IV

John Newton

Arr. Tyler Tolles

\$36.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (5 Players): 2 vibraphones, 4-octave marimba, 5-octave marimba, ride cymbal

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

Tyler Tolles' arrangement of "Amazing Grace" begins with a vibraphone solo playing the familiar melody as one typically hears it. Once the other instruments join in, the melody becomes groovy with syncopated ostinato in the marimba parts underneath. Dedicated to Dave Samuels, this arrangement is jazzy and features the vibraphone as a soloist throughout, with the exception of a section in the middle where all of the ensemble players get a solo.

This piece is designed to be a medium grade level, and the marimba parts are mainly two-mallet accompaniment, with steadiness and rhythmic confidence required of the players. The second vibraphone part fills out the sustained chords, with occasional rhythmic playing. The ride cymbal serves a similar function to a drum set, and while seemingly simple does require technical and rhythmic proficiency.

The meat of this piece is in the first vibraphone part, which plays the melody and has two cadenzas. The cadenzas are written out with the option to improvise. For all of the solo sections, Tolles provides chord symbols so that the players have the option to improvise. This piece does contain a metric modulation, but it allows for the new tempo to be set by the ride cymbal, so this piece could be performed without a conductor if the players have good listening skills.

Audiences love hearing familiar pieces, espe-

cially when presented in a new style, and this piece fits that criteria. There is pedagogical merit to be had in this arrangement, but mostly "Amazing Grace" would be a nice and crowd-pleasing addition to a high school or undergraduate percussion ensemble concert, particularly if the director is looking to feature a vibraphone player.

—Marilyn K. Clark Silva

The Bells of Moscow III

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Arr. Stephen Primatic

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (10 players): glockenspiel, chimes, xylophone, vibraphone, 3-4 marimbas (5-octave, 4.3-octave, and two 4-octave, or one that may be shared by two players), 2-3 timpani (requires a low C-sharp), hi-hat, tam-tam, crash cymbals, bass drum

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

Rachmaninoff's "Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2," also known as "The Bells of Moscow," is one of the renowned composer's most popular works, and Stephen Primatic's arrangement for percussion ensemble is both satisfying and shrewd. Satisfying, in that the arrangement mostly captures the morose, if not maudlin, character of Rachmaninoff's original piano version, and shrewd in that there are a bevy of opportunities packed into the arrangement's three-minute footprint for ensemble directors to address and define phrasing, rubato, and other stylistic/interpretation concepts while providing a rich (if brief) listening experience for the audience. While the piece is listed by the publisher as being of medium difficulty, this designation should only apply to the technical demands of the piece (no four-mallet technique is required), and not the higher demands of balance and artistry placed on the ensemble. The arrangement is clearly intended for ensembles at the high school level (or possibly an extremely talented middle school group), but it could also be a rewarding project for a university ensemble interested adding a short, low-stress arrangement project to their program.

There are a couple decisions that I might have made a little differently had I been the arranger, beginning with the addition of the hi-hat. The creative risks Primatic takes in adding extra percussion mostly pay off, particularly in regards to the added weight and gravitas of the bass drum and the complex color of the tam-tam scrapes. However, I found the riding hi-hat triplets in the middle "agitato" section to be a step too far, and I couldn't help but connect the resultant texture to Mannheim Steamroller (perhaps, writing this as I am in mid-December, other cultural influences are also on my mind). Were I to direct this arrangement myself, I might be tempted to leave that part out in favor of preserving the original carillon spirit of the piano prelude, without added grooviness. I'll admit, however, that I understand the need for younger students to have a reliable "metronome" to reference at that point in the work, and perhaps groups with less experience should ignore my earlier complaint in the interest of practicality.

I should also point out that the arrangement calls for a low C-sharp in the timpani, which may not be reliably achieved by the instruments found at every school. Primatic is correct in warning that taking that note up an octave is not

an acceptable substitute, so directors should ascertain whether their lowest timpano is capable of producing a satisfactory low C-sharp before committing to this arrangement.

All in all, this worthwhile arrangement provides a fabulous opportunity for percussion students to crack open their musical passports and visit the piano repertoire of late-19th-century Russia, and to gain some excellent artistic development along the way. I highly recommend this piece to any high school director looking for a short project that is light on technical demand but heavy on artistry.

—Brian Graiser



Big Adventure III

Brian Mueller

\$40.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (8+ players): glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, 4-octave marimba, piano, bass guitar, drum set, 2 congas, suspended cymbal

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

According to the composer, “Big Adventure” was written during the summer of 2017 for the Middle Tennessee State University front ensemble. It was intended to be a fun “lot tune” that drills common keyboard percussion techniques and requires tight ensemble coordination. The piece, however, can also be used as a fun, accessible percussion ensemble piece. The score includes the suggestion to duplicate keyboard parts to fit the size of your ensemble.

The piece begins with a cha-cha feel, and the piano, bass guitar, marimba, and vibraphone parts set up the chord structure. The vibraphone and glockenspiel parts hold the primary melody soon after, which is echoed by the vibraphone. The middle section includes moving eighth- and sixteenth-note passages in all keyboard parts. This leads to a return to the theme and a short coda.

The intended purpose as a “lot tune” for front ensemble is evident in the large variety of techniques included in the keyboard parts, with the rhythm section staying more or less steady. The score lists what techniques to expect in each part, which could help with part assignments. For example, the marimba part includes double vertical strokes, accent-taps, single-line and octave melodic material, single-independent strokes (all four mallets), and 4231 and 4312 permutations.

As intended, this piece would make a great front ensemble tune or an equally effective percussion ensemble piece. The pop feel makes the music accessible to various types of audiences, while the variety of techniques included give the piece great pedagogical value in a tight space.

—Justin Bunting

Changing Winds IV+

Lisa Ann Marsh

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (4 players): glockenspiel, 4.3-octave marimba, 4.5-octave marimba, xylophone, suspended cymbal, crash cymbal, medium tam-tam, large tam-tam, woodblock, wind chimes, tambourine, triangle, claves

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

“Changing Winds” is an interesting 5½-minute piece influenced by climate change and 2016’s “political upheaval.” It is appropriate for advanced high school and younger college ensembles.

The piece begins with players quietly bowing tam-tams and a cymbal, suggesting that national discord is brewing. Other voices enter gradually, shifting from an ethereal texture to a steady sixteenth-note pulse that lays the foundation for the rest of the mildly dissonant piece. The rhythms are all simple, although there are a few brief 3:2 and 4:3 polyrhythms established between members of the ensemble, making this piece pedagogically relevant as an introduction to the concept. Four-mallet proficiency is required for the xylophone and marimba parts, but with nothing faster than sixteenth notes at 92 beats per minute, it’s still approachable for those new to four-mallet playing.

In a vacuum, this work is musically satisfying with interesting timbres and interplay between the individuals in the ensemble. However, when paired with its program notes, the piece and the sentiments it is attempting to convey come off as muted and watered down, as it stops far short of accurately depicting the outrage, concern, and uncertainty that many people feel concerning the topics of its inspiration. Omit the program notes and you’re left with a fine pedagogical option to assign to young and developing ensembles. Check it out and see if it’s right for your group.

—Brian Elizondo

Carol of the Bells II

Mykola Leontovych

Arr. Eric Rath

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (11–14 players): glockenspiel, xylophone, chimes, vibraphone, 4-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba, 4 timpani, snare drum, concert bass drum, suspended cymbal, crash cymbals (optional), China cymbal (shared), triangle, tambourine (optional), bass guitar (optional)

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

This arrangement of “Carol of the Bells” is appropriate for junior high and some high school ensembles. It offers plenty of recognizable material to excite students and audience members while balancing it with new ideas that keep things interesting. “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” is included in this arrangement as well, à la Trans-Siberian Orchestra’s ever-popular “Christmas Eve/Sarajevo 12/24.”

The timpani part requires two tuning changes: E-B-D-E to A-C-D-E, then back to E-B-D-E. The first change occurs over four measures of rest and the second change occurs over two measures of rest. These tunings utilize some extremes of individual drum ranges, so make sure your drums are properly tuned and in good repair.

Thanks to its short length (just under three minutes) and flexible instrumentation, this arrangement is easy to add to most holiday concerts.

—Brian Elizondo

Clocks III–IV

Frank McCarty

\$7.50

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (5 players): 3 timpani, triangle, temple blocks, vibraslap, metal snare drum, orchestra bells, tambourine, xylophone, marimba, 2 bongos, castanets, 3 cowbells, cuckoo, bass drum, small gong, 2 woodblocks, 2 suspended cymbals, finger cymbals, chimes, large gong, guiro, claves, small ratchet

Web: [score sample](#)

Frank McCarty’s quintet “Clocks” is scored for a wide variety of keyboard, non-pitched, and ancillary percussion instruments. It is comprised of 10 unique gestures per player followed by a rhythmically unison coda section. Employing elements of chance to determine the number of repeats, these gestures can be performed in any order, but no two successive cues can be played on the same instrument. It is best suited for an advanced high school or college percussion quintet with an interest in indeterminate music.

While most of the gestures could be sight read, players need to familiarize themselves with specifics such as implement requirements and playing area. For example, player five is instructed to drag a triangle beater along the ridges of a gong, while player three must spin coins on heads of bongos. Because players choose the order of the gestures and number of repeats, a conductor is suggested by the composer to facilitate structural shifts in performance.

The greatest challenge with this work is maintaining dynamic contrast. With only one exception, there are no written dynamics in any of the gestures. McCarty states that each gesture is to begin *pianissimo* and crescendo to *mezzo-piano*, only to decrescendo back to *pianissimo* over the course of 10–20 repeats. Player five is the only individual with a notated *forte*, written on the long ratchet roll. This, coupled with the recommended duration of six minutes, may make it difficult to sustain musical interest. Nonetheless, “Clocks” utilizes very unusual timbral effects and would work well in a variety of performance situations.

—Danielle Moreau

Dreams from the Dark Forest II

Brian Slawson

\$38.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (13 players): ukulele, glockenspiel, chimes, vibraphone, xylophone, 4.3-octave marimba, 4 timpani, finger cymbals, 2 woodblocks, 2 concert toms, 2 congas, bass drum, additional accessory instruments

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

It can be challenging to find repertoire to help young percussionists see past the notes on a page and develop an overall character. “Dreams from the Dark Forest” helps to bridge this gap and opens up dialogue by providing an open-ended thematic concept. Each of the four movements includes a specific yet broad title to give young percussionists an opportunity to take a small idea and run with it in their own way.

Scored for 13 players, Brian Slawson includes

some challenging instrumentation for younger ensembles but provides some information to ease wary directors. The ukulele part consists of mostly open-string individual lines with a few simple chords, not requiring an experienced player. If crotales are not available, Slawson provides useful alternatives — including energy chimes or glockenspiel with finger cymbals — to replicate the effect. He also includes a large list of possible instruments for the improvised thunderstorm (Movement III), providing ensembles with several options.

The level of difficulty for each part is fairly consistent throughout the movements; however, the overall challenges from the most difficult mallet parts to the percussion parts does vary. All parts are limited to whole notes through eighth notes. The percussion parts are significantly less demanding than the mallet parts, allowing for some ease and flexibility in part assignments. All mallet parts are similar, written mostly in A-minor or D-minor, depending on the movement. The timpani part requires some tuning in between movements, potentially requiring a more advanced player. Overall, this four-movement piece allows for an ensemble with a diverse range of skills to perform together and focus more on the music beyond the notes on the page.

"Dreams from the Dark Forest" allows directors to move away from simply teaching the notes or rhythms and opens up avenues of discussion on creating a unique programmatic performance. The composer cleverly includes open-ended program notes to allow for the meaning of each movement to be a joint discussion within an ensemble, even including the third improvised movement. This is a great ensemble for middle schools or young high school groups looking to encourage creativity from within the ensemble to take ownership of the character of each movement.

—Matthew Geiger

Klung VI

David Macbride

\$19.50

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (3 players): 3 instruments capable of playing a 13-note scale, 6 sustained metal sounds

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

Passing away unexpectedly last year, David Macbride left the percussion world with significant solo and chamber works in the repertoire, including "Klung" for three percussionists using three distinct melodic instruments. Macbride's interest in world music traditions is obvious in this intersection of styles between Balinese, Indonesian, Thai, Indian, and more. With the use of non-standard, non-Western percussion instruments, "Klung" creates a new soundscape that envelops and invites the listener while also creating a backdrop for rhythmic interplay amongst the musicians.

"Klung" was commissioned and written for Tim Broschius, Gene Koshinski, and Bill Solomon in 2006. The online recording features the Quey Percussion Duo with Solomon on Koshinski's album *Klung*, with Koshinski playing his homemade marimba, Broschius playing a Thai ranat, and Solomon playing a West African balafon. Macbride indicates that the instrument choice is completely up to the performer, but a preferred sound concept includes dry, non-Western mallet

instruments or even timbrack setups. The timbrack comes from Michael Udow's concept of a collection of multiple percussion instruments arranged in a visual way to represent a keyboard. Each player is also asked to play two sustained metal sounds, which contribute to the gamelan effect.

The piece is very demanding from a notational point of view. Macbride uses a standard five-line staff to notate each part, and without a key signature, the measures can easily run together, and the intricate rhythms and fast metric shifts add to the complexity. Putting all of that together along with the creation of three unique instruments makes for one intense piece. Designed for the professional or graduate level ensemble, "Klung" is a great way to add a non-Western touch to a concert that will create a unique timbral combination to draw interest and excitement.

—Matthew Geiger

The Lamed Wufniks IV-V

Mark Saya

\$8.00

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (3 players): 2 congas, bongos, large mounted tambourine, 4 cowbells, hi-hat, 2 log drums, large suspended caxixi

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

"The Lamed Wufniks" is a trio for non-pitched percussion instruments written in 1985. The work is based on a Jewish legend of the same name, which states that 36 righteous men inhabit the earth and whose existence spares all others. According to Saya, "If a Lamed Wufnik ever learns of his significance, he immediately dies, to be replaced by another somewhere else on earth. They have no apparent power, but it is due to them that God refrains from destroying the world."

The piece is supplied in score-form only and is divided into seven lettered sections. While this suggests the sections are to be performed in alphabetical order, they are not notated as such. For example, section A is followed by section C, followed then by sections B, D, and F. Because the end of each section is marked "attacca," I presume Saya wants the lettered sections performed in this fashion. It also reminds me of each Lamed Wufnik learning of his importance, subsequently dying and being replaced by another. However, nothing is indicated in the performance notes.

Each player has five instruments written on a two-line staff, and well as "+" and "o" notations to indicate where or how the instrument is to be struck. Each of the three parts is equal in difficulty but challenging to prepare as an ensemble due to several rhythmic complexities. Utilizing a moderately portable instrumentation, "The Lamed Wufnik" would be a fine addition to any collegiate percussion ensemble program.

—Danielle Moreau

Marshall's Medium Message VI

Roger Hannay

\$7.50

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (5 players): xylophone, vibraphone, glockenspiel, tubular bells, piano, celesta, windchimes, maracas, tambourine, temple blocks, toms, bongos, tenor drum, bass drum, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tam-tam

Web: [score sample](#)

In our current social and political climate, the world is often viewed through the lens of social media, YouTube, and online updates. Although written in 1969, Roger Hannay's "Marshall's Medium Message" still resonates as a charged message toward our outlook on media. Hannay's guided ensemble improvisation takes its cue from Marshall McLuhan, who, in 1964, published a book suggesting that the medium itself, not the content within, carries more weight than the material.

Written toward the end of Hannay's penultimate period composing frequently with electronics and multi-media, "Marshall's Medium Message" uses acoustic percussion instruments along with piano and celeste positioned in a large circle on the stage. The piece is broken up into seven sections, with relative time lengths given in the score. Each section begins and ends with cues from the various players, requiring a highly alert ensemble at all times.

The introduction sets the stage, literally, as the performers are asked to position the instruments during the performance while the fifth player takes his or her place on a conductor's stool to adjust a microphone. This player's whole role in the piece is to improvise during the fifth section using typical airport terminal announcements. The other four percussion parts are written using a combination of graphic notation, standard notation, and written instructions. Each part is incredibly individualistic, providing a great opportunity for personal artistic contributions throughout.

The piece culminates in the final section with all percussionists moving rapidly clockwise around the entire setup, playing as loudly as possible and striking all sound sources. After a cue from one performer, the players rush off the stage leaving the expressionless announcer and the still-resonating instruments onstage. The piece is structured to challenge the performers in the ensemble to create a meaningful experience for the audience, while tying together all events into one cohesive creation.

—Matthew Geiger

Obelisk III

David Cope

\$7.50

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (5 players): 5 different percussion instruments or like sets of percussion instruments

Web: [score sample](#)

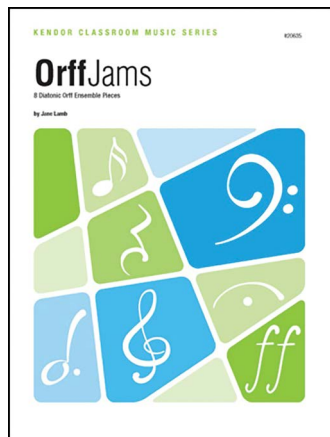
"Obelisk" is a contemporary work that allows the performer to choose instrumentation, as well as improvise and select parameters for duration. The composer provides detailed instructions regarding how to choose instrumentation, form, dynamics, extra effects, and preferred staging. The score is notated as four different cells containing aleatoric notation of all five parts. The piece is played five times through with each playing having different temporal parameters.

The individual parts are not technically demanding, which allows this piece to be accessible to various levels of percussion groups. The majority of rehearsal time would initially be spent interpreting the score and making decisions as an ensemble. After that, the correct pacing of the aleatoric notation must be realized by the five performers working together.

"Obelisk" would be a great piece for any per-

cussion ensemble (young or advanced) looking to experiment with open parameters and contemporary performance (a dark auditorium with flashlights attached to each performer). This type of work gives a certain artistic choice and freedom to the performers that is not afforded in most repertoire.

—Justin Bunting



Orff Jams I–II

Jane Lamb

\$29.95

Kendor Music

Instrumentation (5–8 players): Orff instruments (soprano xylophone, alto xylophone, bass xylophone, glockenspiel, alto metallophone), congas, bongos, various percussion accessory instruments

Web: [score sample](#)

This collection of eight works for Orff ensemble is geared towards the general music classroom. Each piece includes parts for Orff mallet instruments and standard percussion instruments. While general technique is explained in the book for how to play the mallet instruments, the percussion instrument instruction can be lacking at times. This is not a huge issue for instruments such as shakers or cowbell, but issues may arise when the composer describes the two sounds on the conga drum as “tone and bass” as opposed to “open and bass.”

The pieces are all of relatively similar difficulty. One uses 6/8 meter as opposed to the other works in quarter-note based meters, and the most complex rhythm used is a dotted-eighth to sixteenth-note. The composer states that these works can be used as frameworks to create your own arrangements and forms.

General music specialists looking for additional repertoire for their groups may find this collection useful, though some additional fleshing out of the percussion techniques used would have been helpful.

—Brian Nozny

Palm Reader V

Benjamin Holmes

\$29.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (2 players): 2 snare drums, djembe, 1 octave of crotales

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

The art of palmystry, also known as palm reading, is often explained away as a parlor trick without substance. With its “flashy” split parts,

I expected this work to embody its namesake; I was wrong. This piece is unique and creative, offering far more than novelty.

“Palm Reader” is a duo for percussion that, in around four minutes, takes the audience on a journey using over-the-top rhythmic complexity and lilting octatonic melodies. This advanced solo manages to unexpectedly present a gift for the performers and the audience as it is both visually and aurally appealing. Benjamin Holmes harnesses the power of the piece’s asymmetrical rhythms through orchestrating an intricate hoquet — between crotales, snare drum, and djembe — that reveals a complex yet aesthetically accessible work, worthy of multiple performances.

This efficient work calls for each performer to use a snare drum and four unique pitches on crotales while they both share a djembe. With this instrumentation, Holmes has written an advanced work for percussion that is approachable for performers from a variety of backgrounds. While the use of pervasive split parts will appeal to performers with a strong background in marching percussion, this work would be a great addition for any undergraduate recital, or even as a small chamber ensemble piece on a percussion ensemble concert.

—Quintin Mallette

Pin Ball V

Jack McKenzie

\$25.00

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (11 players): 3 suspended cymbals, 3 snare drums, hi-hat, triangle, 2 castanet pairs, 2 musical saws, slide whistle, bass drum, ratchet, maracas, sleighbells, 3 tambourines, wood drum, three 26-inch timpani, 29-inch timpani, woodblock, temple blocks, bongos, xylophone, 2 cowbells, 4 brake drums, water gong, 2 guiros, claves, tam-tam, handbells (E4, F4, A4, C5, E5) or vibraphone

Web: [score sample](#)

“Pin Ball” is the most realistic representation of an actual pinball game to be found. Jack McKenzie has successfully managed to recreate the sounds of the classic arcade game through simple notation and clever use of standard percussion instrumentation. The score is very clear (with edits by Thomas Siwe and Michael Udow).

Written in 1964, the score essentially takes the listener through the sounds and scenarios created by a conventional pinball machine. Each player has multiple responsibilities from both technical and musical standpoints. A performance will also require a very competent conductor as there are many tempo changes. The three limiting factors of “Pin Ball” are the number of players required (11), the number of instruments needed (2 musical saws, 4 brake drums, etc.) and the difficulty of the piece. The handbells can be substituted with vibraphone.

“Pin Ball” is an early percussion ensemble piece that is simply a gem. It would be perfect for a (very) advanced high school percussion ensemble or a collegiate/professional ensemble.

—Joe Millea

Pistoleros III

Brian Slawson

\$35.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (13 players): chimes, xylo-

phone, 4-octave marimba, 4.3-octave marimba, 2 timpani, bongos, snare drum, 2 concert toms, bass drum, vibraslap, temple blocks (or 2 wood-blocks), crash cymbals, tam-tam

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

This three-minute composition for percussion ensemble pays tribute to gunfighting traditions in old Mexico. According to the composer, the piece opens with an “anxious” introduction that is followed by a rhythmic battle and tense standoff between players in the group. With varying levels of difficulty from part to part, it is most suitable for advanced middle school or younger high school percussion ensembles.

The entire work seems to focus on rhythm, even within the xylophone and marimba parts. I particularly enjoyed the juxtaposition of eighth-note and triplet figures, written in unison between the keyboard and battery players. There is a significant amount of dynamic nuance, seen both as a large-scale concept and within each part. These concepts add clear education benefits. Because of the individualistic nature of each of the parts, it truly requires 13 players in order to effectively perform the work.

Aside from a short paragraph about the piece, the necessary instrumentation, and recommended stage setup, no additional information about “Pistoleros” is included. This is sufficient, but I personally find interpretive considerations and the composer’s thoughts very valuable. Furthermore, while Brian Slawson hints that the work is to be programmatic, I did not get this impression from either the composer’s notes or musical material. As a 21st-century educator, I would be cautious about selecting a work about guns for a public school concert if historical relevance is not clearly evident.

—Danielle Moreau

Rites IV

Jack H. McKenzie

\$25.00

Media Press Music

Instrumentation (9 players): 6 tom-toms, 6 timpani, 2 snare drums, 2 bass drums, 2 triangles, 5 suspended cymbals, 3 sizzle cymbals, 3 wood-blocks, temple blocks, large tam tam, medium gong, water gong, 4 brake drums, 2 anvils, 2 musical saws

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

This piece is written in five continuous sections: “Processional,” “Earth,” “Air,” “Water,” and “Fire.” The sections incorporate a variety of different implements, as well as the instruments to explore the sounds of the representative elements. Instruments and mallets are clearly indicated through pictograph notation.

The piece revolves around the different timbres that percussionists are able to create, specifically those created with different beaters. The performers need to be very aware of the sound they are producing relative to the composer’s intent. The different metrical changes, along with the subtleties needed, would make a conductor helpful for this work. Although technically nothing is too difficult, the nuances needed would make this work more suitable for an older ensemble. McKenzie utilizes these sounds to create an aural environment that represents each of the elements beautifully. The biggest issue a group might find in the performance of this work is obtaining all of the instruments required. This piece would work very well on a

collegiate-level percussion ensemble concert, to showcase the musicality non-pitched percussion instruments can achieve.

—Josh Armstrong

Sic Semper Draconis II

John Herndon

\$32.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (12 players): chimes, glockenspiel, vibraphone, xylophone, 4.3-octave, 4 timpani, snare drum, tom-toms, bass drum, China cymbal, hi-hat, Mark Tree, temple blocks, suspended cymbal, finger cymbals, triangle, brake drum

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

This accessible percussion ensemble is scored for 12 performers who are divided into keyboard (six performers) and non-keyboard percussion. Composed in 4/4 throughout its 2 minute, 40-second length, Herndon's placement of effectual dynamics, easy rhythmic patterns (which border on being repetitive), and the delightful G-minor tonality provide just enough sophistication for this composition to appeal to the junior high or second-year percussion ensemble. This composition could showcase their abilities either as a festival selection or as repertoire for the end-of-term showcase concert. Only two-mallet technique is required of the keyboard players.

—Jim Lambert

Soca Polka III

Louis Köhler

Arranged by Brian Slawson

\$36.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (3-14+ players): required xylophone, 4.3- or 4.5-octave marimba; optional glockenspiel, temple blocks, bongos, chimes, three timpani, 2 tom-toms, kick drum, snare drum, bass drum, crash cymbals, maracas, 2 cowbells

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

This concert percussion arrangement by Brian Slawson transforms an original polka by German composer Louis Köhler into a very accessible 2½-minute percussion ensemble in a soca style. Slawson has designed this ensemble for a flexible instrumentation of as few as three performers (xylophone plus two marimbas) or an expanded version of up to 14 players (the core keyboard performers plus 11 additional performers).

The style is enhanced by the expanded instrumentation, which could permit a few less-experienced players to perform on maracas or bongos. The upper keyboard percussion parts (xylophone and marimba 1) require two-mallet technique, while the marimba 2 part demands basic four-mallet technique. A web-based performance recording is helpful for stylistic references. This ensemble would be appropriate for the younger percussion ensemble (probably younger high school level).

—Jim Lambert

Sound Frames V

Thomas Albert

\$12.00

Media Press Music

Instrumentation: vibraphone, oboe, alto saxophone, trombone

Web: [score sample](#)

This work for mixed ensemble is aleatoric and achieves this through the use of graphic notation. Each instrument has a line in the middle of its "box," and that line indicates the middle range of the instrument. Noteheads are placed above, below, or on the line to indicate the range of the instrument that the notes are to be played, while the vertical distance between the notes indicates the approximate intervallic relationship.

There are three sections to the piece, with each one lasting two minutes. A conductor is to be used to indicate specific time markings in the work and help keep the ensemble together and in sync. The saxophone and trombone player will be required to use flutter tonguing, and the oboe player must occasionally use forked fingerings.

As this piece is almost completely improvisatory the players must listen and react to each other. Some sections require the players to "follow" another player, requiring excellent musicianship. This work would go well on concert of 20th-century music, and would work well with a group of graduate-level musicians.

—Josh Armstrong

Sound Off! II

Chris Roode

\$30.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (7+ players): glockenspiel, snare drum, crash cymbals, concert bass drum, 3 standard mallet instruments or Orff mallet instruments of choice

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

"Sound Off!" is a three-movement work that requires a minimum of seven players at comparable ability levels but may be expanded by doubling, tripling, or quadrupling any parts to fit the size of the group. At approximately seven minutes in length, it is most suitable for younger middle school students.

Chris Roode includes detailed performance notes and instrument recommendations based on ensemble size. For example, he states that marimbas and vibraphones work best as the bass and alto voices, and smaller battery instruments blend better with an Orff ensemble. This is particularly beneficial for instructors who need more assistance in selecting appropriate equipment. Additionally, while the piece consists of three movements, it is possible to perform each as if it were a stand-alone work.

The first movement, "Attention!" begins and ends with an ensemble vocalization that adds a theatrical element to the composition. The battery parts are traditional in nature, exploring simple rudimental figures and syncopated eighth-note lines. Each of the mallet parts is manageable, consisting primarily of quarter-note and eighth-note figures that are in unison or doubled by other players. Though arguably the easiest movement in the piece, there are plenty of dynamic changes to keep everyone engaged.

The second and third movements, "Sound Off!" and "Salute!" explore similar dynamic and rhythmic concepts but include more syncopations, exposed melodic lines, hand-to-hand independence, and increasingly complex rudimental figures. I particularly enjoyed the meter change from 4/4 to 6/8 and back in movement three, which provides students a musical opportunity to study this concept.

"Sound Off!" comes with an accompanying CD

that includes a pdf file of each part and an audio recording to help expedite rehearsal preparation. The product's quality and educational value make it a recommended addition to a middle school library.

—Danielle Moreau

Under the Influence V

Brian Blume

\$45.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation (6 players): crotales, chimes, glockenspiel, 3-octave vibraphone, 3.5-octave vibraphone, 4.3-octave marimba, 5-octave marimba, low tom, kick drum, snare drum with splash cymbal on top, 2 hi-hats, China cymbal, sizzle cymbal, cabasa, 2 sets of sleighbells, egg shaker, large shaker, 5 tuned rice bowls, log drum (4 pitches), 3 triangles, flexatone

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

Brian Blume has created one of the stand-out percussion ensemble pieces of 2019. His combination of groove, timbre, and creative orchestration make me want to assemble my percussion students and begin rehearsing immediately. Originally composed for the Indiana University Percussion Ensemble, the title speaks to the various experiences the composer had while a student there, and their influences on him as a musician.

The music maintains a sense of groovy (sometimes multi-meter) minimalism throughout, often with overlapping entrances and sections that feature soli scoring against a repetitive rhythmic backdrop. Two of my favorite sections feature "soloistic" hi-hat writing and the combination of pitched flexatone and pitched rice bowls.

The score requires some specific instruments that not every university program will have, along with six players who can maneuver complex rhythmic textures amid numerous stick/mallet specifications and specialized performance instructions. While a conductor could certainly be used, it can be assumed that such skilled performers could perform the piece as a true chamber work. I truly expect this piece to appear on a PASIC showcase concert in the near future.

—Jason Baker

STEEL PAN ENSEMBLE

Trinidad Tidings II-III

John Willmarth

\$32.00

Tapspace Publications

Instrumentation: lead pan, double seconds, guitar or cello, bass pans, drum set, brake drum, congas

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

In this steel band version of "Trinidad Tidings," John Willmarth has put together a number of the most famous holiday melodies and arranged them in a soca style. "Joy to the World," "Deck the Halls," "Ode to Joy," and "The Hallelujah Chorus," are all brilliantly mashed-up to form one cohesive and groovy piece. Included in this arrangement are drum set and auxiliary percussion parts.

Willmarth has done a particularly excellent job of fitting these songs to the soca style. Rath-

er than simply orchestrating the parts for steel band, Willmarth has written them as if these songs were originally meant for this instrumentation. The transitions are seamless, and the vertical orchestration allows for doubling any of the parts.

If you are playing a holiday concert with your steel band, this set of medium-easy songs is not to be missed. It is sure to be a hit at any holiday concert.

—Joe Millea

SNARE DRUM SOLO

Deus Ex Metronome VI

Russell Wharton

\$23.00

Tapspace Publications

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

“Deus Ex Metronome” is a snare drum solo with audio accompaniment. As one may infer from the title, the audio track is the metronome. However, this is not just any metronome; Russell Wharton sampled the sounds from the Boss DB-90 and used them as both a click track and melodic source (by manipulating the DB-90’s tuning pitches).

The audio track starts with three measures of solo metronome in 4/4 at 90 bpm. The snares are to be turned off, and the performer should have brushes at the ready. The snare enters on measure four, playing a theme comprised of quintuplet partials. This rhythmic phrasing is explored throughout the piece. The intensity is heightened by increasing the rate of subdivisions to sextuplets, phrased across the beat and over the bar. The time signature then weaves between 7/8, 3/4, 4/4, 3/8, 5/16, 1/4, and 6/4, before settling into 12/8. The quintuplet theme now returns, this time with a stick in the right hand. The left hand plays rhythmic brush sweeps before switching to a stick, when both hands play sixteenth-note based rhythms. The phrases again stretch over the barline. The rhythmic intensity increases, aided by the electronic melodies.

The next section is a bit faster, incorporating groove-based solo ideas over a syncopated sixteenth-note track. The tempo then increases, and the drum set enters on the track. The snares are turned on at this point. After the drum set drops out, the melody and snare become one, with the snare soon embellishing upon the rhythmic framework. The tempo decreases for the final section, where quintuplets reappear, phrased in both the melody and solo parts. The piece builds to a *fortississimo* climax with sixteenth-note triplets as the ending rhythm.

The piece has a very futuristic feel, at times reminiscent of video-game music. The performer must be comfortable playing to both a click and melodic track. Since the solo is performed with accompaniment, there is little room for error. It will take some time and practice to prepare this piece; however, it will be time well spent.

—Jeff W. Johnson

Eight Pieces for Concert Snare Drum V

Peter Jarvis

\$26.00

Self-Published

Loosely modeled after Eliot Carter’s *Eight Pieces for Four Timpani*, Peter Jarvis provides a variety of musical and technical opportunities with these pieces for snare drum. Each piece is dedicated to a different person Jarvis has encountered along the way. His program notes provide short stories about his relationship with that person, which offers a little insight into the piece.

Most pieces are between two and three minutes, with the exception of “The Snares of Time,” which is around three minutes and 20 seconds, and “A Brief Look in the Rear View Mirror,” which is just under two minutes in duration.

The individual pieces cover a range of styles. From the erratic rhythmic accents in “The Snares of Time” to the backbeat groove in “Funk 2019,” there is a lot to get out of this collection. Some are more straight-forward (“Rhapsody for Snare Drum,” “And On It Goes,” “Poly Groove”), while other pieces will require more planning of logistics (“Timbre,” “The Snares of Time”). Most of the pieces in this collection are advanced, but few are overly difficult. Any one of these pieces could work as a springboard to longer, more substantial works for solo snare drum. The composer indicates that it is not recommended to perform more than four of these works on a single concert, but it is conceivable that the entire collection could be peppered throughout a concert as a framing device.

There are a few aspects that could be improved upon, mostly in the engraving category. Making choices on percussion notation can sometimes mean choosing between an odd way of notating something and an odder way of notating something. With that in mind, it seems that a five-line staff could have helped clarify notation throughout. A single key at the beginning that is followed by all pieces would be helpful; as it stands, the composer provides explanation on each piece’s notational quirks at the beginning, requiring flipping back and forth. Most pieces require at least one page turn, preventing reading that piece straight through upon purchasing the collection.

None of these issues prevent a convincing performance, and minor inconveniences of notation preferences and pagination should not outweigh musical content. Regarding content, *Eight Pieces for Concert Snare Drum* delivers a wide variety, and this is a worthy addition to the concert snare drum repertoire.

—Jamie Whitmarsh

Pop & Mom VI

Nicolas Martynciow

€11,37

Gérard Billaudot Éditeur

Web: [score sample](#)

Nicolas Martynciow has already composed some of the most accessible, yet intricate, solo snare drum repertoire for the contemporary percussionist, and “Pop & Mom” continues in that vein. The exciting elements of Martynciow’s previous compositions remain prevalent in this new work as well: an emphasis on color and originality around the snare drum, a fun and sophisticated combination of rudimental and



concert language, and an overall sonic structure that employs a variety of timbres and textures that blend and meld together, seamlessly floating from one thematic area to another.

Martynciow employs detail in his notation, similar to his other works, to illustrate the variety of extended techniques required to perform the solo. He has created a YouTube video to explain all of the various sounds and effects of the piece for those working on performing it. The particulars in notation provide for a very specific sound design, which is then imitated and expanded in the body percussion and vocal elements. Some of the extended techniques used in this work — beyond the fast-paced snare drum material — include playing with hands or brushes on the drum as well as using the snare drum sticks to mimic vocal effects, and using vocal effects to mimic traditional drum set sounds.

In one section, Ravel’s “Bolero” returns as a subject of Martynciow’s compositional manipulations as the voice replicates the repetitive bass line against a rhythmically complex snare line played with the hands. Similarly, the rest of the solo also revolves around imitation and grooves. With such sections as “Metal drummer solo” and “Very rhythmical and with a swing,” it is easy to see how a foundational concept of feel is essential to getting the most out of this work.

At just under seven minutes, “Pop & Mom” is an excellent choice for the graduate or professional recital, forcing the performer to coordinate limbs and dexterity as well as integrate vocal techniques toward a common musical goal. I personally cannot wait to start working on Martynciow’s newest creation for my next solo recital. “Pop & Mom” is definitely worth the effort.

—Matthew Geiger

SOLO COLLECTIONS FOR VARIOUS PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

Accessible Solo Repertoire for Percussion I–III

Robert Clayton

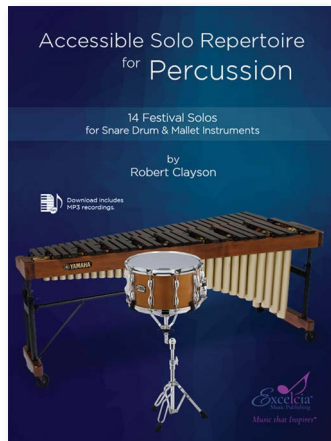
\$14.99

Excelcia Music Publishing

Instrumentation: 4.3-octave marimba, xylophone, bells, snare drum

Web: [audio recording](#)

Subtitled “14 Festival Solos for Snare Drum and Mallet Percussion,” this collection includes six solos for snare drum, three solos for



bells, two solos for xylophone, and three solos for marimba.

The six snare drum solos are all within the beginning level of percussion playing. The first solo requires only quarter and eighth notes, while the last one has sixteenths and triplets included. Stickings are included and use double-stroke rudiments only. There are no flams or ruffs in any of the solos and only 5-, 9-, and 16-stroke rolls are required. The bell and xylophone pieces require only two mallets and are all loosely based around scalar patterns found in many warm-ups. The marimba solos require four mallets and range in style from a chorale to a waltz. The pieces utilize every stroke type with the exception of the triple lateral, making them more at an intermediate level. The melodic material is thin, and the pieces revolve more around the chord changes. All of the pieces in the collection lack phrase markings, perhaps making it difficult for young students to learn about musical nuances.

This book strives to be a good resource for beginning percussionists to learn simple pieces. However, the pieces themselves could use a little more work to really nail down a final product. In an effort to cover four different instruments in 14 solos, many aspects were overlooked such as quality, editing, and musical clarity. Overall, these pieces would probably benefit from being put into separate collections where the author could focus on one set of techniques.

—Josh Armstrong

INDETERMINATE INSTRUMENTATION

STNCLS V

Paul Steg
\$8.00

Media Press Music

"STNCLS," written in 1976 by Paul Steg, is an aleatoric piece for "any mallet instrument with accessory percussion." A search on YouTube produced no recordings or videos of the work. The piece may also be performed on prepared or unprepared piano.

The notation is completely graphic, consisting of wavy lines punctuated by other graphic symbols including triangles and circles. The vertical dimension of the score indicates relative pitch, except for notes in the box (which indicates free improvisation on the accessory instruments). The horizontal dimension indi-

cates approximate time in minutes and seconds. Timings are indicated along the horizontal plane. Other notations indicate things like dynamic levels and crescendo/diminuendo, "fast group," and "sustain to arrow," along with other symbols for the accessory percussion instruments.

Needless to say, performances of this piece will vary greatly depending on the instruments used and the interpretation of the player. Pieces like this were popular in the 1960s and '70s but seemed to go out of favor near the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Now there may be a new interest in this music, as everything old is new again.

—Tom Morgan

RECORDINGS



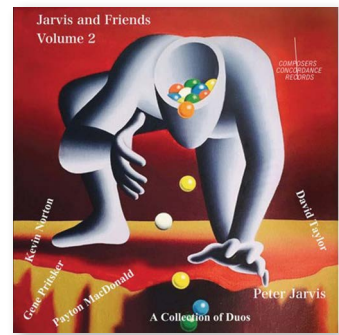
Between Two Worlds

Jeff Denson, Romain Pilon, Brian Blade
Ridgeway Records

Between Two Worlds is a new jazz CD by bassist Jeff Denson with guitarist Romain Pilon and drummer Brian Blade. The title may be referring to the American world of jazz for Denson and Blade and the French jazz world of European guitarist Pilon. This is a great jazz album of interactive and intuitive improvisational music making.

The guitar and bass weave around each other, making the varied accompaniment as enjoyable as the lead improviser! Blade's drumming throughout is at time DeJohnette-ish in his driving time feels with surprising twists in his impressive comping. The quality of the music in all aspects — the trio's performances, Denson's and Pilon's writing, and the production — recalls for this listener the ECM-era Bass Desires records that featured Marc Johnson, Bill Frisell, John Scofield, and Peter Erskine. The manner in which the kindred musicality of these three musicians is such a good fit makes the listening experience timeless in its ability to engage focus and transcend past and present trends. The Bass Desires records were like that in the 1980s, sounding neither of the present nor the past. And that's what I like so much about this album; each track is filled with successful real-time decision making, providing value for the listener with each sonic passage to engage with. The music is filled with complexity and an approachable spirit calling for repeated listening to soak in the moments of each tune. Musicians may find themselves between their own two worlds of wanting to listen more and being inspired to play!

—N. Scott Robinson



Jarvis and Friends, Volume 2 – A Collection of Duos

Jarvis and Friends
Naxos of America

I have a sweet spot for the unexpected, and *Volume 2* by Jarvis and Friends is grounded in the unexpected. Featuring both recorded and improvised works, this collection of duos is the second installment of largely duo recordings by the seminal performer, composer, and conductor Peter Jarvis.

The seamless manner in which this collection of duos shifts between pre-composed and spontaneously composed works leads the listener on a consistently stable musical journey, regardless of each piece's origin of composition. A high level of authenticity is omnipresent and speaks to the performers' collective maturity and sensitivity to timbre. Similar to Jarvis and Friends first volume of recordings, Peter Jarvis enlists a notable roster of musicians including bass trombonist David Taylor, guitarist Gene Pritsker, and percussionists Kevin Norton and Payton MacDonald to join him on this sonic exploration.

This recording is a worthy education in the versatility of improvisation, from the array of rock-inspired duets with Pritsker, with their adventures through metal, psychedelic, and punk, to the hard-bop explorations with Taylor. This eclectic recording is organized into tracks by duo partner, featuring a total of 20 tracks ranging in length from under 30 seconds to almost 15 minutes. Recording engineers David Kerzner and Daniel Lucci expertly balanced a startling array of timbres such that each duo collaboration feels equally present without sacrificing either instrumentalist's nuance.

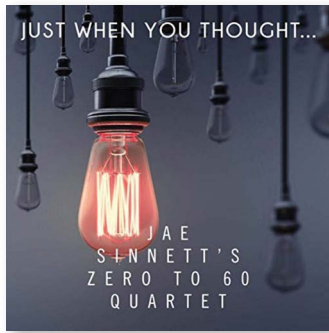
I recommend this recording not only for its artistic merits, but also for its pedagogical merit as a tool for exploring the less tangible aspects of musicianship necessary in chamber music settings. Congratulations to Jarvis and Friends on a great recording worthy of spending time with.

—Quintin Mallette

Just When You Thought

Jae Sinnett's Zero to 60 Quartet
Self-Released

This collection of nine original jazz compositions showcases the exceptional talents of each member of the group. The quartet members include Jae Sinnett, drums; Ralph Bowen, tenor saxophone; Terry Burrell, electric and acoustic bass; and Allen Farnham, piano and Fender Rhodes. The works vary in style, tempi, and color, and each tends to feature the talent of one of the group's members. I was especially amazed with the talent and performance of saxophonist Ralph Bowen.



The only item lacking with the CD is any information on the performers. With the performance level of this collection, it would be nice to have some historical background of the group. I hope that many of you will want to have this CD in your library.

—George Frock



Live at Jazz Standard

Stranahan, Zaleski, Rosato
Capri Records

Coming at you with a diverse array of stylistic influences and originality, *Live at Jazz Standard* delivers excitement on a number of levels. With Colin Stranahan on drums, Glenn Zaleski on piano, and Rick Rosato on bass, the trio performs five originals as well as one cover. Zaleski often leads the group as the main melodic and harmonic voice, and the majority of the works on the album are his own, ranging from free-flowing, fast-paced, and energetic ("Forecast") to ostinato driven, Latin-funk infused ("Sullivan Place"), and even to mellow and somber ("Chorale"). It is obvious that the trio clicks together, each member given rhythmic freedom to float around the groove, making room for complexities throughout. Even the standard "All the Things You Are" twists and turns, founded on an unusual grouping of 9/8. Nonetheless, the lack of simple rhythmic ground in the more upbeat works only serves to enhance the overall group aesthetic and allow the listener to relish the lyricism and nuance in the ballads.

Focusing on Stranahan's drumming, the entire album provides a great glimpse at his wide range of skills and ability to melodically support and create. His constant musical communication within the trio allows for an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of colors within each work. Stranahan's fluidity helps to smooth out the various metric and rhythmic irregularities while juxtaposing his own ideas into the mix. Solos taken in almost all of the tunes help to demonstrate his dexterity around the kit as well as his lyrical manipulation

of melodies around the drums within the overall form.

Stranahan, Zaleski, and Rosato excellently program the recording to weave in between various musical styles and highlight each individual at well-spaced intervals. The interludes of the "Waltz" and "Chorale" provide a breath of relaxed air against the groovy, syncopated energy of the other four tunes. *Live at Jazz Standard* combines excitement, extreme rhythmic interplay, and introspection into an hour of entertaining listening.

—Matthew Geiger

Marassa Duo

James Armstrong, Nicholas Papador
Self-Released

Marassa Duo is James Armstrong and Nicholas Papador, and their self-titled album brings together a pleasing mix of instruments and timbres that complement the various styles that are present in the pieces. The ensemble playing is tight and the sounds are warm and clear. One can softly hear the occasional breath cue from the players, which is viscerally pleasing, and gives the album the feel of a chamber concert.

The first piece, "Marassa II" is an original Marassa Duo composition and showcases a variety of styles and instruments. It is by turns groovy and soft, alternating between warm woods like marimba and sparkling metallics like steel pan and interspersed with hand drums.

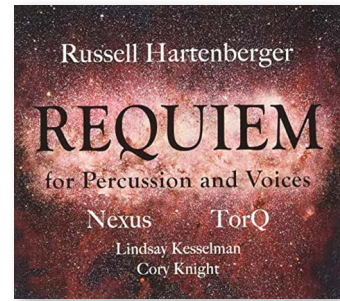
The second piece, "Oyelo Que Te Conviene" by Eddie Palmieri, is a Latin style marimba and steel pan duet. The style of playing is in more of a dance folk-marimba style, and different from the classical playing in the first piece. The second half of the piece adds hand drums and Latin accessories such as guiro. While requiring technical proficiency, this piece would be highly accessible to those not familiar with classical percussion music.

The third piece, "Cross Hatch" by Toru Takemitsu, changes gears to a dreamy marimba/vibraphone duet that is lovely clocking in at just a minute and a half. It pairs well with the fourth piece, "Dans Ginen" by Marassa Duo, which also starts with marimba and vibraphone, but ties in the dance style of the second piece with syncopated rhythms, cajon, congas, and bata. This track includes a third percussionist, Ray Dillard, who also produced the album.

The last piece, "Voduophidian," is another original Marassa Duo composition. It starts out with spooky ambient sounds that dissolve around a marimba part that gradually emerges into a pretty melody accompanied by shaker. This melody in turn is joined by hand drums and becomes more strict and driving. As the marimba fades out the hand drums are joined by vocals. This process is then repeated in reverse. Though this is the longest track, it tells a story as a series of thematic vignettes that flow one into the next.

Marassa Duo is available in digital, CD, and vinyl format, and is worth the listen. I'm sure that the pieces are stunning to witness live.

—Marilyn K. Clark Silva



Requiem for Percussion and Voices

Russell Hartenberger
Self-Released

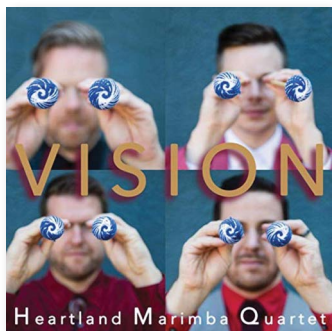
Russell Hartenberger has enjoyed a long and successful career including being a founding member of the percussion group Nexus and his work as a composer and arranger. Throughout this journey, he has experienced several different cultures and events that have shaped him as a musician. Performed by members of the Nexus and TorQ percussion ensembles and vocalists Lindsay Kesselman and Cory Knight, this album is comprised of original music inspired by Hartenberger's experiences.

A keyboard ensemble plays a majority of the music in this collection. Staying within a tonal realm, we hear references to Hartenberger's time studying in Ghana through the melodies in "Bird of Paradise" and the rhythmic patterns in "Alleluia," a nod to the Canadian wilderness in "Eternity" through interlocking vibraphone patterns, and even a Scottish Aire in "Mist Covered Mountains." The pieces are performed with perfect balance between all of the keyboards and voices, which complement each other spectacularly.

While most of the album makes use of keyboards, "Muffled Drums" is entirely based on military-style drumming. It derives its main themes from rhythms used in military funerals by the United States Air Force Band, of which Hartenberger was once a member. The piece is in the form of a military cadence, gradually getting denser with activity while keeping the slow marching characteristic, then naturally decaying as it comes to an end. Under all of this, a muffled bass drum plays at the ending of all of the phrases. This muffled drum motif is quoted several times throughout the project, even in those movements that are meant to be a reflection on natural beauty. Along with tying all the movements together in a tasteful manner, this quoting also serves a purpose narratively speaking by providing a reality check as we admire and daydream about the beautiful world that surrounds us.

The music in this album is written brilliantly, performed beautifully by the percussionists and singers, and produced and edited with the utmost care. The only electronic alteration that can be heard is a simple layering of the voices to create a denser texture, but all the sounds created seem pure and unadulterated. One can listen to this from start to finish and enjoy the narrative that Hartenberger has created through his experiences. *Requiem* is wonderful memoir to his musical life, or in his words, "a reflection on time and timelessness."

—Kyle Cherwinski



Vision

Heartland Marimba Quartet

Self-Released

Vision is an impressive collection of works for marimba quartet, skillfully performed and deftly recorded. Heartland Marimba Quartet is doing commendable work to promote and expand the marimba quartet art form, and this disc well represents their endeavors. The collection contains a variety of genres (includes historic and contemporary classical, pop, and ragtime), and represents American composers from the 1800s to today. The works are by turns tonal and edgy, "typical" and unusual. HMQ also shares pieces from a variety of origins: works written recently or historically for marimba quartet, new commissions of their own, and adaptations and new compositions from within the ensemble.

Scott Joplin's "Solace" is a beautiful adaptation by Steve Mathiesen, played quite tastefully; I could listen to it over and over again. HMQ adroitly handles the grandeur and technical challenge of Alex Orfaly's "För Marimbas," a three-movement suite that the ensemble calls their "symphony for marimba quartet." My personal favorite is Scott Blasco's "Momentia/Minutia," with its wandering time signatures and cascading melodies, creating a sense of ease yet also a feeling of joyful abandon. There is only one disappointing characteristic here: the majority maleness of the composers represented is hard to ignore.

Vision demonstrates Heartland Marimba Quartet's fabulous ensemble skills, infectious energy, and nuanced performances. The recording is high quality, well-balanced, and compelling. Congratulations to HMQ on the release of this impressive full-length album. Links to purchase as well as to streaming sites are available at Heartland Marimba's website.

—Rebecca McDaniel

PUBLISHERS

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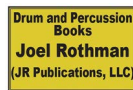
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From the Rhythm! Discovery Center Collection

“Chime” Tubaphone built by William “Billy” Dorn

Donated by Peter Erskine, 2019.8.2

William “Billy” Dorn (b. 23 Feb. 1898, d. Nov. 1971) served as a percussionist for the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini for 11 years, was a member of the Sousa and Pryor Bands, and performed as a staff musician for major radio, television, and recording companies. A gifted teacher as well as instrument designer, Dorn often built instruments to use for his own sound effects or for the use of his students.

One student in particular, drummer Peter Erskine, studied with Dorn in the 1960s, and in addition to having instruments built for him by Dorn, acquired several instruments from Dorn’s widow after Dorn passed away. One of these instruments is a vertically-mounted, chromatic tubaphone.

Originally named tubuscampanophone, tubaphones were often used in British military bands in the late 19th century, and it was the first type of instrument patented (in 1888) by J. C. Deagan. Constructed from hollow tubes or pipes, the instrument is usually built in a chromatic-style keyboard layout with the tubes suspended by some type of cord. Other methods, such as this instrument, include vertical mounting, which result in a tubaphone “chime.” The tubaphone is prominently featured in Kachaturian’s ballet, “Gayne.”

This “chime” tubaphone is constructed from 1 1/4-inch diameter copper and aluminum electrical metallic tubing (EMT) conduit manufactured by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. It has a 1 1/2-octave range from C4 to F5, with copper tubing used for the accidentals and aluminum tubing for the naturals. Each tube is suspended by a cord that is attached to the wooden frame by two eye screws. The tubes range in length from 22 7/8 inches to 13 3/4 inches and when struck are prevented from striking the wooden cross rail by a length of woven, cotton cord.

The wooden frame, which is reinforced with aluminum bracing, has a height of 30 3/4 inches, a width of 32 5/8 inches and a depth of 16 inches. It is held together by screws, bolts, and wingnuts, and is painted with Dorn’s customary red and gold paint. For a look at other instruments made by Dorn, see [Percussive Notes, 53/1, March 2015, page 80](#).

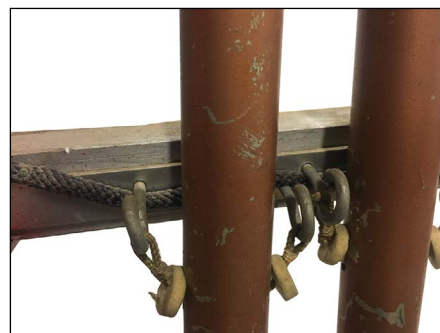
—James A. Strain, PAS Historian



Detail of a tube, stamped with “UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES, INC. / LISTED / ELECTRICAL METALLIC TUBING.”



William “Billy” Dorn, ca. 1967, posing with this Chime Tubaphone in his shop.



Eyehook suspension system utilized by Dorn.





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