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Gene Fambrough, editor

The ALAPAS Newsletter



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Message from the Vice-President: Grant Dalton

Greetings fellow percussionists,

It is my privilege to have the opportunity to bring a note about the state of the ALAPAS Chapter to you. This is such an enjoyable message to present because the chapter is so busy in such a great variety of ways. If you are looking for something percussive in which to participate I think you will find a great number of opportunities this year.

First, let me encourage you to make the trip to Columbus, Ohio for PASIC this year. As always, PAS has scheduled a wonderful event that is certainly worthy of your time. I would like to especially draw your attention to a showcase concert on Friday at 9am. The Oak Mountain High School Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of Mr. Kevin Ownby, will present a showcase concert at PASIC. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time in the history of PASIC that an Alabama ensemble has been selected to perform a showcase concert. Oak Mountain was one of three high school ensembles that were selected to perform at this year's convention. Oak Mountain was selected as one of the top ensembles from many applicants from all over the United States. I hope that you will join me in congratulating the OMHS Percussion Ensemble and Mr. Ownby on this wonderful accomplishment.

The annual Alabama Day of Percussion is being coordinated, and it is shaping up to be another fine event. The day will be held in the beautiful J. H. Brock Recital Hall on the Samford University campus on Saturday, March 8, 2008. Please put this event on your calendar, and watch for email updates regarding this great event. I hope that you will take the time to thank our chapter president, Mr. Neal Flum, for the immense amount of hard work he has done to put this event together.

You may also want to congratulate Neal Flum on his new position as Interim Chairperson for the Marching Percussion Committee of PAS. This new position brings yet another spotlight on the great work being done by the percussive community in Alabama. Congrats Neal!

I hope that you will continue to check your email for chapter updates. There has been some discussion of a get-together at PASIC for all of the folks making the trip up from Alabama, so keep an eye out for updates about that possible event. In the upcoming months you should be hearing about the many ALAPAS sponsored events. Please also add this link to your bookmarks in your favorite web browser – <http://www.pas.org/Chapters/Alabama/>. At this website you will find news regarding many of the percussive events taking place in our state. You will find dates for many of the percussion ensemble concerts in the state, and you will find information regarding events and festivals in the state. I will draw your attention to one date in particular that is coming up quickly. On Thursday, October 18 David Waters and Iain Moyer will host the North Alabama Day of Percussion at Muscle Shoals High School. This event will feature guest clinicians Jeff Queen and Colin McNutt.

All the best,

Dr. Grant Dalton – ALAPAS Vice President

Fall Dates:

October 6—Planet Drum with Mickey Hart, Alys Stephens Center.

October 18—North Alabama Day of Percussion, Muscle Shoals HS.

October 20—Hoover HS Marching Band Festival.

October 31-November 3—PASIC (Columbus, Ohio).

November 6—UAB Percussion Ensemble, 8:00 PM, Alys Stephens Center.

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Todd Sucherman Delights Fans and Drummers at Arts Music Shop

contributed by Chris Moore

On June 20th, the Alabama Chapter and Arts Music Shop of Birmingham recently co-sponsored a clinic by Styx drummer Todd Sucherman. Todd entertained fans and drumset enthusiasts at the store for over two hours. Over 70 people of all ages packed the Arts Music Shop to see what turned out to be an electrifying display of technique, power, and humorous dialogue. Todd delighted the participants with extended solos, and performed to several Styx classics through a "drumless" PA mix. An autograph session and meet-n-greet followed, with most participants receiving some impressive door giveaways. With the rousing ovation Todd received, look for a future appearance by Todd at an Alabama Day of Percussion. Special thanks also go to the contributions of Sabian Ltd, Promark, and Remo Inc., which made Todd's appearance possible.



L to R: Neal Flum, Clif Payne, Todd Sucherman, Danny and Chris Moore.



Drum Camp 6: Tsumagoi, Japan

contributed by John Scalici

In May 2007, I was fortunate enough to be asked by Remo (the drum company I endorse) and Yamaha to teach djembe, djun djun and drum circle facilitation at Drum Camp 6, the annual percussion camp in Tsumagoi, Japan. By no means am I a djembe master, but after three years of intense study on this highly expressive and powerful instrument, I felt I was up for the challenge.

In attendance were over 100 men and women, ages 18-75, from all parts of Japan and from all walks of life. Music teachers wanting to facilitate drum circles in schools, music therapists wanting to deepen their inner sense of rhythm, and general music enthusiasts looking for new ways to express themselves, and of course, professional musicians.

The camp would always open with an hour and a half drum circle which I would co-facilitate with Professor Johnny Lee Lane, Director of Education at Remo, Inc. Johnny is an amazing snare drum virtuoso and choreographed much of what you saw in the movie "Drum Line".

We would then breakout into individual classes where I would teach basic hand drumming technique as well as some djun djun (West African pulse keeping drums). Hopefully from the photos you can see that a good time was had by all. It was a memorable experience that I will never forget. The Japanese are wonderfully spirited and creative people and I learned much from them.

Until the next time--Arigato!

Photos from John Scalici in Japan



UAB Electro-Acoustic Percussion Group

by Gene Fambrough

The UAB Electro-Acoustic Percussion Group performed two concerts recently to cap off its most successful season to date. The student membership of the ensemble grew by 50% this year, with six students enrolled for credit. The summer concert was held July 26 in the Hulsey Recital Hall on the campus of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, with another concert held on August 29 for a UAB Department of Music Convocation session. Both concerts were extremely well received.



L to R: Dr. Gene Fambrough, Aaron Branson, Brett Huffman, Justin Wallace, Aaron Alford, Mac Kramer, Kristina Howard.

This unique ensemble gives students in the class a chance to try their hand at composition and arranging skills, giving them first-hand experience with the compositional process and allowing them to hear their work live. This year's program featured five student compositions / arrangements. The concert started with an improvisation-based piece by senior Music Technology student Aaron Alford, who is also a founding member of the ensemble. The next piece was a transcription of the song "Sæglópur" by the Icelandic group Sigur Rós. Arranged by junior music major Brett Huffman, this piece was one of two works that utilized vocals and was a near perfect vehicle for this ensemble. Three more student compositions followed: "Simple Unadorned Simplicity" by senior music major Mac Kramer, "Sidewalk" by senior music education major Kristina Howard, and "L'Eau Vie" by junior music major Aaron Branson.

The program concluded with an arrangement of "Bangkok" (from the musical *Chess*) and the first movement of "Fire Garden Suite" (entitled "Bull Whip") by the contemporary guitarist Steve Vai. Both of these pieces are from the 1996 release "Fire Garden" and were arranged by Gene Fambrough.

Formed in the summer of 2004, the instrumentation for this ensemble consists of two MalletKAT controllers, one DrumKAT controller with Hart Multipad trigger interface, one Roland HandSonic pad, one Roland SPD-s sampling pad, one Roland SC-880 synthesizer, two Kurzweil PC2-R synthesizers, one vibraphone, electric guitar, bass guitar, and drumset. All of the electronic percussion instruments have come from the UAB Arts & Humanities Faculty Development program, which has awarded over \$16,000 to the program since the 2001-02 school year.



Oak Mountain Percussion Ensemble to PASIC

by Gene Fambrough

The Oak Mountain High School Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of Kevin Ownby, will be headed to Columbus, Ohio to perform a showcase concert at PASIC this fall. This is a wonderful accomplishment for the group, as ensembles are selected through a blind audition process. Of note, included on the audition program was one of the most challenging pieces for percussion ensemble, "Crown of Thorns" by David Maslanka. It speaks volumes of a group just to be able to perform this piece, especially at the high school level, but to play it well enough to win this audition is truly outstanding.

The members of the group traveling to Ohio are: Alex Ballew, Ryan Biasco, Diamond Brown, Katherine Carnes, Patrick Cleveland, Michael Cocherell, Seth Denney, Robert Gardner, Emily Graham, Sam Green, Amia Loubser, Martin Maddox, Maia McDonald, Ryan Myers, Marcus Nobles, Jon Pettry, Andrew Ripley, Jillian Roche, Rod Schopke, and Michael Southerland. Special thanks to past members (Class of 2007) and their contributions: Jay Holmes, Brian Pappas, and Ben Stephenson.

From all of ALAPAS, good luck and safe travels!

OMHS PASIC Program:

Mixtures 2	David J. Long
Trio Per Uno	Nebojsa Zivkovic
Uriel	Doug Rosener
Bicksa	Thom Hasenpflug
Limerick Daydreams	Nathan Daughtrey

OAK MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL
PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE
PASIC PERFORMANCE
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 9:00 AM.

Tuning the Battery Percussion Instruments

contributed by Neal Flum

Having the battery instruments (snare, multi-tenors, and bass drums) speak clearly and well within the musical ensemble depends greatly on the manner in which they are scored into the piece and just as importantly, "**how they are tuned.**" In what follows, I am offering you some basic guidelines for tuning your battery instruments. The info I am sharing with you is geared more towards band directors and particularly those marching percussion sections that do not have a percussion instructor, either full-time or intermittently. Please also bear in mind that one of the current trends in marching percussion is to tune the battery instruments to specific pitches. We'll address that at another time.

Fundamentally, we would like to achieve two results in tuning the snare drums, multi-tenors, and bass drums: 1. Each instrument should be tuned such that it produces a characteristic sound and timbre when struck; 2. Each instrument should be tuned such that it speaks clearly both within the percussion ensemble (battery and front ensemble) and within the musical ensemble as well.

In order to achieve the results listed above it is best to think of the battery as a "choir" of voices as in our traditional four-part harmony: **soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.**

Soprano: the snare drum is the soprano voice in the battery and should be tuned to speak above the other instruments. The snare drum is like the trumpet of the percussion section. It should be a clear and distinct voice that is easily distinguishable from the other battery instruments. As it provides a great deal of the rhythmic content for a marching band, its voice needs to be heard, a particularly important point when engaging a larger band that produces significant volume.

Alto/Tenor: the multi-tenors is the alto-tenor voice of the battery finding itself situated between the snares and bass drums in voice. The multi-tenors should be tuned such that they are a "true" middle voice and can be distinguished from the other battery instruments. The multi-tenors are like the mellophones

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Battery Percussion Tuning Tips

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and trombones of the percussion section. The “gock” or “accent” drum on a set of quints should not have a specific pitch but have a sharp, clear, biting, and articulate sound. You might try tuning the multi-tenors to have intervals of a minor third between the drums, #4 to #3, #3 to #2, and #2 to #1. Some individuals use the interval of a major second between drums #4 and #3 and a minor third between the remaining drums. An interval is not needed between drum #1 and the “gock” drum. Try to tune it to have the type of sound as indicated above.

Tenor/Bass: the bass drums are the tenor/bass voice of the battery. The highest pitched bass drum should be tuned below that of that of drum #4 of the multi-tenors. Bass drums 1, 2, and 3 carry the more rhythmic parts in bass drum scoring and should be tuned to have an articulate sound when struck. Bass drums #4 and #5 function as accenting drums that reinforce what is taking place in the wind score. They should be tuned to provide a proper “fundamental” to the percussion section, and particularly the bass drums. The bass drums can and often do imitate and reinforce the tuba/bass line in a score. You might try tuning the bass drums to have intervals of a minor third between drums #1, #2, and #3 and a 4th or 5th between drums #4 and #5.

Additional Information:

1. Tune and approach the battery instruments as you would your wind instruments. Their tuning should help achieve a quality of sound that affords them the opportunity to:
 - balance with the musical ensemble
 - blend with the musical ensemble
 - speak clearly within the musical ensemble
 - speak clearly within the battery
 - speak clearly and in a balanced manner when performing with the front ensemble
2. Specific pitches will guide you towards achieving better results with your battery instruments' tuning. You should, however, listen to your battery instruments within the context of how they sound in your musical ensemble and amongst themselves as well. They need to speak clearly and function in their proper roles within the choir of voices.
3. Visual design placement; the number of players on each battery instrument; and the skill level of the performers on your battery instruments will all affect how well they are heard within the battery and the musical ensemble. Your goal should be to tune your battery instruments so that they have the best possible opportunity to speak clearly, musically, and with the best possible quality of sound when your group is performing.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss further the info I have offered above, please contact me at: nealflum@mac.com or my office: (205) 348-9440 or on my cell phone: (205) 239-0336.

Neal is a clinician/endorser for Evans Drumheads, Innovative Percussion, Pearl Drums / Adams Musical Instruments, and Zildjian cymbals. He serves as the Associate Director of Athletic Bands at the University of Alabama.



"My parents never had to make me practice (they had to make me stop). I'd practice constantly and everything else took a back seat"

Kevin Barrett is originally from St. Louis, Missouri. He is currently the lead drummer of the Alabama Pipes and Drums. Kevin was formerly the Assistant Principal Percussionist of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, a position he held from 1978 – 1992. While with the ASO, he recorded Russell Peck's percussion concerto *"The Glory and the Grandeur"* with Tim Miller and Bill Williams.

- *How did you get started in percussion?* I started in the eighth grade. A friend of mine had a drum set, and I was completely fascinated by it. I kept asking my parents to get me one, and they finally did. It was a Slingerland set in 'gold satin flame' finish. Right from the beginning I started taking lessons with a good teacher. From that point on all I wanted to do was play the drums. My parents never had to make me practice (they had to

Profile: Kevin Barrett

make me stop). I'd practice constantly and everything else took a back seat. I don't know how my parents or the neighbors put up with it.

- *Where did you study formally?*

In high school I started studying with Al Hobbs, who was the timpanist of the St. Louis Symphony. He was a former student of Alan Abel. I stayed with Al for two years. He started me on mallet instruments and timpani. I then attended Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and continued my percussion studies. My primary college instructor was Rich O'Donnell, Principal Percussionist of the St. Louis Symphony. I also studied with John Kasica and Tom Stubbs, both of whom play with the St. Louis Symphony.

- *What do you remember most from your teachers?*

I'll always be grateful to my first teacher, Bob Siegel. Besides providing me with a well-rounded foundation, he was a great guy. We studied out of the Haskell Harr books, and he also introduced me to many of the top jazz drummers like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Louie Bellson. He would show me various things, but my curiosity and interest really drove the process. I think he let things evolve naturally, and only presented new material when I was ready.

Rich O'Donnell also made a big impression on me. He is one of the most interesting musicians I know. He is quite the iconoclast and visionary. To my knowledge he was the first percussionist in a major orchestra to switch exclusively to matched grip. He made that change way back in the late

50's or early 60's. During the period I studied with him his main area of interest was contemporary music.

John Kasica and Tom Stubbs really helped my orchestral playing. They were both Julliard graduates, so through them I got a little taste of the Buster Bailey and Saul Goodman styles. John is a fabulous mallet player. He studied with David Friedman, the jazz vibist, and introduced me to vibraphone and 4-mallet technique. Tom is a great percussionist. Among other things, he gave me some cymbal lessons that proved to be very helpful when I joined the Alabama Symphony.

- *Do you have a favorite composer or piece of literature?*

As a percussionist, I like many of the 20th century composers: Stravinsky, Bartok, Copeland, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, etc. I suppose if I had to choose a single work it would be the *Rite of Spring*.

- *What was the most difficult aspect of learning/performing Russell Peck's "The Glory and the Grandeur"?*

There were many challenging aspects to that piece, some of which were primarily logistical, such as three people performing on the same four-octave marimba. One particular passage, which stands out for me, is the big drum introduction that opens the work. The way in which the accent patterns are passed around among the three players, creating the illusion of a gradual accelerando, was very challenging from an ensemble standpoint.

Interview by Gene Fambrough

- *How did you get involved with Pipe Band drumming?*

When I was in high school I received a recording of the Black Watch of Canada. I had never heard pipe band drumming before and I was intrigued by the sound. I couldn't figure out what they were playing or why the drums sounded so unique. That recording piqued my interest in the style. A few years later I was at Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago and I ran across a book on Scottish drumming. It explained some of the rudiments, and how the music is notated. This gave me additional information to go on. I continued to dabble with the style until about 5 years ago when I discovered there was a pipe band here in town, *'The Alabama Pipes and Drums'*. I started playing with them and that was another eye-opening experience. I quickly discovered that besides being a highly evolved style of snare drumming, pipe band drumming is also very challenging musically.

- *What is the biggest challenge in learning that style?*

Pipe band drumming has many technical challenges. It can be pretty complex. There are certain rudiments and movements, which are not commonly found in other styles of drumming, such as dead strokes, tap rolls, flammed buzz rolls, etc. Beyond the technical challenges are the musical challenges. Pipe band drumming is not a style that can be learned from a book. You could work through a lot of pipe band drumming books and not have a clue as to how it should sound. I personally discovered

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Drum Corps Roundup 2007

Another great season of exciting Drum Corps action completed, with several state ties to many successful corps. **Spirit of JSU**, our home state corps from Jacksonville State University, finished in 12th place with a score of 84.50. They placed 11th in overall percussion with a score of 17.20. Joining the staff this season was **Sean Womack** (DoubleStop Percussion). Congratulations to percussion caption head **Clint Gillespie** and all the members and staff for another outstanding year! Clint has recently announced his retirement from Spirit, so from all of ALAPAS, a huge "thank you" for all of your years of hard work that has helped to bring Spirit back as a perennial top-12 corps.

Two other top-5 Division I corps have Alabama connections. **Brad Palmer** (also from DoubleStop

Percussion) continues his work with the front ensemble of the **Bluecoats**, from Canton OH, who placed seventh overall (94.05) but an amazing second in percussion with a score of 19.40.

Iain Moyer (UNA) joined the staff of the **Cadets** for this season to assist with the front ensemble. The corps came in second place overall with a score of 97.025 and 4th place in percussion with a score of 19.05.

Although too extensive to list here, congratulations to all young people who participated in Drum Corps International this past year—thank you for all of your hard work and dedication!

Be on the lookout for audition times and places for your favorite corps over Thanksgiving weekend!

Event Calendar Fall 2007



October 6—Planet Drum with Mickey Hart, Zakir Hussein, and Giovanni Hidalgo, 8:00 PM, ASC.

October 7—UAB Wind Symphony, 3:00 PM, ASC.

October 18—North Alabama Day of Percussion (with Jeff Queen and Colin McNutt), Muscle Shoals HS.

October 20—Hoover Invitational Marching Band Contest.

November 2—Oak Mountain Percussion Ensemble performs at PASIC.

November 6—UAB Percussion Ensemble, 8:00 PM, ASC.

November 9—JSU Percussion Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Mason.

November 15—Jonathan DeLoach, JSU junior recital, 7:30 PM, Mason.

November 15—Auburn University Percussion Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Goodwin.

November 17—Samford University Percussion Ensemble, 2:30 PM, Brock.

November 18—Lauren Spicer, JSU junior recital, 7:30 PM, Mason.

November 28—JSU Percussion Ensemble, 7:00 PM, Mason.

November 29 through December 1—UAB Middle School Honor Band.

November 30—UAB Jazz Ensemble, 3:30 PM, ASC.

December 3—USA Percussion Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Laidlaw.

December 6, 7, 8—UAB High School Honor Band.

December 7—UAB Wind Symphony, 3:30 PM, ASC.

February 27-29, 2008—UAB Wind Symphony at CBDNA Southern Division Conference, Columbus State University.

January 15—Deadline for submission of events to be included in the spring newsletter. Please send any and all information to: gfambro@uab.edu

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this when I started playing with a band. It's very difficult to understand the phrasing and musical nuances from only the written notation. The notation is often not meant to be a precise representation of the sound. One needs to understand the conventions and shorthand of how the style is written. In this respect it's a lot like learning jazz. Attempting to learn pipe band drumming from just the written scores would be as difficult as trying to learn jazz drumming from only a book of exercises. You'll never be able to fully grasp the style without hearing it.

Contemporary pipe band drumming actually has a lot in common with jazz. The swing and groove of the pipe band style is very similar to jazz phrasing. Alex Duthart, the father of modern pipe band drumming, was also a drum set player. He was very interested in all styles of drumming. He associated with great players from a variety of backgrounds, such as Joe Morello (jazz), Buster Bailey (symphonic), John Bosworth (American rudimental), and Fritz Berger (Swiss Basle drumming). He incorporated aspects of many of those genres into Scottish pipe band drumming.

Like jazz, pipe band drumming is an aural tradition. The great players have grown up in the style and absorbed its vocabulary in a natural way. For those of us who come to the style later in life it's a challenge to acquire that level of skill and understanding, therefore it's necessary to listen to, and study as many great players as possible. Taking lessons and attending pipe band workshops can be very helpful in this regard.

- What new area of percussion would you get involved with if you could?

There are so many areas of percussion that it's hard to choose just one. I always wanted to be a good jazz vibist, but I don't think I'll accomplish that. Afro-Cuban drumming would be a lot of fun. As far as snare drum, I think Swiss Basle drumming would be very interesting to study. It has a great history and it's a very important part of our drumming heritage.



Alabama Chapter newsletter

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

<http://www.pas.org/Chapters/Alabama/>

Sounds of Summer!



2007 Yamaha Sounds of Summer Camp, May 30 and 31, hosted by Grant Dalton and Samford University. Pictured L to R: Grant Dalton, Gene Fambrough, Bret Kuhn, Kevin Ownby, 5th year attendee Wade Sweatt, Chris Moore, Matthew Waldron.
