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Gene Fambrough, editor

The ALAPAS Newsletter

PERCUSSIVE
ARTS SOCIETY



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SPRING EVENTS, 2010:

March 6—ALAPAS Day of Percussion, Samford.

April 18, 19—John W. Parks IV at Troy University.

April 22—Auburn Percussion Ensemble and Steel Band concert.

April 25—Andy Harnsberger, concert at UAB.

May 10—UAB Steel Band in Sandestin, FL.

May 13—SO Percussion with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

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From the President, Dr. Grant Dalton

Hello all,

It is my pleasure to serve as the president of the Alabama chapter of the Percussive Arts Society (ALAPAS), and I thank you for your support of PAS and ALAPAS. I have served in the role of vice-president for the last several years, and I can say now that I appreciate the incredible efforts of our past presidents much more now that I am trying to fill their shoes. If you are coming to the Alabama Day of Percussion on March 6, 2010 at Samford University please say a word of thanks to both Neal Flum and Chris Moore for their leadership of the chapter. We are in a great debt to both of these men for the many hours that they gave (and continue to give) to the chapter.

Over the last year the chapter has truly broadened its scope and reach within the state of Alabama. I don't know that we have ever had so much interest in the chapter from so many various points in the state. Recently we have had a great change in the culture of percussion in the state, and it seems that we are now poised to make the chapter a truly state-wide musical force.

In a reaction to this newfound interest the leadership of ALAPAS has determined that we should host several new concert percussion festivals in the upcoming year. Our goal is to host one in the northern part of the state, one that is in the central area, and another in the southern region. These festivals are to be set up as an opportunity to bring percussionists together for a day of great music making, fun, and to give us a chance to know each other better. Iain Moyer (University of North Alabama) will be hosting a festival in the northern part of the state this year. We hope that this becomes a regular part of the ALAPAS yearly schedule, so be on the lookout for an event in your area next year!

We would also like to thank the Alabama Music Educators Association for including so many of our ALAPAS members on the schedule for the 2010 convention. The Alabama PAS chapter was represented by Dr. Gene Fambrough (ALAPAS Director of Communications) of UAB, Mr. Sean Womack (ALAPAS vice-president), Mr. Bradley Palmer, and Mr. David Waters and the Muscle Shoals High School Percussion Ensemble.

The annual big production of ALAPAS is our Alabama Day of Percussion. I already mentioned that it will be held on March 6 at Samford University, and you will find a list of the ensembles that are going to perform this year as well as a list of the clinicians for the Day in this publication. We will also be offering certificates to band directors in attendance for them to use for their continuing education hours. If you need more information on this you may email me at gbdalton@samford.edu; we will do our best to get you all of the information that you need to get approval for this event.

The last thing that I need to mention is our newly revamped website. Please go to www.pas.org and select "PAS Local" at the top of the page. Check the site often for updates on percussive events in the state. We will do our best to keep you up to date with the happening in the state, and we hope that you will send us any information that you have on upcoming concerts or events.

I hope to see you soon at the Day of Percussion!

Grant B. Dalton (chapter president)

New Faces: Jacksonville State University

by Gene Fambrough



We are fortunate to welcome to our state Dr. Thomas McCutchen as Professor of Percussion at Jacksonville State University. Tony comes to us from the University of Georgia, where he had taught for over 30 years. After the retirement of long-time JSU percussion teacher Tracy Tyler, Tony McCutchen arrived on campus for the spring semester of 2010 after an interim position was taught by Todd Mueller during the fall semester.

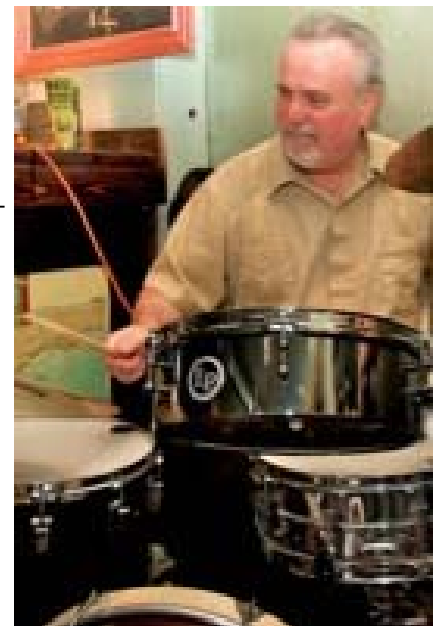
Dr. Thomas W. (Tony) McCutchen was the Percussion Coordinator at the University of Georgia School of Music since 1979. Prior to his appointment at UGA, he served as Assistant Band Director / Percussion Instructor at Auburn University and as Associate Director of Bands at the University of Mississippi. His professional experience includes performances with the Fort Worth Symphony, Savannah Symphony, Augusta Symphony, Augusta Opera, and the National Opera Company (North Carolina). He plays drumset regularly with the Jim McKillip Trio and annually with the Directors' All-Star Jazz Band at the Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference. He also performs on vibes in Jazz / Latin combo settings as well as on pan with the "Tropical Breeze" Steel Band which is based at the University of Georgia. He has performed at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, IAJE, MENC and GMEA conventions as well as various PAS "Days of Percussion".

Dr. McCutchen is a Fulbright Scholar, having taught and done research for a period of six months in Brazil. He is on the faculty of the annual International Music Festival of the Federal University of Santa Maria (Brazil). He has presented clinics and performed in various parts of Brazil and in Uruguay. As an arranger, Tony has various scores published by Arrangers' Publishing Company, Hal Leonard Publishing Company and Band Music Press. He is an Artist - Clinician for Ludwig / Musser Percussion, Zildjian Cymbals, endorses mallets by Innovative Percussion and Regal Tip/Calato drumsticks, and is currently involved with KAT MIDI percussion instruments, serving on the P.A.S. Technology Committee. He has served as an adjudicator for various festivals in several states, and as a performer is equally at home behind a number of instruments ranging from drum set and Latin percussion to jazz vibes, steel drums, marimba, timpani and orchestral percussion.

When asked about returning to his home state to lead the Jacksonville State percussion area, Tony states: "When I came to the Alabama PAS Day of Percussion a couple of years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to find out how high the level of percussion education and professional involvement is in the state, especially the Alabama PAS chapter. When I was last in Alabama as a resident (born in Sylacauga, moved to Montgomery at age 10), it was quite a different world. What I did not realize is how much things would progress over the last few decades. When the chance came up to return to my home state I was very excited and glad to have the opportunity to contribute to percussion education in Alabama. Teaching here at Jacksonville State University is a privilege and I am so happy to be here. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues in the state and being part of one of the best PAS chapters in the country, thanks to much hard work and collegiality among the percussion educators in Alabama. I am proud to be associated with you!"

On a personal note, I am also thrilled to be that much closer to my college teacher and hopefully be able to collaborate on a more frequent basis now that we are teaching roughly 90 minutes apart from each other. I only wish I didn't have to recruit against him, though...it's a contest that I don't want to engage in!

Welcome to Alabama, Tony—we're glad you are "back home"!!!



Transitions: The University of Alabama

contributed by Neal Flum



Outstanding tennis player, first-rate auto mechanic, collector of model trains, devoted Philadelphia Eagles fan, and timpanist *par excellence*. Those are but a few of the many things for which Mr. Larry Mathis will be remembered after retiring from 40 some years of dedicated service to the University of Alabama as director of the percussion studio. He leaves behind a legacy of teaching excellence, outstanding musicianship, and the respect and affection of his students, colleagues.

Mr. Mathis came to the University of Alabama by way of Pennsylvania and the Julliard School of Music. While at Julliard he received both his M.S. and B.S. degrees studying with, among others, Saul Goodman, Morris Goldenberg, Fred Hinger, and William Schinstine. Prior to being hired by the University of Alabama he performed with the New York Philharmonic, City Symphony of New York, and the Pottstown Symphony. Upon his arrival in Tuscaloosa, he performed with the Alabama Symphony, and Tuscaloosa Symphony, the latter of which he is still a performing member. He began teaching at the Capstone in 1969 and concluded his service this past December 2009. Mr. Mathis has always been active as a performer, particularly on timpani. It was the timpani that, of all the percussion instruments, was and is his great passion.

As much as Mr. Mathis contributed to the University of Alabama during his lengthy career, he particularly gave of his self to his students. One in particular, Keith Larson, in speaking of his time with Mr. Mathis offered that, "Larry Mathis played a huge role in my percussion career. Since we were both from the same part of Pennsylvania and studied with the same instructor (William Schinstine), we shared a lot of common experiences. Larry Mathis's knowledge of timpani repertoire I would put up against anyone in the country. His classical recording collection of the 1950's-1960's New York Phil is incredible. We spent many hours going over timpani rep with those recordings. One of the great moments I had at U of A was performing the *Bartok Sonata for Two Pianos And Percussion* with him. Watching and listening to him play the timpani part was an experience I will never forget. I have been fortunate to perform the Bartok several times since . . .but never with a player like Larry Mathis. To sum it all up, Larry Mathis is a tremendous teacher, tremendous percussionist, and tremendous musician. I truly valued the time I studied with him." Mr. Larson, like many of Mr. Mathis's students went on to successful careers as educators and performers.

Mr. Mathis was not only appreciated and respected by his students. He was held in high esteem by his fellow faculty members who to consistently be a supportive colleague and gentleman in all he did and with all whom he interacted. University of Alabama Director of Bands, Dr. Ken Ozzello, in speaking of his fondness for Mr. Mathis stated, "Both Larry and I are from Pennsylvania. During football season we both closely followed our childhood teams. For Larry it was the Philadelphia Eagles and for me it was the cross-state rival Pittsburgh Steelers. When the other guy's team would have a bad weekend, you could count on a hard time coming on Monday morning. Of course the Steelers have won six Super Bowls to the Eagles none. I certainly missed those Monday morning conversations this past fall. Larry is a great musician, but more importantly a great guy."

As one might note from just a few of the comments included about Larry Mathis--You could not find anyone with anything unkind to say about him. That cliché is oft used, but seldom fully truthful. In this case it is absolutely accurate and tremendously insightful about the character of Larry Mathis. If space permitted, we could include many more testimonials from students and colleagues attesting to the kind of individual he is and the many superlatives that attend commentary on his career as an educator and a performer. On a personal note, I will miss Larry. It is a high honor and great privilege that I was able to return to my alma mater and teach along side him for nine years. My memories of my time with him as a student are many, and all good. He was then as he was these past nine years, passionate about all he did. When I was a student at the Capstone at any time of the day or night he was in his office or somewhere in the music building, I could ask him a question about something in the world of percussion and a passionate discussion would ensue. You

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Community Involvement

contributed by Mike C. Muncher

If you have one, take a look in your ABA Directory. Something that has always been interesting to me is noting which instruments each director plays. You'll notice that there are a lot more percussionists teaching music in this state than usually show up at our Annual Day of Percussion. In fact, I bet you didn't even know some of these people played percussion. Why?

Many of them wear it like a scarlet letter. It amazes me how many of the drummers who are band directors actually subscribe to the notion that drummers are either stupid or troublemakers...or both! It would seem that these directors aren't proud of their own percussion heritage. What does this mean for the Chapter? It means reduced membership, and lower-than-hoped attendance at our events. If you're a band director who plays percussion and you're reading this, check into your memories and see if you can't dredge up at least one moment that you felt just a little embarrassed when a non-percussionist band director asked what instrument you play. I know I have, and I shouldn't! Neither should you.

The Day of Percussion drew a large crowd this year. Many of these were high school students, but as I looked around, most were from larger schools around the central portion of the state. Realizing that the economy would keep some from driving long distances, why aren't there more small school drummers attending this event? Isn't it for everyone? Could these students, who probably have no more percussion instruction than what their non-percussionist band director can give them for a few days at the beginning of 5th or 6th Grade band not benefit GREATLY from seeing Joseph Gramley play marimba? I know the First Annual Day of Percussion changed my own life. Guess who took me – MY COUNSELOR!

"How can we fix this?" you might ask. Sending out a flyer only does so much. Simply, get more involved in our band community. Percussionists are often guilty of self-fulfilling prophecy. We don't want to be treated as inferior, so if we direct, we don't talk about percussion with any familiarity, and if we perform, we sit off in our proverbial corner talking to our performing colleagues. Is this always the case? NO! There are many wonderful percussionists out teaching high school students as directors and as percussion instructors and private teachers. But outside of metropolitan areas (and I'm counting Tuscaloosa) this is not the norm!

So I entreat you – Rise up, percussionist/band directors! Shake some hands, elitist performers! Let us foster a partnership with the Alabama Bandmasters' Association. Non-percussionists are never going to understand percussionists if we don't show them what we do. We're exposed to winds all day, every day. They see percussion on Friday nights and whenever they have to teach the bass drummer to play on one and three! Community Involvement, reciprocity - EXPOSURE! That is the key to building our membership from the ground up.

UAB Happenings

by Gene Fambrough

The Spring 2009 semester saw the UAB Percussion Area grow yet again with the addition of local drumset artist Michael Glaser to the faculty. He started during the Spring 2009 semester to teach jazz percussion lessons. Michael joins Laura Noah as an adjunct faculty member at UAB.

UAB is also planning two new events for the summer of 2010: its first Marching Percussion Camp (June 7-11) and its first annual "Summer Percussion Seminar" from June 22-26. You can find more information about this and other events on our new website - www.uabpercussion.com.

Last summer, the UAB Steel Band was invited to Sandestin, FL to provide entertainment at the Sandestin Golf and Resort Spa during the U.S. Foodservice annual company retreat. The event included and overnight stay and some relaxation on the beach the next morning. The Steel Band will be headed back to Sandestin this May for a return engagement! See pictures at right from last years trip.

The Spring semester of 2010 will see the UAB percussion area involved in many events; the addition of a new "Chamber Percussion" recital will take place at 7:30 PM on March 11 in the Sirote Theater of the Alys Stephens Center, and Dr. Andy Harnsberger will present a guest marimba recital on April 25 at 3:00 PM in the Hulsey Recital Hall. We hope to see you there!

Once Upon a Time

contributed by Anne Rose

Long ago, you used to hear tales of how your parents walked uphill both ways, through the snow, barefoot, and with bobcats on their backs just to get to school and other similarly fascinating stories. And not all that long ago, you could tell your own children of a time when there were only four black and white TV stations, no remote control, and what a big deal it was when that fifth station came along. Then, cable just blew everyone away! Because your parents were good to you, they worked hard so that you could have the things that they didn't, and you've followed in those same footsteps. Sound familiar? With the AMEA conference just behind us and the ALAPAS Day of Percussion fast approaching, I began to reflect upon how our state's own percussive "Once upon a time" story might read.

Once upon a time in our very own state, percussion sections used to be quite different than they are today. More often than not, percussionists played only one instrument, were often unable to read notation, were taught by directors who knew plenty about embouchure but nothing about rudiments, and frequently were placed in the percussion section for myriads of reasons that had no discernable connection to a student's desire or ability to be there. Often, students in our state had little to no exposure to music instruction given by trained music educators prior to the middle school years. Early experiences in music were reserved for such purposes as learning state names and multiplication tables. Really fortunate schools may have had part time teachers and a bass xylophone that stood mostly unused in the corner. If a student did not choose to enroll in beginning band or choir in the middle school years, it was entirely possible that his entire musical experience from K-12 could be summarized by listing the badly scratched Hap Palmer records his kindergarten teacher had on the shelf and by humming through the unknown lyrics to the school fight song the band played at pep rallies.

Through tremendous amounts of hard work, cooperation, vision, and blessing, a substantial amount of progress has been made toward helping our students rewrite the musical story in Alabama. Sequential courses of study have been introduced in all K-12 arts programs, increasing exposure and participation in both choral and instrumental activities from earlier ages. In the early grades, there has been a real move away from toy and imitation percussion instruments toward more authentic instruments that produce characteristic sounds. Emphasis has been placed on developing reading skills and training students to be total percussionists. The exponential increase in quantity of *quality* literature speaks to this. We now have far greater access to a much larger variety of percussion instruments and more students taking advantage of those opportunities as they perform in percussion ensembles across every grade level throughout the state. We have more trained percussionists as the primary music educators in their schools, more

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UAB Steel Band in Sandestin, FL—June 17-18, 2009



UAB Steel Band (at right, L to R): Dr. Gene Fambrough, Randy Wade, Margie Webb, Courtney Walker, Adam McDowell, Sam Herman, Justin Wallace, Nick Recio, Seth Noble.

My Excellent Drum Building Experience

by John Scalici

Greetings! In January, I had the good fortune of spending a weekend with master drummer and master drum *builder*, Tom Harris. Tom Harris runs a therapeutic drumming program at Inner Harbour, a facility for at-risk youth in Douglasville, GA. The program implements daily doses of West African drumming as part of these young men's actual treatment program. I have spent several weekends studying the djembe with Tom and watching his programs and he always ends our sessions with, "You need to come build a drum so you will know it inside and out!" He said it would be an exhausting experience, but one I would never forget. Curious, excited and a little fearful that I might screw something up, I decided to invite two of my friends, Randy Crow and UAB Music student, Justin Wallace to invest in the weekend experience as well. At least we could all screw up together and I wouldn't look so bad. Well, this in fact did turn out to be one of those experiences that I will never forget and will probably undertake again. There is nothing quite like building your own djembe. Knowing first hand, just how much blood, sweat, and physical strength master drum builders in Guinea go through to produce just ONE drum is very humbling. And we didn't even have to carve our own shells from a solid tree! I hope you enjoy these pictures as much as I enjoyed building the drum.



Step 1--cutting fabric to wrap the metal rings



Step 2--wrapping the rings

While we were wrapping the metal rings, there were goat skins soaking in a metal tub of hot water. This softens the skins because before they soak, they are hard as a rock.



Step 3--tie knots around the rings to hold the "vertical" ropes

During the process, there were lots of "stop and do that over" comments from Tom. One of the challenging things was that if one single knot was in the wrong place, you would possibly have to start over from scratch! This was a real incentive to get it right the first time!

Drum Building (cont.)



Step 4--fit the goat skin on the drum & string the vertical ropes



Step 5--begin tensioning the vertical ropes, trim excess goat skin



Step 6--Begin high tensioning with rope puller (they don't use these in Africa)

On the first day, we could only do so much tensioning because the skin was still soft. But as you can see from the above photo, the skin is now trimmed and hard as a rock. If we would have tensioned too much on the first day, we would have woken up to a broken head!



Step 7--more tension



Step 8--wrap the excess rope (used to tune the drum later)



Step 9--Happy people with Happy Drums!!

Tom Harris presents drum building workshops all over the Southeastern U.S. If you are interested in building your own drum, please contact John Scalici at GetRhythmPrograms@mac.com.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF RANDY CROW

News from Troy University

contributed by Adam Blackstock

Troy University had their Fall 2009 Percussion Ensemble Concert on December 1, 2009. Mr. Tracy Thomas of Missouri Western University was in residency for the event. Mr. Thomas performed as a guest soloist on the concert, presented a clinic/master class, and also composed a work for the Troy University Percussion Ensemble, which was premiered at the event, "Drop the Beat-Tales of a Broken Drum Machine".

Dr. T. Adam Blackstock performed a concert and clinic for the Bay County school district in Panama City, FL on Monday, January 25, 2010. The event was well-attended by several Bay County schools including: Deane Bozeman Middle/High School, Moseley High School, Bay High School, and Rutherford High School.

Prior to, and following the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Dr. T. Adam Blackstock of Troy University performed and presented clinics at several universities in Alabama and Tennessee including: the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of South Alabama, Auburn University, and Tennessee Technological University. "Thanks to all of the previously mentioned schools' professors (Dr. Gene Fambrough, Dr. Mike Sammons, Dr. Doug Rosener, and Dr. Eric Willie) for hosting me. It was wonderful to see you and your students and I look forward to many successful collaborations in the future!"-Blackstock

During the Fall 2009 semester, Dr. T. Adam Blackstock of Troy University was named principal timpanist of the Northwest Florida Symphony, based in Niceville, FL. The symphony's season consists of approximately six concerts per year; the final concerts will be on February 19, 2010 and April 10, 2010. For more information, please visit the symphony's website at www.nfsymphony.org

Upcoming Events:

March 18, 2010- Troy University will be hosting Mr. Erik Forst of Mill Creek High School, in Houschtion, GA.
 April 18, 2010- Troy University will host guest artist Dr. John Parks IV of the Florida State University.
 April 19, 2010- Troy University Percussion Ensemble Concert w/ guest artist Dr. John Parks IV.
 April 25-30, 2010- Dr. T. Adam Blackstock, Residency at Arizona State University, performing Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic's "Tales from the Center of the Earth", for marimba/percussion soloist and wind ensemble.

Once Upon a Time *(continued)*

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percussion programs, and more band programs using outside percussion instruction to supplement daily band instruction. Music therapy programs, drum circles, world percussion groups, music technology for students, and classroom visits from composers, artists, performers, and outside instructors have broadened our students' musical horizons. Teachers, too, now have access to much greater music technology – remember the days of writing drills out by hand? Deficiencies from our percussion pedagogy days are now being addressed in our AMEA and ALAPAS Day of Percussion sessions. We really have come a long way since my first day of beginning band in 1982!

In thinking back through my experiences both as a student and teacher in this state, I have concluded that the greatest change I've seen in a quarter of a century is the change in perception – and rightly so. It was gratifying to hear a parent express to us at a Day of Percussion event that she had “never realized just how much went into educating drummers.” I'm so grateful to be a part of a chapter that has grown parental support, community support, educational support, artist and industry support from the ground up. But I'm most proud of the road we've helped pave for our students. Do you ever find yourself wondering what you get from your PAS membership? I invite you to review how far we've come, to realize how far we have to go, to remember that our successes have never been solo achievements, and to join us in the effort of writing the next chapter in our “Once Upon a Time” story.

Profile: Michael Glaser

by Gene Fambrough



Local artist Michael Glaser joined the faculty at UAB as adjunct instructor of drum set in the Spring of 2009. Take a few moments to get to know him a little better!

How did you get started playing drums? I noticed that I was being drawn to the drum parts on recordings as well as not being able to take my eyes off the drummer when I would occasionally see live music, and eventually I started trying to copy the rhythms I was hearing on recordings. My 2 best friends at the time were also getting into drums, and we fueled each other's fire by geeking out over drum catalogs & stuff.

Who were your biggest influences when you were younger? Stewart Copeland, Jeff Porcaro, Steve Smith, Mel Gaynor (Simple Minds), Phil Gould (Level 42)

How did you get interested in jazz drumming? I picked up a very early Vital Information recording after reading a Steve Smith interview in Modern Drummer after he left Journey, as well as Billy Cobham's latest cassette at the time (also after reading an MD interview), and started getting into instrumental music along those lines. It was a long while before my tastes got to where I was checking out guys like Roy Haynes and Tony Williams and the swing rhythm on the ride cymbal (where I have happily been ever since!), but I think the more funk and rock oriented jazz stuff is actually a really good gateway to the sound and the style of the classics for listeners of a certain age or at a certain stage.

What drummers are you listening to currently? Brian Blade, Victor Lewis, Joey Baron, Max Roach, Paul Wertico, and an amazing drummer named Chris Dave who has a bunch of ridiculous YouTube videos.

What do you enjoy about teaching? I like bringing the lessons learned from performing into the teaching studio. All the little things I pick up from playing with other musicians and analyzing my own playing in terms of time and technique- it's fun to pass those observations on and see students benefit from them.

What do you enjoy about performing? I've noticed in the past few years that I have an increased ability to just LISTEN to what's coming out as I'm playing, so I would have to say that feeling of letting go and getting out of the way of the sounds and really ENJOYING the sound of the group.

Talk briefly about your current gigs. Birmingham Seven - a 4 horn 3 rhythm group led by Daniel Western that does his transcriptions of 50s-60s jazz.....Blue Galaxy String Project - a string quartet + bass & drums that plays all kinds of pop music (Radiohead, The Police, Springsteen, Dave Brubeck, you name it).....The White Oaks - awesome original rock band with 3 singers - great hooks & lots of harmonies.....The Chad Fisher Group - original jazz mainly written by Chad, a trombone player & fantastic writer.....Night Flight Big Band - a 20 piece big band led by Mart Avant - we read a lot on the bandstand.

If you could have dinner with one drummer, who would it be and why? Elvin Jones - For me, his drumming beautifully combines a really fine-tuned, advanced concept with a simple, pure passion for playing drums & music, and he also manages to SWING like crazy all the time, so it always feels great. I have also heard he was a warm-hearted person to be with.

Most memorable gig? A few years ago I performed some of my own transcriptions of jazz I really like by folks like Wayne Shorter & Dave Douglas under the name The Prudent Traveller. I arranged the music for a quintet, and the project took quite a while for me to complete. We played at Bare Hands Gallery, where my wife, Wendy is one of the directors, and lots of friends & family turned out to listen. I was so nervous that I know my playing was under par, but the support of everyone that came really blew me away and made it a great night.

Finally, what was the last CD you listened to? Pat Metheny Group *First Circle*.

Transitions: The University of Alabama

contributed by Neal Flum

(Continued from page 3)

never received anything less from him. Great teaching, simply put, gives to those of us who are students the reliable compass which directs us in whatever it is we do—ever reminding us of those who were our teachers. Blake Tyson, associate professor of percussion at the University of Central Arkansas carries just such a compass with him: “When I graduated, Mr. Mathis gave me an old stick case from Frank’s Drum Shop. After all these years I still take that case with me to every timpani gig I play. It helps me remember those inspirational performances and reminds me of the high standard I have to meet. When he played, it seemed as if it was the most important thing in the world to him and I try to emulate that intensity and commitment when I perform. His artistry is impossible to forget. I am grateful that I had so many chances to see him perform and *I will always be proud to call him my teacher.*” Won’t we all. “God’s speed!” Mr. Mathis as you make your way to the next stage of your life. May your compass guide you to only the best life has to offer.



The torch has been passed as Beth Gottlieb, former student of Larry Mathis, now assumes the position of instructor of percussion at the University of Alabama, a position Mr. Mathis held for 41 years. Ms. Gottlieb returns to her alma mater with great enthusiasm and with gratitude for the opportunity to teach where she once was a student. Ms. Gottlieb’s return to Alabama will be a family affair as her sons Brian and Scott are enrolled as students in the school of music. Ms. Gottlieb is married to Danny Gottlieb, internationally known drum-set artist who was the drummer in the original Pat Metheny Group as well as having performed and recorded with some of the world’s greatest musicians.

The school of music is excited to have Ms. Gottlieb as a member of the faculty. Director of Bands, Dr. Ken Ozzello, states, “It is a great opportunity for our students and staff to have the opportunity to take advantage of Beth’s wealth of *real-world* experience in the music business. Her energy is infectious and she has the percussion studio *buzzing* with activity.” School of Music director, Mr. Skip Snead, adds: “We are very fortunate to have had Beth Gottlieb be willing to step in and guide our percussion program through a time of crisis. When it became necessary to replace Larry Mathis at the last minute due to his injury, we could not have hoped to find someone with her strength of background, level of expertise, and knowledge of the institution. She has provided stability, direction, and inspiration for our percussion program at a crucial time. Her willingness to stay with us in a more permanent role following Professor Mathis’s decision to retire is even more fortuitous. She has integrated herself into the faculty and overall program very smoothly, continuing and strengthening the great legacy we are used to at UA. We are very lucky to have her with us.”

In commenting on her return, Ms. Gottlieb offers, “It’s a dream come true to return to my alma mater! I have always been thankful for my education at the Capstone and have had a very successful music career due to Larry Mathis and the University of Alabama School of Music. Larry was a great inspiration to me and taught me how to be a well-rounded percussionist. I always thank him for making me learn to sight-read. We used to read duets together for fun and he was always available.

As far as taking over for Larry, it’s a huge honor. I want to make him proud and take the studio to the highest level. I aspire to be an inspiration to my students as he was to me. Having been a professional performing musician for the past 25 years, I hope to pass on “real world” experience to the UA students. I am very excited about the future of the Alabama Percussion Studio and its promising students.”

The torch, having been passed, now burns brightly for the future of the University of Alabama school of music and percussion studio. And how appropriate it is that Ms. Gottlieb performs with Gary Sinise, actor in the movie *Forest Gump*. Forest Gump, fictional resident of Alabama, whose mother’s wisdom seems appropriate here regarding Ms. Gottlieb’s return to the university:

“Life’s a box of chocolates . . . You never know what you’re gonna get.”

News from South Alabama

contributed by Mike Sammons

USA Percussionist Announced as Finalist

USA Percussionist, Ben Ivey, was announced as finalist for the Symphony of the Mountains (Tennessee) Concerto Competition. Ben was one of 3 finalists from around the country, and will be performing the Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra by Ney Rosauro at the final round competition on February 12. If chosen as the first-place applicant, Ben will perform with the Symphony of the Mountains on the following year subscription artist series. Good luck Ben!

Mike Sammons, Director of Percussion at University of South Alabama

Clinic / Master-class: Clemson University

Mike Sammons traveled to Clemson University on January 27th for a clinic master-class for the Clemson Percussion Studio, Dr. Paul Buyer Director. Topics included triple channel learning (Visual Auditory Kinesthetic- VAK), cloning and hands separate approach to percussion technique and development of sound through relaxation and rebound. Several students played a wide variety of pieces as part of the clinic including *Prím* by Áskell Másson, *Rhythmic Caprice* by Leigh Howard Stevens and several marimba works by Keiko Abe.

Mike Sammons, soloist, *Raise the Roof* by Michael Daugherty

USA Wind Ensemble

Spring Concert

Thursday, April 22, 7:30 PM, Recital Hall, Laidlaw Performing Arts Center

Mike Sammons will perform *Raise the Roof* (2007) for solo timpani with the University of South Alabama Wind Ensemble, Dr. Greg Gruner, conductor. Daugherty incorporates a wide variety of timpani performance techniques in his *tour de force* concerto including extensive use of foot pedals for long, expressive melodic playing, placement of a cymbal upside down on the head of the lowest drum to play glissandi rolls, and the use of wire brushes, maraca sticks, and even bare hands! *Raise the Roof* has quickly become a standard of the percussion concerti repertoire.

USA Percussion Ensemble and World Music with guest artist, Dr. Michael Vercelli

Spring Gala

Tuesday, April 20, 2009, 7:30 PM Recital Hall, Laidlaw Performing Arts Center

The USA Percussion Ensemble and World Music Ensemble will present its annual spring concert on Tuesday April 20 at 7:30 p.m. in the Recital Hall of the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center and will feature guest artist, Dr. Michael Vercelli. The program will feature several chamber percussion group performances including *Sharpened Stick* by Brett Dietz, *Omphalo Centric Lecture* by Nigel Westlake (featuring USA Marimba Band), *Norskin* by Anders Astrand as well as larger works for percussion including *Whispers* by David Skidmore. The world music ensemble will present music representing various Ghanaian ethnic groups including *Dagara* (African Gyil or xylophone tradition), *Ga* and *Ewe* traditions.

Dr. Vercelli is the director of the World Music Performance Center at West Virginia University. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Percussion Performance with a minor in Ethnomusicology from the University of Arizona. He has studied the traditional music of other countries and done fieldwork in Bali, Cuba, Brazil, and primarily, Ghana. Dr. Vercelli has received many awards for both his performance and study of indigenous music such as being named a Fulbright Alternate and recipient of numerous grants including the prestigious Northern Trust/ Piper Enrichment Scholarship, which enabled him to spend seven months in West Africa researching his dissertation project on Ghanaian xylophone.

"Project Ghana," first organized and facilitated by Dr. Vercelli in the summer of 2006, is an annual study abroad course focusing on music, dance and cultural emersion. Dr. Vercelli is a contributing author to the World Percussion chapter in the third edition of Gary Cook's *Teaching Percussion*. He is a participating member in the Society for Ethnomusicology and Percussive Arts Society where he serves on the World Percussion Committee. Michael has given lectures, performances and workshops, across the United States, Mexico, Brazil, and China and is a founding member of the Zumbumba Percussion Trio.

For more information regarding USA Percussion events, visit: <http://www.southalabama.edu/music/percussion/>.

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2010 Drum Corps International Outlook

On July 29, Drum Corps International will return to Alabama for the "Battle of the Brass" in Gadsden. Although this is the only show in the state this summer, it is a spectacular line-up and should be a great show.

On the ticket are the Blue Knights, Blue Stars, Bluecoats, Boston Crusaders, Cavaliers, Crossmen, Santa Clara Vanguard, Pioneer, and Spirit.

Best of luck to all of our Alabama connections in the DCI community - **Brad Palmer** with the **Bluecoats** from Canton, Ohio, **Iain Moyer** with the **Holy Name Cadets**, and **Sean Womack** serving as Co-Caption Head of **Spirit** from Atlanta, GA.



Best wishes for all students and staff for a successful 2010 competitive season and we'll see you in Gadsden!!!



Event Calendar - Spring 2010

January 21—DoubleStop Percussion clinic session at AMEA, Tuscaloosa, AL.

January 21—Dr. Gene Fambrough clinic session at AMEA, Tuscaloosa, AL.

January 31—Marimba Madness concert, UAB. Hulsey Recital Hall, 4:00 PM.

February 25—Dr. Gene Fambrough, UAB Faculty Recital, Hulsey, 7:30 PM.

February 28—UNA Big Band Blow-out, featuring Marimba Bands I and II, 2:00 PM, Florence freshman Center Auditorium.

March 6—ALAPAS Day of Percussion, Samford.

March 11—UAB Chamber Percussion Recital, 7:30 PM, Sirote Theater.

March 24—Kevin Kenney, JSU Senior Recital, 7:30 PM, Mason.

March 28—Brian Radock, UA Student Recital, 8:00 PM, Moody.

March 31—UA Percussion Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Moody.

April 5—UAB Percussion Ensemble, 7:00 PM, Jemison Concert Hall.

April 5—UA African Drumming Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Moody.

April 7—JSU Mallet and Percussion Ensembles, 7:30 PM, Mason.

April 11—David Carroll, JSU Senior Recital, 7:30 PM, Mason.

April 12—Justin Fees, UA Student Recital, 5:30 PM, Moody.

April 13—Brandon Dodge, JSU Senior Recital, 7:30 PM, Mason.

April 18—Dr. John W. Parks IV clinic at Troy University, 7:00 PM, Long Hall.

April 19—Troy University Percussion Ensemble, with guest artist John W. Parks IV, 7:30 PM, Crosby Theater.

April 20—USA Percussion Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Laidlaw.

April 22—Auburn Percussion Ensemble/Steel Band, 7:30 PM, Goodwin.

April 22—Mike Sammons performs Michael Daugherty's "Raise the Roof" with the USA Wind Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Laidlaw.

April 23—UAB Steel Band, 5:30 PM, Hulsey.

April 25—Andy Harnsberger, UAB guest recital, 3:00 PM, Hulsey.

April 25-30—Adam Blackstock residency at Arizona State University.

April 26—UNA High School Percussion Ensemble Festival, 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM, Norton Auditorium.

April 26—UNA Percussion Ensemble Concert, also featuring the UNA World Percussion Ensemble, Marimba Bands I and II.

May 6—Samford Percussion Ensemble, 7:30 PM, Brock.

May 6-12—UAB Wind Symphony on tour to New York City.

May 10—UAB Steel Band performance in Sandestin, FL.

May 13—SO Percussion Ensemble with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra (performing *Ionisation* and the music of Frank Zappa), Alys Stephens Center (UAB).

June 5—UAB Drumline Auditions, 9 AM—5 PM, Hulsey Center.

June 6-11—UAB High School Drumline Camp.

June 21-25—UAB Summer Percussion Seminar.

July TBA—UAB Electro-Acoustic Percussion group, Hulsey.

July 29—DCI Battle of the Brass, Gadsden, AL, Titan Stadium at Gadsden City High School (featuring Bluecoats, Cavaliers, Santa Clara Vanguard, and Spirit of Atlanta).



Alabama Chapter newsletter

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

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

ALAPAS Day of Percussion, March 6, 2010!!!



Gregg Bissonette



Janis Potter



Colin McNutt

***PLUS: Jennifer Caputo and percussion ensemble performances
by Oak Mountain HS, Samford, Alabama, and UAB.***
