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Gene Fambrough, editor

The ALAPAS Newsletter

PERCUSSIVE
ARTS SOCIETY



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Department of Music*

From the New President, Dr. Grant Dalton

Greetings!

SPRING / SUMMER EVENTS, 2009:

**April 24—North Alabama
Percussion Festival**

**May 28-29—Yamaha
Sounds of Summer
Camp at Samford**

**July 24—UAB Electro
Acoustic Percussion
Group**

**July 24—DCI Gadsden
Battle of the Brass**

I hope you enjoy this spring/summer edition of the Alabama Percussive Arts Society's newsletter. The Chapter has had a great year, and we are already looking forward to this coming school year. The summer is going to be filled with opportunities to make music, and the coming year should be very energizing. I am sure that you are very familiar with our Day of Percussion, and I hope that you plan to attend that event on March 6, 2010. We are already planning that event, and we expect it to be a great day that is educational and entertaining for everyone in attendance.

In this upcoming year I hope that you will be involved in many different facets of music making. We are in a state that has a wealth of percussive opportunities that is in many ways disproportionate to our population. There are very few other states that are the size of Alabama that have as many quality orchestras, festivals, clinics, or musical events.

For those of you who are students you may want to check out the orchestras in the state. Many of them have special discounts for students, so it is very economical to attend these performances, and you can learn so much from top notch percussionists in these groups. I know that the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in Birmingham allows students to attend concerts for \$7. This means that a student may go to a live concert for less money than a movie. Many of the opera companies in the state have similar discounts.

There are many different marching percussion events that take place during the summer. Some of these are connected with Drum Corps International. Often, there are free clinics at DCI events. We will try to keep the website updated with regard to these clinics. In fact, if you have an interest in marching percussion and would like to try something a little different you may want to investigate one of the various Scottish Pipe and Drum bands in the state. Most of these organizations have training groups, and they are open to anyone.

The Chapter has been primarily organized from the central part of the state; however, we are now using technology to improve our communication with the southern and northern parts of the state. If you are in an area that is simply too far from Birmingham to attend our chapter meetings please let me know and I'll put you in touch with a site that will be "Skyping" in on the meetings.

Lastly, there are some opportunities that are available to our students and teachers. Many schools, especially colleges, allow you to form a student group that is recognized by the school. The Percussive Arts Society will help you to organize your group if you want. The benefit of forming a PAS student group is that there may be money from your school's "student activity fund" that can help to fund a trip to a percussive event. The obvious choice for a trip is PASIC. PASIC will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from November 11 through 14.

I hope that this is a great year for you. Please let me know if there is a way that our PAS chapter can help you in your percussive endeavors.

Percussively yours,
Grant Dalton
gbdalton@samford.edu

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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.

2009 WGI Recap

contributed by Sean Womack

With the growing popularity of indoor drumline and percussion ensemble this year, nine groups from our state competed in the Southeastern Color Guard Circuit (SCGC) and three groups went on to WGI finals in Dayton, OH. These groups represented our state well and were very successful.

Cullman HS, Hewitt-Trussville GS, Hoover HS, Oak Grove HS, and Vestavia Hills HS competed in the Scholastic Marching "A" Division of SCGC. Oak Grove, Cullman, Hoover, and Trussville finished the season in Nashville, TN at SCGC Finals placing fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth respectively. Spain Park HS competed in Scholastic Concert "A" placing second at SCGC Finals and taking home the silver medal in their division. Muscle Shoals HS competed in Scholastic Concert Open placing first at SCGC Championships winning the gold medal, as well as placing first at WGI finals and winning the gold. Bob Jones HS and Brookwood HS competed in Scholastic Marching Open Division. Brookwood placed second at SCGC finals, taking home the silver medal, and Bob Jones and Brookwood attended WGI finals.

Congratulations to all the students, staff, and directors of these groups. They represented our state very well and we wish them continued success in the years to come.

University of South Alabama Events, Spring 2009

contributed by Mike Sammons

With a host of concerts / recitals, clinics, and gearing up for the new USA Jag' Drumline, percussion at the University of South Alabama is in full swing. For more information regarding USA Percussion events, visit <http://www.southalabama.edu/music/percussion/>.

The **USA Percussion Studio** hosted Remo Artist **Johnny Lee Lane** for a clinic on Thursday, March 12, 2009. The theme of the clinic was "Percussion is Plural". Featured topics included rudimental drumming, orchestral snare and accessories, hand drums, and drumset. Thank you to all of Professor Lane's sponsors: **Remo, Percussive Arts Society, Vic Firth, Roll-Off, Hal Leonard, and Zildjian**. For more information on **Johnny Lee Lane**, visit <http://www.proflane.com/>

Newly appointed Director of Percussion Studies **Mike Sammons** presented a Faculty Percussion Recital on Thursday, March 12, 2009. The recital featured the USA Percussion Ensemble performing *Mudra* by Bob Becker and *Legal Highs* by David P. Jones with Christine Gundayao Sammons, violin. Other works performed included Àskell Másson *Kím* for snare drum and *Impromptu* for marimba as well as Echard Kopetzki's *Movements for a Solo Dancer* and an adaptation for marimba of *Sonata no. 4 pour violon* by Eugène Ysaÿe.

http://blog.al.com/entertainment-pressregister/2009/03/usa_faculty_recital_features_m.html

Caleb Givens presented his senior recital on Sunday, March 29, 2009. Works performed included *Four Movements for Timpani* by John Bergamo, *Six Unaccompanied Solos for Snare Drum* by Michael Colgrass, *Nancy* by Emmanuel Sejourne, and *Wind in the Bamboo Grove* by Keiko Abe. Mr. Givens is a Music Business Major at the University of South Alabama and currently finishing his music business internship.

The **USA Percussion Ensemble** presented its annual spring concert under the direction of newly appointed Director of Percussion Studies, **Mike Sammons**, on Thursday, April 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Recital Hall of the Laidlaw Performing Arts Center. The ensemble presented an eclectic program featuring both contemporary and traditional styles of composition for keyboard percussion to works influenced by rudimental style drumming. The program included music by composers Bob Becker, John Bergamo, David Skidmore and Dave Hall. The concert also featured the **USA World Music Ensemble** performing repertoire from West African and Indian musical traditions, and the **USA Marimba Band** performed a variety of xylophone ragtime music. For more information, visit <http://www.southalabama.edu/music/calendar/>

Thad Anderson presented a guest faculty recital on Thursday, April 16, 2009 as part of a Southeastern US tour. Mr. Anderson currently serves as Director of Percussion Studies at Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX where he teaches applied percussion lessons and directs the Southwestern Percussion Group. He also maintains teaching responsibilities on the University of Texas at Austin campus where he directs and arranges for the Longhorn Band Drumline and conducts the Longhorn Percussion Ensemble. Thad is founder and artistic director of □the Cage Percussion Players. For more information, please visit: <http://www.thadanderson.com/>

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

ALAPAS Day of Percussion, 2009

contributed by Neal Flum

The 15th Annual Alabama PAS Day of Percussion took place at Hoover High School on Saturday, February 28, 2009. Our host for the event was Jeff Fondren and serving as newly-elected president and vice president respectively were Grant Dalton and Sean Womack. Special thanks go to Harry McAfee, Dennis Carroll, Sallie Vines White, and the band parents of Hoover High School who did a superb job in making the event run seamlessly and quite well. This year's event had the highest paid-attendance in its history at 180. Total attendance was close to 300. The weather even cooperated keeping the snow away until Sunday when, unfortunately, several of our clinicians were stranded for most of the day at the airport.

The event was fortunate to have the participation of the Brookwood Indoor Drumline directed by Mike Keeton (assisted by Tony Riddle, Sho Woods and Alex Hinson), the Hoover High School Percussion Ensemble directed by Jeff Fondren, and the Jacksonville State University Marching Percussion Section directed by Clint Gillespie. Clinics were presented by Joseph Gramley of the University of Michigan, current PAS president Steve Houghton of Indiana University, Scott Johnson, percussion director for the Blue Devils Drum and Bugle Corps, and Todd Sucherman, drummer for Styx and recent recipient of the Modern Drummer reader's poll "#1 Rock Drummer," "#1 Educational DVD," "#2 Recorded Performance," and "#3 Clinician." Ron and Lauren Vogel Weiss were special guests at the event having traveled from Bedford, Texas (outside of Dallas) to attend our 15th annual event. The day also included the presentation of a plaque by Steve Houghton to outgoing Alabama PAS Chapter President, Neal Flum. The Alabama Chapter of PAS is deeply indebted to Jeff Fondren whom without his many hours of work and dedication—our event would not have been possible. Special thanks to Gayle Wilkinson of the Homewood Suites Hilton on Highway 280 for assisting with our guest lodging needs. And "Bravo!" to Anne Molony, Melanie Gammon, and Paige Hood for our outstanding hospitality room. Next year's event is scheduled for March 6 at Samford University.



Mike Keeton and Brookwood Indoor Line



Hoover High School



*At right: Joseph Gramley,
University of Michigan*



Photo by AEROSE 2009

*Above: Clint Gillespie and the JSU
Drumline, below*



Photo by AEROSE 2009

Scott Johnson, Concord Blue Devils



Photo by AEROSE 2009

Steve Houghton, Indiana University and current PAS President



Photo by AEROSE 2009

Todd Sucherman of Styx

All photos courtesy of Anne Rose

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2009 Drum Corps International Outlook

On July 24, 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 Cavaliers, Carolina Crown, Blue Knights, Santa Clara Vanguard, Madison Scouts, Blue Stars, Spirit, Colts, Pacific Crest, the Troopers, and Jersey Surf.

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 Jacksonville, AL.



Best wishes for all students and staff for a successful 2009 competitive season and we'll see you in Gadsden!!!



Event Calendar - Spring/Summer 2009

May 28-29—Yamaha Sounds of Summer Camps at Samford.

May 30—The Machine performs Pink Floyd, Music at McClellan.

June 6—UAB Drumline auditions, 9 AM—5 PM, Hulsey Center.

June 13—Alabama Symphony Orchestra performs “Classics and Canons under the Stars”, Music at McClellan.

June 10-14 and 14-19—UA Crimson Music Camp.

June 14-20—UAB Summer Music Camp.

June 17—UAB Steel Band performance at the Sandestin Hilton (Florida), 6:30—9:30 PM.

June 22-26—UAB Summer Percussion Seminar.

July 1—UAB Teacher Training Workshop, 9 AM—4:30 PM.

July 4—UAB Summer Community Band, annual July 4th concert, Campus Green, 7:00 PM.

July 24—DCI Gadsden “Battle of the Brass.” Featuring the Cavaliers, Carolina Crown, Blue Knights, Santa Clara Vanguard, Madison Scouts, Blue Stars, and Spirit.

July 24—UAB Electro-Acoustic Percussion Ensemble, 5:30 PM, Hulsey Center.

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

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.

The UAB percussion studio also hosted marimbist Christopher Norton (Belmont University) for a masterclass on February 6. He presented a wonderful session on musicality and sight-reading for the marimba.

The UAB Drumline was selected to perform at the USA vs. Switzerland Davis Cup tennis matches held at the BJCC March 6, 7, and 8. In addition to performing during the USA team player introductions, they also accompanied American Idol runner-up Diana DeGarmo during her performance of the national anthem.

Faculty members Gene Fambrough and Laura Noah were joined by senior music major Seth Noble for a performance of UAB theory professor William Price’s “*Hardboiled (Red Harvest)*” at the Music teachers National Convention in Atlanta, GA on March 29. The performance was part of Dr. Price’s selection as Distinguished Composer of the Year for 2009.

Percussionist Brad Palmer (DoubleStop Percussion) joined the UAB Percussion Ensemble on their Spring concert (April 7), performing Bob Becker’s “*Palta*” on solo congas with the group.

UAB is also planning its first annual “Summer Percussion Seminar” from June 22-26. You can find more information about this and other events on our new website (developed by Laura Noah), located at www.uabpercussion.com.



Alabama Chapter newsletter

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

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

ALAPAS Day of Percussion, February 28, 2009!!!

