The Journal of the DePaul School of Music | Spring 2012

conBrio

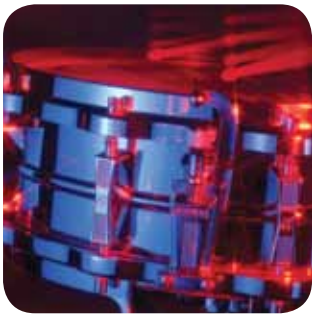
Patience
Persistence
Perfection
Percussion

Contents

Prelude

Patience Persistence Perfection Percussion

The impulse seems to be nearly universal and it likely dates to the beginnings of humanity — this profound inclination to strike objects for the varying sounds the striking can produce and for the rhythmic patterns that can be generated by grouping them. It is somehow soothing and may well be one of humankind's most primitive and longstanding proclivities, and it has been integrated into music making since the start.



It is also now likely the most extensive and may well be among the most refined aspects of all instrumental music, as literally thousands of varying objects and beaters are regularly incorporated into the domain, and at least hundreds of thousands of possible sounds have been incorporated — many demanding extraordinary levels of technique by the advanced performer.

I write, of course, about the field of percussion, and of the protocols and practices associated with its pursuit. It permeates most music making around the globe, regardless of genre, and it occupies a unique place within the curricula of every school of music.

The student musicians drawn to this field are themselves unusual, as success here requires a particular combination of intelligence, diligence, sonic sensitivity, and patience that few seem to possess. For the rest of us, we can only marvel at what is possible and wonder about how such specialist musicians are developed. That is the particular focus we've chosen for this issue of *Con Brio*, and we invite you to both marvel and wonder along with us as we try to understand what goes on in the percussion studio and in the back row of our major ensembles.

To provide a fairly complete perspective, we focus especially and first upon the extraordinary percussion studio at DePaul. Among other things, you'll hear faculty percussionists Michael Green and Al Payson reflect upon the "rhythms" of percussion education, read faculty percussionist Michael Kozakis's reflections about the power of the percussion ensemble as a pedagogical tool, listen in on the conversation between faculty jazz drummers Bob Rummage and Dana Hall about their specialty, and tune in to DePaul Aumna Erin Walker Bliss's celebration of mallet percussion experiences. Faculty member Michael Lewanski writes of the role percussion plays in the Classical Canon and his colleague Eric Millstein writes of the special challenges of the percussion part in Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*. Cleveland Orchestra percussion and DePaul faculty member Marc Damoulakis reflects on the life of an orchestral percussionist and alums Andy Jones and Jeff Handley describe life playing percussion in the Broadway musical pits. Finally, we joyfully offer a reprint of Garrison Keillor's "Young Lutheran's Guide to the Orchestra" in which he explores which instrument is ideal for young Lutherans to take up. All this we do as we do all our work, with spirit.

Dean Donald E. Casey
DePaul School of Music

The Young Lutheran's Guide to the Orchestra

BY GARRISON KEILLOR

To each person, God gives some talent, such as writing, just to name one, and to many persons He has given musical talent, though not as many as think so. For the young Lutheran, the question must be: Do I have a genuine God-given musical talent, or do I only seem gifted in comparison to other Lutherans?

If your talent is choir or organ, there's no problem. Choir members and organists can be sure their gift is from God because who else but God would be interested? Just like nobody gets fat on celery, nobody goes into church music for the wrong motives.

But for a Lutheran who feels led to play in an orchestra, the first question must be: Are you kidding? An *orchestra?*

In the Bible, we read about people singing and playing musical instruments, the harp, trumpet, psaltery, but always in praise of the Lord, not for amusement. We do not read that our Lord Himself ever played an instrument or enjoyed hearing others play theirs. The apostles did not attend concerts or go to dances. *Are you sure this is what you want?* Do you know what you're getting into?

Opera. Is that anyplace for a Christian? Don Juan and Mephistopheles and Wagner and all his pagan goddesses hooting and hollering, and the immorality — I mean, is anybody in opera married? You play in an orchestra, you're going to wind up in opera, and the next thing you know, you're going to be skipping Sunday mornings.

If you steer clear of opera and stick to orchestral concert music, where are the Christian composers? Modern ones are existentialists, the Romantics were secular humanists, the eighteenth century was all rationalists, and the seventeenth was Italians, except for Bach, and you can't make a living playing Bach. You go in an orchestra, you're going to be devoting your life to a lot of music that sort of swirls around in spiritual mystery searching for answers that people could find in the Bible if someone showed them where to look.

But if you're determined to play in an orchestra, then you ought to ask yourself: Which instrument is the best one for a Lutheran to play? If our Lord had played an instrument, which one would he have chosen? Probably not a *French horn*. It takes too much of a person's life. French horn players hardly have the time to marry and have children. The French horn is practically a religion all by itself. Should a Lutheran play the *bassoon*? Not if you want to be taken seriously. The name says it all: *bassoon*. Maybe you'd do it for a hobby ("Let's go bassooning this weekend, honey!") but not as your life occupation.

Many Lutherans start out playing *clarinets* in marching band and think of the clarinet as a Christian instrument, clear and strong and almost human, but a symphonic clarinet is different from the band clarinet: it's sardonic, skeptical and definitely worldly. The *English horn* sounds Christian, maybe because we think of it as the Anglican Horn, but it's so mournful, so plaintive. And so are English Horn players. They all have incredibly complicated problems, they're all depressed, especially at night, which is when the concerts are. The *oboe* is the sensualist of the woodwind section, and if there's ever a wind a Lutheran should avoid, it's this one. In movie soundtracks, you tend to hear the oboe when the woman is taking off her clothes, or else later, when she asks the man for a cigarette. The *flute* is the big shot of the wind section. Jean-Pierre Rampal, James Galway, both millionaires (how many millionaire bassoonists are there?), because everyone knows it's the hardest to play. To spend your life blowing across a tiny hole — it's not really normal is it? The flute is a temptation to pride. Avoid it. The last member of the woodwind family is the flakiest, and that's the *piccolo*. No Salvation Army Band ever included a piccolo and no piccolo virtuoso ever did an album of gospel music. This is not a devotional instrument.

Garrison Keillor, host, "A Prairie Home Companion," American Public Radio. PHOTO BY VELENCHENKO.

We come now to the string section. Strings are mentioned in the Scripture and therefore some Lutherans are tempted to become string players, but be careful. *Bass*, for example. An extremely slow instrument, the plowhorse of the orchestra, and bass players tend to be a little methodical, not inventive, not quick, not witty or brilliant, but reliable. This makes the instrument very tempting to German Lutherans. And yet, bass notes have a darkness and depth to them that, let's face it, is sexual. And when bass players pick up their bows, I don't think there's any doubt what's going on in their minds back there. The *cello* section seems so normal, and cellists seem like such nice people. The way they put their arms around their instruments, they look like parents zipping up a child's snowsuit. They seem like us: comfortable, middle-range. And yet there is something too comfortable, maybe too sensual, about the cello. The way they hold the instrument between their legs: why can't they hold it across their laps or alongside themselves? The *viola* section is not a nice place for a Lutheran and here you'll have to have to take my word for it. I know violists and they are fine people until, late at night, they start drinking a few bottles of cheap red wine and roasting chickens over a pit in a vacant lot and talk about going to Yucatan with a woman named Rita.

Don't be part of this crowd. The *violin* is a problem for any Christian because it is a solo instrument, a virtuoso instrument, and we're not solo people. We believe in taking a back seat and being helpful. So Christians think about becoming *second violinists*. They're steady, humble, supportive. But who do they support? *First violins*. You want to get involved with them? The *first violins* are natural egotists. The conductor looks to them first, and most first violinists believe that the conductor secretly takes his cue from them, that he, a simple foreign person, gets carried away by listening to the violins and falls into a romantic, emotional reverie and

forgets where in the score he is and looks to the concertmaster, the No. 1 first violin, to find out what's going on: this is what violinists believe in their hearts. If the conductor dropped dead, the rest of the orchestra would simply follow the violin section, while the maestro's body was carried away, and nobody would know the difference. Is this a place for a Lutheran to be? In the biggest collection of gold-plated narcissists ever gathered on one stage? No.

Let's be clear about the brass section. First of all, the rest of the orchestra wishes the brass were playing in another room, and so does the conductor. His back is toward the audience, so they can't see what he's saying to the brass section; he's saying: You're too damn loud, shut the fuck up (in Italian, this doesn't sound course at all). The brass section is made up of men who were at one time in the construction trades and went into music because the hours were better. They are heavy dudes, and that's why composers wrote so few notes for them: because they're juveniles. The *tuba* player, for example, is a stocky bearded guy who has a day job as a plumber. He's the only member of the orchestra who bowls and goes deer hunting. It's not an instrument for a sensitive Lutheran, and anyway, there's only one tuba and he's it. The *trombonist* is a humorist. He carries a water spray gun to keep his slide moist and often uses it against other members of the orchestra. A Shriner at heart, he knows more Speedy Gonzalez jokes than you thought existed. The *trumpet* is the brass instrument you imagine as Christian, thinking of Gideon and of the Psalms, but then you meet a real-life trumpet player and realize how militaristic these people are. They don't want to wear black tie and play Bach, they want tight uniforms with shiny buttons, and they want to play as loudly as they possibly can. Most of the people who keel over dead at concerts are killed by trumpets.

There are two places in the orchestra for a Lutheran, and one is *percussion*. It's the most Lutheran instrument there is. Percussionists are endlessly patient, because they don't get to play much. Pages and pages of music go by where the violins are sawing away and the winds are tooting and the brass is blasting but the percussionist sits and counts the bars, like a hunter waiting for the quail to appear. A percussionist may have to wait for twenty minutes just to play a few beats, but those beats have to be exact and they have to be passionate and climactic. All that the epistles of Paul say a Christian should be — faithful, waiting, trusting, filled with fervor — are the qualities of the percussionist. The other Lutheran instrument, of course, is the *harp*. It is the perfect instrument for a Christian because it keeps you humble. You can't gallivant around with a harp. Having one is like living with an elderly parent in poor health — it's hard to get them in and out of cars, impossible to satisfy them. A harp takes fourteen hours to tune and remains in tune for twenty minutes or until somebody opens a door. It's an instrument for a saint. If a harpist could find a good percussionist, they wouldn't need an orchestra at all; they could settle down and make wonderful music, just the two of them.

The Life of a Symphony Percussionist

In "Music: An Address at a New York Philharmonic Lunch," published in 1990, the late essayist and self-proclaimed autodidact George Plimpton, writes: "I am often asked which of the participatory exercises I have been involved in was the most frightening. People are always startled when I say that the one that frightened me the most was not playing football with the professionals, or basketball, or boxing, but when I played with the New York Philharmonic. I played the triangle. And some of the other percussion instruments."

Marc Damoulakis

Con Brio asked faculty member Marc Damoulakis, a member of the percussion section of The Cleveland Orchestra since 2006, about life without fear in one of the most acclaimed orchestras in the world:

"Typical" is a word that is not often used when you are talking about percussion. That is one of the things I like so much about the instruments. There is never a dull moment. Whether I'm playing a setup of 30 different instruments or a single triangle note, each sound needs to be totally unique and appropriate for the piece and the hall, as well as for the other instruments I'm playing with.

On January 13th The Cleveland Orchestra performed *Orion*, a piece by Kaija Saariaho. It calls for five percussionists and uses standard instruments such as cymbals and triangle and more unique and exotic ones, "shell chimes" and "bull roar." A few days later, we performed Shostakovich's Sixth Symphony from the repertory, scored for bass drum, xylophone, cymbals, triangle, and snare drum. The snare drum I chose to use for that piece was made in the '70's from a piece of cast iron sewer pipe; the triangle is handmade, from Germany.

A cargo plane with trunks holding all our instruments leaves before the orchestra tours — even if we're performing a modern piece that calls for hundreds of instruments. We have an amazing stagecrew and an incredible casemaker who makes custom cases for all of our instruments; everything is fitted in a way to protect the instruments.

In general, all the best conductors really value a good percussion section. The last time Kurt Masur was in Cleveland he programmed Brahms's Fourth Symphony. He was so blown away with the quality of the triangle's sound, he stopped the rehearsal and kept asking questions about the instrument. He is in his eighties and must have conducted that piece hundreds of times; yet he still experienced something new and exciting with a great interpretation of a standard triangle part.

Massachusetts native **MARC DAMOULAKIS**, *who joined the DePaul Percussion faculty in 2008, received his bachelor of music degree from Manhattan School of Music and is an alumnus of the New World Symphony, where he studied with music director Michael Tilson Thomas. Prior to joining The Cleveland Orchestra in 2006, he performed with the New York Philharmonic for three seasons, held tenure positions as principal timpanist of the Long Island Philharmonic and assistant principal percussion of the Harrisburg Symphony, and performed with the Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Kirov Orchestra, Canadian Brass, and Florida West Coast Symphony. He has taught masterclasses and clinics internationally.*

The Rhythms of Percussion Education

BY ROSALIE HARRIS

Michael Green, DePaul's percussion coordinator, remembers his hometown, Belleville, Illinois, as a great musical town. "My maternal uncle and first teacher, percussionist David Tuerck, was a member of the Belleville Philharmonic Society, which my grandfather, a violinist, conducted. Founded in 1867, the Belleville Philharmonic is the second oldest symphony orchestra in continuous operation in the nation," he said. (The oldest, the New York Philharmonic, was established in 1842.)

Belleville and his own drive put Green on an early fast musical track. He played in the junior high school band while still in fifth grade. After moving to Matteson, Illinois, he won a place in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra while he was at Rich Central High School. As a high school sophomore, he began studies in Evanston with the legendary Chicago Symphony Orchestra percussionist Gordon Peters, who became his teacher at Northwestern University. "Peters was hired by CSO music director Fritz Reiner in 1959 and played for forty-two seasons. It's not widely known that Reiner was a percussionist,

as well as a pianist, composer, and conductor. He knew the percussion instruments very well."

In 1969, during his junior year at Northwestern, Green won an audition in the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra's percussion section. He never looked back; since 1973, he has been timpanist at Grant Park. He became an extra with the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra in 1970; in 1979, he auditioned for and won a position as a contracted, full-time percussionist. He was appointed principal percussionist in 1996.

For many years, Green was an extra with the CSO, where he met percussionist Al Payson, a member of the DePaul School of Music faculty. In 1975, Payson recommended Green for a position in the department. Circumstances once again propelled Green to a more responsible position; he filled the newly-open percussion coordinator post in 1976.

Best Practices

Much of Green's approach to percussion education is based on his own studies with Peters. "He was a meticulously organized performer and approached all percussion instruments in a structured and thoughtful manner," said Green. "His methodology was structured around three goals: 1) to make students *musically independent* — that is, to teach us how pieces are constructed and how to develop the subjective art of phrasing; 2) to understand the *context* of pieces — that is, to understand how percussion parts fit, to see how they relate to each other and to other sections, and 3) to develop *aural criteria* — not just react to a piece with technical proficiency, but to explore its metaphorical heart."

All three criteria are embodied in the story Green tells to every new student — a lesson on preparation from the late, great cellist Pablo Casals. "Casals invariably followed the same preparatory routine," said Green. "He would leave his instrument in its case, carry the music to a comfortable chair, and sing the piece to himself. After a few ghost-fingerings and further study, he would put the music away and start practicing. (It helped that he had a photographic memory.)

"The point I make is that students shouldn't put the music on the stand and start wailing away by playing at tempo. Instead, they need to understand the piece and then take it at a speed where their hands and brain can grasp it. If they can play a piece slowly, chances are that by incrementally increasing the speed, all the motions, patterns, and musical ideas will be efficiently ingrained in their hands and their mind."

According to Green, starting points for DePaul's percussion recruits include 1) *proficiency*, "performing at a high level, both technically and musically — a given before anything else;" 2) a *work ethic* "second to none;" 3) *ears* "that can tune the most defiant timpani;" 4) *good people skills*, including cooperation and a willingness to help peers, and 5) *goal orientation*, "a vision of what you want to do."

Michael Green

Green is proud of the fact that each member of the present percussion faculty is a current or former performing professional, coming from diverse educational institutions and offering individual ways to solve percussion problems. (All are featured in this issue.) "Al Payson enjoyed a long performance career and, in addition to his years of experience, promoted avant garde music in the 1960's. Marc Damoulakis, a percussionist with the Cleveland Orchestra, one of the world's greatest orchestras, is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music. In addition to music degrees from the New England Conservatory and Temple University, Eric Millstein earned a degree in philosophy from Tufts. Michael Kozakis's degrees are from the Eastman School of Music and DePaul and he performs in Chicago-area ensembles of all sizes. From the jazz studies program here, we retain the professionalism of Bob Rummage, a fine jazz drummer. Next fall, jazz drummer and ethnomusicologist Dana Hall will add yet another dimension to our department."

There are a wide variety of ensemble opportunities for DePaul percussion students,

including the symphony orchestra, opera orchestra, percussion ensemble, wind ensemble, wind symphony, chamber orchestra, Ensemble 20+, and numerous jazz ensembles. "In a single quarter," said Green, "a student might perform Tchaikovsky's symphonic *Romeo and Juliet Overture*, the Janáček opera, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *Ionization*, a chamber work by Varèse.

"Many students also form their own groups," said Green, "And Chicago's numerous clubs and other performing venues have offered unparalleled practical experiences for generations of our students." Consequently, he said, DePaul percussion alumni have successful careers in major symphony orchestras and smaller classical ensembles around the world; in military bands; in Broadway orchestras; jazz clubs, and music festivals, as well as in recording studios, and classrooms ranging from elementary schools to institutions of higher education.

Jacks and Jills of All Trades

Among the requirements of all professional musicians, Green said, are listening skills and team playing. In another facet of the job, musicians must be protective of their rights, he added. Long active in local and national orchestral labor relations, Green teaches a course on these issues at DePaul.

Unlike other musicians, though, percussionists must incorporate a number of non-musical skills — all of which must be taught. Green's composite percussionist is a person who combines the characteristics of many occupations:

Collector: Percussionists need to have a stock of multiple instruments to make appropriate required sounds. This is especially true of the toys, which are the property — and responsibility — of the percussionists. For example, Green's collection includes triangles ranging in price from $130 to $600, no two sounding alike.

Tinker: Composers and conductors often are after a particular percussive sound, not a particular percussion instrument. If that sound can't be found among an existing collection, ingenuity with a hammer, knife or some glue can come in very handy.

Choreographer: Movement between instruments and among fellow percussionists must be made without distraction to the audience and other musicians. Audiences probably would be surprised to know how many rehearsals it might take for a percussionist to be "heard, not seen."

Scavenger: Wherever Green goes around the world, he looks for objects — not necessarily instruments — that make interesting sounds. Percussionists can own hundreds of these objects, some gathering dust for years, waiting for the right occasion.

Perfectionist: Known for patience, percussionists are often back there counting, waiting for the right time to make the perfect sound while the rest of the orchestra carries on.

"For instance," Green said, "although a percussionist might have to play only one single note on a tam-tam, these five actions must precede the actual note played: 1) choose an instrument with the appropriate size and depth of sound for that particular piece; 2) choose a mallet for the proper articulation and depth of sound; 3) before the performance, re-familiarize yourself with that particular instrument's reactive properties; 4) just before the entrance, prime the tam-tam — that is, strike the instrument inaudibly to start it vibrating. Striking a 'cold' tam-tam causes a delay in the sound that reaches the audience, and 5) finally, strike the instrument at the proper dynamic and tonal depth that is appropriate for that musical setting."

In Praise of **Mallets**

BY ERIN **WALKER BLISS**

The roots of the word "xylophone" come from the Greek words xylo, meaning "wood," and phone, meaning "sound." As such, the instrument family known as the xylophones includes all mallet percussion instruments with wooden bars. The two most famous of these instruments are the marimba and, of course, the xylophone.

The origins of the xylophone and marimba date back thousands of years, though modern concert versions of these instruments can be most directly traced to the 16th century. European xylophones of this period commonly featured an arrangement in which the bars did not lie lengthwise in front of the musician, as on the modern orchestral xylophone, but crossways, with the lowest bar nearest to the performer and the highest bar furthest from him. (Hans Holbein the Younger's famous 1523 wood etching, *Dance of Death*, in which a skeleton is playing a portable one-row xylophone, illustrates this type of bar arrangement.) Even in the mid-1830's, this type of xylophone was still being used: virtuoso Michael Jósef Gusikow utilized a crossways-arranged four-row xylophone; his renditions of popular folk songs and classical transcriptions earned rave reviews from famous musicians, such as Felix Mendelssohn.

Around this same time, the marimba was evolving in Central America. Guatemalan Sebastian Hurtado replaced the marimba's traditional gourd resonators with wooden boxes, expanded its range, and popularized a novelty type of performance in which he and his brothers performed together on one massive five- or six-octave marimba. The family, along with other Central American marimba groups, became a favorite of concert hall audiences and recording companies by the early 20th century, often referred to as the "Golden Age of the Xylophone."

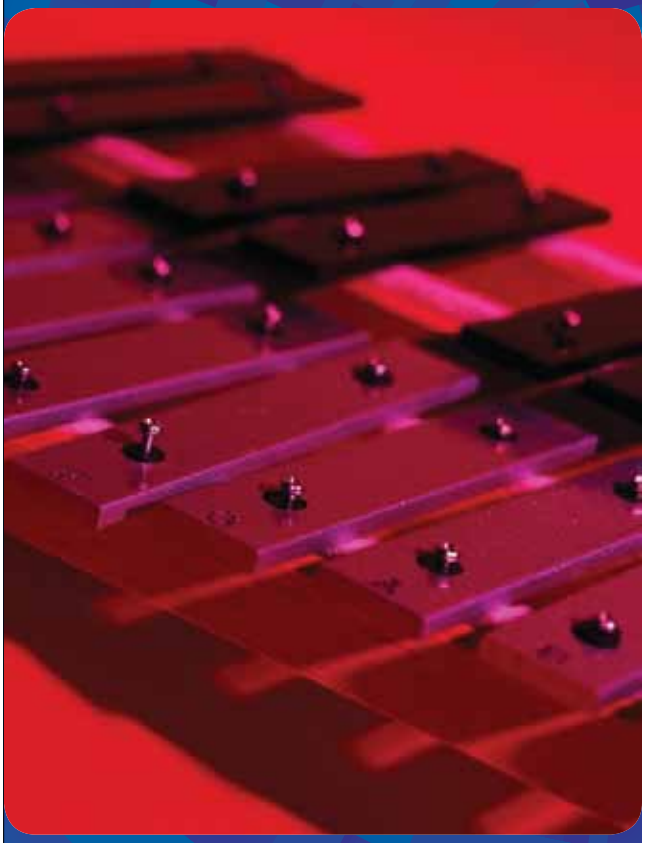
During its Golden Age, the xylophone was a featured instrument in vaudeville shows, dance orchestras, and military bands. Because it recorded with clear sound quality, it was sought after for early phonograph recordings and radio broadcasts. Companies such as Edison, Columbia, and RCA Victor featured artists including Charles P. Lowe, George Hamilton Green, Sammy Herman, Teddy Brown, The Hurtado Brothers Marimba Band, and Harry Yerkes' Jazzarimba Orchestra, featured on cylinder recordings and jukeboxes. Several xylophonists were regular members of early NBC and CBS orchestras, and the instrument was also popular on early movie soundtracks.

Manufacturing companies such as the J.C. Deagan Company also helped to spread the popularity of the xylophone. Located in Chicago's North Side, at the intersection of Ravenswood and Berteau Avenues, the company revolutionized the xylophone by adding Helmholtz resonators, rosewood bars, and one of the earliest two-row chromatic bar arrangements, played from behind the "white keys" in the center of the xylophone. The company also produced the nabimba, the first North American version of the marimba.

Over the ensuing years, well-known marimba and xylophone soloists such as Vida Chenoweth, Clair Omar Musser, Leigh Howard Stevens, Keiko Abe, Gordon Stout, Bob Becker, and Nancy Zeltsman continued to expand the popularity of both instruments with the development of four-mallet grips, virtuosic technique, and the composition and commissioning of new works from major composers. Today, the xylophone and the marimba are popular in solo recitals, percussion ensemble concerts, and orchestral performances around the globe.

ERIN WALKER BLISS *(MM '04), is a lecturer in world music and a Ph.D. candidate in musicology/ethnomusicology at the University of Kentucky (Lexington), where she received her doctoral of musical arts degree. She also taught courses in music appreciation, jazz history, Asian music, and the history of rock. Erin's diverse musical interests have allowed her to travel to Korea, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Thailand, Canada, Croatia, and throughout the United States. She has recorded for Honeyrock Publications and Alfred Publications and is a founding member of the "nief-norf project," a contemporary percussion ensemble. In Lexington, Erin is the director of the Central Music Academy, a non-profit music program that gives free music lessons to financially disadvantaged children.*

Going Like Sixty



According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *the slang phrase "like sixty" appeared in 1848, meaning "with great force or vigor." This is an apt description of the 60-year-and-counting career of DePaul faculty member Albert "Al" Payson, the renowned percussion performer, pedagogue, writer, and inventor.*

He might have been a percussive dancer, were it not for an early medical crisis. "I started tap dance lessons at age four but my 'hoofing' career lasted only one year due to appendix surgery. So the next year I began snare drum lessons," he said. "When I was 12, I began marimba lessons from a teacher who had a nightclub act playing that instrument; so her teaching was skewed to that end and I became a marimba specialist. She mostly had me memorize 4-mallet 'pop' pieces and, when I was 14, I was performing solo work on the marimba, playing for local Springfield, Illinois, civic groups, such as women's clubs and the Elks. My repertory consisted entirely of popular songs; but by the time I was old enough to do nightclub work, that era had come to an end due to the advent of a new medium, television." In high school, he often played marimba solos with band accompaniment. From his sophomore year through graduation he played timpani in the concert band and snare drum in the marching band.

Upon entering the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in 1950, "I happened to stumble into a great percussion program run by a musical dynamo, Paul Price. Just two years before my arrival, he had established the first college-accredited percussion ensemble in the nation. We toured extensively, and every audience we played for was hearing a percussion ensemble for the very first time. I particularly remember a performance at a Music Educators National Conference (now National Association for Music Education)

convention in Pittsburgh; a huge auditorium was standing room only, with thousands of music educators witnessing in amazement this new medium of musical expression. This was a heady time for us students!"

At the U. of I., Payson met his wife, Gerry, also a percussion student. During their 55 years of marriage, Gerry has been not only a soul mate, but also a business partner.

A Percussionist's Percussionist

After graduation, Payson spent one season in the Louisville Orchestra, then one season in the Lyric Opera Orchestra. In 1958, he was hired by Fritz Reiner, then music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO); he remained in the CSO until his retirement in 1997, performing around the world under the leadership of Reiner, Jean Martinon, Sir Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim, and a host of guest conductors.

"During my first few years in the CSO, percussion was dubbed the 'salt and pepper of the musical feast' in most of the repertory that was programmed, however, as the years went by, this changed; in many works we moved up to 'salad and vegetables,' and towards the end of my career, we actually moved up to 'meat and potatoes.' For example, I'm thinking of pieces such as *Notations*, by Pierre Boulez. This was challenging but, at the same time, very gratifying."

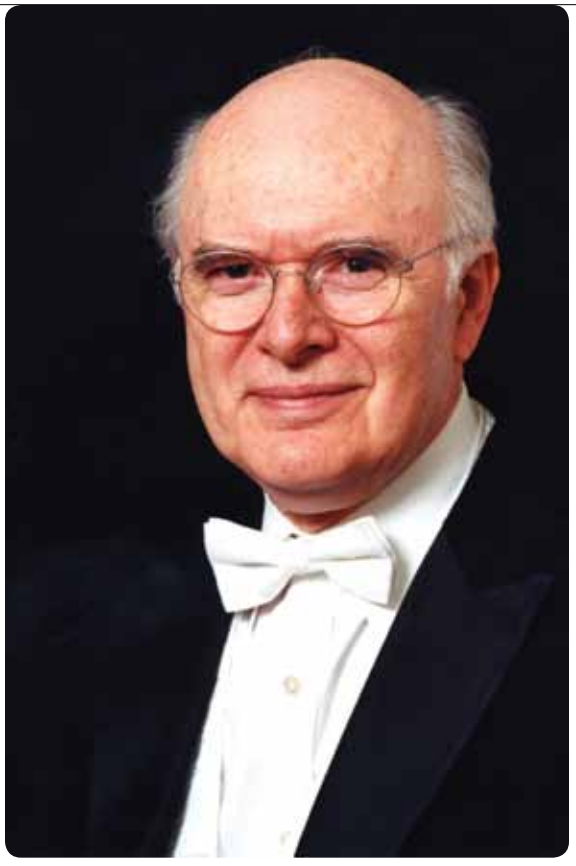
When Payson was named to the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) Hall of Fame in 2001, he was asked by PAS writer James A. Strain about his years with the CSO. He remembered that the season grew from 28 to 52 weeks during his tenure. "It's wonderful now," Payson said. "The new players can focus on an orchestra career without other obligations. It fosters such a better quality orchestra than when I began my career."

It is typical that Payson emphasized the welfare of his fellow musicians, a characteristic running through his career. In the PAS Hall of Fame article, James Ross, a fellow CSO percussionist, said, "When I think of Al, the first thing that comes to mind is that he is always the voice of reason and an island of calm. In a business where, all too often, inflated and fragile egos are the norm, I never saw even a hint of that with Al. He is the epitome of a 'good colleague.' That, as many of us know, is extremely important and something that should never be taken for granted."

A Musician of Invention

While it is not unusual for some percussionists to discover, create or modify instruments, Al and Gerry Payson turned his ideas into a business.

"Professional reed players, such as clarinetists, oboists, and bassoonists, make their own reeds," he said. "Likewise, a few professional timpanists make their own mallets. I also began making my own timpani mallets and bass drum beaters, just for my own use. Then some colleagues and students asked me to make some for them; I started making half-dozen at a time, then a dozen — and it kept growing until eventually, to my surprise and with absolutely zero promotion on my part, I was supervising the production of several thousand a year. Then Ludwig Industries invited me to put the mallets in their catalog."



Al Payson

His "eureka" inventions didn't stop there. "A roommate of mine in college, Michael Colgrass, became a composer. Around 1965, when he received a commission from an eminent violist, Emanuel Vardi, to write a duet for viola and percussion, Mike asked me if I could come up with a percussion membranic instrument resembling a timpani, but up in the viola range. In other words, it would need to be tuned to specific notes on the scale, with the ability for a performer to change pitches quickly, as with a timpani. I came up with an instrument I called a 'timp-tom.' Mike scored for a set of four in his composition, *Variations for Four Drums and Viola*, and recorded it with Vardi; it subsequently has been played by many percussionists. Remo Belli, president of Remo, Inc., decided to manufacture the instrument, which he called a 'roto-tom.' It was used on the soundtrack for *In Cold Blood*, a film adaptation of

the best-selling book by Truman Capote. The English composer Michael Tippett scored for a set of 25 roto-toms (two octaves) in his symphonic work, *Byzanteum*. By coincidence, the work was commissioned and premiered by the CSO."

The innovation he came up with that has enjoyed the widest usage is neither an instrument or beater, but a stick bag. "In New York City, the traffic situation is such that most drumset players do not bring their drumset to a gig. Instead, they hire a rental/cartage company to deliver a rental set. They then take the subway or a taxi to the gig, carrying just a bag of sticks and mallets. A drummer friend of mine, Harold 'Jonesie' Jones, who at the time was the drummer of the Count Basie Band, asked me to come up with a stick bag that, when opened, would hold all the sticks in ready access, hanging on the floor tom-tom of the drumset. I did so with input from him and marketed it as the 'Jonesie Stick-Tote.' It became so successful that most percussion manufacturers jumped in with their own versions. Today, probably every drumset player on the planet has some version or another of the 'Jonesie Stick-Tote.'"

Because neither Gerry nor Al were interested in expanding the business, they closed it about 15 years ago. "My primary interests have always been performing and teaching," he said.

Payson also has contributed to a wide variety of professional publications and participated in numerous masterclasses and clinics, exuding authority, grace, and wit. For example, one of his articles is entitled "Balancing a Timpani Head, Or: How to turn an ogre into a handsome prince."

Lessons for Life

Mike Green has been percussion coordinator at DePaul since 1976; he was recommended for the position by Payson, who joined the faculty in 1968. "Al is my 'go-to guy' when it comes to teaching a structured approach to young students. The methodology taught in his studio serves percussionists well throughout their DePaul career and beyond. He taught me and generations of students that there are no shortcuts to a high level of performance."

Payson said, "One of the main lessons I took from one of my own teachers has nothing to do with the performance of music *per se*. He taught me that punctuality in all music commitments is extremely important. He ingrained that in me and I try to do likewise with my students. Another example from my own student days is that when practicing even just technical exercises, no note should sound without a musical intention preceding it."

Changing Technology, Taste, and Talent

Payson believes that the chief lesson for students to learn is to be self-reliant problem-solvers. "The field of music always has been, and

probably always will be, in a constant state of flux. This is due to changes in audience preferences and continuous technological innovations that pertain to music."

"An example of a change in audience preferences was the switch from jazz to rock-and-roll in the 1950's. Drumset players had to adjust both their musical and technical approaches or fall by the wayside. As far as technological innovation, possibly the most momentous one in the past century that affected musicians was the advent of 'talking' movies in 1927. It threw tens of thousands of theater musicians out of work, literally overnight.

"A recent example of technological innovation was shared by a DePaul alumnus who told me that he played a show where the musicians were on stage, rather than in the pit, and so spread out that they were all issued wireless earphones that played a click track to keep the ensemble tight. It's one thing to play with a click track, but quite another to do so while being distracted by always hearing the distant brass section a millisecond late. How does one go about practicing for that? Our alum worked out a way."

An example of a technological innovation affecting music educators is Skype. "It is now possible to give a lesson to, or take a lesson from, anyone in the world, with both persons in their own home or studio. Use of the medium is free and there is no advertising. I wonder how Skype can afford to do it!"

Meeting Students' Needs

Another sort of change Payson recognizes is the opportunity for students to study ethnic or 'world' percussion — instruments including African jembe, Greek doumbek, Brazilian pandeiro, and Peruvian cajon. "Until about 20 years ago, most of them were considered 'curiosity' instruments seen mainly in museums. Today, music contractors are expecting percussionists to have at least basic skills on some of them." Payson believes this trend will continue.

"A major change that has occurred over my years at DePaul is the level of proficiency in incoming freshmen, which just keeps getting higher and higher. In turn, the level of proficiency of our DePaul graduates keeps getting higher. Our curriculum is designed to meet the great variety of goals and aspirations of the students and I believe the faculty has achieved a good measure of success in that regard. This is exemplified by the great variety of performance in which our alumni are engaged: symphony orchestras, opera orchestras, chamber ensembles, military bands, big 'Count Basie-style' jazz bands, jazz combos, show bands backing pop singers, industrial film recording, Latin groups, steel drum bands, Broadway shows, and flamenco dance troupes."

Meeting all these needs, Payson said, "The current DePaul percussion faculty, curriculum, facilities, and instrument inventory make the department, I believe, second to none in the nation."

Guest Solo

Drums and Rhythm in the Multicultural Classroom

BY **TINA HONORÉ**

A child's first experience with percussive sound might originate in the kitchen — from enthusiastic banging of pots and pans with cooking utensils. Later, this develops into hand-clapping songs, jump rope chants, and playground games heard from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Using only their voices and bodies, young children have found intrinsic value with just this simplistic music making.

In an elementary music classroom, teachers have the opportunity to build on this foundation and choose musical opportunities with multicultural diversity, while still maintaining the integrity of state and national standards.

An understanding of how the music and classroom curriculum can merge is vital in helping develop the holistic education of children, as well as creating cross-curricular connections for them. Using traditional folk songs and materials from around the world is one way of introducing students to a culture and its history. Music teachers have an abundance of world music sources to choose from; even music series textbooks include multicultural materials. Internet sites can show students authentic performances from original cultural sources. Using instruments from these cultures in the classroom can add to the authenticity of songs; they can give students an insight into the diversity of people, the craftsmanship of instruments, and the materials used to create them.

Most music classrooms have a wide variety of percussion instruments that generally fall into

Students at Romona Elementary School, Wilmette, Illinois

categories of shakers, scrapers, woods, jingles, metals, and skins. To enhance diverse song material, I also purchase culturally-specific instruments for my classroom. Some of these are djembes, talking drums, African tongue drums, shekeres, thumb pianos, and various Native American taos, buffalo, and gathering drums, and shakers. Instruments can be purchased at a wide variety of venues, even at local farmers markets, flea markets, and world market stores.

In class, we discuss how these instruments vary between cultures. Youngsters love to explore the timbre and tone of drums through a variety of playing techniques and enjoy using them for performance situations. My students create a rainstorm of sound, using hand drums by tapping their fingertips on the drum skin to create raindrops, scraping the drum skin with their fingernails to create windshield wiper blades, striking with the whole hand for thunder, and then placing the drums over their head like an umbrella — to keep the rain off as they sing the English folk song, "Rain, Rain, Go Away," or the Japanese folk song, "Ame, Ame."

Through their studies of the Arctic, part of the second grade social studies curriculum, students are introduced to the "Ice Cream Dance." This Yupik song with movement shows how to make Eskimo ice cream, consisting of wild berries, snow, ground caribou meat or fish, and whale or seal fat. The song is accompanied by Eskimo frame drums, wooden hoops with a skin stretched over the frame, held with a wooden handle. The frame is struck with a long dowel or stick for a very percussive sound. The dance is driven by playing the steady beat during the words of the song, then switching to rhythmic patterns mimicking the stirring, scooping, and eating movements of the dance. Upper elementary recorder students can use the Carol King piece, "Indian Campfire," using hand drums playing a rhythmic *ostinato* pattern. The rhythm of the *ostinato* is quite simple, but a challenging drumming technique keeps students interested. Holding the drum with the head to the side, students sweep their fingers up for the first quarter-note, sweep down with their thumb on the second-quarter note, then play the eighth-note patterns in the middle area of the drum. Included at a program, the drumming adds visual interest for the audience, with all hands moving in synchronization. If a classroom has Native American drums, teachers can create a layered *ostinati* based on known rhythmic patterns, or break up the pattern and play it between different instruments. Students can make drums play on the two-quarter notes, while pitched drums and shakers play on the eighth-note patterns.

As music teachers, we want to use only the best material with our students. Choosing music that teaches our curriculum should be the priority, while using a wide variety of movement, song, reading, listening, and instrumental experiences to support each concept. Just as each student we teach has a unique and diverse background, so should the materials we choose to teach them. You can open the world to your students through the door of the music room.

TINA HONORÉ *has been the music teacher at Romona Elementary School in Wilmette, Illinois, for 19 years; for eight years, she has worked with student teachers from DePaul. She received her bachelor's degree in music education at Westminster Choir College, Rider University, and her master's degree in music education from Roosevelt University. Honoré has taken African Drumming classes at DePaul.*

Jazz Drummers Talk Drumsets

When Bob Rummage was studying percussion performance at the University of Kentucky, he learned from the jazz band director that the drummer is the driving force of a big band and has major influence over the direction of the music played. Jazz drummers Rummage, percussion faculty member in the DePaul jazz studies department, and Dana Hall, who will join the School of Music in the fall as associate professor of jazz and ethnomusicology, shared the history and characteristics of drumsets and what it's like to be in the driver's seat of a jazz ensemble.

Drumset Development

A drummer, ensemble conductor, educator, and ethnographer, Hall said, "Drums and cymbals have historically been central to popular music-making around the world. In fact, my interest in music began with an interest in popular music and, therefore, paved the way toward my eventual gravitation to the drums and cymbals, rather than the marimba and timpani. Although I studied other percussion instruments very seriously, particularly at the collegiate level, I became more of a specialist on the drums and cymbals because of my love of jazz and its respective use and privileged position in that music."

Bub Rummage

Dana Hall. PHOTO BY JACOB HAND.

Rummage, a student of jazz history, said, "Jazz ensembles developed in small social clubs in the Storyville district of New Orleans; because there wasn't room or money for a percussion section, instruments were adapted for one player to play. The bass drum pedal was invented around 1909 to make it possible to free up both hands to play the snare and percussion parts. Most of the timekeeping in early jazz was done on the snare drum, with press rolls, woodblocks or cowbells for variety; there was no hi-hat cymbal yet. The bass drum was large, around 26 inches in diameter, and thin, around 10 inches deep; its beater was large and fluffy, so that when the drum was played it would produce a low roar to fill out the low end."

In Hall's view, the drumset came about in the late 19th century as a way for vaudeville acts to consolidate the musical needs of the show into one part and one performer playing that part. "Thus, 'traps' (short for 'con*trap*tion') players originally used a full array of percussion instruments, including drums, cymbals, timpani, temple blocks, bell trees, and bongos. As music became more dance-oriented, traps players were able to reduce their set-up by eliminating the elements that were previously utilized for the 'show' aspects of their respective performances. Around that time, foot-operated stands and levers were added, making it easier to simultaneously play these instruments and encouraging traps players to develop their coordinated independence."

Rummage said, "The components of the drumset stem from the instrumentation of the concert band, which included bass drum, snare drum, wood blocks, cowbells, tom-toms, cymbals, and other percussion instruments. Concert bands were very popular in the late 1800's; John Philip Sousa's is perhaps the most famous example."

By the 1940's, Hall said, most drumsets consisted of a bass drum, a floor tom-tom, a mounted tom-tom, a snare drum, three or four cymbals on stands, and a foot-operated hi-hat stand which used two cymbals that close together on each other. "This is the set-up I most commonly use.

"Interestingly, the history of the instrument has seen it evolve from a set of drums and cymbals, usually marginalized by a contraption table and a surrounding battery of various percussion instruments, to a reduced set-up of only drums and cymbals in the 1930's and '40's; a very large set-up of drums and lots of cymbals in many rock and jazz fusion ensembles in the 1970's, and a minimalist set-up in punk and New Wave drumming beginning in the mid-1980's and continuing today."

"In early jazz," said Rummage, "cymbals were used to play accents. The hi-hat pedal was invented in the 1920's and gave drummers a new vehicle to propel the time. This became more of a focus during the swing era of the 1930's–1940's. Count Basie's drummer, Jo Jones, known as "Mr. Hi-Hat," was a driving force in this innovation, along with Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and others. During the Swing Era, Jones developed the idea, with cymbal manufacturer Zildjian, to develop a dance cymbal.

Later known as the ride cymbal, it became a focus for timekeeping duties during the bebop period of the 1940's–1950's. Then the bass drum was unleashed from its role as keeper of steady quarter notes, freeing the role of jazz drummers from timekeeper to an interactive player. This culminates in Miles Davis's famous 1968 recording of "Nefertiti." In this tune, the relationship of horn players to the rhythm section gets turned on its head. The band had recorded it earlier in the day and the horn solos had been magnificent; but there was a technical problem and the track was lost. So they had to do it again. Well, Miles was tired and didn't feel like blowing on the tune again, so he and saxophonist Wayne Shorter played the melody over and over as the rhythm section — especially drummer Tony Williams — developed solos. The result was some of the most remarkable music-making I have ever heard."

Drumset Variations

"A variety of instruments can be added to a jazz set-up and I have used unusual ones," Rummage said. "When I played a recital of experimental jazz with bass player Ken Haebich and pianist Dennis Luxion last year, I used a dumbek, cuica, thunder sheet, thunder drum, gongs, bell tree, and finger cymbals, among others. I enjoy finding random instruments, such as the radiator (giant guiro) behind the drumset at the Green Mill, and am not past playing a prank or two.

"I occasionally use both traditional instruments and 're-imagined percussion devices' to supplement my drum and cymbal set-up," said Hall. "I let the music dictate these choices. If the music I am performing calls for a sound I am not able to generate from my usual set-up of drums and cymbals, which is rare, I bring in other sounds. Generally speaking, for much of the music I find myself performing these days, I am able to use different sticks — mallets of varied material, hardness, and size — as well as brushes, all combined with traditional or unorthodox techniques, to create the sounds and colors I hear in the music. And cowbell. All music could stand more cowbell, right?"

Learning from the Past

Hall's years as an educator have taught him that "younger, less experienced drummers generally don't have a great sense of time on the instrument and don't have a strong command of the fundamental language of the drums, the rudiments. The tools I use to correct and develop better time-playing, as well as help students establish a better understanding of time, include identifying master musicians who have a strong sense of time; I encourage students to emulate those approaches. These will generally illuminate various technical deficiencies, such as poor posture, inefficient technique, and a lack of stick control, addressing these deficiencies in a more concrete manner. I'm primarily concerned with the music and how to make music feel and sound good. The highest hurdle for more advanced students is for them to marry their superior technical skills with the musical acumen and conceptual knowhow one needs to perform creative improvised music in the 21st century. That's the highest hurdle we are all trying to leap over."

Rummage also swears by "learning by listening" for his students. "Playing recorded music is a great

way to learn tunes and to practice listening while you play. I usually play for students a recording of Miles Davis's band, with drummer Jimmy Cobb playing a tune like 'So What' or 'Freddie Freeloader'; Cobb plays simply, with such a beautiful time feel. Hearing someone like this helps students become aware of how a swing groove should sound like.

"Next, I usually suggest some 'comping' — short for 'accompanying' — ideas to budding students, recommending some books to suggest ideas to

support an improvised solo or melody lines. The best way to develop comping ideas is to take them off recordings of great jazz players. What are they playing? When are they playing it? Where, in the form of the song, are they playing it? Who is playing this idea? Take the idea and try to develop it. See if you can get inside of it. This same process can be used in learning to solo. All of the graduate level students are required to transcribe comping and drum solos. Then, they develop variations of certain phrases to make them their own."

From Classrooms to Clubs

"It is crucial for students to get into a combo or similar performing situation as soon as possible, to

learn how to apply the concepts," said Rummage. "But to make a living playing music, professionals have to be versed in many skills, including reading music, knowing styles, promotion, and using a computer to record, edit, and write music. The more avenues available, the easier it will be to support yourself financially. Very few musicians earn a living with only one skill set. Diversification is essential."

Even in a great jazz town such as Chicago, performing venues come and go. Hall said, "For me, my drums never sounded better in the city than in the old Pops for Champagne up in Lakeview on Sheffield. Sure, people talked. Sure, some staff was, at times, indifferent. But my drums and cymbals sounded absolutely awesome in there. The stage was up high. There was a curtain behind the drums, as well as carpeting. The ceilings were high. There was a little bit of glass and brick. The opposite wall was close to the stage. It was everything you would think would be horrible for the sound of the drums, but yet it was extraordinary. I took every gig I was called for there — even some when the music wasn't particularly engaging artistically, just to hear the real way my drums and cymbals could sound. That room made me truly dance on my instrument! And now it's gone.

"Every drummer will have a different opinion about what makes a great performing venue. Sonically, the drums and cymbals create challenges. You need to be in a place where the drums don't overpower the other musicians. The drums are loud! They must be hit with precision to respond. You must hit them. But there must be a range of dynamics and that dynamic control needs to be heard acoustically in the room one is playing music in. The Jazz Showcase is such a room. The stage, curtains, and the depth of the room all contribute to a very natural, acoustic space for drums — and the club has a great house kit.

"The Green Mill also is a fabulous place to make music and, therefore, great for drummers. One can stretch out there. People listen. The drums sound alive and natural there. That space is great."

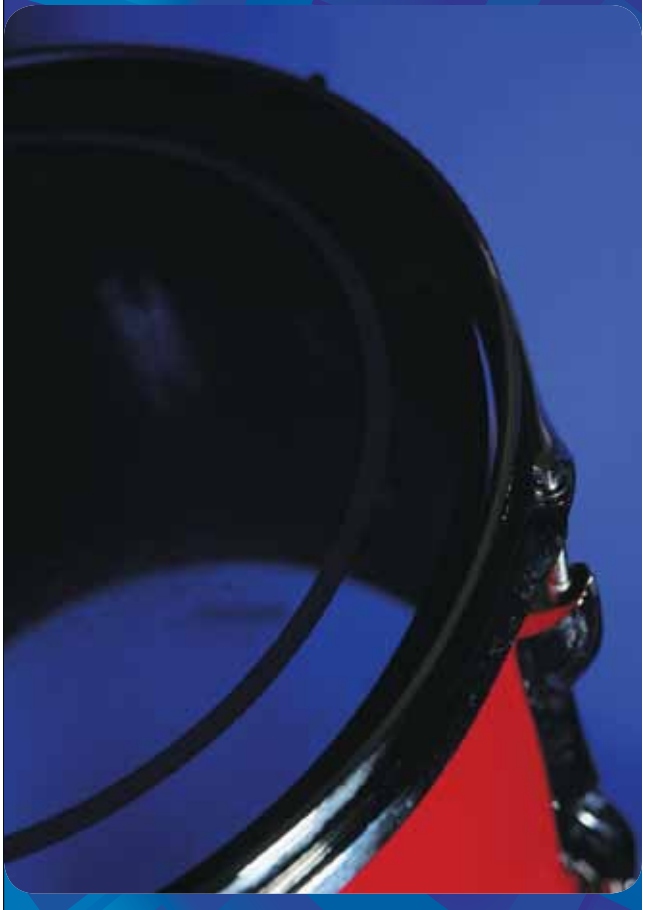
A DePaul faculty member since 2006, Owensboro, Kentucky, native **BOB RUMMAGE** *majored in percussion performance at the University of Kentucky. In his junior year, he left to play a year-long U.S.-Japan tour with the Glenn Miller Orchestra and since then has performed with top jazz musicians around the country. He regularly performs and records with a variety of local groups, including Broadway in Chicago musicals, club gigs, and classical ensembles.*

DANA HALL *will join the DePaul faculty in the fall as associate professor of jazz and ethnomusicology; he currently is associate professor of music-jazz and ethnomusicology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He majored in aerospace engineering and percussion performance at Iowa State University, completing his undergraduate degree in jazz performance at William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey; he is concluding doctoral studies in ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago. Hall is the artistic director of the Chicago Jazz Ensemble and performs as a freelance drummer around the world.*

The DePaul Percussion Ensemble:

From Classroom to Concert

BY **MICHAEL KOZAKIS**



"That is not at all what I expected."

"Wow, I was amazed at how the students had to master so many different instruments."

"Who knew that percussion instruments could actually make sounds that aren't just loud banging!"

These are comments I get on a regular basis from concertgoers — especially from non-musicians — after they see a DePaul Percussion Ensemble concert. The average non-musician generally perceives percussion as drumset in a rock band or playing buckets on the street or generally hitting something without regard for how it sounds.

When I program a concert for percussion ensemble at DePaul, I am constantly trying to balance the needs of the concertgoer with the educational needs of the students. Many times, these overlap nicely. A good concert, in my opinion, is one where there is a varied repertoire of styles. If someone doesn't like one piece, he or she might relate to another. Some different styles in recent percussion ensemble concerts have included transcriptions of choral works played on marimba, groove pieces on drums with verbal chanting, minimalist pieces, marimba quartets with odd sounds — such as mallets taped to brushes to give a sound of birds flapping their wings — and polymetric pieces with incredibly hard rhythms.

Even though the concert is the payoff at the end of an academic quarter, the real education is in the rehearsal room. Playing with others is an

essential component of a complete musician. One may be able to win an orchestra job by playing alone; but to keep a job and attain tenure, other ensemble skills are needed. Four examples are:

Placement — This involves when to play a note in an ensemble setting relative to a conductor's beat. Every instrument in the percussion family reacts differently. Some make a sound immediately upon striking, others later. Knowing your instrument's tendencies relative to the other instruments in the ensemble allows everything to be heard at just the right time.

Musicality — It is a rare occurrence for orchestral percussion parts to contain the main melodic theme in a musical work. While percussion parts do at times play the melody, it is far more common for the percussion section to play the part of rhythmic driver or add texture and accentuation to the ensemble sound. Percussion ensembles allow percussionists to experience and learn how to nuance melody, accompaniment, and harmonic responsibility because only percussion instruments are used to fill these roles. Students can then apply this musical knowledge to their orchestra parts, especially with regard to placement. In addition to knowing an instrument's tendencies, the player must imagine as if he or she is playing the main melody and then insert the percussive note at just the right moment.

Technique — Private lessons in percussion tend to focus a lot on the "meat and potato" instruments in the family, such as snare drum, timpani, mallets, and drumset. Percussion ensembles allow for more opportunities to learn playing techniques of the accessory instruments including crotales, bowed cymbals and tam-tams, gongs, sirens, whistles, waterphones, tambourines, and bass drum. Often, each instrument has more than one way in which it can be played to achieve drastically different sounds. A bass drum, for example, sounds different when played with different mallets, on different parts of the drum head, and also with different amounts of stroke velocity and height. A complete percussionist will know, based on the musical needs at that moment, what stroke to use, what mallet to use, what sized bass drum will produce that sound, where to play it on the head, and when to hit the drum at the precise moment — relative to the other instruments playing, the stage placement of the drum, and the conductor's beat.

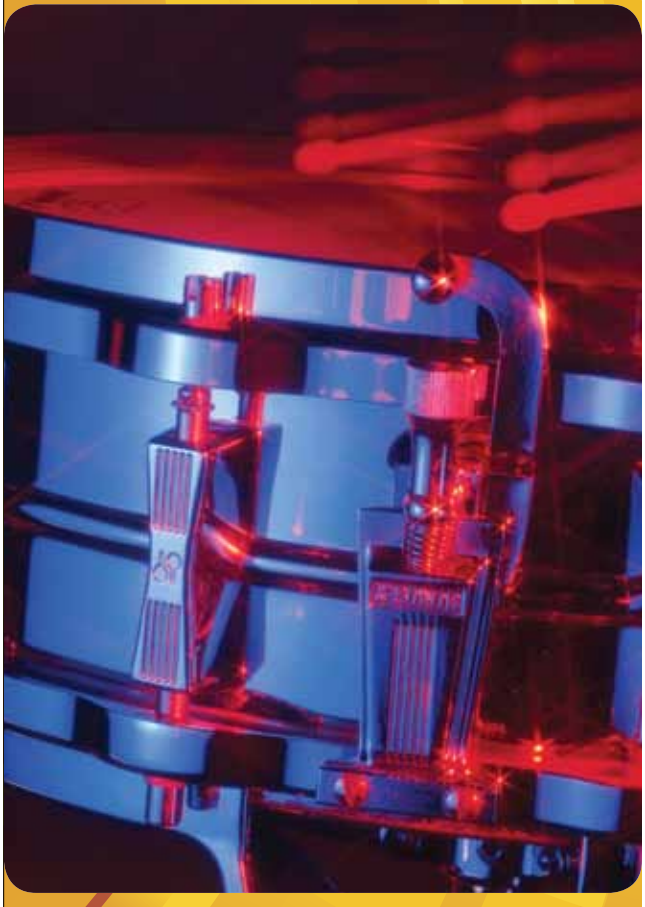
Part Assignments — A percussionist is never playing the same instrument all of the time. We have literally hundreds of different instruments that we may be called upon to play at any given gig and are expected to know how to get the appropriate sounds. In percussion ensembles, we often are playing more than one instrument per player, per piece. A percussionist has to be incredibly organized to figure out what mallets are needed for the piece, what setup of these instruments works for best transitions between instruments, which instruments are available in the group's inventory, and which need to be rented or purchased.

I think that even subconsciously these ideas become clear to anyone attending a DePaul Percussion Ensemble concert. As the initial comments imply, non-musician concertgoers are surprised about how much knowledge a percussionist has to have to be successful. Hopefully, over time, many repeat concertgoers come to love the idiom not just for the techniques and preparation, but also for the quality of the pieces themselves.

MICHAEL KOZAKIS *joined the DePaul School of Music percussion faculty in 2008. He received his bachelor's degree in performance and music education from the Eastman School of Music and his master's degree in performance from DePaul. An active musician in the Chicago area, he frequently plays as an extra percussionist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, where he recently held two one-year positions and has also soloed with the orchestra.*

Percussion Instruments in the Classical Music Canon

BY **MICHAEL LEWANSKI**



The history of the orchestral percussion section is, like most things involving the symphony orchestra, some combination of fascinating, haphazard, and unpredictable. What makes these instruments of special interest, though, are their utterly unique roles in musical ensembles. Percussionists are the field goal kickers of the orchestra; there are few of them and they don't play much of the time — but when they do, they are capable of creating an enormous impact on the situation at hand.

The percussion instruments used most frequently, from the earliest periods of common practice music, are the timpani. In baroque and classical music, sets of timpani tend to be tuned, not surprisingly, to the two most important notes of the diatonic scale — the tonic (scale degree one) and the dominant (scale degree five.) It mostly serves with the trumpets (and sometimes the French horns) as the orchestra's "rhythm section." That is, it helps the audience perceive

basic but vital information about the key and the meter of the composition.

Even in this limited role, though, the timpani are capable of having a powerful effect on a listener. Precisely because of their tuning, the timpani are frequently the articulators of major structural points within a composition; there is a good chance that you know you have arrived at the recapitulation of a Mozart symphony when the timpani re-enter. Haydn goes so far as to let the timpani introduce the tonal center by itself in his 103rd Symphony (subtitled, as a result, *Drumroll.*)

As with so many other aspects of our art, it was Beethoven who made the timpani take on previously unimagined responsibilities. He would prompt generations of future composers to continually rethink the role of the percussion section in orchestral music. It was Beethoven who first regularly instructed timpanists to tune their instruments to notes other than the tonic and dominant; his opera, *Fidelio*, as well as Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth symphonies are a few well-known examples. In the last movement of the Eighth Symphony, the timpani, tuned to octave F's, begin to take on a rambunctious personality that almost acts as an antagonist to the rest of the orchestra, rather than a support. Alternating between two notes, the timpani seem to try to prolong the movement boisterously while the rest of the ensemble wants to be done with it already.

It is really the Ninth Symphony, though, in which the timpani finally emancipate themselves from historical servitude. In the second movement, the famous *Scherzo*, the timpani are again tuned to octave F's; here, though, they serve a motivic function. At the beginning, the string section hammers out octave D's followed by octave A's. Without the timpani interjecting their F's before the rest of the orchestra reiterates the D's, the connection between the opening of this movement and the opening of the first movement (whose famous theme, when played by the full orchestra, begins D, A, F, D) would be lost. Later in the same movement, the music has modulated first to E minor, then to A minor. The woodwinds seem content to continue quietly. The timpani enter impetuously, insisting upon their F's, and the woodwinds find themselves forced up a half-step into the key of B-flat major. For perhaps the first time in history, the timpani have become the agent of the modulation — the cause of the key change rather than the instrument that dutifully follows along.

The 19th century composers who followed Beethoven in the Austro-German symphonic tradition made less violent, but no less striking use of percussion instruments. Brahms reserves the use of the triangle in his Fourth Symphony for the third movement. After the tragic whirlwind of the E minor first movement and the nostalgic consolation of the E major second movement, the sudden entrance of the triangle emphasizes the athletic exuberance of the C major Scherzo. It is fleeting, though, and disappears for the severe, consciously backwards-looking Finale. In short, the triangle serves as the one bright spot in an otherwise dark work.

Similarly, the only use of non-timpani percussion in Bruckner's Seventh Symphony is a single cymbal crash and a triangle roll at the climactic moment of the slow movement. Cast in a brooding C-sharp minor, it is Bruckner's moving and heartfelt tribute to the recently deceased Richard Wagner. The pinnacle of the massive crescendo towards the movement's end is a C major triad in the second inversion — nearly as far as one can get from the key of C-sharp minor, but arrived at via the re-spelling of C-sharp minor's

dominant as an augmented sixth chord. It is at this precise moment that the percussion make their single entrance. The effect on the listener is shattering; Bruckner seems to have transcended his grief, if only temporarily.

Though percussion sections continued to grow ever larger, it was Russian composers who, in the first half of the 20th century, would continue to expand the affective palate of the instruments.

Stravinsky's landmark 1913 ballet, *The Rite of Spring* (subtitled *Pictures from Pagan Russia*), forces nearly all orchestral instruments to make sounds not traditionally associated with them — from the bassoon playing notes in a register more commonly associated with the oboe or the clarinet, to eight French horns blaring dominant seventh chords a half-step apart. The percussion is no exception. (Frankly, one could be forgiven for feeling that the entire orchestra is used as a gigantic percussion instrument at times.) The tam-tam, rather than merely playing a single stroke to emphasize a profound moment, as is so often the case in 19th century works, takes on a savage character. Stravinsky instructs the player to rapidly drag a triangle beater across the tam-tam's surface, prompting the strings to respond barbarically. (Today's percussionists are inclined to take the spirit of the composer's instructions and run with them — for a recent performance in which I was involved, the percussion section had a fulsome discussion of how many metal rods they should purchase from the local hardware store, how long they should be, and how thick.) In the final section of the ballet, the "Sacrificial Dance," it is again the timpani and the bass drum that set the irregular rhythm, forcing the hapless string section to follow them through a minefield of meter changes. In this case, the percussion instruments are not only leading the rhythmic charge but have an aesthetic role, suggesting the style and character of the dancing.

For Dmitri Shostakovich, whose music engages the symphonic tradition through the lens of a citizen stifled by an oppressive Soviet regime, the militaristic rhythms played by percussionists (imagine nearly any snare drum excerpt you can think of) take on a different character. While the exact identity of the menace is never quite clear — is it the Nazis? the Soviet authorities? the evil that humans perpetrate upon each other? — the march-like rhythm played at a climactic moment by the snare drum in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony is both sarcastic and terrifying. Similarly, the frantic second movement of the Tenth Symphony is made all the more uncivilized by the march figures in the snare drum part, here played in a distortedly loud and fast manner. Even the xylophone, frequently used by composers for comic effect, takes on a sinister character in Shostakovich's works; by simply doubling the same repeated notes a violin section may already be playing, Shostakovich can add a demonic drive to an otherwise unremarkable accompanimental figure.

The later 20th and early 21st centuries have seen the innovative use of percussion instruments continue apace. We now find all manner of unusual percussion instruments in ensembles: Chinese temple blocks, three octaves of tuned gongs, police whistles, a large metal bar struck with a hammer, the brake well of a car used as a drum, a bowed cactus. And composers show no sign of slowing their quest for new sounds.

Assistant professor of instrumental ensembles, **MICHAEL LEWANSKI** *joined the DePaul faculty in 2007 as conductor of the DePaul Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble 20+. He also is conductor of Ensemble Dal Niente and the conducting assistant of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.*

Percussion Experiences for People with Special Needs

Every summer from the age of 10 through high school, DePaul Percussion faculty member Eric Millstein attended a non-music camp with a division for campers with special needs. "My interactions with those campers led to an interest in working with them," he said. "I eventually became a counselor in that division."

"Much later, when I was a member of the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, I had my first opportunity to combine my early camping experience with music. I attended a creative music-making workshop for people with special needs in Daytona. Still later, I helped plan and run two similar events hosted by the St. Louis Symphony.

"More and more," he said, "the therapeutic and interactive benefits of music for all people are becoming widely understood and recognized. I've witnessed what can happen if a tambourine is placed in the hand of a person who cannot or does not speak — suddenly, he or she has a way to communicate. Add to this a familiar song, and you may even hear a nonverbal person begin to sing a bit. These kinds of breakthroughs are incredibly rewarding to everyone in the room. Percussion instruments work particularly well because people without training can at least make a sound on the instrument."

Music therapy in action. PHOTO COURTESY OF SEASPAR

Personal experience also touched percussion alumnus Jeff Handley ('86–'88) when he initiated classes for people with special needs last summer. "My son, Jeremy, is a senior at Downers Grove (Illinois) North High School. He is currently working at Seaspar, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Downers Grove that provides recreation programs for children and adults with disabilities. I approached the organization about trying a drum circle. World percussion specialist John Knecht joined me in classes at Seaspar and I hope to repeat the activity this year.

"In the class, we found West African percussion to be extremely accessible — everyone approached a drum and communicated together rather quickly. Once the rhythm was explored, we added song and dance, encouraging solo and group creativity. We were told by Seaspar employees that African drumming opened up many participants who were very reserved in the past."

The benefits of music therapy are clear. "Music can be a powerful therapeutic tool for therapists to consider," Handley said. "In particular, the actions and textures of playing drum can be effective therapeutic tools for people with autism and Down syndrome. I hope that more therapists study and apply these programs."

Millstein said, "Music therapy programs in universities seem to be more common these days and there are many recent interesting books on the subject, most notably by the best-selling author and neurologist, Oliver Sacks.

"I learn a lot from participating in these events," he added. "In my opinion, all audiences are essentially the same — whether at a special needs group home or at Carnegie Hall. Music is a basic human endeavor and people's reactions to music are universal. For musicians, learning to communicate through music with a particularly challenging audience makes us better understand our roles as performers on stage."

A Guide to the Four Basic Percussion Groups

BY **MICHAEL GREEN**

Orchestral percussionists spend more than 90 percent of their practice time on etudes, solos, and excerpts for snare drum, timpani and keyboard mallet instruments such as xylophone, orchestra bells, and marimba. Yet there are literally dozens and dozens of other percussion instruments professionals must perfect or at least, display competency playing.

From tambourine to tam-tam, doumbek to maracas, castanets to musical saw, percussionists must meet the challenge of composers writing for instruments from around the world.

Ethnomusicologists group percussion in four main categories: membranophones, idiophones, aerophones, and chordophones.

Membranophones include both tuned membranes, e.g. timpani, boobams, and rototoms, and untuned membranes, e.g. snare drum and bongos.

There are four subsets of **idiophones**, those

instruments that vibrate through their entire bodies. These include tuned keyboards such as vibes, marimba, and chimes; tuned-note keyboards such as gongs and steel drums; indefinite pitch instruments played by striking, such as triangles, cymbals, and tam-tams, and indefinite pitch instruments played by shaking (maracas), stroking (sandpaper blocks), or scraping (guiro).

In addition, there are **aerophones** (whistles and sirens) and **chordophones** (pianos and celesta), although chordophones are not usually included in percussionists' responsibilities.

Not surprisingly, when percussionists audition for an orchestra or opera position, excerpts and solos on snare drum, keyboard mallets, and timpani make up most of the required material to be performed. With the exception of timpani, however, bass drum, cymbals, and triangle occur far more frequently in a typical orchestra or opera season. These instruments were introduced to European orchestras by the 18th century through contact with Turkish Janissary (military) music. Mozart *(Abduction from the Seraglio)* and Beethoven (Ninth Symphony) were some of the first composers to use these instruments in their orchestral compositions.

Other familiar pieces that use these instruments prominently include Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, and Verdi's *Requiem*, all featuring bass drum; Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony and Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, cymbals, and Liszt's First Piano Concerto, Bizet's *Carmen*, Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*, with their signature triangles.

Addressing the demands of instruments such as these is quite often underestimated by students and young professionals. I often tell my students that only 60 to 80 percent of what we actually play is written on the page. For example, take the triangle. Such variables as type and size of instrument, hardness and/or weight of beater used, where to play on the instrument, phrasing, articulation, and duration of notes played enter into performance decisions beyond what is on the page. Composers will often write a quarter note for an instrument; but on closer inspection, that could mean anything from a staccato eighth note to a whole or longer note.

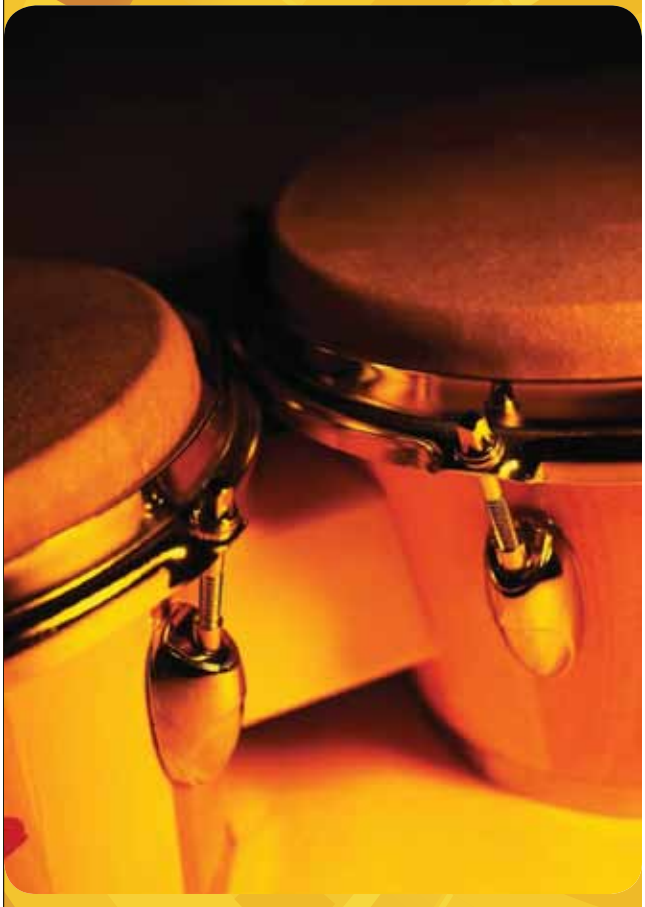
In the parlance of the field, triangles are part of a grouping referred to as "toys"; this nomenclature belies the importance of the instruments. In 1998, I had the opportunity to hire a DePaul School of Music percussion alumnus to play triangle as an extra for Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*. It was a small part and could have been viewed as a "read on the job" exercise. Instead, this young man had obviously listened to the opera, studied the score, and determined the musical context of that triangle excerpt. He chose a triangle of appropriate size and pitch, knew that the phrase was complimenting the clarinet line, and recognized the ebb and flow of the dominant lyric line. As a result, this percussionist has worked with us ever since. Conversely, we have witnessed percussionists who were ill prepared on the "simple" instruments and never worked with us again.




The lesson: rarely are new hires as extras assigned to snare drum or keyboards. Instead, they are given less active parts, such as assignments on triangle, bass drum or tam-tam. That means their "shot" at making an impression is reliant on their professional preparation on all instruments.

DePaul's percussion curriculum acknowledges the extensive and varied demands of the profession. Between the faculty members who, though specialized, are proficient on all instruments, we offer a concert accessories class on orchestral "toys;" a Latin American instruments class; a two-year class on orchestral techniques; an African drumming class, and lessons on world percussion instruments. In the fall of 2012, Dana Hall, a respected and well known drum set player and ethnomusicologist will join our faculty; he will enhance and broaden our students' experience on the many fascinating percussion instruments that hail from all corners of the world.

The Broadway Beat



In The Joy of Music *(1959), Leonard Bernstein writes that the first American musical, performed on Broadway in 1866, was "a great extravaganza called* The Black Crook, *a smash hit containing a showstopper called 'You Naughty, Naughty Men.' Actually, it was a musical comedy by accident and is in no way related to what we now think of as musical comedy, except that it was the first variety show to acquire a plot." Bernstein's integration of Latin percussion in* West Side Story *is only one example of the importance of the percussion section in the modern Broadway musical.*

From the Great White Way to extravaganza touring productions to downsized versions performed all over the world, the Broadway musical has come to be recognized as an American musical icon — and an increasingly significant source of creative employment for percussionists. On Broadway and in Broadway in Chicago, DePaul alumni Andy Jones and Jeff Handley are among the "go to" percussionists of today.

Andy Jones (CLASS OF '91)

Andy Jones grew up in Adrian, Michigan, the home of the Croswell Opera House, one of the oldest continuously operating vaudeville houses in the country. From age 15, he played all of the shows at the Croswell. "The middle and high schools in Adrian didn't have auditoriums," he said, "so most of the band, orchestra, show choir, and jazz band concerts took place at the Croswell, too. So you could say I grew up and learned to perform there." When, during his freshman year in high school, a new band director, drummer John Neztek, was hired, the percussion section got quite a bit of attention. "He was very inspirational and really instilled in me a professional attitude."

Jones was attracted to DePaul by the School of Music's reputation, specifically the percussion faculty. "I had played from Al Payson's books growing up and used his timpani mallets," he said.

"But I was also drawn by the city of Chicago and the fact that the campus was in the center of the north side music scene. I was able to run out to hear a new band and make it back to the practice room for a couple hours of 'inspired' playing."

At DePaul, Percussion Coordinator Mike Green helped Jones put all the pieces together. "I had an understanding of performance and even the ability to handle multiple-percussion parts. What I was missing, though, were the technique and musical ear to create the right sounds on all the instruments. In Green's percussion studio and in Don DeRoche's DePaul Wind Ensemble, I learned about ensemble playing and following a conductor. All are lessons I use everyday."

Chicago is home to many great theatre companies such as Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, the Goodman, Writer's Theater, and many more; Jones became familiar with them while at DePaul. "Learning about theater is much more accessible in Chicago; and, in some ways, more rewarding than in New York," he said, "because the shows are not big commercial machines with big stakes. So it's more about the work and doing the play than about making it a business."

Jones's professional career began when he left Chicago and DePaul to perform in the national tours of *Into The Woods* and *Cats* and in European tours including *Chicago, Cabaret*, and *On The Town*. But between the tours, he never cut ties to Chicago. At the Goodman Theatre, he played in *The House of Martin Guerre* and *A Little Night Music*, and the Studio production of *Wings*, as well as its subsequent production at the Joseph Papp Public Theater. He wrote the percussion score to the ASCAP Award-winning musical *90 North* (by Chicago writers Dan Sticco, Patti McKenny and Doug Frew) and performed for its staged reading at The Kennedy Center. Jones received a Joseph Jefferson Award for the score he composed for *Blade to the Heat* at Apple Tree Theatre in Highland Park and he arranged and directed the music for the world premiere rock opera *God and Country* at Victory Gardens Theater, just a block from DePaul. For Chicago Shakespeare Theater, he wrote a solo-percussion score for the recurring Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and was the assistant music director and percussionist for their Chicago and London productions of *Pacific Overtures*. Most recently, Jones composed a two percussion score for *Execution of Justice* at About Face Theatre, which received a Joseph Jefferson nomination.

In 2003, Jones was offered the percussion chair in the Broadway orchestra for *Wicked*. "In the creation of a new musical, every member of the rhythm section gets an amount of latitude in the creation of their book. That was certainly true in *Wicked*, especially in my book. It's easier for an orchestrator to plan all the voices in the wind or string sections. But in the rhythm section, there are so many choices of textures and feels that arrangers are more flexible about these parts and listen to the players more. The score that arranger and orchestrator Bill Brohn wrote for the out-of-town tryout (first publicly performed in San Francisco in May 2003) called for 32 instruments. The book we ended up with in New York uses 59 instruments, often requiring playing multiple ideas and instruments at once." The album of *Wicked* won a Grammy Award as Best Musical Show Album and attracted very high album sales, rating Certified Double-Platinum by the Recording Institute Association of America. Jones played *Wicked* for eight years.

Broadway percussion books are becoming more multicultural, according to Jones. "As Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon brought Africa and South America to pop music in the 80's, *Miss Saigon* and *The Lion King* brought Asia and Africa to the Great White Way in the 90's. Players must have a deeper understanding of a wider array of instruments, techniques and styles than they did say 30 years ago. There's a huge variety of international themes on Broadway today — *Fela!* and *In The Heights*, for example.) Even shows that aren't culturally exotic, or set on another continent may use ethnic percussion. The percussion book for *9 to 5* uses a Japanese Taiko drum."

The latest project Jones worked on was co-orchestrating and writing the percussion book for a new musical, *Ella Minnow Pea*. "It's this great story

Andy Jones. PHOTO BY ROBERT DOWNS, COURTESY OF BOSPHOROUS CYMBALS

about a fictional government that starts systematically limiting the letters of the alphabet one is allowed to use. So the composer, Paul Loesel, and I tried to make the structure of the music mimic the loss of speech."

Students often ask Jones, "How can I get to play on Broadway?" or "How did you get this job?" He said, "Well, it's a business of connections and there are no guarantees. Nobody gets here without education, experience, and fortitude. And lastly: Go See Shows! How do you know what works out front if you're never out front?"

Jeff Handley ('86, '88)

Jeff Handley grew up in the small town of Chesterton, Indiana — about an hour from Chicago. "Luckily, even though it was a small town, Chesterton High School had a national champion marching band," he said. "I was interested in studying at DePaul with Al Payson, Mike Green, and Bobby Christian and I also thought it was important to study in Chicago, where I could eventually work into gigs around the city. While at DePaul, I played in every group possible, including the percussion ensemble, symphony orchestra, wind ensemble, jazz ensemble, and pep band." He was orchestra assistant under its former conductor, Meng-Kong Tham and a member of the Civic Orchestra, "a quick 'L' ride for rehearsals and performances," he said.

Through DePaul connections, Handley started subbing at regional Chicago theaters, including Marriott Lincolnshire, Candlelight Dinner Playhouse, Drury Lane Oakbrook, and Drury Lane Martinique. Eventually, he started to get calls for bigger productions downtown. Today, he is a regular in the Broadway in Chicago series, created in 2000. "I've performed in *Wicked, Spamalot, The Color Purple, Mary Poppins, Shrek, The Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables, Mamma Mia*, and other musicals."

The question Handley is most frequently asked by non-musicians is, "How do you do eight performances a week, possibly for years?" "My response is that, as with any musical performance, we are constantly striving for perfection, adding elements to make each performance better. I believe percussionists, in general, are very organized. So it's very comforting to have a daily routine and the equipment always in exactly the same spot. Interactions with my colleagues in the pit are always a pleasure and exciting."

Handley juggles theater work with performing as principal percussionist with the Chicago Sinfonietta and Fulcrum Point New Music Project. "And, almost every day throughout the year, I'm in a classroom, busy with music education programs. The variety is what motivates me the most. I don't think I could ever choose one style of music. The best part of switching opportunities is the variety. Sometimes I'm a small part of a large orchestra, sometimes part of a small chamber group, and sometimes playing with headphones and a click track." (A click track is occasionally used in theater work. The musicians all wear headphones and play to a metronome that keeps the tempo. This helps to lock the music into complicated movements on stage. For *Mamma Mia*, the whole show had click from beginning to end.)

Jeff Handley

"One of the challenges of playing in different types of groups is adapting to the communication involved. An orchestra reacts musically a little slower from a conductor than a musician would need to react to a click track. Because there often is no conductor for chamber music, musicians must communicate non-verbally with each other on stage."

Handley said that new trends in music include ethnic and electronic percussion. "I have been lucky to meet and work with some of the great world music practitioners in the city. By practicing African and Latin percussion, I stay in the game. I'm hoping to continue what I am doing for years to come. For *Wicked*, I was able to have over a three-year run in Chicago. I would love to see another long-running show come here with a similar appeal to all. But I must say that I was thrilled to finish the tour of *Mary Poppins* for three weeks in Mexico City in January last year!

"Theater performance is a combination of knowing classical, jazz, rock, world music, and contemporary styles. Musically, you need to be very open-minded. Because, there are rarely auditions for Broadway shows, it's important for students to network with musicians in the city. I have invited many students to watch a show from the pit; the view from there is the best way to learn — and continue learning."

Eric Millstein

The Tale of *The Soldier's Tale*

Julie DeRoche

BY **ERIC MILLSTEIN**

Marc Embree

A capacity audience entered DePaul Concert Hall in the late afternoon of October 23rd for another in the series of free concerts offered by the School of Music during the year. The program began with Igor Stravinsky's PIANO SONATA *(1924), performed by George Vatchnadze, who joined the faculty last fall as associate professor of piano and coordinator of the keyboard program.*

Ilya Kaler

Then, under the direction of Michael Lewanski, assistant professor of instrumental ensembles, faculty members performed the groundbreaking ensemble piece written by Stravinsky in Paris in 1918, in the early days after World War I. In the composition, based on a Faust-like Russian folk tale, *L'Histoire du Soldat* — also known as *The Soldier's Tale* and, simply *L'Histoire* — the percussion takes on the central role of the devil. Percussion faculty member Eric Millstein comments on the piece and on his experience performing with his colleagues Marc Embree, narrator; Julie DeRoche, clarinet; William Buchman, bassoon; Tage Larsen, trumpet; Charles Vernon, trombone; Ilya Kaler, violin, and Robert Kassinger, bass. Faculty members Buchman, Larsen, Vernon, and Kassinger are members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Kaler is a world renowned soloist and DeRoche is an associate professor of clarinet, Chair of Performance Studies, and a world-renowned soloist.

What was Stravinsky's motivation for writing this work, at this particular time in his career? How does this piece fit within Stravinsky's work, and how does it fit into the classical music canon in general?

L'Histoire dates from a period in which Stravinsky was writing a lot of chamber music, most likely at least partially a result of tough economic times during the First World War. He seems to have taken this as a challenge and during the War and Post-War years he

experimented with various unusual combinations of instruments. So *L'Histoire* is quite a unique work; but then again, almost every piece Stravinsky composed, especially in this period, is unique. The story is the classic tale of a deal with the Devil; in this case, the soldier trades his violin for knowledge of the future. In what is probably the most well-known example to music lovers, Gounod's *Faust* (loosely based on Goethe's *Faust*), Faust gives his soul to the devil in exchange for being transformed into a handsome youth.

What is distinctive about the instrumentation he uses?

At the time, the now iconic *L'Histoire* ensemble was, I believe, a novel combination of instruments. With small chamber groups, the instruments are normally of the same family, such as wind quintet and string quartet, or they may have one instrument from a different group, such as piano or oboe quartet. *L'Histoire's* ensemble configuration has an almost democratic representation of all the sections of the orchestra: two strings, two winds, two brass, and percussion. On the face of it, it would seem quite difficult to compose coherent music for such a diverse group of instruments.

Please describe the percussion instruments called for. Can you comment on use of the drumset and its relationship to jazz?

The percussion instruments called for include a bass drum, three snare drums (small, medium, and large), tambourine, triangle, and one or two cymbals. It isn't really a "drumset," but it is similar to the kind of setup the early Dixieland drummers would have had. Although Stravinsky had by that time already written some fantastic percussion parts (for example the bass drum part from *The Rite of Spring*, the tambourine part from *Petrushka*, and the xylophone part from *The Firebird*), I don't think he had ever before written for a multi-percussion setup. It's said that he actually purchased the necessary drums and set them up himself to make sure that what he wrote would be playable. So the percussion instrument grouping almost certainly comes from jazz, but except for the short "Ragtime" section of the piece (one of the "Three Dances"), I actually don't hear much of a jazz influence in the music.

What are the musical and narrative roles for the percussion in this piece?

The percussion represents the devil and the violin represents the soldier. More than the innovative music given to the percussionist to play, it is this narrative and dramatic responsibility that was so ahead of its time. Even today, it is unusual in classical music for percussion to play a lead role in the drama of a piece.

Can you put words to what's going on with you, musically and emotionally, as you perform the piece? What's your favorite part and why?

Amazingly, this was the first opportunity I've had to play the piece as a professional musician; the only other times I played *L'Histoire* were during my student days. So first of all I had to come up with a whole approach to the piece. I essentially started from scratch instead of trying to remember how I played it 15 years ago. A surprising number of details in the percussion part (such as the specific type of drums called for or which stick or mallet to use at which times) are unclear, or at least open to debate, so I had to make a lot of choices right from the start. There are also many stylistic and musical considerations to deal with, such as how much to exaggerate the rhythm in the "Tango" and whether one should end the piece (a percussion solo) with a *diminuendo*, as Stravinsky originally wrote it, or with a *crescendo*, which Stravinsky agreed to in later years; I ultimately chose to end the piece loud, with a *crescendo*, because it seems to work much better dramatically when the piece is performed without actors. With actors, the *diminuendo* makes sense, because the music dies out as the soldier walks farther and farther away.

I enjoyed playing the entire piece, but my


Charles Vernon


Robert Kassinger


William Buchman


Tage Larsen

favorite part was the "Tango," which is mainly a duet between the percussion and violin. When one thinks of percussion, one usually imagines a lot of loud and fast rhythms. But in the "Tango," Stravinsky utilized the more subtle elements of percussion to beautiful effect.

You performed together with only two rehearsals. What were the challenges that came up?

Musicians are used to putting concerts together with little rehearsal time, but playing *L'Histoire* with only two rehearsals did present a special challenge. Rhythmically, some parts of the piece are composed in a slightly strange way. What sounds to a listener, even to a trained musician, like the beat is actually often the off-beat, or vice-versa. I don't know why Stravinsky chose to notate the piece in this way, but it does present some extra difficulties for the players. Of course, with this group of musicians, these issues were worked out very quickly. My job was made especially easy because I simply had to lock in with bassist Rob Kassinger's rock-solid *pizzicati*.

What advice would you give to students and experienced percussionists performing the piece for the first time?

My advice to students performing the piece for the first time is to really delve into it. There are a lot of great articles written by percussionists over the years. One percussionist, a former member of the New York Philharmonic, even traveled to Switzerland to look at the original manuscript of the score and then wrote an article detailing his findings — some of which changed the way percussionists now view certain spots in the music. There are various editions of the percussion part, with conflicting information in them, so the player really needs to sort through all of this material and figure out what makes the most sense.

The concert drew a large audience of students, as well as the general community. What do you think draws people to the work, either on first or repeated hearings?

The Faustian story is a classic tale, one that both authors and audiences are continually coming back to. In the case of *L'Histoire*, the music vividly captures the essence of the story, and that, combined with a good narrator (we had a great one in Marc Embree) makes for a very compelling dramatic work.

ERIC MILLSTEIN *received his bachelor of music degree in percussion performance from New England Conservatory, a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy from Tufts University, and a master in music degree from Temple University. After graduating, he played in the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, a semi-professional training orchestra. Millstein won the auditions for both the Lyric Opera Orchestra and the Grant Park Orchestra in 2002. He joined the DePaul faculty in 2004; in addition to private lessons, he teaches the Percussion Orchestral Repertoire class.*

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DePaul School of Music
Centennial Celebration: 2012–13

The DePaul School of Music first opened its doors in September of 1912 and we have been hard at work for 100 years now, helping to ensure Chicago's, and increasingly the world's, musical future.

This past fall we welcomed our 100th incoming class of young music students to our school — 143 highly talented men and women selected from among almost 1,400 who applied. They are proving to be the finest class we've ever enrolled and they are elevating every aspect of our work. We're very glad they are here.

We will celebrate our centennial over the course of the 2012–13 academic year with a wide variety of special activities, and we'd like now to invite everyone who has ever been a member of our community — as student, faculty member or staff — to contribute to our celebrations in two ways. First, we're trying to further develop the photographic archives of key moments and individuals in the School's past. If you were here and have photographs of your time here that you would be willing to share, we would sincerely welcome them. Just note who and what the photographs capture and send them to Pat Mikos, Executive Assistant to the Dean, DePaul School of Music, 804 W. Belden, Chicago 60614. We'll protect them carefully, scan them into our collection, and if you'll include a return address, return the originals to you promptly. You'll all see a collection of these historical photos, with attributions, in a special centennial edition of *Con Brio* next year. We've also begun to imagine a historic photographic collage and mural of our key moments and individuals along a central wall in the new performance center we'll begin constructing in late 2013, and your photographs could well be included there as well.

Second, we invite everyone who has been a member of our community anytime in the past to contribute an original piano prelude to a centennial celebration collection we are developing and will publish online. "The DePaul Preludes" will be distributed for free next year. The parameters are these: the work must be for solo piano; of between one and three minutes in duration, and must begin and conclude with a concert "D" sounding (for "DePaul"). Submissions must be made electronically, in "Finale" or "Sibelius," and should be sent to Kurt Westerberg, Chair of Musicianship and Composition not later than June 1, 2012 (kwesterb@depaul.edu).

Donald Casey, Dean

con Brio

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