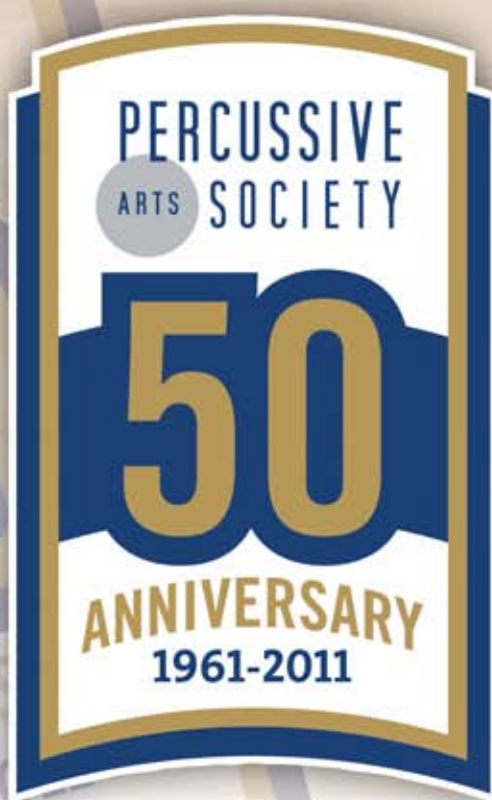


PASIC 2011

Percussive Arts Society International Convention Round Up



By Gary France

Wow! Here I am celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Percussive Arts Society by attending the International Convention. I always enjoy attending the largest gathering of percussionists on the planet earth as it reminds me, once again, that I share the passion for something groovy, cool and fun!

I attended the very first PASIC in 1976, Rochester, NY, hosted by John Beck, the Professor of Percussion at the Eastman School of Music. My percussion teacher Jim Petercsak, insisted that all students in our percussion department, at the Crane School of Music, car pool and make the 6-hour drive to Rochester. The first PASIC 1976 was a small gathering of around 400 drummers and percussionists and I indeed felt privileged to be a part of it. Things that stand out in my mind included hearing Leigh Howard Stevens and Gordon Stout unleash the Marimba explosion and personally meeting a polite gentleman at a small table who sold me some very exotic shakers (Caxixi) and a couple of special instruments (that I did not know how to play, but it looked cool) called a Cuica and a Berimbau. I still have his card - Martin Cohen,

(founder of LP)!

I returned to University, after that weekend, with the knowledge that I was one of the lucky ones to have participated in something special - small and perfectly formed!

Fast forward to 2011, 35 years later. The Percussive Arts Society (PAS) now has an international headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana USA that includes the Rhythm Discovery Centre: the largest comprehensive museum of percussion in the world. Over the years our international convention has been hosted in cities all over the US. This year, the 50th anniversary of PAS, over 5,000 people attended the convention.

PASIC 2011 continued to embrace all aspects of drumming and percussion including over 150 individual sessions with the world's leading Orchestral, Drumset, World percussion, music technology, health and wellness, Marimba, Vibraphone, Marching percussion and product specialists as well as participating in industry leadership meetings and panels organized by PAS.



James Bailey (South Australia)
 who is a recipient of the
 PAS lifetime Achievement Award to Education

Steve Houghton is presenting James the Award.

DAY 1
 commenced with an evening concert

An explosion of world premieres and pearls of the past, PASIC'S Focus Day 2011 - "Five Decades of New Music for Percussion 1961 to 2011" - provided an opportunity to experience an outstanding array of virtuosic performances. Stand out works included a collage performance by the Percussion Group of Cincinnati of LAM-MOT (Qu Xiao-song) Water Music by Tan Dun and portions of Drama by Guo Wen-jing (The New Chinese contribution).

DAY 2
 bright and early

Focus Day: "Contemporary Ensemble Showcase Concert presented by the Oberlin Percussion Group".

'Streams' (1964): This sextet by Warren Benson was as fresh as when composed in the early 1960's. The world premiere of 'Cloud-Polyphonies' by James Wood, for me was the stand out new addition. Commissioned by a consortium of universities and individuals this sextet was performed beautifully by the Oberlin Percussion Group, with Mike Rosen as director.

PASIC has become a forum where tertiary and high school percussion departments present their programs. Selection for participation is by submission to a panel of selectors. The deadline for submissions for PASIC 2012 is December 15, 2011, and more info can be viewed at <http://pas.org> . Other university percussion programs that presented concerts included The University of Kentucky, The University of Nebraska, The University of Iowa, Florida State University and Texas Christian University. Each of these ensembles was meticulously prepared and presented a wide range of standard repertoire as well as world premieres.

A fascinating concert included 'Masterworks for Marimba'. It was terrific to experience our Marimba Masters presenting definitive versions of works including: T. Adam Blackstock performing Gordon Stout's classic, "Two Mexican Dances" (1974); John Serry's "Rhapsody for Marimba: Night Rhapsody" (1980) enjoyed an outstanding, slick and well-executed performance by Thomas Burritt; a particular concert highlight for me, featured Paul Smadbeck & Gordon Stout performing Paul Smadbeck's "Rhythm Song" (1984) as a duet; and William

Moersch presented a warm fluid performance of his commission by Andrew Thomas, "Merlin" (1985). Other works on the program included Stuart Saunder Smith's "Links No. 5: Sitting on the Edge of Nothing" (1987) performed by Aiyun Huang; and Gwendolyn Burgett-Thrasher delivered a masterful version of Alejandro Viñao's, "Khan Variations" (2001). Overall it was an amazing concert!

Next, I attended an absorbing presentation by Susan Powell, with the Sympatico Percussion Group and the Shiraz trio. This program included the world premiere of Christopher Deane's trio, "Almost Perpetual Torque" as well as the old standard, "The Recital Piece" (1976) by William Chan for tape and Xylophone. "Pattern Migration 2011" for Xylophone and digital delay by Joseph Krygier, is a cute composition that uses digital delay in a manner not unlike Nigel Westlake's composition "Fabian Theory". This accessible composition would be well placed in recitals.

No PASIC would be complete without catching some of the unbelievable clinics and workshops presented by our Drumset masters. John Riley (stay tuned for AUDW 2012!) presented an outstanding clinic attended by over 1,000 people addressing communication through drumming, "The Art of Improvisation." John's terrific ability to communicate and share his enthusiasm and passion for music was evident and appreciated by all. In addition to John's session, Drum kit artists Peter Erskine, Simon Phillips, Joe McCarthy and the Afro Bop Alliance, Bobby Sanabria, Fred Dinkins, Gil Sharone, Grant Collins, Keith Carlock, Ed Soph, Cora Coleman-Dunham, Claus Hessler, Rich Redmond, and Steve Fidyk all presented amazing sessions that were all well attended.

The next Focus Day Contemporary Ensemble Showcase Concert featured the Blackstock/Stout Duo performing Steve Reich: "Nagoya Marimbas" (1994) and the Nief-Norff Project playing Steve Reich: "Six Marimbas" (1986). A highlight of this showcase concert was performance by the Percussion Collective of Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Musik im Bauch" (1974). Bell plates, Marimba, Crotales, a giant human statue in the middle of the stage whose inner organs - made from music boxes - was attacked by the performers with sticks in robotic movements accompanied by an amplified spinning top. This work, as much theatre as concert, from the German Avant-garde, provided a sorbet for the ears and eyes!

Day 2 finished with the world premiere of the "Concerto for Percussion Section and Orchestra" by Joseph Schwanter, commissioned by PAS and performed by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra with their percussion section led by Paul Burns. This sterling performance was well crafted and played with genuine virtuosity. In 3 movements, fast-slow-fast, this concerto featured the percussion section performing on a vast array of instruments including: Waterphones, Gongs, Timpani, and concluding on a quartet of Paint Buckets - a la street drumming buskers! This concerto will certainly become a staple of orchestras around the world!

DAY 3

This day commenced with an excellent performance of the 29-strong Marcus High School Percussion Ensemble under the direction of Kennan Wylie. This remarkably balanced ensemble presented a wide range of transcriptions and compositions especially composed for this group. Special guest performers included She e Wu - Marimba, Ed Smith - Vibraphone, Heather Hawk - Soprano and Oksana Murashova - Violin.

One of the highlights of recent PASIC's has been the Symphonic Emeritus Percussionist Section (SEPS) featuring Alan Abel, Sal Rabbio, Morris Lang, Stanley Leonard, Richard Wiener, Anthony Cirone, Tom Akins, Ron Barnett, John H. Beck, Frank Epstein, Bill Platt and Gerald Unger. This stellar group of Principal Percussionists and Timpanists garners an impressive 400+ years of experience between them! 2011 was no exception and The SEPS performed a wide range of orchestral excerpts complete with accompaniment to an audience of over 1,000! AWESOME!

Day 3 continued with a display of virtuosity by Master Percussionist Pete Lockett (known to many of our readers from his visit down under at ADW2010). Of course, Pete 'Wowed' the international audience with his mastery of world hand percussion and new and innovative products. World percussion is an established genre at PASIC and joining Pete at this year's convention were Ricardo Flores, Obo Addy, Thomas Cruz, Ray Dillard, Arthur Hull, Ganesh Kumar, Neeraj Mehta, Poncho Sanchez, and Bernard Woma.

Australians were well represented at this year's PASIC with sessions being presented by Nat Grant, (Melbourne, Victoria), Grant Collins, (Queensland) and of course, James Bailey (South Australia) who is a recipient of the PAS lifetime Achievement Award to Education. Nat's session on "Looping" was attended by over 200 people. It is wonderful that even though there are such a variety of sessions on offer, each one is attended by people who are really passionate about the subject for discussion. Nat, recently attending the Loopers Delight Festival in California <http://www.loopers-delight.com/loop.html>, demonstrated mastery over this ever-popular idiom utilizing pedals, lap tops, effect processors and, her preference, acoustic sound sources. She was well received by all as a leader in the field.



Percussionist, author, educator and music therapist, Kalani presented an informative session on Interactive Drumming, 'POPS' (Pattern Over Pulse sequence). Kalani is popular in Australia and will return in early 2012 presenting a workshop supported by Optimum Percussion. His PASIC session was infectious and inspiring. Interactive drumming, expressive affirmations focuses on helping people play unified rhythms based on positive statements! Particularly exciting was the development of the new "Flex Drum" a drum that has a removable head and a cone shape that allows for compact storage and transportation.

For me, the most rewarding part of PASIC 2011 was the Hall of Fame Awards. The ability to honour icons in our profession always fills me with a deeper appreciation of Drums and Percussion as a "life long" profession.

This evening the Percussive Arts Society honoured Jazz drummer Jimmy

Cobb, University professor and founding member of PAS Thomas Siwe and the remarkable percussionist entertainer and entrepreneur Dick Shorey. I was especially pleased to witness the award of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Education to James Bailey. Jim is well known to Australian drummers and percussionists and is actually a featured artist in this inaugural edition of PERCUSscene!

After the awards we were treated to a concert with the US Army Blues. This 17-piece Big Band explosion is one of the finest Big Bands in the USA. Drummer Steve Fidyk permanently fills the drum chair. On this occasion Steve was joined by guest artists Keith Carlock, John Riley, Peter Erskine, Ed Soph, and Simon Phillips (how's that for a line up of drummers in one concert!?) Needless to say this was a rockin' concert and attended by over 4,000 percussionists and drummers of all ages. Other special guests included multi-award winning percussionist Emil Richards on Vibraphone, and Memo Acevedo on Congas.



DAY 3 still rockin'...

...Sitting in on a clinic with Peter Erskine, "Virtually Erskine", midi groove library. This session explored some of the newest technology using BFD2 sampled drums, exciting grooves, play-alongs in Cubase, very cool!

Marimba and percussion on display with up and coming artist Casey Cangelosi (described as the 'new Paganini of Percussion') presented a recital of his own compositions for Marimba and percussion. "Plato's Cave" for 2 players sitting on the floor playing their sticks and the floor demonstrated creativity and a sense of fun!

As can be expected, a vast international array of keyboard artists were present at PASIC 2011 including, Gordon Stout, Kevin Bobo, Aiyun Huang, Robert Van Sice, Bob Becker, Mike Burritt, Thomas Burritt, Paul Smadbeck, William Moersch, Gwendolyn Burgett-Thrasher, I-Jen Fang, Anders Åstrand, Pius Cheung, Emil Richards and Ted Piltzecker. How's that for an impressive line up?!

Finishing up the Saturday sessions was the Indiana University World Percussion Ensemble directed by Michael Spiro. Michael is well known globally as the guru of all things Afro Cuban. This outstanding 50-piece student ensemble presented a remarkable demonstration of music from the Yoruba people of southwest Nigeria through their journey that eventually became what we know as the music of Cuba.

PASIC 20

Shifting rooms across the hall was the 50-piece PAS 2011 world showcase concert Mass Steel Band with special guests Liam Teague, Ricardo Flores, Chris Hanning and Randy Villers. It was incredible to witness this 50-piece ensemble in full regalia grooving to the Caribbean beat.

During this 4-day event I managed to set aside 30 minutes to catch up with the Percussive Arts Society's executive director, Michael Kenyon, who

gave me a personal tour of our new Rhythm Discovery Centre. Imagine a hi-tech museum (like SciTech etc.) devoted solely to the history and discovery of drums and percussion. The opening display, artistically designed by Mickey Hart, introduces people to the world of rhythm and percussion through a series of interactive displays taking us on an all-encompassing sensory experience. You have a chance to see instruments like the original drumsets

of Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Gene Krupa, the original Marimbas used in the 1933 Chicago World's Fair by Clair Omar Musser, George Hamilton Green's personal Xylophone, not to mention mountains of original and exotic instruments from all over the world. Method books and literature are all available for study such as the original edition of Stick Control! I would encourage all drummers and percussionists to take the opportunity to visit this Mecca of historic percussion, a "must see" when travelling to the USA.



Michael Kenyon

DAY 4

My final day at PASIC included an amazing 6-hour session, "Vic Firth Private Drum Teacher Program," led by inspirational drummer, educator and clinician, Dom Famularo. I would encourage anyone who has a passion to start or further develop a Drums/ Percussion teaching studio to attend one of these "in service" programs. Topics discussed included all of the foundation aspects of establishing, nurturing and maintaining a teaching studio. Best of all, it was free!

Next year's PASIC is already in the planning and will take place in Austin Texas in early November 2012. Now is the time to begin planning your trip.

www.pas.org/PASIC.aspx

PASIC 2011

E X P O

No PASIC would be complete without a visit to the International Drum and Percussion Expo. The PASIC Exhibition hall includes a comprehensive display of drums, percussion products, literature and speciality items (over 140 exhibitors) from all over the world. All of the big names in drum and percussion industry have complete displays of their latest models of drums, cymbals, sticks and mallets, solo and ensemble literature. There are also numerous

speciality small manufacturers of boutique instruments such as hand-crafted timpani and keyboard percussion mallets, wood blocks, triangles, steel pans, marching and electronic percussion. At each booth well-known players are on hand to personally meet and greet and autograph copies of books sticks etc. One could easily spend 2 whole days strolling through the exhibition hall!





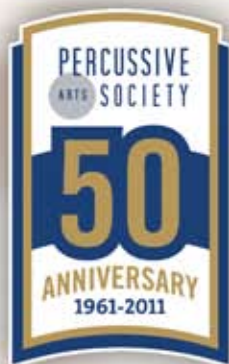
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Why join the Percussive Arts Society?

The Percussive Arts Society (PAS) is the world's largest percussion organization and is considered the central source for information and networking for percussionists and drummers of all ages. Established in 1961 as a non-profit, music service organization, our mission is to promote percussion education, research, performance and appreciation throughout the world.

Is PAS for me?

For Students and those with an interest in Percussion:

PAS Scholarships and Grants

More than \$35,000 is awarded to PAS student members annually.

Scholarship, Assistantship, and Audition Information

Orchestras, military, colleges, universities, and conservatories publicize current auditions, assistantship openings and scholarship announcements.

Central Source of Information

Access the percussion community's most comprehensive publication archive and database of percussion music, performances, and reviews.

Online Multimedia Resources

View video clips of past PASIC performances and clinics, listen to and view the 40 PAS Rudiments and download various exercises for a vast offering of percussion instruments and drum set.

For Professionals and Educators:

Percussion Literature Research, Recording and Video Reviews

Search through our comprehensive database to find information on percussion music, composers, and past performances, including access to over 7,000 reviews of percussion music, recordings (studio and live), and videos.

Online Discussion Forums

Join the PAS Network, with over 8,000 registered users, from 26 countries, participating in more than 30 discussion categories. What's the difference between a tamtam and a gong? Crash cymbal, or strike a suspended cymbal with a stick? You will find the answers here!

PAS Publications

Percussive Notes and *Percussion News* publications are sent monthly to PAS members. Printed articles, along with searchable online archives, give members access to 50 years worth of valuable information.

As a special offer, readers who subscribe to *DRUMScene* / *PERCUSscene* magazine in will receive a complementary "e membership" to PAS, a \$35.00 value. Check out the largest organization of percussion in the world at www.pas.org today! See all details on page 84 & 85.