



The University of Wisconsin – Madison

Percussion Program Timeline

(Compiled by James Latimer and Anthony Di Sanza with assistance from numerous alumni)
March 2015

Comprehensive percussion studies at the university level are a relatively recent phenomenon when considering the long history of universities and conservatories in the Western musical tradition. The 1950's and 60's saw the beginning of what was to become the gradual inclusion, and ultimate expansion, of percussion studies programs in schools of music and conservatories in the United States. Like many programs around the country, the UW-Madison percussion program began with graduate students (who were often pursuing degrees in music education or other related fields) teaching lessons and running the nascent studios. What follows is the story of the UW-Madison percussion program.

Fall 1964

Percussion was a growing movement within the School of Music. Director of Bands, Ray Dvorak, spearheaded the initiative to create a percussion major and hire a full-time percussion professor. There was opposition, but Dvorak finally prevailed.

- Five Students approached SOM Chairman, Dale Gilbert, in support of creating the percussion major and hiring a tenure-track teacher. With faculty approval, the percussion major was in place by spring 1965.
- The “Five” became the first percussion majors: Joe Rasmussen, Jack Barnett, Paul Thorsen, Dennis McKinley and Terry O’Grady.

1964-1965

Graduate Student Jay Collins was hired to teach percussion (Jay Collins went on to teach at what is now known as UW-Whitewater)

- First percussion studio was located in the music annex where the Humanities Building now stands.

March 1965

The first UW Percussion Ensemble Concert was conducted by Jay Collins. Dick Schory, known for his work in percussion pops, was guest conductor.

1965-1966

Neal Fluegel served as graduate instructor.

- 1966-1967 Terry Hulick served as graduate instructor. There were two percussion practice rooms: one in the basement of Music hall and one in an annex on State Street
- 1967-1968 Michael Dreves, a professional percussionist from Chicago, was hired as the first full-time percussion instructor. Tragically, Michael died in an auto accident on January 8, 1968 when his car, having skidded on a patch of ice, hit a tree in Madison.
- Thomas Siwe (an in demand freelance percussionist in Chicago and future Professor of Percussion at the University of Illinois) guided the program during the spring 1968 semester as a last-minute replacement.
 - Grad student Terry Hulick assisted. Michael Udow, a freshman at the University of Illinois and a student of Siwe's friend Jack McKenzie, was recruited to play in the UWPE when a UW student fell ill unexpectedly. Years later, Udow served as graduate school mentor to Larry Kaptain and Anthony Di Sanza at the University of Michigan.
- Fall 1968 James Latimer was hired as first tenure-track full-time percussion faculty at UW-Madison to develop the percussion program. He was also hired as timpanist with the Madison Symphony Orchestra and to develop the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra (WYSO) Percussion Ensemble (and later served as WYSO artistic director). Jim previously taught at Florida A&M University (1957-1962) and received the MM from Boston University.
- Studio, practice rooms and rehearsal space were located at 550 State Street (over a bar...how convenient).
 - There was still hesitation within the SOM about establishing a percussion program.
- Fall 1969 The School of Music's new home was the Humanities Building at 455 N. Park Street. The percussion area was moved from State Street to the Humanities Building. The percussion studio was in room 2401 and the faculty office was 1407 (currently a multiple percussion practice room)
- From 1969-1999, the UWPE presented over 350 Young Audience Concerts in the schools (10 per semester through 1984). One graduate estimated these concerts reached over 50,000 young people!
- 1971 Jim Latimer spearheaded the week-long Duke Ellington Festival at UW funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Participants worked directly with the musicians of the Ellington Orchestra. The UW-Madison Ellington Festival and Jim Latimer are referenced in Ellington's *Music Is My Mistress*.

1973	Jim Latimer and the UW Percussion studio, in cooperation with UW Extension and Karl Dustman of Ludwig Industries, hosted the Ludwig Symposium with major guest artists. There were subsequent Ludwig and international symposia through 1983.
Fall 1974	The percussion studio moved to the current location (Room 1629) in what was Mills Music Library. Mills Music Library moved to the Memorial Library
Spring 1978	The UW Percussion studio hosted Percussion Festival USA, a semester-long tribute to Paul Price whose pioneering efforts led to the accreditation of the percussion ensemble curricula. It was a semester-long dedication to percussion “whose time had come.” In addition to undergraduate and graduate recitals, solo faculty performances, and a departmental recital of nineteen percussion students, the festival included performances of major works and collaborations with Paul Price, the UW Wind Ensemble & Symphony Orchestra, Malmo Percussion Ensemble (Sweden), Ed Thigpen (jazz legend), William Kraft (composer, conductor, percussionist) and Karel Husa (composer). Additionally, Jim Latimer performed <i>Two Pictures for Percussion and Orchestra</i> by Phillip Lambro with the Madison Symphony Orchestra and alumnus Steve Cornelius performed a solo recital.
Fall 1978	<p>Steven Cornelius served as Visiting Instructor of Percussion. Steven earned his BM at UW-Madison, MM at the Manhattan School of Music, and PhD at UCLA. He currently teaches at University of Massachusetts, Boston.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Latimer was awarded sabbatical leave to collaborate, research, survey percussion programs and interview major percussion faculty and performers around the country.
Fall 1980	Jim Latimer founded the Madison Marimba Quartet (an affiliated professional performance group). Personnel included several UW graduates over the years. Current members are Tom Shaver, Tim Gruber, Laura Guse and Jim Latimer.
August 1981	The Tenth International Percussion Symposium was held at UW-Madison with as many as 14 international percussion artists.
Summer 1982	<i>Then high-school student Anthony Di Sanza participated in the UW-Madison Summer Music Clinic and took percussion classes in what would be, 17 years later, his teaching studio.</i>

Fall 1984	Steven Cornelius was again hired as Visiting Instructor of Percussion. Jim Latimer was awarded sabbatical leave and a Fulbright Scholarship to Cairo, Egypt to teach Western percussion and conduct the Cairo Conservatory Orchestra. He was also guest conductor of the Cairo Symphony and guest marimba soloist.
Spring 1985	Jim Latimer completed sabbatical in New York City under the tutelage of Max Roach and others. Steven Cornelius continued as Visiting Instructor of Percussion
1985-1987	<p>Jim Latimer accepted a Visiting Professorship at Radford University (Radford, Virginia) where he developed the percussion program and conducted the jazz band. (Chair of the Radford University Music Department was a UW graduate).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Cornelius continued as Visiting Instructor of Percussion for the 1985-86 academic year. • Larry Kaptain served as Visiting Instructor of Percussion 1986-87. (Kaptain received his DMA from the University of Michigan where he studied with Michael Udow and is now Dean of the College of Arts & Media at the University of Colorado – Denver)
Fall 1987	Jim Latimer returned to UW-Madison; the Madison Marimba Quartet regrouped and resumed professional performances and extensive touring throughout Wisconsin and nationally. The UWPE continued Young Audience performances in the schools on a reduced scale (1-2 per semester).
Spring 1999	The UW percussion studio hosted the Wisconsin Percussive Arts Society (WIPAS) Days of Percussion (third time).
July 1, 1999	Jim Latimer achieved Professor Emeritus status (retired).
Fall 1999	Anthony Di Sanza was hired to direct the percussion program (1 year appointment). (Di Sanza received the DMA from the University of Michigan where he studied with Michael Udow. From 1996-1999, Di Sanza taught at Kansas State University.) Di Sanza also joined the Madison Symphony as Principle Percussionist.
2000	Anthony Di Sanza was appointed tenure track professor of percussion at UW-Madison.
Spring 2001	Roberto Vizcaino Guillot served as a Tinker Scholar to teach Afro-Cuban percussion for the entire semester. He is recognized giant in Afro-Cuban percussion.

Spring 2002	John Santos served as visiting scholar to teach Afro-Cuban percussion for 10 weeks. Santos is recognized globally for his knowledge and performance of Afro-Caribbean music.
2002	<p>The energy created by the Santos and Vizcaino residencies combined with Anthony Di Sanza's growing interest and study of Brazilian and Middle Eastern percussion lead to the creation of the UW World Percussion Ensemble (WoPE). Graduate student Jamie Ryan and Robert Schoville (director of the community Brazilian music ensemble Handphibians) made extensive contributions to get the World PE started.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout its history, the World Percussion Ensemble has been strongly influenced by numerous graduate students who had significant non-Western percussion skills. • UWPE is now called the UW Western Percussion Ensemble (WePE) • The Percussion Ensembles continue young audience programs at a rate of 2 or 3 per year.
2004	The DMA Degree in Percussion Performance was approved and implemented with Todd Hammes being the first to graduate with a DMA in Percussion (2010).
2005	The Western Percussion Ensemble recorded two works by Michael Udow for release on Udow's CD recording <i>Footprints</i> . The CD features selected university ensembles from around the country performing chamber works by Udow.
2009	The percussion TA position was converted to adjunct faculty and Neil Sisauchyhoat (DMA from the University of Michigan) joined the faculty to teach drumset, Cuban percussion and Western percussion.
Fall 2010	<p>Anthony Di Sanza was awarded sabbatical leave. Neil Sisauchyhoat along with DMA students Tom Ross and Todd Hammes guided the percussion program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During his sabbatical Di Sanza completed his first solo CD recording. He also traveled to Recife, Brazil as well as Matanzas and Havana, Cuba to study various folkloric percussion traditions.
2010	The World Percussion Ensemble won the Percussive Arts Society World Percussion Ensemble Competition resulting in a major performance at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Indianapolis, IN.

- 2011 Clocks in Motion (Affiliated Professional Percussion Group) was created. CIM grew out of the Graduate Percussion Group and was spearheaded by DMA student Sean Kleve. The ensemble has gained national attention for adventurous programming and compelling performances. All members of Clocks in Motion are UW graduates; current members are Sean Kleve, Dave Alcorn, Jennifer Hedstrom, Michael Koszewski and James McKenzie.
- 2012 Neil Sisauyhoat left UW for a tenure track position in Texas. Todd Hammes and Tom Ross (MM UW-Madison) were hired to teach studio percussion, percussion fundamentals, WoPE and WePE
- Spring 2015 The UW Percussion Ensembles traveled to China for a 10-day tour including performances in Beijing and Shenyang. The programs include works by American and Chinese composers as well as music from Brazil and the Middle East. In Shenyang the ensemble collaborated with Shenyang Conservatory students on two concerts.
- 2017 UW-Madison will host the Wisconsin Percussive Arts Society Days of Percussion. The last time UW-Madison hosted the DOP was in 1999.

Notable Commissions & Premieres

- *Phoenix of the Redding Sky (1995)* conducted by James Latimer – premiered by UWPE and the Anna Nassif Dance Company
- *Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries (1998)* conducted by James Latimer – premiered by UWPE and the Anna Nassif Dance Company
- *Encounters VII* by William Kraft (commissioned by WYSO dedicated to then WYSO Music Director Jim Latimer), (Jim Latimer, soloist)
- Premiere of *Du-Re (2003)* by Serra Hwang
- Co-Premiere of *Tales from the Center of the Earth (2003)* for percussion soloist and wind ensemble by Nebojsa Zivkovic (Anthony Di Sanza, soloist).
- Co-Premiere performance of Dave Hollinden's *What Clarity (2005)* (MM student, Cindy Terhune, soloist).
- Premiere performance of *A Gleam in Her Eye (2006)* by UW graduate, Scott Gendel.
- Premiere performance of *Wan Xiang (2006)* by UW graduate, Yi-Cheng Lin.
- Premiere performance of *Elements (2006)* by Laura Elise Schwendinger (UW Faculty)
- Premiere Performance of *Radioactive Octopus (2011)* by Steven Simpson
- American premiere performance of Per Nørgård's monumental 65-minute work, *A Light Hour (2011)*
- Premiere performance of *Night at the Lake (2012)* by Joe Diedrich (UW graduate)
- Co-Commission *Shadow and Light* (Double Concerto for 2 Percussion and Wind Ensemble by Baljinder Sekhon (2015)
- Commission and premier performance of *Aviary (2017)* by Laura Schwendinger

Recordings and Other Special Activities

- Recorded Michael Udow's *Four Constructions* (1964) and *Toyama* (1993) for release on the CD "Footprints – The Percussion Music of Michael Udow.
- Performances and/or master classes with world class guest artists (including Bob Becker, Linda Maxey, Roger Braun, William Kraft, Alan Dawson, Max Roach, Nexus, Leigh Howard Stevens, Wm. F. Ludwig Jr., Ed Thigpen, Malmo Percussion Ensemble (Sweden), Timeline Percussion, Marv Dahlgren, Paul Price, Steve Haughton, So Percussion, etc.
- Multiple collaborations with the Dance Department in both Western and world music settings.
- Worked directly with numerous composers, including; Pauline Oliveros, John Harbison, Michael Udow, Michael Daugherty, William Kraft, Dave Hollinden, Laura Elise Schwendinger, Paul Price, Karel Husa, Andy Harnsberger, Bob Becker & Roger Braun.

Graduates

Graduates of the UW-Madison Percussion Program have been very active and successful in the field. Our graduates are teaching at colleges and universities, working as free lance musicians in cities such as New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Madison, San Diego, Los Angeles, Des Moines, Denver, Milwaukee, Miami, Boston, teaching in the public schools, operating independent percussion studios, working as studio musicians, teaching/researching in the fields of musicology and ethnomusicology, working in the percussion industry, performing in US armed service ensembles, etc.

Academic Institutions at Which UW Percussion Grads Have Taught (Full Time or Adjunct)

Boston University	University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Casper College	Creighton University
Eastern Illinois University	Texas Lutheran University
Goshen College	Northern Illinois University
University of Colorado	Edgewood College
University of Central Florida	Tennessee Technological University
Kent State University	University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
University of Wisconsin	Beloit College
St. Thomas University	Lawrence University
Mercer University	Hope College
Hamline College	University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
New York University	Hope College
Drake University	
Central Connecticut State University	
Madison Area Technical College	
Normandale Community College	
Berklee College of Music	
University of California – San Diego	
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	

Queensborough Community College