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A Brief History of the PAS Interactive Drumming Committee

By Robert J. Damm

Institutional memory is brief. A recent question about the PAS Interactive Drumming Committee (IDC) brought to light that this information was held in the oral history of a few. Only certain stories are preserved in written archives, such as PASIC programs, committee reports, and *Percussive Notes* articles. The history is enriched by personal interviews with previous leaders who dedicated time and energy to identify a need, advocate for change, and work to sustain the idea. The entire PAS benefits from this history.

1990S: THE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

For many years before the establishment of the IDC, a few PAS members par-

ticipated in drum circles as part of their professional activities. These individuals advocated for the inclusion of interactive drumming at PASIC to promote active participation, community engagement, and a range of social, health, and musical benefits. In particular, in the early 1990s, “Arthur Hull and Remo Belli were the biggest drivers to bring drum circles and interactive drumming to PAS,” said Kalani. “There was excitement for this kind of large group, improvisation, inclusion, multi-level (people with little or much experience), community drumming experiences that hadn’t happened [previously] at PASIC.”¹ In the early 2000s, Mike DeMenno worked with Remo Belli, John Fitzgerald, and Christine Stevens to develop the recreational music division at

Remo, Inc. DeMenno shared his firsthand knowledge of Belli’s pioneering work: “Over 30 years ago, at a time when almost the entire music instrument manufacturing industry focused on creating instruments for virtuosos, entertainers, and pop musicians, Remo Belli did more than create tools for musicians. He also wanted to make a profound, ever-lasting difference to improve the human condition. Pioneering the ‘rhythm and wellness movement’ was not easy and was not cheap, but Belli’s heart was 100% committed to it. Remo understood that for kids with autism, kids with severe developmental disabilities, kids in foster care, kids in poverty and/or in legal trouble, people with depression, drug addiction, stressed out at work, burnt out, overwhelmed with life, and

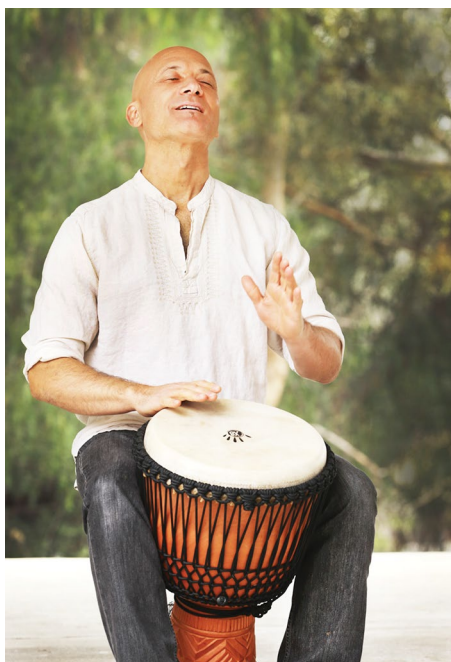
Arthur Hull – PASIC 2022



like so many of us, just extremely lonely, that a drum and drumming with others for healing and for connecting with community was the most beautiful gift you could give a person. Now you have virtuoso orchestral percussionists drumming with the elderly, university music professors bringing drum circles to incarcerated youths, and legendary rock stars bringing drumming to veterans and the community at large. Remo Inc. has consistently supplied drums and sponsored facilitators for interactive drumming workshops at PASIC.²

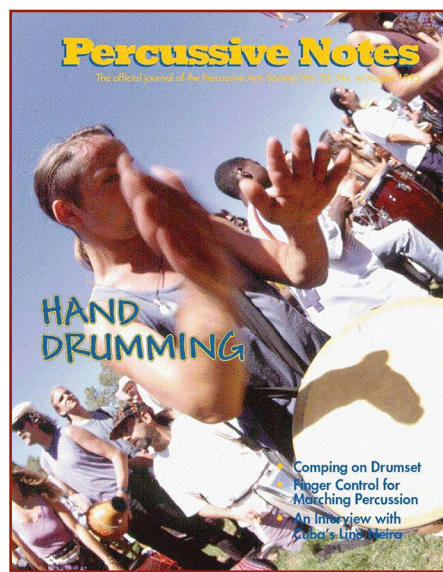
Bob Bloom noted that “during those years, there would be these ‘Let’s all get together and be drummers’ sessions in a hallway somewhere because there weren’t any rooms designated for them. The gatherings grew and became so popular that they were the seed for what came after.”³ Kalani added, “What eventually formalized as the evening drum circles started off as people – such as Alessandra Belloni, Randy Crafton, Jim Greiner, Dror Sinai and others – getting together in hotel rooms late at night and jamming.”⁴ John Yost recalled that “All the world music kind of people – Layne Redmond, Valerie Naranjo, Barry Olson – would sneak into a ballroom or any room we could get into to jam. It usually wasn’t very loud be-

Kalani



cause we were playing instruments like frame drums, but we kept getting kicked out of the rooms by security. I went to the PAS president and said, ‘We are PAS members and we want a room to jam in. We need a room to jam in. I don’t understand why we can’t have this.’ That started a conversation that led to us finally getting our own room.”⁵

With his August 1995 cover story, “Primal Pulse,” Rick Mattingly contributed the first article in *Percussive Notes* to address the topic of interactive drumming.⁶ He shared quotes from Arthur Hull, Sedonia Cahill, and other percussionists



Bob Bloom



about hand drumming, ritual drumming, and community drum circles. The article included a photo of a drum circle from PASIC '93 facilitated by Ray Dillard. Publication of articles related to drum circles and interactive drumming continued in a slow but steady pattern. For an extended list of articles on drum circles and interactive drumming published by PAS, see Figure 1.

At PASIC '97, reflecting the growing interest in hand drumming and drum circles, the World Percussion Committee (WPC) featured sessions by Jim Greiner, Arthur Hull, Kalani, and Paulo Mattioli. Randy Crafton wrote in the PASIC '97 Preview that “In addition to the workshops, we will also continue the traditional late-night hand drum jams (a chance to play with some of the top performers in the field) and two large community drum circles (extended to two hours) facilitated by people such as Arthur Hull, Jim Greiner, Paulo Mattioli, Barry Bernstein, and Kalani, to name a few.”⁷ The “Hand Drum Jam Sessions” (perhaps a spinoff of the jazz/drumset jam sessions) were formally listed for the first time in the PASIC '91 schedule and remained an annual offering through 1999. A “Drum Circle” (no facilitator indicated) was specified on the PASIC '99 daily schedule for Thursday night at 10 P.M., although Friday night was, for the last time, reserved as a “Hand Drum Jam Session.”

At PASIC 2000, Arthur Hull, courtesy of the WPC, presented a drum circle clinic. The daily schedule for that year shows that a 10 P.M. drum circle was led by Arthur Hull on Thursday and by Amy Martin on Friday. PASIC 2001 featured a Thursday night “Drum Circle” led by Matt Savage and a Friday night “World Drum Circle” led by Kalani, which Rich Holly described in the PASIC Preview issue as “improvised group drumming for players of all levels and interests.”⁸ World Drum Circles at PASIC 2002 were facilitated on Thursday night by Eric Paton, on Friday night by Jeff Jones, and on Saturday night by Kalani. And thus, interactive drumming and drum circles found a place in PAS.

2000S: THE RECREATIONAL DRUMMING COMMITTEE

At first, these activities fit well under the umbrella of the WDC. “But” said Kalani, “a drum circle is not really world drumming. So, those of us who valued the in-the-moment, freestyle jam sessions proposed a separate committee to oversee and curate the content for PASIC that would be drum circles, and later, interactive drumming. The committee was approved and named the Recreational Drumming Committee (RDC),” continued Kalani, who was named the inaugural chair of the RDC. This committee began, in large part, “due to Kalani’s efforts to ensure PAS is actively involved with this rapidly growing segment of percussion.”⁹

“[RDC] activities focused on casual drumming, drumming for wellness, drumming for non-musical outcomes, to socialize, and to have fun,” Kalani explained. “This was very different from the other kinds of drumming that happens at PASIC. People like Arthur Hull, Jim Greiner, Dror Sinai, Randy Crafton, and Paulo Mattioli were already doing that kind of work, and we leaned on them to provide workshops and sessions at PASIC. Around the same time, Darin Workman created the Health and Wellness Committee (HWC); there was a little bit of overlap between the committees.”¹⁰

The newly formed RDC enjoyed a robust presence at PASIC 2003. The first official meeting was held.¹¹ Evening

World Drum Circles continued, led by Bob Bloom on Thursday, Kalani and Jim Greiner on Friday, and Chet Doboie on Saturday. Two RDC sessions were on the schedule: Kalani’s World Clinic “Drum Circle Music: New Ways to Work Together in Rhythm” and Arthur Hull’s untitled World Clinic. Also in 2003, a new Sunday event was introduced: the Drum Circle Facilitation Workshop. Arthur Hull led this first workshop.¹² Over the past 20 years, 14 of the leading experts in facilitation have presented the 5-hour workshop at PASIC. The workshop covers a wide range of skills, techniques, methods, games, protocols, and rhythms to foster entrainment, wellness, and community. See the detailed record in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Selected Drum Circle/Interactive Drumming Articles (in chronological order)

Year	Author	Title
1995	Mattingly, Rick	“The Primal Pulse: The Unifying Power of Hand Drumming”
2002	Kalani	“What is a Drum Circle?”
2003	Mikenas, Ed	“Drumming on the Edge of Leadership: Hand Drumming and Leadership Skills for the New Millenium”
2004	Greiner, Jim	“PASIC 2004 Drum Circle Facilitation Workshop”
2005	Mikenas, Ed	“Walking and Talking with Our Hands: Hand Drumming and Group Process in Substance Abuse Recovery:
	Kalani	“An Introduction to Drum Circle Music”
2009	Scalici, John & Michelle Puckett	“Rhythm Establishes Connections”
	Campbell, Steve & Lindsay Rust	“Community Drum Ensemble: Drumming Outreach for All”
2010	Bacon, Rex	“Recreational Drumming in the Correctional Setting”
	Doboie, Chet	“The Drum Circle Family”
2011	Buyer, Paul	“Teaching Ubuntu in Percussion”
	Kalani	“Interactive Drumming: Using the Power of Rhythm to Unite and Inspire”
2013	Mattingly, Rick	“Christine Stevens: Drumming for Health”
2014	Mattingly, Rick	“Arthur Hull and the Drum Circle Experience”
	Fitzgerald, John	“The Facilitator’s Skill Set: Creating Connections and Expanding Opportunities for Yourself and Your Community”
2015	Damm, Robert	“Recreational Drum Circles for University Students”
	Damm, Robert	“A Drum Circle Enhances a Day of Percussion”
2017	Damm, Robert	“The Positive Effects of Drumming on Children with Autism”
	Damm, Robert	“African Drumming in Drum Circles”
2018	Greiner, Jim	“Drumming for Corporate Team Building”
2020	Beck, John R.	“The Comfort Sound® Drumming: Successfully Adapting the Traditional Drum Circle for Hospitalized Cancer Patients and Their Caregivers”
	Damm, Robert	“Exploring Meter in a Drum Circle”
2021	Karow, Christopher	“Suggested Guidelines for Community Group Drumming”
	Damm, Robert	“Foundational Rhythms for Drum Circles”
2022	Huber, Gary and Christopher Karrow	“Group Drumming with Senior Citizens”
2023	Damm, Robert	“State of the Art of Interactive Drumming”

For PASIC 2004, Jim Greiner presented an RDC-affiliated session titled “Drum Circle Facilitation Skills.” New this year was the introduction of the “quiet” or “small instrument” drum circle. Jim Greiner led the Thursday night drum circle in one room while Kerry “Shakerman” Greene led the small instrument drum circle in another. Similarly, John Yost led the Friday drum circle while Sule Greg Wilson led the small instrument drum circle. Matt Savage facilitated the Saturday drum circle while Sule Wilson and Kerry “Shakerman” Green led the small instrument drum circle. The small instrument drum circle continued to be offered for many years, although many members

seemed to prefer participating in the bigger, louder events.

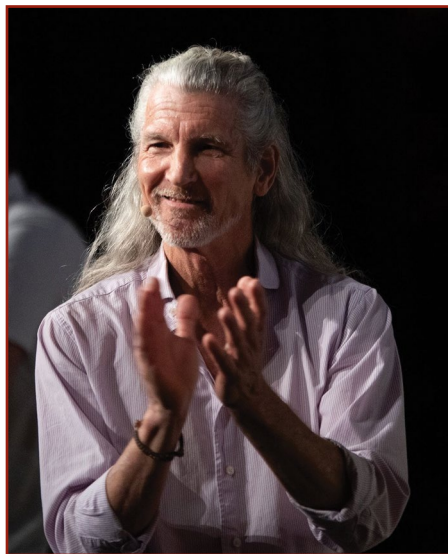
Official RDC meeting minutes of that year identify early members: Kim Atkinson, Rex Bacon, Bob Bloom, Jerry Bolen, John Fitzgerald, Kerry Green, Jim Greiner, Arthur Hull, Susan Hunt-Wallace, Kalani, Michael Markus, Craig Ramsell, Scott Snow, Darin Workman, and John Yost. These members collaborated to identify future goals of the committee. Ideas included “development of outreach programs that could bring in potential PAS members and create windows of access for the general public” such as “drum circles for school and/or community groups and training programs for PAS members

and the general public.”¹³ Bob Bloom conveyed that “[Members] had useful information-sharing sessions from the get-go. The RDC did and continues to strengthen interactive drumming, be important at PASIC, and support PAS in general.”¹⁴

RDC sessions at PASIC 2005 included two drum circles held simultaneously on Thursday night: the Rhythm Weavers Drum Circle and “Share the Beat: A Late Night Drum Circle” led by Jaqui MacMillan and Dave Holland. This is the first record of simultaneous offerings, made possible by a plentiful supply of active facilitators who eagerly volunteered to serve. A Friday session featured an RDC panel discussion with Kalani, Arthur Hull, and Mary Anderson titled “Drum Circle Facilitation as a Profession.” Two evening drum circles, one led by Paulo Mattioli and another by Kalani, were offered. On Saturday, Bob Bloom provided a RDC workshop called “Add Your Voice.” A “Mass Drum Circle” was held at 5:00 P.M. This is the first documentation of the mass drum circle as the closing event for the conference. This tradition has remained

Dave Holland

John Fitzgerald



John Yost

Figure 2. IDC Drum Circle Facilitation Workshops

2003	Arthur Hull
2004	Jim Greiner
2005	Kalani
2006	Bob Bloom
2007	Dave Holland
2008	Arthur Hull
2009	Robert Friedman
2010	Dave Holland
2011	Kanya Masala
2012	Christine Stevens
2013	John Scalici
2014	Arthur Hull
2015	Cameron Tummel
2016	Robert Friedman
2017	Jeni Swerdlow
2018	Greg Whitt
2019	John Fitzgerald
2020	virtual PASIC/no workshop
2021	Jim Donovan
2022	Arthur Hull & Jim Boneau
2023	John Yost



to the present day, offering one final opportunity for attendees to drum together and participate in the hands-on, social experience of interactive drumming. The annual RDC report noted that committee members were “considering all formats and schedules for evening drum circles, including providing participants with as many opportunities as possible, and accommodating various types of drums and styles, in order to provide a unique experience.”¹⁵ That is, while continuing to offer the standard notion of interactive drumming for all PASIC participants, members were intent upon offering fresh, interesting interactions.

Throughout that year, RDC members hosted outreach events at schools and one at a local children’s hospital. The RDC report in *Percussion News* for 2005 identified that “The RDC hopes that a room or space at PASIC will be dedicated to group drumming and drum circle related sessions, as well a greater focus on articles for PAS publications.”¹⁶ The hope for a dedicated room was realized and is continued practice at PASIC. This convenience has improved logistics for interactive drumming. People who are interested in interactive drumming sessions can easily locate the dedicated room. Also, large instruments are stored in one place, rather than being rushed between different rooms, and room setup usually remains in circle formation, without having to be restored for a lecture session.

For PASIC 2006, the RDC presented a panel discussion titled “Growing Your DCF Business.” Kalani moderated the panel of Toni Kellar, Mike Marcionetti, Kenya Masala, and John Scalici. “The committee plans on presenting future panels with a focus on drum circles for specific populations” said Kalani in *Percussion News*.¹⁷ RDC sessions on Thursday were an undefined “Recreational Drumming Lab” and a 10:00 P.M. Drum Circle titled “Roots to Inner Rhythms” led by Toni Kellar and Christina Boiano. Friday’s offerings were Dave Holland’s DRC Lab titled “Drum Circle Games, Songs, and Interactions,” a Recreational Drumming Lab, and Chet

Doboe’s 10:00 P.M. drum circle. Saturday offered the third Recreational Drumming Lab at 4:00 followed by the closing mass drum circle at 5:00 P.M. With this conference, Kalani concluded his service as chair of the RDC.

A NEW NAME: THE IDC

RDC members elected Bob Bloom to serve as the next chair, which he did for three years.¹⁸ Bloom was moderator for the PASIC 2007 panel discussion “New Gigs on the Block: Get Listed in Your State as a Teaching Artist” with Joanne Eubanks and Eric Paton. David Frego led a workshop titled “Dalcroze Eurhythmics: Experiencing Rhythm in Your Whole Body.” Craig Woodson led the 9:30 P.M. drum circle on Thursday and Dave Wonsley led the one on Friday.

PASIC 2008 included a “Welcome Drum Call” at 8:15 A.M. outside the exhibit hall in the Convention Center. Jim Greiner facilitated the Late-Night drum circle on Thursday and on Friday, Kenya Masala facilitated with Steve Campbell and Lindsay Rust. The panel discussion with Bob Bloom, Gary Gibbs, and Mark Shelton was “New Gigs on the Block/Get Listed in Your State as a Teaching Artist.” Bloom and Arthur Hull led the closing mass drum circle on Saturday. Important committee work at this conference included proposal of a name change from Recreational Drum Committee to Interactive Drumming Committee (IDC). The PAS Executive Committee approved the proposal in January 2009. Bloom explained the motivation to change the name: “[The name IDC] would be more encompassing and more representative. We could add to the recreational drumming and nurture facilitation and leadership skills to serve additional populations such as people with autism, students in education, and older adults.”¹⁹ The stated mission of the RDC at this time was to promote “the establishment and benefits of participatory percussion-based experiences in education, recreation, healthcare, business world, disabilities, social work, and community-building settings where people of

all ages and background can participate.”²⁰

The written report for 2008 RDC activities included the first published acknowledgement of vendors who provided instruments for so many conference sessions. The RDC has always been grateful for the vendors who provide instruments for the sessions. Vendors mentioned that year as providing instruments for IDC-hosted activities included Latin Percussion, Remo, Inc., and Tycoon Percussion.²¹

Another change for the IDC in 2009 was that membership increased by 13, welcoming members with backgrounds in music therapy, social work, music education, healthcare, performance, teaching artistry, and ethnomusicology.²² Bloom mentioned that he worked hard to invite a diverse constituency and was able to recruit Steve Campbell, Valerie Naranjo, Ken Porter, Lindsay Rust, Mark Shelton, Dr. Craig Woodson, and others.²³ PASIC 2009 included Valerie Naranjo facilitating the Thursday late-night drum circle and Mark Shelton facilitating the Friday late-night drum circle (playing the Roland HandSonic digital hand percussion controller). The panel discussion, moderated by Bob Bloom, with Julie French, Dave Lawrence, Paul Norman, Jim Nulty, and Jo Ellen Rossebo, was titled “Selling Yourself.” Lori Fithian facilitated the closing mass drum circle at 5:00 P.M.

PASIC 2010 included an Interactive Drumming Workshop by Nellie Hill titled “Meeting the National Standards of Music using Interactive Drum Circles” and Jeni Swerdlow’s “A fun approach to engaging kids in rhythm.” Chet Doboe facilitated a late-night drum circle, and John Yost led the closing mass drum circle.

INTERACTION, PLAYFUL ENERGY, AND SURPRISE

Dave Holland stepped into the role of IDC chair for 2011–12. PASIC 2011 was a celebration of the 50th anniversary of PAS; to kick off the celebration, IDC offered for the first time an early-morning opportunity for members to engage in interactive drumming. A Welcome drum

circle was offered at 8:00 A.M. on Thursday morning and on Friday morning at 9:00 A.M. These special morning interactive drumming events were exclusive to the 50th anniversary PASIC; they have not been repeated since then. Also that year, John Scalici presented “Therapeutic Drumming: Using Traditional West African Music,” and Kalani shared “Interactive Drumming: Expressive Affirmations (IDEA).” Lori Fithian and Kenya Masala led the late-night drum circles.

PASIC 2012 included the Welcome Drum Call outside the exhibit hall at 8:30 A.M. Thursday offered the late-night options of a drum circle led by Jeff Stewart and the World Folk Jam provided for players of more intimate world percussion instruments (e.g., frame drum, thumb piano, berimbau) who come to PASIC looking for an opportunity to connect in a more casual, non-facilitated setting. Friday events were Keith Terry’s Interactive Drumming Master Class “Body Music,” as well as Dave Holland’s panel discussion with Lonny Benoit, Julie Hill, Peter Hussey, and Matt Savage about integrating drum circles to create deeper musical connections with students. Late-night offerings included a drum circle facilitated by Nina Rodriguez or the World Folk Jam. Saturday sessions were Christine Stevens’ workshop titled “Rhythmacology: The Science of Drum Circles,” Keith Terry’s showcase concert, Kenya Masala’s “Rhythm Play: Interactive Rhythm Activities for Team and Community Building,” and the 6:00 P.M. Closing Drum Circle. Dave Holland summarized his time as chair of the IDC by saying “I had a purpose to bring to PASIC the collective ideas of the committee, which at that time were interaction (free jams), playful energy, and surprise (flash jams).”²⁴ Flash jams were energetic, spontaneous, five-minute facilitated rhythm events held outside the exhibit hall, rather than in a designated meeting room.

SECOND DECADE: RHYTHMIC ENTRAINMENT

John Fitzgerald started the first IDC meeting that he chaired in 2013 with in-

teractive body percussion. He established “rhythmic entrainment” to be of such great importance that it was placed as the first order of business on the committee meeting agenda. Fitzgerald was proud to say that he “started every IDC meeting in rhythm, play, and interaction.”²⁵ The practice continues to this day. Fitzgerald acknowledges the early advocacy for drum circles expressed by Steve Houghton, PAS past president (2009–10): “In 2011, [Houghton] spoke with me about his belief that drum circles and other rhythm-based experiences had a valuable place in the PASIC experience. During that conversation, we agreed that interactive drumming provided many benefits for PAS: enhancing its public image, broadening its fundraising outreach, and expanding career possibilities for members. With his encouragement, I created a document outlining my thoughts, which served as a framework for organizing my activities when I became IDC Chair.”²⁶

For PASIC 2013, a Thursday IDC session was John Scalici’s workshop “Using Rhythm Based Activities Collaboratively with Occupational Therapists.” Flash jams were brought back and continue to this day. Late-night Thursday offered the Rhythm Lounge and a drum circle facilitated by Kerry “Shakerman” Greene, advertised with the title “Musicality in

Drum Circles: The value of Dynamics and Dialogs.” Late-night Friday was the Rhythm Lounge and a drum circle led by John Yost. Saturday’s sessions were the panel discussion with Syed Ibrahim and Vicky Gunawan titled “Community Building Journey through Interactive Drumming in Socially Diverse Community” and Kalani’s “Making Music with Persons with Special Needs.” The closing mass drum circle began at 6:00 P.M.

In a June 2014 *Rhythm!Scene* article titled “Interactive Drumming Committee,” John Fitzgerald explained that drum circle facilitators are “professionals, well trained, and experienced. They utilize

Flash Jam, PASIC 2016



John Scalici’s Drum Circle Facilitation Workshop, PASIC 2013



rhythm-based activities to deliver music education curriculum, address the challenges of special-needs populations and youth at-risk, provide solutions for corporations in the areas of leadership development, celebration, and much more.”²⁷ In the article, he provided links to drum circle videos facilitated by Arthur Hull, Jim Greiner, and Kenya Masala. Also included were links to outreach drum circles facilitated by IDC members John Scalici and Richard Farvour for chapter Day of Percussion events. A September *Percussive Notes* article “The Facilitator’s Skill Set: Creating connections and expanding opportunities for yourself and your community” increased awareness of drum circles and drum circle facilitators. In the article, Fitzgerald compiled testimony from four respected members of the PAS community who spoke about being valued for abilities outside of teaching or performing and the extra-musical outcomes that benefited participants, the local community, or society at large. Fitzgerald concluded that facilitating drum circles in the community is a way for artists to “utilize your passion and your skill for the wellbeing of others in a way that is powerful and transformative.”²⁸

The article was a preview of IDC events at PASIC 2014, which included panel discussions moderated by Frank Shaffer and John Fitzgerald. Also offered were flash jams, late-night rhythm lounge, and

drum circles led by Arthur Hull and Chet Doboe, and the closing circle at 6:00 P.M. Hull presented the annual drum circle facilitator workshop on Sunday.

The IDC sessions at PASIC 2015 continued to build and inform on the theme of community engagement. John Fitzgerald moderated a panel discussion with speakers Frank Shaffer, Richard Farvour, and Jeff Holland. Warren Hyer discussed a unique rehabilitation program he facilitated that featured therapeutic drum circles for juveniles in drug, alcohol, or behavioral cases in the juvenile court. Furthering the community involvement, a composition for drum circle and orchestra was commissioned and premiered in the community. Robert Damm presented a workshop about a drum circle for credit that could serve as “a model for other colleges and universities to emulate” in employing a first-year experience to promote student engagement.²⁹ Ralph Hicks offered a workshop on “Incorporating Drum Circles into your Campus Special Needs Program.” Cameron Tummel facilitated the 9:30 P.M. late-night drum circle on Friday. Various members of the IDC facilitated the other late-night drum circles, rhythm lounges, and closing mass drum circle.

Leading up to PASIC 2016, the August 2016 issue of *Rhythm! Scene* included an article authored by Ralph Hicks that spotlighted drum circle facilitators John Yost,

Warren Hyer, and Jim Greiner. In the article, Yost described his vision for the IDC: “The PAS needs to understand this growing segment of its membership and their needs in order to...stay viable in the changing world of percussive arts. Most facilitators are missionaries of percussive arts, not only consumers, players, teachers, and professionals.”³⁰ As part of conference activities, Fitzgerald organized “Rhythm Discovery Day at PASIC” with a three-fold mission. First, the day provided a model for showcasing how to provide rhythm-based activities for the local community. Second, the day served to educate PAS members about how to utilize drum circles/interactive drumming activities to increase attendance at local events. Third, the day promoted the Rhythm Discovery Center in Indianapolis by drawing people there for sessions. Several IDC members collaborated in the Rhythm Discovery Day: John Yost, Lisa Colleen, Robert Friedman, Robert Damm, and Kim Brower. Discovery Day continued to be a part of PASIC until the COVID pandemic.

Regular conference sessions that year were “Beneath the Groove: Creating a Powerful Drum Circle Experience” with Yost and Fitzgerald, “Drumming Up Values: Teaching Character Development through the Interactive Rhythm Experience” by Toni Kellar, and “Body Jammin’ –Rhythm Facilitators Guide to Portable Percussion” by Dave Holland. Holland also facilitated the late-night drum circle on Friday. Various members of the IDC facilitated additional late-night drum circles, rhythm lounges, low-volume instrumentation, and intentional listening circles, as well as the closing mass drum circle.

For PASIC 2017, John R. Beck facilitated the panel discussion “Group Drumming: Why Should I Care?” Invited panelists advocated for “how interactive group drumming can benefit your performing and teaching career, expand your outreach, and help make you a socially relevant artist.”³¹ Panelists were Beck, Bill Cahn, Peter Erskine, John Fitzgerald, Peter Alan

Rhythm Discovery Day – PASIC 2017



Hussey, and Brian Precht. Fitzgerald emphasized the clout such highly respected percussionists brought to “educate people coming from academic and orchestral traditions. These [educators and orchestral performers] are at the places (locally) that will be distribution points with much better visibility for drum circles and rhythm-based wellness programs.”³² This well-attended session helped spread the message regarding the benefits of interactive drumming. Benjamin Lehman, Trevor Meyer, and Stan Nabors provided a second panel discussion titled “Warrior Beat: The Impact of Drumming on PTSD and Substance Abuse.” Drum circles included the late-night drum circle at the

Rhythm! Discovery Center at 10:00 P.M. on Thursday, the Circle City Drum Circle at 7:00 P.M. on Friday, and the closing mass drum circle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday. Workshops consisted of Cameron Tummel’s “Effective Methods for Facilitating Improvisation” and Robert Damm’s “African Drumming in Drum Circles.”

Four IDC sessions were offered at PASIC 2018: “How to create Recreational Drumming programs for middle and high school special needs students” by John Scalici; “Using Drumming to Organize the Brain, Reduce Anxiety, and Increase Focused Attention” by Jeff Strong; “Teaching Two- and Three-Note Timing Patterns Through Improvisatory Drum Circles”

by Ralph Hicks; and “Boomwhackers for Team Building” by Greg Whitt. The panel discussion, with Alisha Roth Ramcharitar, John R. Beck, Julie Hill, Matt Savage, and Greg Whitt, was titled “Community Engagement and Interactive Group Drumming: A Powerful and Adaptable Tool for Every Percussionist.” Yost and other members of the IDC facilitated the late-night drum circles and the closing drum circle.

Fitzgerald concluded his service as IDC chair with PASIC 2018. He remarked that, during his years as chair, he sought to broaden the definition of interactive drumming. The committee did revise their charge to promote “the highest expression of the art of facilitation through educational resources and programming, for the purposes of enhancing the well-being of all populations through facilitated rhythm-based experiences.”³³

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

John Yost and Robert Damm agreed to serve as co-chairs leading up to PASIC 2019, working together to divide roles and responsibilities, find creative solutions to challenges, and develop strategic plans to achieve goals. One common goal they had was to include hands-on world drumming workshops in addition to sessions on drum circle facilitation. This was to provide participants with experiences in culturally specific techniques, rhythms, and processes in order to increase their drumming skills and knowledge of world percussion traditions. PASIC 2019 sessions were “Community Drum Circle: A Minimalist Approach” by Damm and “Facilitating Community Gatherings: Tools for Fun & Function” by Sule Greg Wilson. The panel discussion, titled “Taxonomy of Interactive Drumming Experiences,” was presented by Kalani, Wilson, and Yost, with Damm moderating. Kim Brower organized the “Rhythm! Discovery Day” events and featured “Middle Eastern Rhythmic Fun” with Dennis Mayberry, “Instant Ensemble” Percussion Games by Brower, and “Marimbas: Let’s Have a Melodic Conversation” by Brandon Cruz.

Cameron Tummel – PASIC 2017



Robert Damm – PASIC 2017



Yost facilitated the Thursday late-night drum circle and Fitzgerald facilitated on Friday. The closing drum circle began at 4:00 P.M. In 2019, Damm completed a project of making selected PAS Interactive/Drum Circle articles available to the public on the PAS website. This action better realizes the PAS mission to educate and the PAS vision of providing educational resources.

PASIC 2020 was a two-day virtual event due to the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting a challenge for the IDC. Santi Carcasona led an “Interactive Kitchen Drum Circle” with participants invited to retrieve an “instrument” from their kitchen and join in the music. Kumi Masunga’s session was “Drumming for Health, even ONLINE” in which she provided “wellness practices based on Health-RHYTHMS, evidence-based group drumming to boost your immune system, uplift your mood, and restore your spirit.” Mary Tolena’s “Rhythm’s Code for Strange New Times” looked at the “fundamental concept of rhythm and how it can help us stay grounded, oriented, and connected with each other.”

In 2021, Kim Brower became *Percussive Notes* Associate Editor for Interactive Drumming and served until 2023. This was the first time to have an editor dedicated to articles with topics connected to interactive drumming. Previously, such articles were reviewed by the editor for *World Percussion*. PASIC 2021 sessions were “Bringing West African Rhythms to American Elementary Students” by Staci Toma, “Tambourine Workshop: In the Layne Redmond Tradition” by Barbara Gail, and “Connections Between Group Drumming and Mindfulness” by K. Michelle “Yeshima” Lewis. Lewis and Lisa Colleen Beale facilitated the late-night drum circle on Thursday; Yost led the one on Friday. After the Thursday evening concert, Gail led a “Procession in Honor of Layne Redmond” from the Sagamore Ballroom to room 209 where the late-night drum circle was taking place. Various members of the IDC facilitated the 4:30 closing drum circle on Saturday.

PASIC 2022 included “Facilitating the Dance between Technology and Humanity in a Drum Circle” with Arthur Hull and Jim Boneau, “Introduction to the Rhythm Bones with James Yoshizawa,” and an “Interactive History of Your Favorite Rhythms” organized by puck glass. Damm moderated the panel discussion with Boneau, puck glass, Hull, and Yeshima. The topic was “Drum Circles Suck!” which allowed panelists to openly address negative comments about drum circles that appeared in recent social media posts. This dialogue led to reflections on how to facilitate more successful interactive drumming events, published as an April 2023 *Percussive Notes* article titled “State of the Art of Interactive Drumming.”³⁴ Hull facilitated the Thursday late-night drum circle and Boneau facilitated the one on Friday. Yost and members of the IDC facilitated the closing drum circle. Due to problems with participants not being able to get into the convention center on Sunday the previous year, IDC held the facilitation workshop on Wednesday at the Rhythm! Discovery Center. The event was well-attended, and the venue functioned beautifully. The Drum Circle Facilitators Guild (DCFG) had a sizeable presence at PASIC 2022 with a booth in the exhibit hall and several members who contributed as panel members, presenters, and drum circle facilitators. This was due to the continuous efforts of John

Yost, who worked tirelessly to strengthen connections between PAS and the DCFG. As part of those efforts, he presented a session at the 2021 DCFG conference on why DCFG participants might like to become PAS members.

PAS members may serve on one committee at a time and must attend two out of three PASICs within each membership term. IDC members are required to participate in at least one initiative (article, project, planning, presentation) per year. Current IDC members are Robert Damm, Sandra Gruber, Gary Huber, K. Michelle “Yeshima” Lewis, Arianna Monge, Marciano Alberto Moreno Diaz Covarrubias, Eric Swanson, Tom Teasley, and John Yost.

Daytime IDC sessions for PASIC 2023 were Philip Galinsky’s “Art and Techniques of Samba Percussion,” Cory Hill’s “Percussive Storytelling,” Mark Shelton’s “Teaching Improvisation with the Drum Circle,” and Tom Teasley’s “Expanding the Skill Set for Interactive Drumming. K. Michelle “Yeshima” Lewis moderated the panel discussion about “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” with Lisa Colleen, Ariana Monge, Eli Stephen, and Elijah Smith. The late-night drum circle on Thursday was co-facilitated by John Yost and Lisa Colleen with the rhythm lounge option facilitated by Robert Damm. The late-night drum circle on Friday was led by Greg Whitt and Ariana Monge with the

Greg Whitt - PASIC 2018



rhythm lounge led by Lewis. The closing drum circle on Saturday was facilitated by members of the IDC.

According to the official website, "PAS has 16 standing committees that address specific areas of percussion performance, research, education, pedagogy, and the percussion community." Yost pointed out that "In terms of what the IDC has accomplished, we have furthered the interactive drumming movement by highlighting the different types of interactive drumming that are out there. We have expanded interactive drumming as a viable practice for percussionists who are already in the PAS organization. We have also helped to bring people who didn't think of themselves as percussionists into the fold of the IDC through recreational, interactive, and the drum circle in conjunction with world music. We still have a long way to go to keep showing the legitimacy of what we do and to show that facilitation of interactive drumming and its many facets is an art form. We need to keep looking for people to bring to the forefront of PAS who are doing the next thing in this growing and ever-evolving activity of using these powerful instruments to connect people."³⁵

PAS Executive Director Joshua Simonds encapsulated the contribution of the IDC: "At PAS, we understand the potential rooted in interactive drumming. That's precisely why we established the Interactive Drumming Committee — a group of dedicated, enthusiastic percussionists and educators fully devoted to advancing the art and practice of interactive drumming. The work of the IDC is vital to the overall success of PAS. It has the remarkable capacity to unite and elevate, whether at the Rhythm! Discovery Center, PASIC, in a classroom, at a community gathering, or a corporate team-building event. Interactive drumming is a powerful way to nurture inclusion and celebrate diversity. In my time as Executive Director, I have witnessed just how important interactive drumming is within our PAS community and in our world."

ENDNOTES

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35. Personal communication with John Yost, 2023.

Robert Damm is Professor of Music and Director of Music Education Partnerships at Mississippi State University, where he teaches World Music, World Drumming, African American Music, Music of Africa, Music of Latin America, Native American Music, Mississippi Blues, and Interactive Drumming. Damm studied percussion with PAS founding member Hugh Soebbing at Quincy University, with PAS Past President and Hall of Fame inductee Tome Siwe, and PAS historian Fred Fairchild at the University of Illinois. While earning his Ph.D at the University of North Texas, he studied percussion with PAS Past President Robert Schietroma, past vice-president Ron Fink, and Hall of Fame inductee Ed Soph. While at UNT, he played in the wind ensemble that was directed by PAS founding member Robert Winslow.