

# PASIC 2007 Freelancing Presentation

BY DREW LANG AND CHRIS HANNING

## I. To Freelance or Not to Freelance?

Pros - Variety in styles, colleagues, instruments. No "rut" or "daily grind". Opportunity to travel. Making music on your chosen instrument and getting paid for it. You can be playing timpani on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony one week, snare drum on Scheherazade the next week, and drum set on West Side Story suite the next.

Cons - Lack of job security. There are no tenured freelancers (actually in a way, this may keep you sharper.) Responsible for health care costs, self-employment taxes, retirement, etc. Lots of "drive-by" gigs, less than "ideal" preparation and playing circumstances (meatball surgery), gig inconsistency from year to year, etc. Jobs are also based on economic conditions. It is also very expensive to get "set up" with equipment, hard to keep up with taxes, receipts, etc. Travel costs. Working during holidays and weekends when most people are not working . . . not the most ideal circumstances for raising a family.

## II. Getting the Gig(s)

### A. Types of Freelance jobs

1. Upper tier orchestras and ensembles (usually have their own instruments)
2. Regional orchestras and ensembles (may or may not have everything - sometimes has the bigger instruments. Some regional groups with no permanent "home" may not provide ANY instruments.
3. Pick-up groups (either for a guest artist or event) generally furnish NO instruments. It is the players responsibility to furnish all instruments.
4. Club dates, wedding gigs, private parties (generally do not furnish instruments.)
5. Church jobs (classical and rock/jazz) generally do not furnish instruments, however a growing trend for most large churches and some smaller ones is to furnish a drum set (usually electronic so they can control the volume) and timpani. Some churches actually have music departments and music programs for their worshippers to continue their musical interests. These can have a full percussion section.
6. Recording Sessions - generally do not furnish instruments.
7. Show playing. Broadway, off-Broadway. Subbing for Broadway shows.

### B. Marketing You. Remember you are a business.

1. If you are starting out in a new city, make sure it is "feasible" for freelancing. Are there enough jobs out there? Are there other venues for earning money while you work in to the "scene"?

2. Specializing can open doors more than being a general percussionist. For instance, if you are known as a mallet player, you can be hired over others if an intense mallet book needs to be covered. It can open the door for more work, even outside of mallet playing, IF you can also cover the "non-mallet" percussion. The reverse can be true as well. If it shows you are a "one-trick pony" you can be pigeon-holed as only that type of player.

3. Church jobs - Send resumes to local contractors AND church music directors. If you play drum set, contact drummers that play regularly. They can be a good source for subbing. Most church jobs involve playing timpani, so having a working set (preferably portable ones) is essential. Few churches have their own timpani, so you can't count on it.

4. Drum Set work - Having drum set skills is imperative to sustaining work. A lot of classical jobs can incorporate drum set (pop shows, some contemporary composers, etc.) Having those skills can lead you more work (drum set and classical) in other venues.

5. Broadway Shows - Getting a Broadway show or off-Broadway show is usually done by gigging in an area long enough for musicians and contractors to know you. Many breaks into the business come from subbing. To sub a Broadway show, you must know the percussionist who is playing the show. If they think you can handle the gig, you will have to study the book, observe several shows, and begin sitting in on sections of a show before being allowed to play an entire show, first with the principal percussionist watching you, then finally playing on your own and eventually getting paid. Be prepared to put a lot of time into your preparation for no pay. Also, many off-Broadway productions will not give you the music in advance. You will have to show up and sight read the first rehearsal!

6. Don't be afraid to make your own work. If you are a soloist, check to see if there are local concert series, local and state arts agencies, etc. If you have always wanted to be,

say, a jazz vibist, start your own band. Get a new club/restaurant to hire you to book live music for them; you can be the "house drummer". Accompanying dance classes can also be an avenue for outside income.

7. Teaching - depending on the area, teaching can greatly supplement income until performing opportunities develop (usually it can take from 2-5 years to work into the freelancing scene.) If you teach for a school system, It also can provide additional advantages of access to instruments, practice and storage facilities. Some music stores have teaching studios and will handle the collecting of money, etc.

8. Have business cards with your name, phone number (preferable cell), e-mail address and instrument(s) you play. Have a cell phone and PDA or date book. You need to be easily accessible and promptly return all calls and e-mails. Keep a short resume handy at all times.

9. People will not hire you if they do not know who you are. Contact local percussionists, contractors, etc. Take any performing job you are offered, whether it pays or not. You never know who else is playing or listening. Play a recital at a church, school or university and send out invitations to local percussionists (make sure it's not on a typical work night!) You never know what might become of some of these "less than ideal" jobs. Many have turned in to well-paying ones, you can make good connections for future work and you can play repertoire in a setting where you can "work out the kinks" in a low stress setting (to help you in the "high stress" settings in the future!)

10. Sometimes luck comes into play - with luck being defined as "preparation meeting opportunity." Unless a new performing opportunity is created, somebody has to vacate a job for an opening to occur. No amount of talent is going to get you work if there is no work available.

11. Other percussionists, while being your competition, can also recommend you for jobs. Don't give them reasons to not recommend you. It's a small world and people talk. What you do, how you handle yourself and other people, even in college, can follow you for many years. See the Gig Etiquette section.

12. Invest in yourself! Take lessons from

other pro's in the region to keep you up to date. Read journals and listen to latest recordings, etc. Also, record yourself regularly in practice and performing situations.

13. Take care of yourself! Get regular exercise and eat well. Especially as you get older, you won't be able to abuse your body as much. Invest in dollies, drum carts, ramps, etc. to keep you from hurting yourself.

### **III. Rental, Cartage, Instruments: Purchased gear can be rented for extra income. Borrowing gear is short term.**

#### **A. Rental Rates**

Most unions have a cartage rate that is used as a reference. Performing organizations that have a CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement) have rental rates worked in the contract. Union rates are a starting point. Most contractors also use these rates for pick-up work, although you can sometimes set your own cartage rates (or push for more if warranted.) Just make sure it is all done ahead of the job. Contractors bid for work and need to know what their final bid will be – including cartage. While you do not want to sell yourself (and instruments) short, you also do not want to price yourself out of the job. As a rental business entity, you also set your own rate. Keep in mind if you charge top dollar, the equipment needs to reflect the price paid.

Rental rates can vary, as well as what can be considered cartage. In Dallas, we set individual items or a group (bells, marimba, etc. or mallet instrument) and small percussion is done by what you would consider one "trip" to carry in. In Philly most groups have union contracts, if not; most players use the AFM rates. Depending on the contractor, a little flexibility can go a long way in creating a favorable business relationship. Helping a contractor that has to fill a large percussion list with a manageable cartage bill can result in the contractor being "manageable" back on another job that might not be as lucrative cartage-wise. (I'll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today . . .)

Some instruments call for more than "standard" cartage. For instance, a 5 octave marimba (as opposed to a 4.3, etc.) should be more cartage simply because it is a bigger instrument. Usually when the contractor sees the actual instrument there is no problem.

Generally, if you bring the instrument you play, there is a cartage scale for each instrument. If you bring instruments that other people play (not you) you should get rental as well as cartage. Some locations do let you charge both whether you play them or not, but be aware of the local "custom". Bottom Line – Check with other players in town,

contractors, and union to find out what is common practice for rental and cartage. Don't be tempted to undercut other bids for furnishing instruments. There is usually a "gentleman's agreement" on the rates. If you undercut others, you risk putting yourself in jeopardy if YOU need instruments from others, and you are not making the money you should be making.

If you are appointed principal in a group, it can be tempting to "get all you can" from the cartage/rental standpoint. Just know that if you "snub" other section players from getting cartage/rental, they might return the favor. If they are appointed principal for another pick-up job, at best they might do the same to you. At worse, they might suggest to the contractor to hire someone else altogether.

#### **B. Obtaining instruments**

1. Typical Instruments to start acquiring: Timpani (at least 2, with pedals), Bells, Xylophone, Drum Set (preferably with 4 mounted toms that can be used as concert toms) Standard orchestral instruments (snare drum, triangle, tambourine, cymbals (crash and sus) castanettes, etc.), Small Bass Drum w/ cym attachment, standard Latin Instruments (bongos, congas (2), timbales, hand percussion (shakers, cowbells, etc.), Vibraphone, Tam-Tam, Marimba and Crotales. Chimes and Tam-Tam are also routinely called for. This is just a BASIC list – it's easier to list the instruments you DON'T need than the ones you do need.

2. Think practically. Start out with instruments you can actually use on a gig. If possible, get instruments that are portable and practical. Sometimes your performing venue can be a cramped pit, a church choir loft or a balcony. It does not do you any good to have a set of Walter Light timpani or a 4 Octave Deagan Artist Special Wide-Bar Xylophone if you can't physically move or make the instruments fit.

3. Having multiples of instruments can be handy, especially if you have gigs running consecutively . . . or need to practice at home . . .

4. Borrowing gear should be considered short term. Ultimately you need to make it a "win/win" situation. If someone is generous enough to let you borrow an instrument, offer to pay them the cartage, etc. Above all else, bring it back in as good or better condition than when you got it. Doing so might not guarantee another "loan", but not doing so will practically guarantee a "NO!" The same thing goes for borrowing vehicles – under no circumstances bring it back with no gas!

5. Borrowing from a school can be risky, especially if you are not the main percussion instructor. To be successful, it must be a positive experience for the "borrowee" as well as the "borrower". Again, offer to pay them cartage (and/or some other token of appreciation . . .) If borrowing timpani, keep the drums in range and in tune. Retune them after you bring them back. Offer to replace heads or work on the drums afterwards. Make it positive for the school. Don't return drums with more dents, heads played out or torn from having pushed them through a door sideways. Etc. Also, make sure there is not a school performance at the same time. That is a clear way to "wear out your welcome".

6. Bartering with other percussionists is another option – as long as you have something to barter.

7. The number of instruments a good freelancer will need is tremendous. Optimally you want to have as much as possible, but having a close circle of percussion friends can be helpful, especially with the bigger instruments. Especially with the smaller hand instruments, a good rule of thumb is if you have played it once, you will probably need it again at some point in time. If you play a show, etc. make it a point to purchase what instruments you use (especially the smaller ones.) SOMEONE ELSE might need them at some point in time . . . for a slight fee. NOTHING GET'S CHEAPER!!!!

8. Some percussionists take out loans and buy the large items (timpani, BD, chimes, vibes, bells, xylophone, etc.) It's a major expense, but you can also start renting those instruments to help pay for them.

9. Besides buying from discount wholesale percussion distributors, other ways of purchasing instruments (and anything else) at a reduced price include buying instruments from floor shows. PASIC, State music conventions, etc. provide a cost effective way of purchasing big ticket items at reduced prices. Sometimes schools will sell their old equipment when purchasing new instruments - especially when space is an issue. Ebay is also a good source, although prices can definitely be inflated. Your local classified ads and Craig's List are other good options.

Have a purchasing goal – constantly purchase things you need for any gig you are playing or know will be coming up. If you come upon a good deal and can afford it, get it. Ask around the local percussion community if anyone has instruments for sale.

11. TAKE CARE OF YOUR GEAR. Before every job (especially a studio session) make sure the drums and hardware (including a "well-oiled" bass drum pedal) are rattle-free and tuned to go – especially drum set! In

the down times (usually summer or early fall) take stock of all your instruments and gear. Oil wooden bars with lemon oil, etc., clean and oil/grease hardware, stands, etc. Change out any bad heads, replace worn parts, broken/lost instruments. Take an inventory of your gear - **KNOW WHERE ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT IS!** You don't want to be running around looking for a piece of equipment at the last minute.

### C. Be Prepared

1. If you have to bring instruments, double check to make sure they are packed. A good plan of action is to have cases for all instruments – the fewer the better. For instance, if you are playing a drum set job, the traditional “trap” case can be a life saver. Having a trap case that holds your stick bag, snare drum, all stands, BD pedal and cymbals means less chance of leaving something behind. As long as you have the bass drum (in a case, of course), you can play any job with just the contents of those two cases. Make a check list for every gig. Lay it out, pack it, and put it in your vehicle. Pack the night before the gig for early services (Relache, 9am rehearsal, can have as many as 35 instruments.)

2. The more cases (or “loose” instruments) you have, the more you have to make sure to pack or you can forget a vital piece of gear. Consolidating instruments in fewer cases and double-checking can lessen the chance of leaving something behind.

3. Another good thing have in your vehicle is a pre-packed “safety bag” – any mallet or drumstick bag (maybe one of your old worn out ones) with an “emergency kit” of implements and things for any occasions – a pair of concert SD sticks, drum set sticks, brushes, xylophone mallets, bell mallets, marimba mallets, timpani mallets, triangle w/beater and clip, drum key, adjustable wrench, and (if room allows) a bass drum beater (or two), and any SMALL accessories (cowbell, finger cymbals, woodblock, whistle, etc.,) and a black bow tie. If you have old or less than optimum implements or instruments, this would be a great use for them. Also, you would want to have string/cable for snare drum throw-offs, extra felts and cymbal accessories and the savior of all percussionists everywhere . . . duct tape! Have a tool kit in your vehicle for any drum emergencies. Wal-Mart has small portable tool kits for \$15 Ultimately, you would like to always have top-line gear ready to go, but we are talking about items you would not miss if they disappeared or were destroyed.

One thing I think is really important to have

in your car is latex gloves. These are really handy not only for when you need to oil or lube your stands/instruments, etc. but also if you are on your way to a gig and have to check the oil, change a flat, etc. It will keep your hands from getting dirty and transferring that dirt to your instruments and implements.

4. It is also a good idea to wear like colored clothing for the job – if the job is tux, wear black pants and black shoes/socks, etc. You could save yourself or someone else a lot of embarrassment.

### D. Vehicle - Cargo Van, Mini Van, Pickup Truck, Station Wagon

The standard classical percussion “gigging machine” is a van. For moving timpani, chimes, assorted keyboards and percussion AT THE SAME TIME, a van is essential. You can also go the route of attaching a trailer hitch to your vehicle and rent/buy a trailer. I prefer a van for security, parking, and safety issues. However, towing a trailer would work as well. Most percussionists have two vehicles – a gigging van and a more economical car for day to day travel and less “equipment-intense” services.

### E. Storage

A problem that can arise is where to put all this stuff. Unless you want to furnish your apartment or house with percussion, a rental storage room is a good choice. If you teach at a school you can usually store equipment there as well. Over the long term, in my opinion, the most efficient way of “mass storage” is to have your own storage building. Of course this depends on if you own your own house and plan on living there for the long term.

## IV. Taxes, Finances, Unions

### A. Union or not? Union or Right to Work State?

Union is not a booking agency, but looks after your musical well being in regards to working conditions and wages. In fact, to play most of the upper level “classical” jobs you have to be a member of the musician's union. The union helps freelance drum set players the least. They have little or no control over club owner's treatment of musicians. Most “union” drum set jobs play too little and are not the “better” jobs. Most wedding band leaders do not require you to belong to the union.

### B. Taxes

1. Find a good accountant who specializes

in musician's taxes. Ask around the music community. If someone's name comes up multiple times, you have probably found your accountant.

2. Besides purchasing instruments, music and recordings, anything that deals with your business can be a write-off. For example, if you have a room in your house/apartment for the sole use of your instruments (teaching/storage/practice room) you can write off that room and the utilities (heating/cooling, electricity, etc.) associated with that room. Rented storage rooms are also a write-off. Also, any music, instruments, office supplies, lessons, mileage [non-commuting] – this includes mileage to and from the music store, office supply store, etc.) Additionally, any lessons, concerts attended, etc. are tax deductible.

3. Quarterly taxes, W-2's, 1099's and strategies

You can pay taxes quarterly on the money you receive from jobs, or have taxes taken out of your paychecks. Taxes can only be taken out of W-2's. 1099's are miscellaneous income – the payee is required to pay taxes on this income.

You can have taxes and additional withholding taken out of W-2 income. Generally, I have enough taken out of the W-2 income to cover the 1099 taxes. You can also claim fewer dependents on your W-2's so more taxes are withheld.

### C. Other expenses.

Health care is one of the bigger expenses. Since freelancing is “self-employment”, you are responsible for your own insurance. Health insurance and related medical expenses are tax deductible.

## V. Job Etiquette

### A. Personal Quality

1. A lot of jobs don't depend just on technical prowess (in fact, most jobs have little to do with technical challenges as much as sound quality and ensemble skills.) How you present yourself can affect how people regard you as a section player. If you smell like week-old cigarettes, your tux hasn't been cleaned in years, etc. your “hire-ability” can come into question. You don't want to be a “brown-noser” or have the puppy dog syndrome, but being pleasant to be around will not hurt you. Also, don't act like you are “slumming it” by playing a job (i.e. “this is temporary until I land my big gig”). That type of attitude is insulting to the people who are making their living playing those types of jobs. Make every gig count. As a great drum set teacher told me once, “play

every gig like it's going to be your last".

2. Don't be a "difficult Dillard" – the phrase "a squeaky wheel gets the grease" does not work in this environment. You can be demanding and diva-like if you get a steady gig. Otherwise, TREAT PEOPLE LIKE YOU WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED.

### B. Practice Etiquette on Stage

1. "Be seen, not heard". Nobody likes to hear someone practicing anything at the top volume – as the saying goes "PRACTICE AT HOME". Do not work on your fortissimo triangle and tambourine rolls for 10 minutes, FFF cymbal crashes, Verdi Bass Drum hits, etc. If you need to get used to new (to you) instruments, a few strokes will do it – preferably long before the rest of the musicians (and audience) arrive.

2. Another annoying habit is practicing something you are not playing on the concert. Don't practice your excerpts or try to "show off", etc. It's just a sign of immaturity. Especially don't practice something that another percussionist is playing on the same show. It's quite annoying to the person playing the part and is just bad form.

3. If you need to practice on stage, be discreet. If playing mallets, use soft practice mallets - use a pad or towel if you're practicing snare drum, etc. USE GOOD JUDGEMENT!

4. A good friend told me (CH) the following "One of the most annoying habits I have come across from players just out of school is their desire to tell other people in the percussion section how "they" think a part should go. Right, wrong, indifferent, it is the principal percussionist, conductor or music director's job to correct something they don't like, not some "snot nosed kid" who thinks they know it all. That is a sure fire way never to get called again."

### C. Being a good substitute

1. Your first break might come in the form of "subbing" for a rehearsal or a full concert series. In this case especially – YOU ONLY HAVE ONCE CHANCE TO MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION. So, make sure to do all the above as a section player (see Responsibilities as a section player.) Try getting music ahead of time if possible and by all means show up extra early. It might be a hassle at first and you might have to work around your "other" schedule to do this, but again you are making a good first impression.

2. Another problem that has happened is a sub trying to "weasel in" on someone else's gig. This usually backfires – ESPECIALLY

when people try to show off their technical prowess. A good sub plays exactly what is on the page and what the Music Director wants. But even if someone does "leap frog" over another, the world of music is small – and people talk. Since most work is through recommendation and word of mouth, the successful freelancer needs to have the confidence of his colleagues.

### D. At the Job

1. Show up early. If any problems arise, time is of the essence. It is always better to show up too early than too late. Traffic can play havoc to your timing. Show up early and go take a late breakfast/early lunch. Have a PDA/datebook with numbers of local percussionists. If the unfortunate event occurs that an instrument or implement has been left or was added to the session, you might still get access to what you need. However, this only works if you have allowed enough time.

2. Speaking of cell phones, leave it in the car unless you either ALWAYS turn it off or ALWAYS have it on vibrate. You do not want to realize (along with everyone else) that YOU left your cell phone on.

3. Be considerate of ALL others – stage hands, security personnel, wait staff, cleaning crew, etc. They can help you in "emergencies" or make your life at the job easier (or worse if you treat them badly . . .)

## V. General Responsibilities

### A. Subbing out jobs

Timing (lead time to inform personnel manager, etc.) Getting a good quality of substitute percussionist. A bad sub can reflect upon YOU – it's YOUR name in the program . . . and you never know who may be listening. Make sure it is OK with the contractor or the organization you are dealing with to even consider a sub. Especially when first coming on a scene, it may not be a good idea to send in a sub if it is the first time playing for that contractor or organization. Also, it is usually not a good idea to forgo one gig that you have booked for a better paying gig that comes later. Common sense is the key here – if you are offered a long term gig that conflicts with a short term gig, most contractors are understanding, especially if they know way in advance. On the other hand, if you work with a contractor that gives you steady work, you don't want to "bite the hand that feeds you" and give them a reason to hire someone else more loyal. A contractor in the Philly area told me "I personally have taken people off my recommendation list that have done this to me, and I am not alone."

## B. Responsibilities as a principal in a pickup orchestra

Organizing parts, cartage for all instruments moved (make sure other section players are paid cartage if necessary) and organizing instruments needed.

## C. Responsibilities as a section player

Have your part ready, show up early and assist the principal.

## VI. Reading Element

A big part of freelancing is being able to read at sight . . . REALLY. Sometimes you are doing gigs where you get the music and play the concert the same day – maybe within hours of seeing the music.

To me, the best way to learn to sight-read with a group . . . is to sight-read with a group. A lot of practice in school is done shedding licks and solos over and over. When a mistake is made, the tendency is to stop and fix it. However, the biggest obstacle in gigging situations is keeping time with the rest of the group – no matter what. In these cases, it is more important to keep the time going than to hit the actual notes. "Shooting for shapes" and making the shapes the correct notes takes DOING IT. A good thing to work on in the practice room is sight-reading using the most efficient stickings FOR READING (for example, using one hand for the naturals and one for the accidentals, using doubles, etc.) It may not be the theoretically "correct" way to do it, but if it is easier to play READING, . . . do it. However, it takes practice to make it second nature.

A good way to get comfortable is to get involved in a community band or orchestra. It can provide a less stressful setting to refine your reading skills.

## VII. Family

Talk to some of the people in town who freelance and are married, and married with children. Especially those people who seem to be handling their situation successfully. You can gain perspective on what your life will be like.

Having a spouse who is also a freelancer can be ideal because you have a mutual understanding of the business and the lack of a consistent schedule. It can also mean that there will be times you will not see your spouse for extended periods of time (i.e. road gigs, shows, off-set gig schedules, etc.). Having two freelance incomes can be very beneficial, but remember that you will also have double the amount of instrument purchases

etc. to deal with. If your spouse is a string player, he/she may need an instrument that costs 10 times the price of all your equipment put together.

Raising children can be a real challenge. All of the couples that we spoke to stressed one main point...ORGANIZATION. You must be hyper organized to handle all the schedules in your family. I (CH) have found that weekly meetings on Sunday night have helped my family communicate our schedules. We also use a Palm Pilot program to keep our schedules coordinated. Nothing hurts worse than realizing that I have booked a gig against my daughter's solo performance with the school choir (almost happened!). Other people find an erasable calendar on the kitchen wall works for them.

If both you and your spouse freelance and you have children, juggling baby sitters, day care, etc. can be a major challenge. Once again, being hyper organized is a necessity. Also, having a support system of extended family can really make a difference.

Chris Hanning has been performing with steel bands and studying the drumming styles of Trinidad for over 20 years and plays regularly with the Panyard Steel Orchestra. He recently released a drum set instructional DVD with Panyard, Inc. titled "Island Grooves" that was awarded 4 \_ stars out of 5 by Modern Drummer magazine. Chris is a Professor of Percussion at West Chester University, a recording artist for NFL Films, and performs with the West Chester Jazz Orchestra and the Peter Paulsen Quartet. Chris is also principal timpanist with the Bach Festival Orchestra of Bethlehem and percussionist with Philadelphia's premier contemporary music ensemble Relâche. Chris Hanning has performed on numerous recordings for NFL Films over the past 10 years including several Emmy Award Winning projects. He also recorded a CD with legendary saxophonist David Leibman and the Manhattan Saxophone Quartet titled *The Seasons Reflected*. Reviews of *The Seasons Reflected* include "...drummer Hanning is magnificent." (*Wire Magazine*, England) and "...profound African drumming" (*All about Jazz*).

Chris Hanning has performed throughout Europe and the United States in such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Royal Albert Hall in London. Besides the numerous recordings for movies and films, as a result of over 10 years of work for NFL Films, Chris has been featured on CD's with the Bach Festival Orchestra, the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, Relâche, and several jazz and rock CD's. Chris has also been active as a clinician appearing at both the 2006 and 2007 Percussive Arts So-

ciety International Conventions and several PAS Day's of Percussion. He also teaches at several summer camps and steel drum festivals throughout the United States. Chris Hanning is an artist/clinician for Pearl/Adams, Panyard, Pro-Mark, Remo, and Zildjian.

Freelance Percussionist Drew Lang performs in the Dallas/Fort Worth area including such groups as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Opera Orchestra, the Dallas Wind Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and Casa Mañana Musicals. Dedicated to furthering the marimba as a solo and chamber music instrument, he has commissioned and premiered works for marimba in solo, chamber and concerto settings. Along with his wife, Helen Blackburn, they have performed music for flute and marimba across the United States.

Drew has worked with composers G. Bradley Bodine, Simon Sargon, Robert Beaser and David Maslanka. He can be heard on the premier recording of his Concerto for Marimba and Band with the University of Arizona Wind Ensemble (released by Albany records - TROY 424), Daniel McCarthy's Concerto for Marimba, Percussion, and Synthesizer with the Meadows Percussion Ensemble (GSCD 346) and the premier recording of Astor Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango* for Flute and Marimba on the Breckenridge Music Festival label ([www.breckenridgemusicfestival.com](http://www.breckenridgemusicfestival.com)).

Drew is principal percussionist at the Breckenridge Music Festival and has served as principal percussionist for the Music in the Mountains Festival in Durango, Colorado and the International Festival-Institute at Round Top. He has also served as timpanist with the Victoria Bach Festival. In the summers, he runs MARIMBA MADNESS - a classical percussion camp in the D/FW area and is on the artist faculty at the Stephen F. Austin Percussion Symposium. Drew is on the faculty at Southern Methodist University and is an artist for the ProMark Corporation.