

## Seniors Continued

### What are your plans after high school?

**Jerome:** I will be attending Old Dominion University to pursue a degree in Music Education and will be performing with the ODU Steel Band.

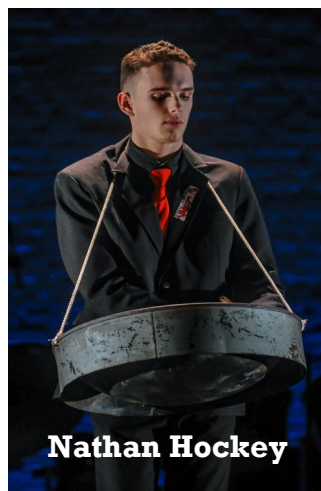
**Kymani:** I will also be attending Old Dominion University to pursue Music Education with an emphasis on trumpet and performing in the ODU Steel Band.

**Alyssa:** I will be attending Radford University to pursue a bachelor's degree and follow my passions in athletics.

**Jahsiah:** I will be exploring opportunities in the armed forces.

**Isaac:** I started attending Kettering University in Flint, Michigan this summer studying Engineering. I love music and could never see it leaving my life so I'll be playing in some brass ensembles and jazz band when I'm not studying.

**Nathan:** I am excited to be attending George Mason University this Fall to study Percussion Performance with John Kilkenny. I also will get to work with Victor Provost and the Steel Pan Ensemble which is a dream come true.



**Nathan Hockey**



**Kymani Senegal**

## Sponsors

The *Rhythm Project* is supported in part by American Borate Company, Bank of America, Capital Group Companies, Clark Nexsen, The Dalis Foundation, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Leah S. Wohl Musical Arts Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, Old Dominion University Hixon Community Engagement Fund, Nordstrom, PRA Group, Ruth Brown Memorial Foundation, SunTrust, Wells Fargo, and the following cities and/or their Arts and Humanities Commissions: Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.



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**Did you know that members and parents of the Rhythm Project have access to our Google Calendar? You can get instant updates regarding all of our rehearsals, performances, meetings, parties, and all other Rhythm Project related events! Contact Dave Longfellow (dlongfellow@vafest.org) to get your access code today!**

### The Rhythm Project

The Rhythm Project is a world percussion ensemble dedicated to the nurturing of self-esteem through individual and cooperative achievement. Founded in 1996, the program was started in Portsmouth, VA by the Virginia Arts Festival. There are four elementary and three middle school Rhythm Project programs that feed the program's premiere performing ensemble, the All-Stars. The All-Stars is a year-round program for high school students that focuses on instilling discipline and dedication in students through performance and touring opportunities. Additionally, two high school programs complete the family of eleven Rhythm Project ensembles that serve the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Portsmouth.

The All-Stars, 2009, 2010, and 2019 Virginia International PANFest Grand Champions, have earned international acclaim and collaborated with many prominent artists. They have opened for Gladys Knight, shared the stage with pan artist Victor Provost and the Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra, and performed at the Royal Nova Scotia and Virginia International Tattoos. In May 2014, the group was featured on NPR's "From the Top" program showcasing outstanding talent in high school students.

[www.RhythmProject.org](http://www.RhythmProject.org)



## Virginia Arts Festival Rhythm Report

Volume 53  
Summer 2019

## Greetings Rhythm Project Supporters—

The summer has been full of exciting opportunities for our students who are ready for another fun and busy school year. Now that auditions for new All-Star members have wrapped up and summer break has come to a close, we get to take a moment to bid farewell to our seniors and send them off with well wishes on their future studies and endeavors. This school year we are excited to start another new elementary ensemble in Portsmouth and continue our successes at the elementary level in both Norfolk and Portsmouth. New additions not only include a new school, but also adding a new member to our Rhythm Project team. We are excited to introduce everyone to our new Associate Director, Daron Roberts! Mr. Roberts is a fantastic addition to our staff and will be crucial in preparations for the All-Stars upcoming trip to perform at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. We are looking forward to all of these new and exciting experiences that our students and staff will have this year!

*Dave Longfellow*  
Dave Longfellow

RP Director (757) 282-2823

*Daron Roberts*  
Daron Roberts

RP Associate Director  
(757) 282-2815

*Robert W. Cross*  
Robert W. Cross

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*Austin Ferguson*  
Austin Ferguson

RP Assistant Director  
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*Scott Jackson*  
Scott Jackson

VAF General Manager

### Activity Calendar

- Sunday Sept. 8th, 2019

Virginia Symphony  
Orchestra CommUNITY  
Play-in and Sing-along  
Scope Arena, Norfolk  
4:30 PM

- Saturday Oct. 5th, 2019

All-Stars Portsmouth Court-  
Yard Concert  
Portsmouth Art & Cultural  
Center  
11:00 AM

- Thursday Oct. 17th, 2019

All-Stars at NEON Festival  
NEON District, Norfolk  
5:30 PM

- Friday Nov. 15th, 2019

All-Stars at PASIC  
Ellie Mannette Memorial  
Concert, Indianapolis, IN

Full Schedule at  
[www.RhythmProject.org](http://www.RhythmProject.org)



Keep current with the  
Virginia Arts

Festival and the  
Rhythm Project  
online!





## New Additions for 2019/2020



This summer we went through a thorough search process to find a new Associate Director for the Rhythm Project. We successfully selected our candidate this past July and would like to introduce him to all of our Rhythm Project friends and family. This August we are fortunate to be joined by our new Associate Director, Daron Roberts! Daron joins our three person team having just graduated from Northern Illinois University where he worked with friends of the Rhythm Project—Liam Teague and Cliff Alexis. We are thrilled to have Daron join the team and look forward to him taking over leadership of The Norfolk Rising-Stars and Portsmouth Rising-Stars, as well as co-directing The Tidewater Park Junior-Stars, Brighton Elementary Junior-Stars, Richard Bowling Elementary Junior-Stars, and the Rhythm Project All-Stars. Mr. Roberts looks forward to meeting all of our incredible students, families, and educational partners throughout this school year! Below is a short bio on Daron, more information can be found on [Rhythmproject.org](http://Rhythmproject.org).

**DARON ROBERTS**, Rhythm Project Associate Director, is a multi-faceted percussionist, composer, educator and performer based in Norfolk, Virginia. He earned his Master's Degree in Individualized Specialization – Steelpan from Northern Illinois University and his Bachelors in Music Performance – Percussion from the University of Southern Mississippi with a minor in Recording Industry. Daron has received many awards such as the National Youth Award of Trinidad & Tobago for Music, and various titles in the Trinidad and Tobago Music Festival for outstanding performance. He can also be heard on numerous live and studio recordings with a wide variety of artists in Trinidad, and the United States of America. Daron hopes to continue to contribute to the advancement of the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago in all his endeavors.

## Festival of Steel

After welcoming our new Freshman to the All-Stars this past June, we had once again the opportunity to take them to the Ellie Mannette Festival of Steel in Morgantown, West Virginia. This tradition is one that the students hold near to them as we get to spend the week learning from some of the best pan clinicians in the world including Andy Narell, Jeff Narell, Duvone Stewart, and Victor Provost. The students learned a challenging and diverse selection of music that will be mainstays in our repertoire for the upcoming school year and performance season. This year's festival was truly bittersweet as it is the first Festival since Ellie Mannette passed away last summer. His legacy was on full display for the Festival and culminated in a memorial concert at the Metropolitan Theatre on Friday night of the Festival. The All-Stars were an important piece of the program as they performed a tribute to Ellie titled "The Alchemist", which was composed by clinician Victor Provost. The All-Stars will have another chance to perform this work at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention at Indianapolis, IN this November! More info on this performance will be coming soon.



## All-Stars Graduation

Every summer brings an exciting time for the All-Stars as we welcome new members to the ensemble, but as August arrives we must also bid farewell to our Seniors. These students demonstrate the best of what the Rhythm Project has to offer and we could not be more proud of the work and accomplishments they have garnered throughout their time with us. The beauty of offering ensembles from grades 5 through 12 comes to fruition as we get to watch these students grow not only as musicians, but grow into strong and independent adults that are ready for the next chapter of their lives. This year's bittersweet departure includes the following outstanding students, Jerome Cottingham II, Jahsiah Cason, Nathan Hockey, Isaac Neice, Kymani Senegal, and Alyssa Taylor. Our new alumni had the opportunity to answer a few questions about their time with us and their plans for the future:

### How many years have you been a member of the Rhythm Project and what is your favorite memory from that time?



**Jerome:** I have been a part of the Rhythm Project for 7 years. My favorite memory from my time here would be working on all of the challenging music we had while making friendships with fellow students in the ensemble. It was an awesome experience to have during my schooling.

**Kymani:** I started in the Rhythm Project 6 years ago with the Virginia Beach Rising-Stars. Some of the best memories have are from playing for important and big concerts like the performance we did with Victor Provost and his band as well as playing for the Virginia International Tattoo. Those were unforgettable experiences to share with my pan family.

**Isaac:** I joined the Rhythm Project as a Freshman in High School with the Salem High School Steel Band and also joined the All-Stars. My favorite memory was starting in the band at Salem and getting to make awesome music with all of my friends. It was a great experience getting to play in two steel bands at the same time with my friends.

**Jahsiah:** I have been a part of the Rhythm Project for 6 years. My favorite memories would be getting to play drums for Rhythm Live and having fun at rehearsals.

**Alyssa:** I joined the Rhythm Project in middle school when I was a part of Virginia Beach Rising Stars. My favorite memory would probably be watching my brother play with the All-Stars and thinking it was really cool, and eventually keeping pan in the family by joining the All-Stars.

**Nathan:** I started 6 years ago in the Virginia Beach Rising-Stars. My fondest memories would be getting to play alongside Victor Provost at GMU as well as the memorial for Ellie this past summer. I also got to play Ave Maria at Rhythm Live 2 years in a row which was an incredible experience!

