

VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL

The Rhythm Report

Volume 26

Winter/Spring 2008-2009

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to spring into a new season, it is necessary to take the time to thank and acknowledge those of you who have selflessly contributed and participated in the Rhythm Project during our winter season. After a busy month performing for end-of-year concerts, the Rhythm Project All Stars embarked on a project that had a significant impact on students involved, as well as many other young people in the area. Rhythm Live, a fully staged production outlining the history of steelpan and calypso in Trinidad and Tobago, was presented in collaboration with the Governor's School for the Arts dance department. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade filled the seats of the historic Attucks Theater in Norfolk for two matinees on Friday, February 27 for this visually and aurally engaging performance. There was nothing but great praise from audience members on Friday, as well as on Saturday, February 28, after the evening performance.

Five Rhythm Project ensembles are now preparing for the 7th Annual PANorama Caribbean Music Festival on Saturday, May 9th. Approximately 20 steelbands from as far as Ohio will compete at the 24th street stage at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. We look forward to seeing you at this event and at other Rhythm Project performances this Spring!

Sincerely,

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Robert Cross
VAF Executive Director

J. Scott Jackson
VAF General Manager



Get your
Rhythm Project
"Live in Norfolk" DVD
today! Only \$20



Performance/ Activity Calendar

Sunday, April 26, 2009

St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children
Concert
All Stars
St Mary's Home, Norfolk, VA
4:00 - 5:00 PM

Saturday, May 9, 2009

7th Annual PANorama Caribbean Music
Festival
All Stars, Phoebus and Salem High Schools,
VA Beach and Portsmouth Rising Stars
VA Beach Oceanfront 24th St Stage
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

**Friday and Saturday, May 15 and
16, 2009**

Virginia Beach Drum Festival
All Stars

5/15 - Sandler Center for the Performing Arts - 6:30-7:30 PM
5/16 - VA Beach Oceanfront 17th St. Stage - 2:30 - 3:30 PM

Saturday, May 16, 2009

NPS All City Festival
Norfolk Rising Stars
Ted Constant Convocation Center
Norfolk, VA
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Visit us online at: www.vafest.org
Send email to: ssubero@vafest.org

Winter 2008/2009 Performance Review



The Rhythm Project **Salem High School Steelband** performed at the school's annual showcase concert on Wednesday, December 10, 2008. This was the first of a series of performances in the community during the winter season for this vibrant ensemble. Those in attendance offered high praise to the students who started playing the instrument for the first time only three months prior to this performance. The Rhythm Project is pleased to offer a program to this talented group of Virginia Beach students.

The **Virginia Beach Rising Stars** had the opportunity to perform for their peers on Thursday, January 14, 2009 during the Salem Middle School Winter Concert. Their confident and rhythmic performance awed their audience which included Virginia Beach students, parents and teachers. The ensemble's next performance will be at the 7th Annual PANorama Caribbean Music Festival; four other Rhythm Project ensembles will also participate in this event.



Portsmouth Museums hosted an African American Heritage Celebration on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at the Children's Museum of Virginia. This event featured the Rhythm Project's very own **Governor's School for the Arts World Music Ensemble**. Students involved in this African Drumming Ensemble had the opportunity to interact with young children fascinated with the drums, in addition to performing prepared selections.

The **Hampton Rising Stars** program hosted by Syms Middle School was wrapped up with a performance at the closing reception for the Gifted Art Program to which it is attached. The reception was held at the Hampton City Schools administrative building on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. Two weeks prior to this event, on Tuesday, March 17, the ensemble, comprised of 7th and 8th grade students, performed at an orchestra concert at Jones Middle School. The audience at both venues enjoyed listening to the students as they played styles of music ranging from Dvorak to Stevie Wonder, as well as Caribbean genres.



The Rhythm Project's **Phoebus High School Steelband** made their debut performance on Thursday, December 11, 2008 at the school's winter concert. The group's performance included a rendition of Bach's *Air On The G String* and arrangements of modern pop music. On Friday, March 27, 2009, educators attending the VA School Counselors Association's annual conference at the Marriott in City Center, Newport News were thrilled by the performance of six exceptional students playing a unique 20th century instrument. The dedication and musicality demonstrated by this group of Hampton students has been outstanding.

Fairlawn Elementary School, the home to the **Norfolk Rising Stars**, pride themselves in providing a well rounded education to their students. Because of this, the youngest group of students served by the Rhythm Project has made tremendous progress over the past two semesters! They performed for the school's winter program on Tuesday, December 16, 2008 and will participate in the school's spring program later this month. The ensemble's biggest performance of the year will be for Norfolk Public Schools' All City Festival at the Ted Constant Convocation Center on Saturday, May 16.



Rhythm Live was a blast!

On February 27 & 28, 2009 the Rhythm Project put on their first fully staged performance at the historic Attucks Theatre in Norfolk. The production featured the Rhythm Project All-Stars, Governor's School for the Arts Dance Department, and the Governor's School for the Arts World Music Ensemble. The cast presented two matinees (both sold out) on Friday, February 27, in addition to an evening concert on Saturday, February 28.

The Program

It all began with slaves in Trinidad - African Dancing

The beginning of calypso - Len "Boogsie" Sharpe, Musical Wine

The banning of Skin Drums - Ella Andal, Festival Song

Initial public recognition of the steelpan - Schubert, Ave Maria

Steelpan in early Carnival celebrations - Lord Invader, Rum and Coca Cola; Len "Boogsie" Sharpe, Pan Rising

Panorama and the rise of the steelpan - Ray Holman, Plenty Lovin'; Destra Garcia, Colours Again

The day after Carnival (Ash Wednesday) - Liam Teague, Chant

The American influence - Glenn Miller, *In the Mood*

The annual Carnival celebration - Mighty Sparrow, Soca Pressure; Destra Garcia, Max it up



The Production traced the history of the steelpan. With the help of the GSA dancers and drummers, Rhythm Live! traced the evolution of steelpan on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, from African drumming through bamboo and metal containers, and finally the development of the steelpan!

The Buzz

"This was the best show I have ever seen the group perform!"

- **Alvin Schweizer** Site Manager, Children's Museum of Virginia

"This was one of the best events I have attended"

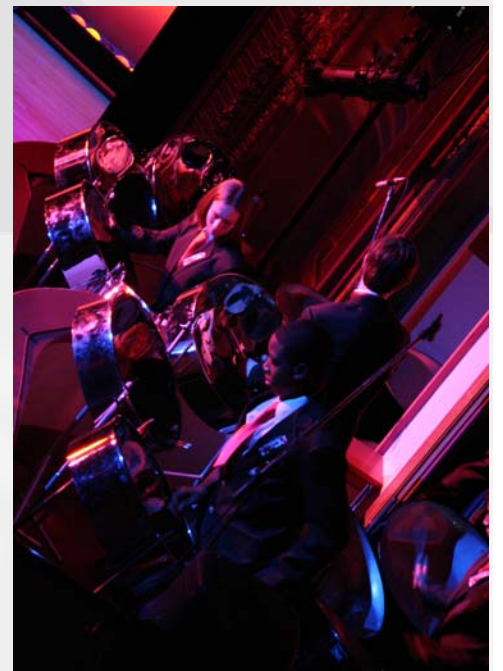
- **Kenneth Vaughn** 4th Grade Teacher, James Monroe Elem. School

"It was the best performance that I have attended in the school environment."

- **Ashley Livermore** 5th Grade Teacher, Willard Model School

Congrats!

To all of the All-Stars and to the other outstanding youth in the area that made this show possible. You have made your parents, teachers and peers proud!





Visit www.vafest.org for more information on the Rhythm Project!



COME JOIN US FOR THE 7TH ANNUAL
**PANORAMA
CARIBBEAN
MUSIC FEST**
FRI, SAT, SUN
MAY 8, 9, 10, 2009
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

Headliner Concerts by the
**CLICO Sforzata Steel Orchestra of
Trinidad and Tobago**
Friday and Saturday May 8 and 9
8:00 –10:00 PM

See **20 Steelbands from across the US**
perform!
Saturday, May 9
10:00 AM –6:00 PM

Performances by the **Dave Longfellow
Ensemble and Jonathan Scales**
Sunday, May 10 from Noon –4:00 PM

The Rhythm Project is a community engagement program of the Virginia Arts Festival involving elementary, middle and high school students from Hampton, Norfolk, Portsmouth and Virginia Beach Public Schools.

World Class Education programs supported in part by the Surdna Foundation, the Tidewater Children's Foundation, the Lee and Helen Gifford Endowment Fund of the Portsmouth Community Foundation, the Junior League of Norfolk/Virginia Beach and the following municipalities and/or their Arts and Humanities Commissions: Chesapeake, Hampton, Isle of Wight, James City County, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Smithfield, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg