

Be sure to join us for the
16th Annual PANFest on
Friday-Saturday, May 11th-12th at the
24th Street Pavilion,
Virginia Beach Oceanfront!



Sponsors

The *Rhythm Project* is supported in part by Bank of America, Capital Group Companies, D. Baker Ames Charitable Foundation, Dominion Resources, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, PRA Group, SunTrust, USAA, Wells Fargo, and the following municipalities and/or their Arts and Humanities Commissions: Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.



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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 ten Rhythm Project ensembles that serve the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Portsmouth.

The All-Stars, 2009 and 2010 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



Virginia Arts Festival Rhythm Report

Volume 50
Spring 2018

Greetings Rhythm Project Supporters—

Happy New Year to our extended pan family and we wish you all peace, love, and music in this new chapter of all of our lives. 2017 wrapped up nicely with holiday performances by the All-Stars, a Larchmont Winter Program, and a fantastic Rhythm Project Holiday party that brought together students from our bands all across Hampton Roads.

Now the Rhythm Project instructors find themselves getting back into the groove after a long break from many of our bands due to the latest snowstorm. Despite losing most of January, we are still on track to have a strong spring semester and there's been a flurry of gig bookings and fun plans to make for a fantastic next few months. *Rhythm Live!* is in our immediate future, and once we get into the month of March, it's going to be pedal-to-the-metal, and mallet-to-steel, all the way to the summer and our greatly anticipated Virginia International PANFest.

Activity Calendar

- Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Larchmont Elementary
Steel Bands Fine Arts Night

Larchmont Elementary
6PM
Free and open to
Larchmont families
- Friday, March 23, 2018

Virginia Beach Rising-Stars
VBCPS All-City

Sandler Center
7PM
Free and open to
Rising-Stars players
- Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Larchmont Elementary
Steel Bands Spring
Program

Larchmont Elementary
6PM
Free and open to
Larchmont families

Full Schedule at
www.RhythmProject.org

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Dave Longfellow

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Paul Munzenrider

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Robert W. Cross

VAF Executive Director

Scott Jackson
Scott Jackson

VAF General Manager



Bridging the Gap

The constant growth of the Rhythm Project family continues with our addition of a middle school group in Norfolk. The Norfolk Rising-Stars draws students with steel drum experience from Tidewater Park, Jacox, and Larchmont elementary schools. The group, like most, is starting out small but mighty, although there is no doubt that it will expand like crazy in the next few years. This fulfills a long-term goal we have had in the Rhythm Project—to provide a bridge between our elementary programs in Norfolk to middle school, and eventually in the All-Stars as high schoolers.



New Home, Same Family

Larchmont Elementary school just recently took a big step into the future by building a brand new school facility to continue their scholarly studies. The long-awaited upgrade finally happened this past summer and the steel band students have been enjoying their time in their new digs. Despite the vintage charm of the previous facility, we're happy to be in a new, state-of-the-art school that allows us more space for kids and a few new pans. It coincided nicely with a record number of students trying out for the bands there. We're also looking forward to a collaboration between the Larchmont steel bands and choir. It's sure to make for some beautiful music at the Spring Program concert!

Pan History in Motion



Once again the month of February brings us a number of important pan-related events both here in the U.S. as well as the mecca of steel pan, Trinidad and Tobago. Carnival season is in full swing as new soca, calypso, and steel band music explodes from the islands and inspires us all. It's perfect timing for us to gear up for the annual *Rhythm Live!* concert, taking place on Friday, February 23rd at the Harrison Opera House. The performance is at 7:30PM and ticket information can be found at www.vafest.org.

If you're new to the program, *Rhythm Live!* is a fantastic concert that brings to life the story of how steel drums were invented in Trinidad over 80 years ago. It features the Governor's School of the Arts Dance and Instrumental departments, as well as the Rhythm Project All-Stars. Narration explains events in history that took place in Trinidad while the dancers bring the words to life with incredible choreography and energy. The audience is indulged in a strong dose of African drumming and dance, Trinidadian steel pan music, and historical relevance. We hope to see you there!

