

## Seniors cont'd

EC: Take a drum home. Realize where you are; immerse yourself in what has been given to you. There aren't many other times in your life where you'll be given an instrument like this, given skilled teachers, and the tools to make it all happen.

MP: Don't be scared to open up and ask questions, always keep an open mind with the music, always keep an open heart with the people that will be around you. Be very open and very aware of the uniqueness of the experience you're about to have.

SS: To whatever you're doing, do it with extreme passion, whether it's moving a stand from the van to the lawn, or playing a solo on a big jazz tune. If the passion isn't there, what else is there? So put it out there.

JS: Don't quit, keep at it, even after camp. It might seem really overwhelming, with all the music you'll be taking in over a really short amount of time, but I promise it will be worthwhile in the end.



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



## Sponsors

The *Rhythm Project* is supported in part by Bank of America, Batten Educational Achievement Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, Capital Group Companies, Clark Nexsen, D. Baker Ames Charitable Foundation, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Hampton Roads Community Foundation, Nordstrom, Old Dominion University Community Development Corporation, PRA Group, Ruth Brown Memorial Fund, SunTrust, USAA, Virginia Lottery, Wells Fargo, and the following municipalities and/or their Arts and Humanities Commissions: Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.



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[www.facebook.com/therhythmproject](http://www.facebook.com/therhythmproject)



### Activity Calendar

- Wednesday, September 13, 2017

Virginia Beach Rising-Stars Auditions Round #1

Kempsville Middle School (VB)  
4:30-6:30PM  
Open to all VB music students

- Tuesday-Wednesday, September 19-20, 2017

Larchmont Elementary Steel Band Auditions

Larchmont Elementary School  
Norfolk, VA  
1:30-2:30PM  
Open to Larchmont 4th and 5th graders

- Thursday, September 21, 2017

Portsmouth Rising-Stars Steel Band Auditions

Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center  
Portsmouth, VA  
6-7:30PM

Open to Portsmouth students grades 5-8

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

## Virginia Arts Festival Rhythm Report

Volume 49  
August 2017

### Greetings Rhythm Project Supporters—

Just like that, summer is ending and everyone here at Virginia Arts Festival is getting ready for a productive fall season. The Rhythm Project has been chugging along ever since school let out, and it's been the usual fast-paced summer season for the All-Stars. After coming in at a very close 2nd place at PANFest this year, the All-Stars began gigging, starting first with the process of welcoming new members and saying a slow goodbye to the seniors. The end of August marks their final gigs with the group, and all five of our seniors this year are poised to go on to do great things in college and the armed forces. The group traveled to Morgantown, West Virginia, as always, for the fantastic Ellie Mannette Festival of Steel in July; it was one of the best festivals yet marked by the presence of famed Trinidadian artist Duvone Stewart. Mr. Stewart was an instant hit with the band and the kids knew they were in the presence of greatness. He taught them a high-energy arrangement of a popular Trinidadian soca, *Full Extreme*, which will be in our repertoire for years to come.

With Labor Day around the corner, it's time to look forward to the start of school and all the pan preparation that goes along with it. Our usual lineup of schools remains intact and poised to continue their successes. This fall, we hope to also welcome and fully-establish our Norfolk Rising-Stars steel band to give even more students of Hampton Roads the opportunity to play pan and achieve the greatness that we've come to expect from the Rhythm Project.

  
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## Mannette Festival of Steel



Each summer, we take 20+ members of the All-Stars out to the Ellie Mannette Festival of Steel in Morgantown, West Virginia to learn from some of the best in the world. The education level is top-notch, and the trip offers an incredible bonding experience for the band as a whole, making us feel closer to a family each and every year we go. The usual world-class brothers Andy and Jeff Narell were there to teach the kids, in addition to the first Mannette workshop appearance for Duvone Stewart, arranger for the *Renegades Steel Orchestra* in

Trinidad. Duvone was a perfect match for the kids, and each rehearsal was full of laughs and amazing musical lines and orchestration. The band enjoyed all four songs they learned throughout the week, which immediately jumped into our set list for the summer. We all hope to work with Duvone again as soon as possible.

## Teens With A Purpose

This year marked our 2nd summer partnering with Teens With A Purpose in Norfolk in order to offer steel band participation as part of their existing summer program. There was a session at each of the two camps this summer and the bands performed very well. Teens With A Purpose has always proven to be a strong source of talented artists, whether it be through visual art, spoken word poetry, digital or acoustic music. We were pleasantly surprised to see how many students proved to be strong steel drum players. It was also a great chance for some All-Star seniors and alumni to join us and help with teaching parts to the bands. It was sure to be an invaluable teaching experience for these students who are pursuing music education in college!



## Seniors

As we do each summer, the RP All-Stars must bid goodbye to our High School Seniors as they take on the next chapter of their lives. We're proud to say that the Virginia Arts Festival helps them enter the next phase through awarding each of them the Rhythm Project Scholarship. This year, we're losing five members: Elly Carlson, Devonte Ezell, Matt Peterson, Sammy Sabater and JaQuan Senegal. Although it will be sad to see them go, we're much happier with all the time we've had along the way, and the great things we expect to see from them. Plus, the All-Stars took on nine new members in June to cover the upcoming absences! We interviewed 4 of the 5 seniors about their time with the Rhythm Project; below are some of their answers:

## Seniors cont'd



### Q: What are some of your fondest memories from your time with the Rhythm Project?

EC: This most recent West Virginia trip was amazing, I liked it a lot. Recently I've been getting into some of the arranging stuff, and thought it was the perfect time to be getting into it, with Duvone there and the phenomenal musicians that I didn't realize were around during my first year. It clicked with me this year and I realized I had to take advantage of it. Tattoo of course, it was a once in a lifetime thing. Also, the opportunity to shadow you two was amazing, I loved seeing the other side of it.

MP: Definitely one would be the moment we walked out onto the stage at Scope, just having thousands of people around waiting to see what you're going to do— that was a very good feeling. Another fond memory is very recent, when we were having our little photo shoot on the rock. It was very cool to have that sort of comradery, and to just sort of sit there and think "hey, yeah this is my family, this is what we do."

SS: Just playing at the Scope, I remember feeling it in my fingertips, we went out on a dark stage but you could still feel everyone's presence surrounding you, and I'm used to playing on a stage but being surrounded like that was a big memory. Also, I'd like to say Rhythm Live every year, and it really hit me this year like "this is my last ever Rhythm Live." I've listened to the words in the

background a million times, I know it by heart, I know the whole performance by ear, I know the dances by heart, and I'm not a dancer....at all. Overall Rhythm Live was a big one for me.

JS: The concert at George Mason with Victor Provost, Tattoo was really cool too, it was a really professional kind of experience. Also every time we go to West Virginia I really love it!

### Q: What kind of advice would you give a rookie member of the Rhythm Project All-Stars?

