

Virginia Arts Festival

Rhythm Report

Activity Calendar

Friday, July 10th, 2015

Rhythm Project All-Stars

Read and Eat to the Beat

MacArthur Square

11:30 AM

Week of July 13th, 2015

Rhythm Project All-Stars

Ellie Mannette Festival
of Steel

Morgantown, WV

Saturday, August 15th,
2015

Rhythm Project All-Stars

CARIB Fest

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Find the Full Schedule
online at

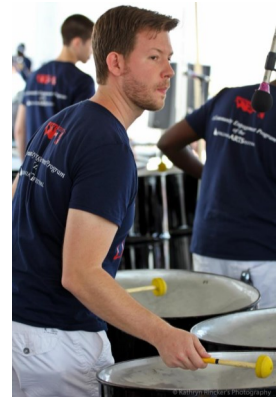
www.RhythmProject.org

Volume 45 Summer 2015

July 2015

Greetings Rhythm Project Supporters,


The 2014-15 school year has wrapped up and it's time to reflect on another incredible season with the Rhythm Project and the Virginia Arts Festival! There has been no shortage of action these past months, and it ended with our yearly PANFest that was enjoyed by a record number of participants. We welcomed 24 bands from around the country including two from the Virgin Islands, and basked in the sweet sounds of pan when our headlining artist, the Renegades Steel Orchestra, played an unforgettable Saturday night show. It was a great thing to see so many young steel drum players inspired by some of the best in the world, and it will surely increase everyone's appetite for this engaging art form.




It's now time to look ahead to a busy summer, with the Ellie Mannette Festival of Steel ahead of us in July, and a busy summer gigging schedule already halfway finished! We had 2 great performances last month at the Fort Monroe Summer Concert Series and the Sarah Hudgins Center in Hampton, VA. In addition to the All-Stars' busy schedule, there are young steel pan groups running for summer sessions with our Portsmouth Rising-Stars and Tidewater Park Elementary school. The young musicians in each group have already showed great promise as steel drum players. Thank you for your continued support of the Rhythm Project!

Sincerely,


Dave Longfellow
RP Director
(757) 282-2823


Robert Cross
VAF Exec. Director


Paul Munzenrider
RP Associate Director (757) 282-2815


Scott Jackson
VAF Gen. Manager





Congratulations to Dave Long-fellow and Paul Munzenrider, for running a fabulous PAN-fest! In the midst of all that, you had your own bands performing and they did a great job! – Janet Reiner

***“That show was worth the whole trip.”
-Jared Allen,
J-Hop Steel***

13th Annual Virginia International PANFest

The 2015 Virginia International PANFest was undeniably a historic event for the steel drum community. Not only did it see over 500 student performers grace the stage throughout the day of the competition, but it was a congregation of many highly respected steel drum artists including Amrit Samaroo, Tom Miller, Jonathan Scales, Kendall Williams, Duvone Stewart, and a slew of highly talented members of the Renegades Steel Orchestra. Bands from around the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands were in attendance, sharing their love of Caribbean music and putting their best foot forward on the 2 stages at the 24th street park on the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. Creativity was on display throughout the day as the bands performed a wide variety of styles from popular classics new and old, Calypso, and Reggae, to Surf Rock, Funk, and Classical. Category Winners were as follows:

Elementary/Middle: E. Benjamin Oliver Steel Owls Orchestra, St. Thomas, USVI

High School: Leon High School Canboulay Band, Tallahassee, FL

Community: Shelly & the Steeltones w/Divine Steel, Wintersville, OH

Private Studio: Mosaic Steel Orchestra, Norfolk, VA

Grand Champion: Leon High School Canboulay Band, Tallahassee, FL

Renegades Steel Orchestra

Of all the steelbands in Trinidad and Tobago, perhaps the most fabled and certainly the winningest band in history is the Renegades Steel Orchestra. Winners of countless accolades and highly in-demand concert performers, these players brought their immense talent to Virginia Beach for this year's PANFest and the result was astounding. They played a wide variety of hits during their program, including Lionel Ritchie's classic "All Night Long," as well as Bob Marley, Cat Stephens, and Trinidadian soca hits. The pinnacle of the show was when they played a legendary steel band arrangement that is well known in the pan community, Jit Samaroo's arrangement of "Pan in A Minor." As is tradition in Trinidad and Tobago, they performed their entire set from memory. Students that stayed for the concert were treated to a program that will go unrivaled in the U.S. for years to come.



Rising Tides in Norfolk

One of the core values of a steel drum ensemble is enforcing a sense of community, and making accomplishments that you can share with others. This past year the steel drum program at Tidewater Park Elementary has excelled, and set a foundation for steel drum music to be a staple in the community for years to come. Each of the 24 piece bands performed at this year's PANFest and it was a very satisfying accomplishment for all parties involved. The kids have made incredible progress in just one year, and there was definitely some excitement in the air around the school after the band got to see their trophy and medal from the international competition. Look out for these kids to make even more progress next year at the Ruffner Academy steel drum band.

Email: Dlongfellow@vafest.org and Pmunzenrider@vafest.org

Phone: (757) 282-2823 and (757) 282-2815



Goodbye and Good Luck, Seniors

Each year around this time, the Rhythm Project All-Stars must say goodbye to graduating senior members of the group. This year we have 5 members who are going off to do great things in the world, and they deserve to be recognized and thanked for years of faithful service and performance. These 5 are not just steel drum musicians, but multi-talented individuals who succeed at whatever musical and academic endeavor they put their minds toward. Thanks and Congratulations to Emily Barritt, Xavier Brown, Alanasia Cicero, Cameron Saylor and Michael Vazquez. These senior members made some important remarks about their participation in the Rhythm Project, stating that the program brought them to meet a wide variety of people from other schools who would become great friends of theirs. It was also mentioned that the ensemble brought them to learn about styles of music that they would not have otherwise found. We are proud to provide \$500 scholarships to graduating members of the Rhythm Project All-Stars to help them transition to the next phase of their lives.

***"I want to start
a steel drum
ensemble at
Virginia Tech
University."
-Emily Barritt***

Cameron Saylor of Portsmouth

Graduating senior Cameron Saylor has been a member of the Rhythm Project for a few more years than you might guess. His first experience with the steel drum came as a young onlooker in the 4th grade, watching his older brother practice his parts. He would soon try out playing the pan on his own, and it grew into a hobby and passion throughout his academic career. Over the years Cameron came to specialize in the tenor steel drum as well as the saxophone, and he would learn a variety of styles on each instrument. Now, on his way to study Music Education and Jazz Studies at George Mason University, he looks to make a path in music as his career. When asked where he sees himself in 10 years, Cameron said, "Doing something in music, making an honest living being a musician working, gigging, teaching, composing, all that good stuff." Cameron has loads of talent and we wish him the best achieving his goals for the next 10 years and beyond.





Hampton Roads
Community Foundation



**VIRGINIA
ARTS
FESTIVAL**
VAFEST.ORG

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 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. Two high school and two combined high/middle schools groups, in addition to the All-Stars, serving the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Portsmouth, complete the family of nine Rhythm Project ensembles.

The *All-Stars*, 2009 and 2010 Virginia International PANFest grand champions, have earned international acclaim with their high energy performances over the years. They have opened for Gladys Knight, collaborated with the Girl's Choir of Harlem, 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.

Keep current with the **Virginia Arts Festival** and the **Rhythm Project** online!

www.vafest.org

'Like' us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/therhythmproject



Sponsors

The Rhythm Project is supported in part by the Surdna Foundation, Hampton Roads Community Foundation, the Batten Educational Achievement Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, Old Dominion University Community Development Corporation, the Norfolk Consortium, D. Baker Ames Charitable Foundation, and the following municipalities and/or their Arts and Humanities Commissions: Norfolk, Portsmouth, York County, and Virginia Beach.

www.rhythmproject.org

