

# Percussion Marketing Council

## Playing an Important Role in Drumming Up Business

**DRUM  
BUSINESS**

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MAGAZINES • MULTI-MEDIA • ONLINE • EVENTS

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

It's been over a decade since *DB* last caught up with the Percussion Marketing Council, but the organization that promotes the drum industry to potential percussionists and educators continues to broaden its reach across the country as well as expand internationally. What began as a single promotion in 1992—International Drum Month (November), comparable with the popular International Guitar Month (April)—has grown into multiple activities that bring percussion to the public's attention all year round.

Founded in 1995, the nonprofit organization increases public awareness of drums and drumming while creating educational and market-development programs that reach a mass audience of musicians and non-musicians alike. Its results benefit music retail merchants all over the country, which in turn benefits percussion manufacturers, distributors, and publishers. The bigger the pie, the more slices for everyone!

Karl Dustman, president and founder of Dustman and Associates Marketing Communications in Cleveland, has served as the PMC's executive director since 2001, succeeding David Levine, who took the position in 1997 after a one-year stint as the PMC's market coordinator. "When Dave decided to step down, the PMC wanted to recruit someone who was recognized and respected in the percussion industry," recalls Dustman, a forty-five-year veteran of the music products field who has worked for a variety of well-known drum companies, including eleven years with Ludwig, as well as time with Gretsch, Sonor, and Pearl. "They asked me if I was interested, and it has turned into almost eleven years of 'helping them out!'"

Technically, Dustman is one of four co-executive directors; the others are Brad Smith (senior sales and marketing manager at Hal Leonard Corporation), Dave Jewell (marketing manager for Yamaha Drums), and Bob Jespersen (national call center director/regional sales manager for KMC Music, Inc.). The latter two were appointed this past August. Each person is responsible for specific areas of guidance, direction, and benefit to all PMC



1. Chad Smith performing at Peters Township High School on November 16, 2010

2. Zig Wajler performing at Glenellen School

3. The Matrix Percussion Trio

4. A Roots of Rhythm seminar in Cleveland

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members as well as to the percussion industry in general, although Dustman handles the day-to-day operations through his company.

There's also a four-person advisory board consisting of Billy Cuthrell (Progressive Music Center, Raleigh, North Carolina), who's responsible for market event administration; Phil Hood (Enter Music Publishing), who handles new membership development; Brian LaRue (Dream Cymbals & Gongs), membership director; and Dr. Craig Woodson, program director for Roots of Rhythm. All officers and board advisors serve as unpaid volunteers.

PMC member companies include *Drum Business* and *Modern Drummer* magazines; Alfred Publishing Company, Inc.; The Clevelander Drum Company; Dream Cymbals & Gongs; *Drum!*; Ethnomusic, Inc.; Gibraltar Hardware; Gon Bops; Gretsch; Hal Leonard Corporation; Hudson Music; King Kong Cases; KMC Music; KoSA; Latin Percussion; Los Cabos Drumsticks; May International; Musicorp; Music With Colors; Pearl; Pro-Mark; Progressive Music Center; Remo; Roland; Sabian; Toca Percussion; Traps Drums; Universal Percussion; Vater Percussion, Inc.; Yamaha; and Zildjian. Their industry alliances include the NAMM Foundation, Percussive Arts Society, MENC (National Association for Music Education), and NASMD (National Association of School Music Dealers).

"The success of that first public awareness campaign [International Drum Month] instilled interest in the percussion industry to continue the marketing and educational programs that would help grow the drum business," Dustman says. "During those early years, the PMC created a variety of different programs tied into concerts at Days of Percussion or PASIC [Percussive Arts Society International Convention]. Over the last ten years, we have taken a more proactive position to create educational programs and marketing initiatives that are beyond just International Drum Month. We have added year-long themes and campaigns to reach more teachers and students, which benefits the retail percussion merchant and ultimately creates more sales of percussion instruments for the entire industry."

One of the PMC's more successful efforts of the past decade was the Women in Percussion campaign, which ran for several years, ending in 2007. "It really struck a nerve

with the industry," Dustman says. "The percussion industry became aware that it was ignoring more than 51 percent of the percussion product marketplace. Female musicians have discovered the fun and many health benefits of drumming, including the Recreational Music Making movement." The two-year promotions "Girls Just Wanna Have Drums" and "Hit Like a Girl" reached thousands and still benefit the entire percussion industry today.

## PERCUSSION IN THE SCHOOLS

"In 2007, we decided to take our programs and campaigns directly to the schools," Dustman says. "The PMC screens and authorizes facilitators from all over the country to go in to do an all-school general assembly on all different kinds of percussion instruments. It's a collaboration between the school that hosts the event—they pay the performer \$250—and the PMC, which pays a matching funds grant."

During the 2010-11 school year, this program presented sixty concerts across the U.S., impacting close to 26,000 students in grades three through twelve. These educational in-school percussion concerts provided hands-on instruction and performance opportunities on a variety of percussion instruments and accessories. The PMC-approved performing groups included the Atlanta Percussion Trio; the Matrix Percussion Trio (Scot Corey, Todd London, and Joe Smyth) from Nashville; "Hands On With Zig," featuring the Nashville-based Zig Wajler, who was featured in a September/October 2002 article in *DB*; and Hannah Ford, a twentysomething percussionist living in Chicago. In 2006, Ford won the Louie Bellson Heritage Days Drum Competition—the only woman to do so. Other authorized and active professional in-school facilitators for the PMC include Dancing Drum (Lindsay Rust and Steve Campbell), Chad Patrick (Boy With a Drum), John Dare (Dare Percussion Studios), Dr. Craig Woodson, and the recently added Mark Shelton from Lewisville, Texas.

The Atlanta Percussion Trio—Scott Douglas, Karen Hunt, and John Lawless—has been performing for audiences for over thirty years, providing upbeat, high-energy programs that entertain students and educate them about the world of percussion sounds. "We were delighted to join forces with the Percussion Marketing Council last year," Hunt says. "The funding provided by the PMC made it possible

for us to go into schools that would not otherwise have been able to afford it.

"Although we are equally comfortable with elementary, middle school, high school, and adult audiences," Hunt continues, "performing for young audiences is one of the most rewarding things we do. From the ancient sounds of Australia and Africa to the recycled sounds of the 'kitchen samba' to the modern sounds of the steel drum and electronics, the APT covers the gamut of 'sound opportunities.'"

The PMC is always looking for new performers to add to its roster. "We do an initial screening," Dustman says. "Who are they? Have they done these types of general assemblies before? Giving a drum clinic is a lot different from being in front of 700 fifth graders. We've found that sometimes the best clinicians are not necessarily able to perform in the chaos of an elementary, junior high, or high school environment.

"Part of the screening process is to determine the potential success and marketability. If an artist comes to us and asks us for bookings, the answer is a cordial no, because we're not a booking agent. But if someone like Jeff Mozingo of Mozingo's Music in St. Louis asks us to work with him because he knows all the schools in the area, then we'll work with him.

"This project is growing faster than we ever dreamed. We started with only twelve of these concerts in 2007, and it's spreading like wildfire across the country. Schools are finding out about it and asking us who's available in their area. Artists are finding out that they can make some decent money, so they're approaching us about becoming professional facilitators. The other element of this program is that Percussion in the Schools is funded in part by our NAMM grant. Therefore, we ship a care package of the NAMM 'Wanna Play' literature to every one of these concerts. It's important to keep music alive in the schools."

## CELEBRITY CONCERTS

The success of the Percussion in the Schools program spawned a variation on the school concert where one school would win a performance by an internationally known celebrity drummer instead of a PMC-approved percussionist. "This was the brainchild of the executive committee last year, when we wanted to increase the national awareness of the PMC and

the Percussion in the Schools program," Dustman says. "Through one of our officers, Brad Smith, we were able to tap the resources of getting his brother, Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith, to be our poster person.

"We went on a yearlong media blitz, inviting online nominations from any music retail dealer of a suitable school to host Chad Smith. We had hundreds of dealers nominate their local school. They had to send an email telling us, in 300 words or fewer, why their school should host a Chad Smith concert. The winning nomination came from Vincent Nemeth, owner of U Rock Music Center in McMurray, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. The school that won is Peters Township High School in McMurray.

"I called the board of education to discuss this with them, and they were all for it. We flew Chad to McMurray, and on November 16, 2010, he performed in front of 1,500 screaming high-schoolers for an hour and a half. We even provided a master class for all school-district percussionists—middle school through high school—to meet and play with Chad and Zig Wajler, who assisted in the event."

U Rock's Vincent Nemeth remembers working with the PMC. "They are a completely professional and committed organization," he says. "Karl, along with all the members and organizers of this event, really outdid himself in putting it together. Chad Smith was amazing, of course, as was Zig.

"I am still seeing the benefits of the exposure that this event provided," Nemeth continues. "As the owner of a small business, getting to work with some really outstanding people through the PMC has been inspiring to me and my staff. Not to mention that I still hear from students and teachers at Peters High School about how much of an impact this event had on them."

"We had a terrific experience with Chad and Zig," recalls Milt Barney, band director at Peters. "They inspired the students and really made an impact in terms of being dedicated to hard work. Students greatly appreciated their taking the time to visit the school and teach a variety of musical ideas via percussion. And they shared life lessons that we know will stay with the students for the rest of their lives as they reflect on the event and clinics.

"We loved hosting the event," Barney adds with a smile. "We'd do it *anytime*."

Unlike regular Percussion in the Schools concerts, where the institution and the PMC each pays half, the Celebrity Concert was completely paid for by the PMC, using part of its grant money from NAMM. "I think we'll keep it going," Dustman predicts. "For the 2012 concert, we'll contact our members to see which nationally recognized artists are available and would like to be involved in the Celebrity Concert."

## ROOTS OF RHYTHM

Not all schools can win a Celebrity Concert, or even afford to bring in a percussion concert, to expose their students to the benefits of drumming. So the PMC is helping music educators learn other ways to incorporate percussion into lesson plans throughout the curriculum, in a professional-development-type setting, which has spread to nine states (Texas, California, Connecticut, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada, Illinois, and Indiana) and six foreign countries (Scotland, Germany, Egypt, Syria, Indonesia, and Iraq).

"The PMC commissioned Dr. Craig Woodson to create a sixteen-chapter curriculum for us," Dustman says. "It connects all basic academic subjects while weaving in music making and rhythm appreciation. This free online Roots of Rhythm curriculum can be used by schoolteachers at any grade level, whether they are music teachers or not."

The workshops, usually two to

five days in length, are free for the teachers, although they have to pay a small materials fee (\$25 to \$35) to cover the cost of instrument making and printed materials. In some cases, college credit is available through Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio. Taught mainly by the Cleveland-based Woodson—a percussionist, music educator, and consultant in the percussion industry for over four decades who has two graduate degrees from UCLA—the workshop combines education, ethnomusicology, and simple percussion instrument design to increase the number of music makers as well as bolster their appreciation of world music.

"Music teachers love it," Dustman says. "But where the music programs have been eliminated from schools, there are geography and history teachers coming to Roots of Rhythm classes to try to make their classes more interesting by finding different ways to engage their students. It's a lot more appealing to hear, 'Tomorrow we're going to talk about the music of Iraq.' Students get excited when they hear the word *music*."

"There are connections between academic subjects—math, science, languages, and social studies—that can be tied together through teaching about drumming and music making. Since 2004, we've had more than 3,000 teachers attend these workshops, which has exposed the curriculum to more than 1.5 million students."

The PMC conducts five or six of these teacher-training workshops each year, funded in part by a NAMM grant. "Last year we had a Roots of Rhythm session at the Los Angeles Unified Public School District," Dustman says. "About 250 fine-arts teachers attended the workshop. They got a complete snapshot of the entire program so they could go back on Monday morning and implement what they'd learned directly into their classroom. It's not one of these 'Someday I'll be able to do this' or 'Next summer I have to take part two in order to use this' things. You walk out of the workshop knowing enough about where bongos came from, how snare drums are designed, and when the first use of kettle drums occurred to apply it to lessons right away."

The 2011-12 calendar of workshops includes locations in Indianapolis, Indiana (November 12-13); Columbus, Ohio (December dates to be announced); Chicago, Illinois, in conjunction

with the Merit School of Music (January dates to be announced); Los Angeles, California, at the Skirball Cultural Center (March 24); Tempe, Arizona, at the Arizona State University Music Therapy Center (April 13-15); and Cleveland, Ohio (June 25-29). Other potential sites include Florida, Oregon, and Washington. For complete details on the classes, visit [rootsofrhythm.net](http://rootsofrhythm.net).

"One high point of the program's being so well accepted is that Dr. Woodson was invited to go to Glasgow, Scotland, earlier this year," Dustman says. "He conducted workshops over there, reinforcing our international program. Teachers in Scotland are now using Roots of Rhythm in their public schools. That's a great accomplishment for us."

## FREE DRUM LESSON

### LAB TENTS ON

### THE VANS WARPED TOUR

This past summer, for the second year in a row, the PMC sponsored free drum lessons for concertgoers attending select Vans Warped Tour venues. The Warped Tour—sponsored by the BMX/skateboarding shoe manufacturer Vans—featured bands playing music from punk rock to reggae to hip-hop, along with an extreme sports festival. PMC marketing event chairperson Billy Cuthrell coordinated the project.

Cuthrell, who founded Progressive Percussion Drum Studios in Greenville, North Carolina, in 1992, expanded his business into a full-scale music education facility with locations in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. The renamed Progressive Music Center offers lessons in guitar, bass guitar, piano/keyboard, and voice in addition to drums and percussion. Known for its innovative Rock School concept, begun in 1994—placing drum and percussion students with guitar, bass, vocal, and piano students—the Progressive Music Center was one of the leading forces in bringing the "free trial lesson" concept to the PMC.

"We built on the success of the 2010 tour," Cuthrell explains, "by continuing our outreach programs in the youth market by partnering with local drum retailers at seven Vans Warped Tour stops, including ones in California, Milwaukee, Chicago, Texas, and Boston. We had high visibility by providing a free five-minute lesson to any con-

cert attendee who was interested in learning to play. While we are still tabulating the final figures, we anticipate well over 600 lessons given. This is a huge market for the PMC, and it puts our member firms in front of thousands of spectators and potential drummers and customers, while allowing the local participating percussion retailer a free opportunity to get involved locally and 'drum up new business' at the Vans concerts."

"PMC officer Brad Smith, who lives in Milwaukee, oversaw the event at the Marcus Amphitheatre on July 19, 2011," Dustman adds. "He connected with a local retailer that has an active teaching program—White House of Music of Waukesha, Wisconsin—and was willing to conduct the free drum lessons at the Vans Warped Tour site. We provided the tent, which has all the graphics on it, including banners with all the PMC members' logos. There's also a big banner that says, 'Get Your Free Drum Lesson Here.' The retailer provides an acoustic kit and an electronic kit, along with a teacher from the store who gives five- to ten-minute drum lessons all day long. It gets the kids excited about drums and drumming. The teacher hands out 500 business cards and recruits business for the store. Each student also completes a consumer survey, and we're still tabulating those results. But everyone who hosted one of these events wants to be assured they can do it again next year. The proof is that no one said it was a waste of time, money, or effort."

Play Drums Lesson Labs are a variation on this same program, only instead of being held as part of the Warped Tour, the lessons are in conjunction with a community happening, like an after-school Boys or Girls Club function or a recreational music event. "It's the same idea of creating interest in the masses to learn about drums," Dustman says. "We have a template program for how to conduct five-minute sample drum lessons on a drumkit or with hand drumming. We provide the press release, and they just put in the hosting dealer's name or the community event. The PMC provides the sign-up sheets, the certificates of completion, and the educational how-to handouts on elementary lessons for drumsets or hand drumming. Plus we provide a \$250 honorarium for the teacher who conducts the daylong lessons."

## WINNING ENTRY FOR THE PMC'S 2010 CELEBRITY CONCERT WITH CHAD SMITH

Hello from U Rock Music Center,  
I just wanted to drop a short note as an entry for the Chad Smith clinic.

I won't be sappy here with my entry. In short I really need this to happen. I am a new business here adjacent to the local Peters Township area high school, twenty-five miles outside the city of Pittsburgh, PA.

With the state of the economy today, for a new business, it is hard. I have put everything I have into this business for the kids. I want it more for them than for me, but this is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

The school's population is approx. 1,458. The local contact at the school and the bandleader is Milton Barney.

Thank you for accepting my submission.

Sincerely,  
Vincent A. Nemeth  
U Rock Music Center  
[urockpgh.net](http://urockpgh.net)

## INTERNATIONAL DRUM MONTH

The PMC's first campaign, International Drum Month, is still going strong. Once again this November, the PMC asks the public, "Got drumsticks?" Last year's campaign connected more than 500 beginners directly with retailers, and 2011 promises an even bigger impact.

"This year we again have a coupon directed toward consumers," Dustman says. "It's running in music and non-music magazines. The coupon will offer the consumer a Beginners Pack, consisting of a pair of sticks and a DVD or instruction book, at no charge. Members of the PMC provide all the products. In order to qualify, the consumer must take the PMC coupon, which is downloadable from our website in addition to being in magazines, to any retailer, get it signed, and request the store's business card. That card is then stapled to the coupon and mailed to the PMC. We will then send out the sticks and book or DVD."

Similar ads directed to the percussion retailer will ask, "Sell drum stuff?" These will appear simultane-

ously in music trade publications, informing retailers about the campaign as well as the opportunity to bring potential new customers into their stores for the first time.

"For example," Dustman explains, "all the PMC members who manufacture drumsticks—Pro-Mark, Los Cabos, Vater, and Zildjian—supply us with suitable beginner models in enough quantities to support the program. Then all of the members who have books or DVDs—like Alfred, Hal Leonard, and Hudson Music—donate those. We would expect to at least duplicate and go beyond the 500 consumer coupons we received last year. There are so many scams out there that offer something for nothing, but this is actually a first-line set of sticks—no seconds—and probably a \$19.95 DVD or a \$24.95 book with a CD.

"The coupon is public domain for anyone and everyone, and it's good until December 31. If a store wants to duplicate it and distribute it to walk-in customers, it can do that. One of the salespeople can ask if new customers want a free pair of sticks and a book. If so, the store can give out the coupon with its business card already attached. This



Retailer and dealer ads for International Drum Month

promotion is something truly educational for beginners."

## LOOKING AHEAD

The Percussion Marketing Council is stronger and more active than ever. With multiple programs promoting percussion throughout the year, the organization continues to add new members. "If you looked at our membership ten years ago, it was very small," Dustman says. "But International Drum Month lit the fuse. We've assembled more than

three dozen member companies that don't compare the size of their company or respective logos with each other. They're focused on creating more drummers. If we can make the pie bigger, they'll get their piece of it. That's the common denominator of synergy that connects all of our membership."

For more info on joining the PMC, or for more details on any of its programs, visit [playdrums.com](http://playdrums.com).

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