

Ontario Chapter Newsletter



Fall 2017

<http://community.pas.org/Ontario>

Message From The President

Hello Everyone and Happy Fall!

I am extremely honoured and excited to serve as your new Chapter President! Thank you to our former president, Nick Papador for all of the hard work and time you put into our chapter. We are grateful for your leadership and dedication!

I would like to introduce myself to those of you who I do not know yet. I am originally from Iowa and was raised in a musical family. I went to the University of Iowa for Music Education and then moved to Canada in 2007 to pursue my Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees at the University of Toronto with Russell Hartenberger, Beverley Johnston and John Rudolph. Since graduating in 2013, I initiated the University of Toronto Percussion Preparatory Department. I also teach percussion and steel pan at the Royal Conservatory and recently accepted a position with the Toronto District School Board as an Itinerant Music Instructor for Steel Pan. I enjoy performing with ensembles such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Esprit Orchestra, Soundstreams, Evergreen Gamelan, as well as Oregano Percussion with my husband, Alejandro Céspedes.

I hope we can all see each other at the Day of Percussion (DOP) 2018! **Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 8th at Western University.** We are drumming up some great ideas for artists and clinicians that you will not want to miss! There will also be a solo competition this year for high school and undergraduate percussionists/drummers. Applicants will submit a video (under 5 minutes) by

January 10th. The application fee will include a one year membership to PAS, and the winner will have the opportunity to be a featured soloist at the DOP on April 8th; be featured in an OPAS newsletter; and will also win a free cymbal! This competition will be a great way to encourage more students and emerging artists to get involved and see the value and importance of PAS and our percussion community. Spread the word to students, parents, music teachers, and stay tuned for more details.

The Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) was held in Indianapolis on Nov 8-11, 2017. It was a huge success as always! There was a lot of Canadian representation including Aiyun Huang, Ray Dillard, Bob Becker, Architek Percussion, Shawn Mativetsky, Fabrice Marandola, as well as booths from Dream Cymbals and Gongs and the University of Toronto. Adam Mason (Alberta Chapter President) organized the annual Canadian Breakfast, which united percussionists from across the country!

I look forward to leading the Ontario Chapter and supporting all of you!

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Michelle Colton

University of Toronto, Percussion
Preparatory Department Director
Royal Conservatory of Music,
Percussion and Steel Pan Instructor
Toronto District School Board,
Itinerant Steel Pan and Band Instructor



Construction on the Coast

Reflections on the TorQ Percussion Seminar 2017 By Yang Chen

This past July, I had the opportunity to attend the TorQ Percussion Seminar held in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Each year the TorQ Percussion Quartet hosts an intensive percussion seminar for university-level students alternating locations every year between Stratford, Ontario and Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Over the course of the seminar, the participants work closely with TorQ to prepare several percussion ensemble pieces for the final concert at the end of the week. Repertoire from this year's closing concert included John Cage's "Third Construction" and Dinuk Wjeratne's "Ersilia", a movement from Invisible Cities, a percussion concerto commissioned by TorQ. Due to the difficulty of the repertoire and short time frame, each day included up to four hours of rehearsal on top of lectures and masterclasses. I found that the challenge of intensely rehearsing and performing difficult repertoire over a very short period of time promoted exponential musical and personal growth.

In addition to the final concert, the TPS participants also perform alongside TorQ in one or two casual outdoor concerts. This year's "outdoor" concert was held at the Lunenburg Fisheries Museum and was comprised of several improvisation based game pieces. Some of the pieces were suggested by TorQ while others were composed by the TPS participants. TorQ's approach to these concerts centres heavily on collaboration as they encourage the participants to explore their own musical ideas and suggestions for curating the show. Past concerts have featured Terry Riley's "In C" on a barge floating on the Avon River and an Inuksuit style performance on an island at sunrise. This past summer was my third time attending TPS and I have always looked forward to what the outdoor concert would entail. Collaborating closely with TorQ to create a show, premiering your first game-piece composition at a fishing museum, and learning the careful art of playing glockenspiel in a canoe are unique experiences typically not found at music school.



(L to R): Yang Chen & She-e Wu

In addition to working closely with TorQ, participants have the opportunity to work with acclaimed guest faculty members who differ from year to year. Past guest faculty members include Nebojsa Zivkovic, Ken Shorley, Beverley Johnston, and Christos Hatzis. This year's guest faculty member was She-e Wu, professor of percussion at Northwestern University and internationally renowned soloist. She gave a series of lectures on various topics including her approach to learning music and exploration of musicality. In addition, all the participants were invited to play for her in a masterclass. I can say with confidence that her musical insight and expansive knowledge of marimba literature and performance practice was impactful and invaluable for all of the

participants. In one of the masterclasses, I played “Time for Marimba” by Minoru Miki. Her detailed and thorough knowledge of the piece greatly altered my approach and conception of the music. I was also astounded by her performances of Bach on marimba and her own composition “Blue Identity”, a marimba feature with percussion quartet accompaniment.



(L to R): Prof. She-e Wu, Zoe Stratt, Alec Bloch, Yang Chen, Max Lindsay & Danielle Sum

Despite the musical intensiveness of the week, the wonderful folks at LAMP made sure that we were given the opportunity to experience the beauty of Lunenburg. One of the highlights of the week was a boating trip sponsored by LAMP (Lunenburg Academy of Music Performance) for the TPS participants, TorQ, and other LAMP artists. We sailed along the coast and were treated to a view of the glittering pyrite laden cliffs. The sun was just starting to set as we pulled back into the harbour. Needless to say, the view was breathtaking. Sailing around Lunenburg was a refreshing respite from the long jam-packed days at the seminar. The trip ended with a visit to the local ice cream shop, leaving us relaxed and invigorated for the upcoming concerts.

I would highly recommend attending TPS to any university level percussionists. TorQ and their guest faculty provide invaluable musical and professional advice year after year. The experience of putting together difficult chamber repertoire in a limited time is a challenging but rewarding one. The most enjoyable aspect of TPS for me is the connections and friendships formed among the participants. Comradery and great chamber playing are complementary and emphasis is placed on both at TPS. Information on the TorQ Percussion Seminar can be found at: <http://www.torqpercussion.ca/tps>

Welcome to the TSO, Charles Settle

By John Rudolph, Member of the TSO since 1997

Charles Settle is the new principal percussionist of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Charles brings a wealth of experience to his new job. He was a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra from 2004-2017 where he served as acting Principal Percussion since 2015. Charles also performed as assistant timpanist and percussionist with the New York Philharmonic for one season. Charles studied at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan and was a member of the New World Symphony in Miami, Florida before joining the Atlanta Symphony. He is a founding member of the Modern Snare Drum Competition which celebrated its 10th anniversary in Cleveland, Ohio in May 2017.

The audition process leading to his TSO appointment consisted of several steps. It began with Charles' success as a finalist in auditions for the TSO assistant timpanist position, followed by several trial weeks as principal percussion with the orchestra. These included playing bass drum in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and Mahler's *Symphony #3*. Charles performed with the TSO in our recent European tour, performing the famous snare drum parts in Bartok *Concerto for Orchestra* and Rimsky Korsakov *Scheherazade*.

I have been most impressed with Charles' leadership and vision as principal percussion. In addition to his obvious performing experience, Charles brings a wonderful collection of instruments to the TSO. His splendid cymbal collection has given a new dimension to the sound of the orchestra. I was excited to play a pair of his old K Zildjian's in our recent performances of Mahler's *Song of the Earth*, which perfectly suited the piece.



(Left to Right) John Rudolph, Charles Settle

Charles is bringing a special concept of unified sound to the TSO percussion section. Asking us to pay close attention to musical details, sound production and be consistent with the instruments we use. We spent a week this past summer organizing the backstage percussion area, so that our extra players know where to find everything from bass drum mallets to brake drums.

Charles also leads with the excellence of his playing. I have been impressed with his interpretations of the standard orchestral repertoire. I remember hearing him play glockenspiel in Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and he brought a wonderfully nuanced interpretation of the glockenspiel part. We performed Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* recently, and Charles played the xylophone part with phrasing and direction seldom heard in that famous excerpt. His sound and control on snare drum is famous among percussionists all over North America and especially inspiring to me.

The projection and tuning of his snare drum is suited to whatever concert hall we happen to be playing in. Charles recently tucked a calf head for my field drum, bringing new life to an old instrument. A devoted teacher, Charles is percussion coach for the TSYO and is on the faculty of the Glenn Gould School. I feel very fortunate and blessed to have a wonderful new colleague and friend who inspires me every time I walk onstage.

Aiyun Huang @ U of T

By Beverley Johnston

Congratulations to Professor Aiyun Huang who has been appointed head of percussion at the University of Toronto. Her appointment as Associate Professor began on July 1st, 2017. She is succeeding Dr. Russell Hartenberger who retired in 2016. Russell was the head of the department for 42 years and in the spring of 2016 we had a wonderful retirement concert/celebration in his honour. The well-attended event took place in Walter Hall at the Edward Johnson Building. Many of the audience members were former students along with colleagues from near and far! In the 2016/17 academic year, I had the honour of being the interim head of percussion whilst the search for the new head was in progress.

I have known Aiyun since she was an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto in the early '90's. Russell invited me to one of her undergraduate recitals and I was immediately impressed with her innate musicality, natural flowing sound on the marimba and, through the years, her ability to absorb and perform a large amount of repertoire with ease. It has been interesting to see how she has honed her craft...developed her love for music theatre, teaching, performing, research and organizing/producing percussion-centric concerts and festivals. She definitely has the ability to successfully 'wear many hats' in the percussion field! Formerly the Chair of Percussion at McGill University (for eleven years) Aiyun's



understanding of running a percussion studio is already paying dividends at the U of Toronto. Already the University of Toronto Percussion Ensemble has performed a stellar concert on October 22nd 2017 in a concert titled "Percussion at Canada 150" which included works by John Wyre, Andrew Staniland, Vivian Fung, Michael Oesterle and Zosha de Castri. In November, Aiyun was the host of the 2017 PASIC Focus Day entitled "Percussion Works Since 2000".

The University of Toronto Percussion Department prides itself in its diversity of knowledge, performance practices and musicianship. We encourage students to take part in all the performance opportunities available... from contemporary music ensembles, to classical and world music. We are pleased that Aiyun Huang will be guiding the department into future exciting endeavours in such a nurturing environment!

For interest in applying to the University of Toronto as a percussion student please go to the following website:

<https://music.utoronto.ca>

For more information on Aiyun Huang please visit her website at www.aiyunhuang.com

Concert at University of Toronto: "Bev @ 60!"

Thursday, January 11, 2018 (12 noon)

Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queens Park, Toronto

Marimba Recital with special guest Marc Djokic, violin and members of TorQ Percussion Ensemble

Program includes music by Christos Hatzis, Alice Ho, Dinuk Wijeratne.

FREE Admission

More information and performance schedule at: www.beverleyjohnston.com

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