



Seattle Rhythm Festival

Seattle Center

July 15, 2006

By Raan Rowley

The Seattle Rhythm Festival, sponsored by the Seattle World Percussion Society, is the creation of a grassroots team of organizers from the Seattle drum and dance community. The program will reflect the diversity and richness of the Seattle drum and dance community, and will underscore the Festival theme, "Community Through Collaboration."

8 performances • 18 workshops • Dance party

- Thione Diop
- Arturo Rodriguez
- Tor Dietrichson
- Johnny Conga
- VamoLá
- Many others!

The Seattle Rhythm Festival is being organized by a terrific all-volunteer team who are having a good time planning and playing together. The team formed a drumming ensemble and played for fairgoers at the University Street Fair to raise awareness and money for the Seattle Rhythm Festival. Kudos to:

- Eric Wilson, Festival Coordinator
- Chris Nielsen, webmaster and Eric's all-around right-hand man
- Mary Jo Pellerito, fundraiser, secretary, and Eric's other right hand
- Raan Marie Rowley, writer, publicist, and web editor
- David Chaus, programming coordinator
- Don Baker, graphic designer
- Rob Campbell, vendor liaison.

Join the fun. If you would like to play a part in the Festival, you can learn more at www.swps.org/SRF2006. We hope this will be just the first of many SWPS-sponsored, volunteer-powered events!

Seattle Drum & Dance Resources

Want more drumming & dance in your life? The Seattle area is full of opportunities to pursue drumming and dancing of many traditions and styles.

For general information about classes, drum circles, and events:

- Check out www.swps.org, and join the SWPS mailing list from the Support SWPS page.
- Join the Seattle-Drum-Jams email group by sending a blank email to Seattle-drum-jams-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.
- For a good overview of the drum and dance scene in Seattle, visit www.larryswanson.com/drum-and-dance-Seattle.htm.

Links to some of the teachers and facilitators featured at the NW Folklife Rhythm Tent:

- Ibrahima Camara www.ibrahima.homestead.com
- Edward Mulhern www.CommunityRhythmJams.com
- Matt Dressler www.mattdressler.com
- Eric Wilborn www.nwproject.com
- Gary Cohen garycohen54@yahoo.com
- Thione Diop www.thionediop.com
- Souleymane N'Diaye www.souleymane.com
- Erik Brown www.doumbec-drum.com
- Saeed Abbas gyenyamemusic@hotmail.com
- Geoff Johns www.rhythmjoy.com
- Kerry "Shakerman" Greene www.shakerman.com
- Eduardo Mendoca www.showbrazil.com
- Simone LaDrumma www.ladrumma.com
- Jamtown John Hayden www.jamtown.com
- Rosalie Brown-Lundh www.rhythmround.com



www.swps.org

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SWPS is a 501(c)3 corporation.

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Seattle World Beats

Spring, 2006

Newsletter of the Seattle World Percussion Society

A Brief History of the World Rhythm Festival

By Simone LaDrumma

Back in the Spring of 1992, I interviewed John Avinger, owner of John's Music Store – at the time the premier purveyor of hand drums in Seattle – about an idea he had: A big, free music festival to take place every year in Seattle featuring a really big drum circle. John had been inspired by another big drum circle – the brain child of Mickey Hart, famous Grateful Dead drummer – that took place in California earlier that year. Its purpose was to raise awareness of the therapeutic effects of drumming. John had gone there just to see what happened when you gathered a few hundred drummers in one big room, and got them all drumming together. He saw that it worked, because beating loudly inside the circle were several huge drums (called surdus) played by some very famous drummers (including Sheila E., Airto, Carlos Santana and Hart), and facilitated by a human tornado, a drum teacher from Santa Cruz named Arthur Hull.

2007 World Rhythm Festival

April 13 - 15, 2007

Seattle Center

At the time, there was a smallish annual event that happened at a local Seattle community college every April called Days of Percussion. Sponsored by the Percussive Arts Society, it attracted perhaps a couple of hundred people to its performances and workshops (with an emphasis on drum set) over the course of a weekend. John's idea was to expand that.

WRF History, continued

“We can try it next April when we do our drum festival. We don’t really have to have any special person come up to do it. I’ve seen how you do it—you set it up right, you get your good drummers to lead it... You can do it with 300, 400, 500... an extension of what they did [in California], but it’s more, really, because theirs was a one-shot deal... a big drum circle and boom, it’s over. But we’re in Seattle and in Seattle we do festivals, right? So we’re going to do a festival—it’s like Folklife, a minimum of a week-end, maybe 3 days. . . we’ll have performances, workshops, clinics, drum circles, led jams. . . the more the merrier...”

And so it was in the Spring of 1993 that the very first “Seattle World Rhythm Festival” blew into the Seattle Center. It attracted a few hundred people and featured a drum circle led by none other than Arthur Hull. John Avinger was its Executive Director and would remain so for the next eleven years.

Since that time, the springtime World Rhythm Festival has grown to attract thousands of people from all over to the Seattle Center for what many believe is the world’s largest free participatory festival featuring workshops and performances of percussive traditions from around the globe. Many famous musicians have starred over the years, including the great Babatunde Olatunji, frame drum virtuoso Glen Velez, internationally renowned Brazilian percussionist Airtó, conga drummer Carolyn Brandy, body percussionist Keith Terry, Pepe Danza of Uruguay, Vishal Nagar of India, plus Middle Eastern, Japanese, Native American and Alaskan drummers, dancers from Africa and Cuba, and many others. Featuring over 60 free workshops and more than 30 free performances, plus jams all over the Center grounds and a marketplace featuring great deals on drums and accessories, the World Rhythm Festival has been called “a Folklife for drummers.”

In 2007, the World Rhythm Festival will once again offer dozens of opportunities to drum and dance in a variety of traditions and settings. Mark your calendar:

April 13 - 15, 2007!

SWPS and the World Rhythm Festival are *Participant-Driven!*

One of the most amazing things about SWPS and the World Rhythm Festival is that we are almost entirely volunteer, participant-driven. With no paid staff, our work is powered by our love of world music, drumming and dancing, and our desire to see Seattle’s drum and dance scene thrive even more.

We need your help!

SWPS and the World Rhythm Festival will grow and flourish with your help. You can work with other fun, dedicated folks, bringing your talents to help create something very special. Help spread the joys of drumming and dance!

To volunteer in any of the following areas, speak to a SWPS representative, or go to the Support SWPS or Contact SWPS pages of our website. Thank you!

World Rhythm Festival 2007 Organizing Team

- Program Planning & Artist Relations
- Publications and Publicity
- Location & Facilities Logistics
- Volunteer Coordination
- Day-of-Festival Volunteers

SWPS Organization

- Board of Directors
- Membership Programs & Communication
- Website Support
- Funding Development & Grant Writing
- Bookkeeping & Administration

SWPS Membership

The Seattle World Percussion Society is a grassroots, community-based organization dedicated to encouraging the flourishing of world music, drumming and dance in Seattle.

Join SWPS!

Your membership support for SWPS helps increase outreach and networking capacity to help spread the word about the many exciting events happening in the Seattle area.

Basic: \$15

- E-newsletter
- 1 SWPS Ticket
(for special offers from local service providers)

Sustaining: \$40

Family Sustaining: \$75 (double benefits)

- E-newsletter
- 3 SWPS Tickets
- Choice of vintage WRF t-shirt (mailed) as long as supplies last
- Eligible to use SWPS Drum Kit
(see swps.org)

Enterprise (New!):

SWPS can help grow your business! If you are a Drum or dance teacher, leaders of a performance group, rhythm event promoter or facilitator, instrument maker or retailer, venue manager, or professional service provider to members of the drum and dance community, contact mary@swps.org for information about the SWPS Enterprise Membership program.