

KALEIDOSCOPE

Section
C

Patricia Watts, Features Editor; 459-7510

Thursday, October 29, 1998

WOOD VIBRATIONS

Percussion is Toronto group's beat

By DEBBIE CARTER
Staff Writer

The word "hexus" dates back to the ancient Romans and means "a connection or tie between the members of a group or series."

Music from percussion instruments—hundreds of them—forms the connection among the five members of Nexus.

It's been a strong connection. Nexus, whose members play everything from conch shells and gongs to war horns from New Guinea, have been together for 27 years.

"Longer than a lot of marriages," noted Russell Hartenberger in a telephone interview from Toronto.

Hartenberger also credits the longevity of the Toronto-based percussion ensemble to the long-running friendships of its members and a shared joy in performance.

Nexus is "all about five guys doing what they want," he said. "If we weren't having fun, we wouldn't be doing it."

Hartenberger, like all of the members of Nexus, was trained classically, but he wanted to be more than a symphony percussionist providing tone color. He wanted to be the essential ingredient.

"I was tired of counting rests and I love to play," he said.

In graduate school, Hartenberger discovered what he calls a whole other world of music. He studied the Indian mridangam (drum) and tabla, the Javanese

gamelan and West African drumming.

"In African music, all it is, is percussion," he said.



QUIRKY QUINTET—The members of Nexus admit to collecting and performing on an odd assortment of percussion instruments.

His friend, John Wyre, was also interested in international music and began collecting exotic percussion instruments—like bells and gongs—from Asia.

Wyre mounted them on a rack at his home, and Hartenberger, Bill Cahn, Robin Engelman and Bob Becker would come to his house and jam.

No music existed for their odd assortment of instruments so they made up their own. Nexus first played together as a group at the Eastman School of Music in 1971, and has made music ever since.

They perform by themselves, or with other dance and symphonic groups worldwide—and have made numerous appearances at Carnegie Hall.

Eventually, all of the members of Nexus started collecting offbeat percussion instruments. A typical performance involves hundreds of them. They generally travel with a truckload, said Hartenberger.

They'll be traveling light when they come to Fairbanks this week. Hartenberger said the group would probably only bring 30 to 40 instruments—and borrow others here.

They play at Hering Auditorium Friday at 8 p.m. as part of the Fairbanks Concert Association series. The following day, members will teach African drumming and xylophone.

See NEXUS, Page C-2



Sam Hamel/News-Miner

SOUNDING OFF—Suzi Lozo plays the steel drums during the University of Alaska Fairbanks Steel Drum Ensemble practice Oct. 19.

A day of different drummers

By DEBBIE CARTER
Staff Writer

Percussionists from all over the state will mark time Saturday in Fairbanks as part of the university's Third Annual Alaska Day of Percussion.

The featured performers and clinicians are members of Nexus, who will teach workshops in African drumming and xylophone.

Various percussion groups will perform and have a chance to hear each other, said organizer Scott Deal, who teaches percussion at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Registration at 9:30 a.m. will be followed by a Nexus world-drumming workshop at 10 a.m. and a xylophone

workshop from 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. All events will be in the Davis Concert Hall.

Opus 7, a group of area high-school students, will perform at 2:15 p.m., followed by the John Damborg Latin Jazz Sextet at 3:15 p.m., and at 4:30 p.m., the UAF Percussion, World Beat and Steel Drum ensembles.

The 4:30 p.m. concert is geared toward children, said Deal, and will include demonstrations of percussion instruments. As part of that concert, the UAF Percussion Ensemble will perform an adaptation of the Maurice Sendak book, "Where the Wild Things Are."

Children are invited to bring toy per-

ussion instruments, drums or anything they can make noise with, said Deal. Performers will act out the story, and children will be asked to play along when the character Max utters those famous words, "Let the wild rumpus begin."

The public is invited to attend all these concerts. The cost for the day's events will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. The cost for the UAF Percussion Ensemble Concert alone will be \$5 for adults and children under 12 are free.

The percussion day event, which began in 1996, rotates annually between Fairbanks and Anchorage campuses.

Halloween comedy to haunt UAF

Director Thomas Riccio gives the short version of Theatre UAF's second production of the season: "It is a psycho-drama experimental comedy about the weirdness that exists between a man and woman in a relationship."

"70 Scenes of Halloween" opens on an Oct. 31 night when the spirits are walking. Joan and Jeff, married for nine years, living in middle-income, middle-America and heading for middle age, have a relationship, like most, colored by habits, tensions, affections, irritants and comforts. As the trick-or-treaters ring their bell and the night descends, the couple journeys into the dark side of their marriage. Beneath the living room setting and polite household pleasantries lurk the ghosts, witches, and beasts that inhabit the flip side of their everyday reality.

"Little do they know that beasts and ghosts that exist between their relationship will also emerge that night," said Riccio. "At its most essential, that is what the play is about.

The dark side of a relationship. Those thoughts, irritations, desires, frustrations and images too violent and frightening for everyday living and society, come out and do their thing. Joan and Jeff, the young couple wrestle with their ghosts, beasts and witches, just like all of us have to do."

Riccio sees this production as a nice departure after having last directed the opera, "Magic Flute" for UAF, and "Pipedreams" for the Fairbanks Drama Association.

"I worked very hard on those projects. This play is simpler, a small cast, realistic setting, and very interesting dramaturgy," he said. "It is not built like any play I have ever seen before, and that intrigues me a great deal. There are 70 scenes, some no more than fragments, flashes of a life. Some are repetitions of the same scene with variations—like life sometimes is—and making so many scenes work is a real challenge."

Like modern America, the

See SCENES, Page C-2



HAUNTING SPECTACLE—Jeff (Brett Good) is surrounded by the ghosts of his marriage in a scene from Theatre UAF's "70 Scenes of Halloween," opening tonight.

Multi-talented Jon b finds his niche

It is not so surprising that at the age of 21 Jon b is a rising musical star, or that he is not only a singer but a songwriter and producer who also plays keyboard, drums and bass. After all, his father is a professor of music, his mother a concert pianist, his sister a violinist and his brother a cellist. And his grandparents owned a record store, which exposed him early on to all kinds of different sounds.

The soul/hip-hop vocalist will perform an all-ages show at the Carlson Center Friday at 8 p.m.

Having written and co-written songs for Toni Braxton, After 7 and Color Me Bad, he recently debuted his second album, "Cool Relax," with his own style of music.

"My first album helped me find my own style and my own voice," Jon said. "Now I've found my niche and the new music reflects it."

His sound has been described as a bridge between the cool swing of '70s soul and the hip edge of '90s rap/pop.

Looking to his musical growth but recognizing the influence of great old artists such as Donnie Hathaway and Marvin Gaye, Jon said, "I hope my songs speak to people as individuals, and I hope they speak universally as well."

Tickets for Friday's show are \$22 and up, and are available at Carrs Tix outlets, Hott's Music and the Carlson Center Box Office, or call 1-800-478-7328.



JON b

Phillips joins bluegrass band for local concerts

By DEBBIE CARTER
Staff Writer

Stacy Phillips joining Northern River for two bluegrass concerts this weekend is the equivalent of a Arnold Palmer teeing it up with some local golfers.

Or so says Carl Hoffman, the guitarist, lead vocalist and unofficial manager of the Fairbanks-based bluegrass band.

"Stacy is one of the movers and shakers in the world of music," said Hoffman.

Phillips, an internationally known fiddler and dobro artist, will join the four-member band at Ivory Jack's for concerts at 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Phillips will also accompany Northern River next week when it tours Southeast for concerts in Cordova, Sitka, Ketchikan and Petersburg.

This will be the third collaboration between Phillips and Northern River, but the roots of the association go back almost 30 years, when Hoffman and Phillips played together as part of the Pine Hill Ramblers in New Jersey and New York.

Hoffman moved the bluegrass band to Fairbanks in the 1970s and contracted with Alyeska to play music in pipeline camps.

Phillips went his musical way. He has recorded with a number of contemporary artists, including Judy Collins, David Bromberg, Leon Redbone and Peter Rowan. He was featured on the album, "The Great Dobro Sessions," which won a Grammy Award in 1995. (The dobro is an acoustic, slide guitar played on the lap.)

Almost 27 years after Phillips and Hoffman parted company, a chance event brought them together again in 1996. Phillips was scheduled to play a gig at Hatcher Pass and asked an Anchorage promoter about a bluegrass musician he used to know who had moved to Alaska. Did he know Carl Hoffman?

Hoffman and Northern River were more than happy to play as Phillips' backup band at Hatcher Pass.

"It clicked really well," said Hoffman. "It was like no time had passed."

Phillips toured with the group last year—to Tok, Whitehorse, Haines and Juneau—and had such a good time he wanted to come again. Meanwhile, Hoffman was contacted by people in Southeast, who wanted the group to play for them. So the second tour was born, supported this

time by the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

Northern River has been playing together since 1993. They play what Hoffman calls the traditional music of Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys and others such as Earl Scruggs, Lester Flatt and the Stanley Brothers.

The music puts more emphasis on the soul and the emotion in the song, rather than complex musical arrangements, he said.

Northern River has made annual appearances at music festivals around the state. Rehearsing is somewhat of a challenge, because two members live in Anchorage. Tapes are sent back and forth, and when they get together, usually before performances, they pick up well, said Hoffman.

"It's cumbersome," he acknowledges, "but it works." The other members of the band are Gary Markley, who plays five-string banjo, Joe Page, mandolin; and Gary Schultz, bass. They all have day jobs.

Hoffman is employed as a project manager for Wick Constructors, Inc. Page works as a supervisor for Odom Co. in Anchorage, and Schultz works for the Depart-



STACY PHILLIPS

NEXUS: Percussion

Continued from Page C-1

phone to area percussionists as part of the university's Third Annual Alaska Day of Percussion.

Scott Deal, the university's lead percussionist, describes Nexus as "the premiere percussion ensemble in the world." The group is respected for its fantastic repertoire that includes turn-of-the-century xylophone ragtime music, African drumming, and their odd assortment of instruments—played with virtuosity, said Deal.

"It rarely gets better than this."

They entertain with an eclectic mix of music drawn from all over the world. Nexus is also known for its jazz, chamber music, Mexican folk and the music of Bali, Java and Japan—as well as its infectious enthusiasm.

A music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle described a Nexus performance as a "stunning virtuoso spectacle. Even more astonishing is the depth of musicianship and superiority of ensemble these five virtuosos brought to bear."

At first, said Hartenberger, Nexus' music was mostly improvisational, but most of its music includes compositions written by members and other pieces composed for them.

In Fairbanks, they will perform Steve Reich's "Music For Pieces of Wood," on two wooden cylinders each, a mini-suite of African music, and a ragtime nov-

elly piece, as well as "Remembrance," Robin Engelman's work that includes the music of Japanese and Pakistani bells.

"Lion's Roar" features a friction drum with a gut string that sounds, appropriately, like a lion's roar and "Fra, Fra" highlights the music of Ghana. There will also be drumming pieces, but Hartenberger promises that they won't bludgeon concertgoers with drums. That's one thing the ensemble has had to overcome—the negative perception people have of drum music, he said.

Nexus doesn't limit itself strictly to percussion, either. Cahn's 1983 composition, "The Birds" has gongs, rattles, a string instrument that is whirled around the head and hundreds of tiny flutes and chimes that produce avian calls and whistles.

Each member plays a variety of instruments, but Bob Becker is considered one of the world's premier performers on the xylophone and marimba. Hartenberger, a professor at the University of Toronto, regularly performs with the Steve Reich Ensemble, and has been a featured performer with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, London Symphony and many others.

Tickets for the Nexus performance are \$25 for adults and \$20 for students, seniors and the military, and are available at Hoyt's Music, Carr's Foodland, or by calling 1 (800) 478-7328.

THE SPINNING ROOM

BEADS!
BUTTONS!
FIBER!

Open studio at Marnie's
516 Second Ave. Studio 220
(in the Lathrop Artist Studios)
907-458-7610
Mon-Sat 12-6 p.m.

Coming Saturday
Wonderful handmade goddess beads
by Leah Fairbanks

THE ARTWORKS

Ravens of all kinds arrive tomorrow!

You're invited for Halloween treats...
4:30-6:30 Friday
Campus Center Mall
University Ave & College Rd.
Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5
(907) 479-2563

THE LAST SETTLERS

Reading & Booksigning

Jennifer Price, author
Charles Mason, photojournalist

The Last Settlers
Hardback \$24.95
The story of unbeautiful land and the people who have laid it to heart

Friday, Nov. 6th • 7 to 9 p.m.
College Road Location
GULLIVER'S BOOKS
New and Used
Shoppers Forum 456-3657
College Road 474-9574
1-800-399-8999 www.gullivers-books.com
Second Story Café • College Road Location

Fairbanks Native Association
New Program Baby Shower

Let your gift make a difference in someone else's life!

November 2, 1998
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
315 Wendell Street

For our new New Hope Center for chronic inebriates, a long-term treatment program for homeless substance abusers, we need:

- household items • clothing • tools • sports equipment

See attached list. To avoid duplications, please call Trish at 452-1648, ext. 249, to let us know what you are bringing.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FOR KIDS

School-aged kids are invited to a "Halloween Howl" in the Noel Wien Library auditorium, 1215 Cowles St. The event begins at 4:30 p.m. today. Wear your costume and come for Halloween stories. Admission is free.

"Halloween Fun for Preschoolers," a special holiday storytime for 3-5 year olds, will be held Friday at 1:30 p.m. in the Berry Room. Costumes are encouraged and admission is free. Information: 459-1020.

UAF Music Department, 474-7555

All interested women are invited to join the Fairbanks Frontier Chapter of Sweet Adelines in rehearsal at 7 tonight. The Sweet Adelines Chorus practices weekly at St. Matthew's Parish Hall on Second Avenue. Information: Kim, 456-7860.

THE CONTRA BOREALIS DANCERS

The Contra Borealis Dancers dance Friday at the Alaskanland Dance Center beginning at 8 p.m. Everyone is invited to wear a costume, but it is not required. Live music will be provided by Celtic Confusion and caller will be Lynn Basham.

THE BALLOON DANCE CLUB

The Balloon Dance Club of Fairbanks will begin a new four-week session of social dance classes Sunday afternoon with Perrell St. Thomas as instructor.

PERMAFROST

The class schedule is 2-6 p.m. with one-hour classes in Beginning Argentine Tango, Intermediate Argentine Tango, Intermediate East Coast Swing and a Latin or Basic Continuity class. All classes take place at the Alaskanland Dance Center. Information and registration: 479-2655.

TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE FOR WALTZ NIGHT an annual fundraiser for the Fairbanks Symphony Association. Waltz Night takes place Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Conference Center, featuring an evening of Viennese waltzes, polkas and Latin-American rhythms set to the music of the live Waltz Night Orchestra and the Alaska Jazz Trio-Plus One. Light refreshments will be served and there will be a no-host bar.

TICKETS ARE \$25 PER PERSON and are available at The Victorian Parlor, located on the second floor of the Airport Road Antiques Shop, Alaskan Floral and Wedding, The Artworks, The Owl

PERSEVERANCE THEATRE in Douglas will present a "site-specific" production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" by Dale Wasserman, from the novel by Ken Kesey, directed by guest artistic associate Pam Mackinnon. "Cuckoo's Nest" will also serve as a focal point for a reallocation of the theatre's training program. Show dates are Nov. 2-22, location to be announced.

PERSEVERANCE THEATRE in Douglas area with a tour of Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" at the Performing Arts Center in Anchorage Nov. 5-5. Ticket information: (907) 364-2421, Ext. 35.

PERSEVERANCE THEATRE in Douglas will present a "site-specific" production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" by Dale Wasserman, from the novel by Ken Kesey, directed by guest artistic associate Pam Mackinnon. "Cuckoo's Nest" will also serve as a focal point for a reallocation of the theatre's training program. Show dates are Nov. 2-22, location to be announced.

PERSEVERANCE THEATRE in Douglas area with a tour of Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" at the Performing Arts Center in Anchorage Nov. 5-5. Ticket information: (907) 364-2421, Ext. 35.

SCENES: Halloween comedy

Continued from Page C-1
style of this production is a blend of elements and influences. The cast viewed several classic horror genre and contemporary horror genre films. As a consequence the

play quotes movements, poses, actions, line readings that are a part of American pop culture.

The cast features three theater majors—Brett Good, Mike Karoly and Tracy Campbell—and a newcomer to the stage. The creative team is rounded off by set Designer B.J. Kutz, costumer Tara Maginnis, lighting designer Kade Mendelowitz and stage manager Fletcher Hiron assisted by Kelly Stables.

"70 Scenes Of Halloween" opens tonight at 8:15 and runs Fridays and Saturdays, Oct. 30, Nov. 6, 7, 13 and 14 at 8:15 p.m., and Sundays, Nov. 7 and 15 at 2 p.m. The production takes a holiday on Halloween to make way for UAF's Student Drama Association's Haunted Theatre House for all ages. Tickets, \$12 adult; \$10 military, seniors, UAF faculty and staff; and \$6 students (\$10, \$8 & \$5 for matinees) are available at the Theatre UAF box office 12-1:45 p.m., 4-5:45 p.m. Monday through Friday, and two hours prior to performances. Credit card orders are accepted on the phone at 474-7751. The show runs about 2 hours and 20 minutes and plays in the Lee H. Salisbury Lab Theatre. This play includes some swearing and some sexual references.

SHOPPERS FORUM MALL

Airport & Cowles

Perdues Jewelry & Gifts
Full service jewelry store

Hops Stationary
Hudson's Gold Crown Store

Fairbanks Fast Foto
Photo processing • film • supplies

Mane Place
Hair Salons, retail & beauty supplies

Santa's Gallery
Fine Art, Custom Framing, Collectibles

Pull Tab City

In Style
Ladies Formal, Casual wear

GNC
General Nutrition Center

L.A. Nails
Nail Salons

Gullivers Books
New & Used

Paws & Claws
Pet Supplies

Pristines
Books, Jewelry, Gifts