

MIKE BALTER

February 2016 NEWSLETTER

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Our Blog is Up and Running!

MALLET CHOICE MATTERS!

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By Josh Gottry, Educator Composer

I cringe when I notice a student lean, place something, or put their hands on a keyboard percussion instrument. It's not a table, bookshelf, or recliner - it's a musical instrument that has the potential to be the source of amazing sounds. I'll save instrument care and maintenance for another day, but this reaction triggers an additional thought worth mentioning here ... when it comes to keyboard percussion instruments, we don't touch them to play them. Instead, our mallets are the vehicle for every nuanced musical effect we intend to create on our marimba, vibraphone, etc. Each time we prepare a solo, perform in an ensemble, or simply practice our scales, the sound we create is at the mercy of the mallets we hold in our hands. In short, mallet choice matters!

So how does this concept work itself out in application? First, as percussionists we should be continually educating ourselves about mallet choices. This can be done experientially simply by trying out a variety of mallets (from a teacher, a colleague, etc.) or can be a product of research (websites, reviews, mallet specs and technical descriptions, etc.). Second, we should be expanding our mallet collection. No, you don't need to own every mallet that Mike Balter makes, but there is a reason for the wide variety of mallet choices available! Even choosing to purchase one new set of mallets each year, each semester, or each quarter will constitute the first step in creating a wider palette of sound options. Third, we should listen critically to the sound we make with our instruments, not only to evaluate the impact of our stroke and technique, but also consider the implication of our mallet choice.

Every factor that goes into the creation of a mallet (shaft, core, wrap, weight, length, etc.) determines a context of sound possible when we use that mallet to strike our instrument. Every time we approach our instrument, our first concern should be that of the mallet we choose to define the sound for that instrument, for that piece, for that room, for that situation ... or from a larger perspective, to define our sound.

Product Highlight

Emil Richards Studio

Mallets

An array of products each producing a unique sound. A sound created by Emil Richards, Mr. Hollywood Percussion, in the studios for TV and movies. Attention to musical nuance was key in the development of this series.

[Learn More About The Emil Richards Studio Series](#)



Contemporary Series

This light-weight, dual-tonal, wool yarn wound series provides improved dexterity and smooth rolling for today's accomplished marimba soloist. Available in Satin Birch, Black Birch, or Rattan Handles.

[Learn More About The Contemporary Series](#)



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Welcome New Artists!

Douglass Bratt

Chicago area percussionist and educator, Douglass Bratt has performed at the Jazz à Vienne, North Sea and Montreux Jazz Festivals as well as noted Chicago venues such as the Jazz Showcase, the Green Mill and Millennium Park. He has collaborated with fellow musicians Kyle Asche, Stuart Mindeman, Jo Ann Daugherty, Victor Garcia, Rich Moore, Joey Sellers and Liam Teague. In addition, Bratt performed with Under the Streetlamp - a group featuring the former Chicago cast of Jersey Boys - in their second national PBS television special, which debuted in March 2014. In 2006, Bratt joined with saxophonist/composer, Douglas Stone, to create the Stone/Bratt Big Band, a group dedicated to the performance of original big band music. The band released their full-length debut album, Stone Bratt Big Band,



in June 2008. Bratt has taught students ranging in age from four to eighty and has been a clinician/visiting artist at the University of Texas at Arlington, University of Missouri, Truman State University, VanderCook College of Music as well as numerous K-12 programs throughout Illinois. In addition, he served as a presenting clinician for the 2014 Illinois Music Education Conference (IMEC) in Peoria, Illinois and a panelist for the 2012 College Pedagogy Committee Mentoring Day at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) in Austin, Texas. In 2015 he was inducted into the Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference Co-Curricular Hall of Fame.

Currently, Douglass Bratt is a tenured associate professor of music at Moraine Valley Community College where he serves as coordinator of Academic Music, instructor of applied percussion and directs the college's jazz ensemble, concert band and percussion ensemble. Additionally, he is a strong supporter of the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) and is presently serving a second, three-year term as Secretary/Treasurer for the Illinois Chapter of the Percussive Arts Society. Douglass Bratt is also proud to serve as a Mike Balter artist/clinician.

Douglass Bratt received a bachelor's degree in music and a master's degree in music with an emphasis in percussion performance and pedagogy from Northern Illinois University, where he toured for three years in the acclaimed NIU Jazz Ensemble. Additional scholarship includes a bachelor's in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and African drumming and dance studies with Ghanaian master-drummer, Frederic Kwasi Dunyo. His principal percussion instructors are Rich Holly, Robert Chappell, Jeff Stitely, Orlando Cotto, Joel Spencer, Jeffrey Moore, and William Elliott, SGM.

[Learn More About Douglass Bratt](#)

Chase Jordan

Chase Jordan was born and raised in Houston, Texas. He began taking music seriously at the age of 8. Jordan was later accepted into the High School For Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) where his career culminated in many awards- most notable 3 time winner of The Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival Outstanding Soloist. After moving to New York City, he received his B.F.A. in Jazz and Contemporary Music from New School University. Chase has performed with and/or recorded with such notable artist as The Houston Symphony, Lionel Hampton, Jewel Brown, Joe Sample, Hubert Laws, Robert Glasper, Jason Marsalis, Solange Knowles, Musiq Soulchild, and Mos Def. Chase is currently band director at Houston's renowned music magnet Parker Elementary. In 2015, Jordan was a quarterfinalist for the Grammy Music Educator award.



[See Chase's Artist Page](#)

Six Ways to Swing with style!



Get Your Groove on with KoSA!

KoSA

KoSA 2016 Coming Events

Feb 13, 2016 NYU/KoSA/HitLikeaGirl day of percussion

Feb 28-March 6, 2016 KoSA Cuba Workshop and Havana Rhythm and Dance Festival

July 22-24, 2016 KoSA CALABRIA "KoSA in Italy"

August 2016 KoSA CHINA

[Learn More about KoSA Here](#)



What's Behind A Name?

- Pride
- Commitment
- Integrity
- Experience

... and when the name is Mike Balter you are assured of the highest quality, perfect weight and balance, superb craftsmanship, with unsurpassed dynamic range and tonal color. Made to exceed the most demanding professional standards. Every custom crafted mallet has a difference you can see, a difference you can hear.



*The difference is the name... **MIKE BALTER***

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