

# VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC



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## Death and Taxes

Benjamin Franklin said there were only two things certain in life: death and taxes. I'd like to add a third certainty for band and orchestra directors: Eventually, you must clean out your instrument storage room. Yes, I know, most of us would rather have cafeteria duty, meet with our principal or attend an in-service day, rather than face the beast that is our storage room. Well, maybe not attend an in-service day, but you get the idea. Like your basement, garage or attic at home, your storage room is a place where only the brave will venture. And, of course, the longer you have been in your current position, the more 'stuff' you have collected. One of the biggest reasons most of us keep putting off the inevitable is: What to do with the instruments (and other items) we no longer use?

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Well, Volkwein's Music has a solution to this dilemma. No, we are not volunteering to come and help clean out your storage room. However, we can solve the question of what to do with the instruments you no longer use: Volkwein's Consignment Department. Now entering its fourth year, we have helped hundreds of individuals sell unused instruments and accessories that were just sitting around collecting dust and taking up space. And not only have these folks ended up with less clutter in their homes, they have ended up with more money in their pockets. And it's not just private sellers who have benefitted from our program. School districts from throughout the tri-state area have used our consignment service to sell unused school instruments, and in return, have received thousands of dollars in 'found' money for their instrumental music programs. How quickly can we sell your instruments? 50% of the instruments that come in are sold within a month for the original asking price. The next 25% are sold within 3-months by dropping the price by up to 25%. The last 25% are mostly instruments for which the seller insists upon not dropping the price from the original amount.

So, how does this program work? First, be certain you are aware of your particular school district's policy on the sale of 'surplus equipment.' Then, bring the instruments to our store (or have your Volkwein's Rep bring them in for you). The instruments will be evaluated (free of charge) by the professionals in our repair department and, in conjunction with you and our online sales coordinator, Jake McKinney, a fair selling price will be determined. Once you approve the sale price, Jake will take a professional picture of the instrument, write a description, and post it on our eBay Store. When the instrument is sold, Volkwein's will mail a check for the selling price, minus a 25% consignment fee. While you might think the fee is high, please keep in mind that if you sell on eBay as an

individual, you will end up paying 15%+ to eBay and services like PayPal in listing and transactional fees.



Why use Volkwein's Consignment Department instead of just doing it yourself on-line?

- Our professionals help you determine a fair selling price
- As an established eBay seller, Volkwein's boasts a 100% satisfaction rating
- We take care of the photos, listing, advertising and shipping hassles, etc... for you.
- Our proven track record of selling 50% of the instruments we list within the first month

If you are interested in joining the many other tri-state area school districts that trust us to sell their unused instruments and accessories on consignment, please feel free to stop by our store or call, Jake McKinney, at 412-788-5900 ext. 645.

Volkwein's consignment service is just another way we continue our tradition of "helping people discover music since 1888."



Be sure to come visit us at this year's PMEA Conference in Hershey, PA.

Volkwein's Music will be setup at **booth 169** in the Main Exhibition Hall.



# One Thing That Makes Us Unique

## Robby Myers Custom-Built Drums



There are very few music stores that can say they have a master drum-maker on staff. However, here at Volkwein's, we have Robby Myers! While his daily job is percussion repair, every now and then he gets to have fun and create an instrument from scratch. Just such an opportunity presented itself last month.

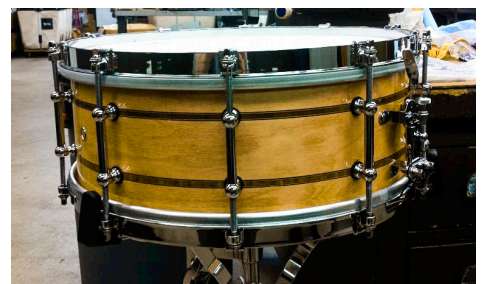
Derek Stoltenberg, a local jazz drum set player and Slippery Rock University graduate, came in to purchase a new snare drum. He had been hired to tour with a musical and did not like the snare that was provided by the touring company. Derek knew exactly what he was looking for as far as the size and sound of the drum was

concerned (a mellow sound with good snare response), but did not have any particular design or finish in mind. Derek's only thought was: "Come up with something classy, but new. Let's call it, Modern Vintage!"

Robby immediately went into his 'drum-maker' mode and began to think of what he could do to make this particular drum unique. He came up with a great idea: A snare drum with a maple shell highlighted by a mahogany inlay. Robby had never done an inlay for a snare drum before which made it all the more interesting.



Unfinished shell, just after the in-lays had been set



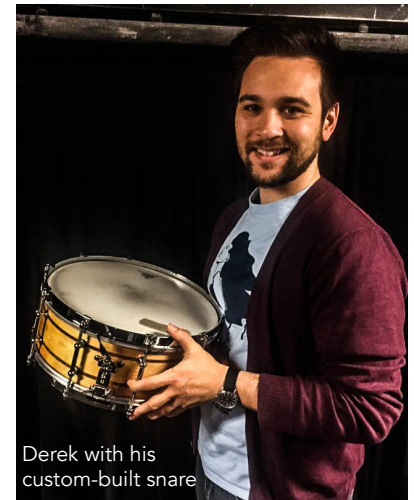
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Due to the relatively small size of a snare drum, precision wood work was going to be critical. A few of the details Robby had to consider were:

- How to cut the groove for the inlay
- How to make certain the depth of the groove was correct
- How to glue the inlay in place
- How to stain the drum without the glue showing through the edges of the inlay

Over the course of a couple weeks, Robby employed a series of trial and error methods to produce the quality he wanted.

Needless to say, Derek was a very happy drummer when his Robby Myers Custom-Built Drum arrived in the mail. Now, as he tours the country, lots of percussionists will have the opportunity to see and hear this great drum and wish they could get their hands on one. I would bet that Robby is going to have some more 'fun' in his future!



Derek with his custom-built snare



Many children in our area, and across the nation, have dreams of creating music. Unfortunately, sometimes financial limitations can hinder, and even prevent these dreams from ever being realized. With educational budget cuts crippling arts programs everywhere, many schools are not afforded the opportunity to provide the instruments, books, and tools our children need to learn and grow as young artists.

We know, however, that there are many people whose lives have been dramatically shaped by their love of music. Consequently, these people feel compelled to see that the next generation of children have the same musical opportunities that they did. If you are one of those people, we are here to let you know that you can help "Keep the Music Alive" by donating money or used instruments to schools in Western Pennsylvania.



## Two Easy Ways To Help:

### 1. Cash Donation to the School of your choice.

When you choose this option, you are purchasing a Volkwein's Music gift card which we then send to the school you have chosen. The teacher can then redeem their gift card to help support their program. This option provides the teacher flexibility to purchase the items and services that their programs need most.

### 2. Donate Instruments

If you have a used instrument that is in playable condition, or only needs a small amount of attention, bring it in to our store. We have compiled a list of schools which are accepting instrument donations. You may choose a music program based upon existing needs, or allow Volkwein's Music to determine an appropriate recipient.

If you are a teacher, we encourage you to register your music programs for the "Keep the Music Alive" efforts through Volkwein's Music. Simply go to [volkweinsmusic.com/kma](http://volkweinsmusic.com/kma) and click on the teacher registration link at the bottom of the page.



# A Teaching Tip from One of Our Pros

## Practice: Music's Dirtiest Word

by: Ray Kasparek

It has been said "music has a language all its own." One word that has always struck most students the wrong way is 'practice.' Phrases like: "Gee mom, do I have to?" or "Can I do it later, please?" come to mind as a student's reaction to the word. No matter the reaction, it is imperative that they do practice on a daily basis.

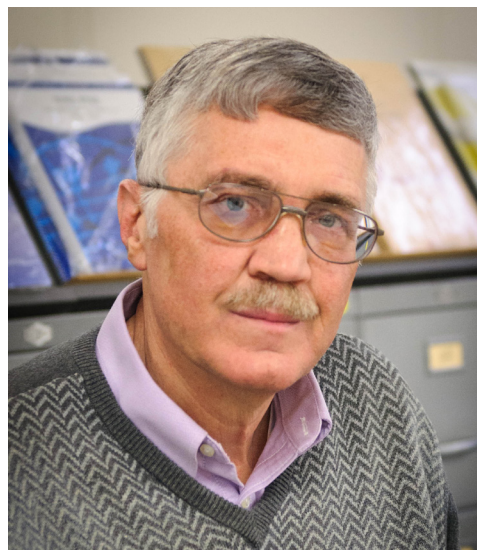
It is up to the teacher and the parent/s to properly motivate the student to want to practice. The teacher can accomplish this by including some 'fun' pieces with every lesson assignment. Please remember, movie music contains the same notes and rhythms the great composers used in their compositions. Be sure to point out to your students that regular practice will make them better players. Parents can positively contribute by doing the following:

1. Monitor the student's practice routine
2. Praise any progress made due to regular practice
3. Provide the student with the proper equipment (an instrument in good condition, a music stand, a metronome and a chair conducive to good posture)

I highly recommend that a student set up a practice routine that does not vary from day to day. Practicing the same time every day allows the students to get into the proper mind frame. During the summer and holiday breaks, I suggest the student practice first thing in the morning leaving the rest of the day free.

### HOW TO PRACTICE PROPERLY

When first approaching a new piece, it is important to choose a tempo that will give you a chance to perform with minimal mistakes. Play through the piece from top to bottom at a reasonable speed. As you are doing this, note any problem areas. Then, go back and work on those areas. Start slowly, gradually increasing the tempo until you have worked the problems out. A metronome is an invaluable piece of equipment during this stage of practice. Once you have perfected the problem areas, go to the beginning and play



through the entire piece again. By doing this routine each day, incredible progress can be achieved. I highly stress that a student should not try to play a new piece up to tempo the first time through. Start slowly and gradually pick up the tempo each day.

I recommend that beginning students practice a minimum of ½-hour per day. As the student matures, the practice time should expand to the amount of time necessary for the student to progress. There is nothing wrong with breaking up the practice sessions into smaller chunks if necessary.

All music teachers will agree that regular practice is extremely important. No matter what approach is used, it must be conveyed to the student and parent/s how crucial proper practicing is to the student's progress. I hope this article will help students to become the best possible musician they can be. Remember, no matter how talented you are, it is practice that makes perfect.

*About Ray:*

*BME and MME – Carnegie Mellon University*

*Junior and Senior High School Band Director,  
Swissvale School District*

*Member (Clariet/Saxophones) United States Air Force Band*

*Private Lesson Instructor*

*Volkwein's Employee (21 years)*

## The Spotlight Is On: Evan Brown

Evan Brown, Volkwein Music's Manager of Percussion Sales, is a master of multi-tasking, juggling schedules and time management. To say Evan "wears many hats," would be an understatement. If I were to make him a business card it would read:

Evan Brown  
Manager, Salesman,  
Repairman, Professional  
Percussionist,  
Music Educator, Sound  
Engineer, Sound Designer,  
DCI Staff, WGI Staff



And no, those aren't jobs he has done through the years. Those are all jobs he IS DOING right now.

It all started in high school with Evan playing in the band program at Mars Area High School while studying privately with local percussionist and music educator, Dr. David Glover. Though he already loved playing percussion, the jazz program at Slippery Rock University (where Dr. Glover was teaching), captured his attention and was an important factor in his decision to attend Slippery Rock. Starting off as a music education major, Evan played in the Slippery Rock University "Marching Pride." His combined experiences with the Mars and Slippery Rock marching bands would lay a firm foundation for his future work in the area of competitive high school marching band, drum line, and the world of DCI and WGI. In his third year of college, Evan came to the realization he did not want to teach school or play professionally and changed his major to a Bachelor of Arts in Music. As graduation approached, the question became: What exactly would he do to make a living? Once again, his mentor, Dr. Glover, would play an important role by suggesting Evan meet with Mr. Jack Dilanni, president of Volkwein's Music. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Here at Volkwein's, Evan can be found in his office

talking on the phone with a representative from a drum manufacturer, writing a quote for a school district seeking new drums, ordering inventory for the store, or checking the latest 'price-point' on percussion gear to insure Volkwein's is competitive in their pricing. If he's not in his office, you can find him on the sales floor answering the questions of a father who is looking to purchase his son's first drum set, a high school senior looking to buy mallets and sticks for his music school audition, or a local music educator who wants his advice on what timpani mallets will last the longest in a school setting. And if he's not in his office, or on the sales floor, check in the percussion repair shop where you will find him working with Jack Dilanni and Robby Myers on their latest project of re-covering old marching drums, re-stringing a school marimba, or totally rebuilding a 1954, 60 inch-bass drum, for an area school district. And at the end of his eight-hour day at Volkwein's, it's a safe guess he won't be headed home.

Many of Evan's evenings are spent teaching high school percussion students to perform in various marching activities. His instructional career began in his sophomore year of college when he was hired by Mars Area H.S. to work with both their marching band and indoor percussion sections. In his first year,



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he took the indoor percussion to their first regional competition where they made finals. After taking a year off, Evan joined the staff at North Allegheny H.S., initially working with just their electronics, then assuming the role of front ensemble instructor and now he oversees their total percussion program. In the fall of 2009, he returned to Slippery Rock University as their battery and front ensemble instructor, a position he continues to hold. Evan also teaches the front ensemble at Kiski Area High School, where he works with both the marching band and indoor percussion.



Back in the fall of 2009, Evan was feeling a little bored and decided to add one more aspect to his skill set: electronics and sound design. When asked how he was drawn into this he commented: "I was intrigued by sound amplification in the rock band I played with and one of my friends was a sound engineer." He continued: "I especially like doing sound design and electronics for indoor percussion. It's very hands on and allows for a great deal of creativity. The indoor setting is a much more intimate experience than working with a marching band."

Little did Evan realize he was beginning something that would eventually lead him past the high school level and into the world of WGI and DCI. In 2010, he began some limited work with Matrix which led to a bigger role the next season with Glassmen. He added Three Rivers Indoor Percussion (TRIP) to his client list in 2011. However, Evan's big break came in 2013 with Matrix's show: *Covered*. Based highly on electronics, this show attracted a great deal of 'outside' attention as it earned a 4th Place finish in WGI's Independent - World division. The next season, nationally known Dartmouth High School (Dartmouth, Mass.), hired Evan to create their sound design and finished with the gold medal in WGI's 'Scholastic Marching - World' division. The same season, his Kiski students won the bronze medal in 'Scholastic Concert - Open'. All of these successes have taken Evan to his biggest assignment yet: Sound design for the 2015 Phantom Regiment. Can you say: "Welcome to the big show!"?

So the hats Evan wears keep adding up and he is going to need a much larger business card. Despite his very busy schedule, with approximately 20 current clients (teaching & sound design/electronics), Evan remains committed to the pursuit of excellence in every role he fills. The Percussion Department at Volkwein's is THE PLACE to go in Pittsburgh for everything percussion. His local high school groups and WGI scholastic and independent ensembles continue to achieve at the highest levels. Now he is preparing to take his sound design talent to the DCI national stage.

All of us at Volkwein's Music applaud Evan's success and are proud to call him one of our own. His accomplishments are representative of the background, knowledge and talent, of the many professional musicians who work in our store. Collectively, they are the reason why Volkwein's has been so successful in "helping people discover music since 1888."



# The Music Education Corner

## What's Good For Drummers Is Good For All

by: Rick Minnotte

A few years ago, I sat down with four colleagues from around the nation to discuss the value of having a percussion ensemble program within a school district's music department. The following article is reprinted with the permission of School Band & Orchestra Magazine. Joining me in this discussion are:

**Matthew McCready:**

Assistant Director of Fine Arts  
Director of Bands  
Union H.S. – Tulsa, OK

**Mark Stone**

Director of Bands  
Ayala H.S. – Chino Hills, CA

**Jason Walsh**

Assistant Director of Bands  
Director of Percussion  
Dobyns-Bennett H.S. – Kingsport, TN



### From School Band & Orchestra Magazine, November 2010

In the music world, mastery of discreet and specialized techniques can make all the difference in terms of individual musicianship and ensemble performance. Private study and practice are perhaps the best ways to hone skills, but small groups of like – and complimentary – musical instruments can also provide a hotbed of learning. In fact, for budding percussionists, the ability to spend a block of time focusing exclusively on their particular skills and techniques – apart from the din and distraction of brass, woodwinds and strings – can prove invaluable.

For a closer look at how percussion ensembles are successfully formed and maintained in schools, as well

as what they bring to the table, SBO turned to four experts on the subject – educators who run successful and accomplished percussion groups.

**SBO:** What is the key to establishing a successful percussion ensemble within a school music program?

**Jason Walsh:** The key is to evaluate one's circumstances in a realistic fashion. Schedules, equipment, resources, and overall program goals will define a great deal of both the establishment and progression of the ensemble. Once you define those things, you can create a plan for working within the system to grow the program as a whole creating a viable and productive ensemble. I also believe in designing the program around certain skills instead of specific pieces or



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performance opportunities. This helps train the ensemble and set standards for the techniques involved. It is also helpful to create an identity for both the ensemble and the sound you want to achieve. That way, you create comfort zone for you and your students because they know what sounds you are trying to achieve.

**Matthew McCready:** Organization is key. Specifically, it's important that percussionists continue to meet the demands of the other ensembles they participate in. If a student is in our program as a percussionist, he or she is involved in at least one aspect of the percussion ensemble program, so there's really not a recruiting process, other than the 5th-grade recruiting we do for all band classes.

**Mark Stone:** I feel the key to a successful program is investment and commitment to the activity from all involved; performers, instructional staff, parents and band administration. It also takes serious investment in both equipment and time. The other key is the vision of the person in charge. My program is the result of the vision of my long time caption head and talented instructors. It's important to keep things in perspective. The indoor ensembles can and should be an important part of our programs, but it must be kept in the right place. I like to say that the indoor program is a beast: you can either ride it, or it will ride you!

**Rick Minnotte:** Most importantly, you must have a band director who is supportive of creating a separate ensemble for the percussionists. As we all know, percussion is expensive, loud and requires a large amount of space to store the instruments. In most schools, additional funds, practice facilities and storage

space, are all fairly limited. Given these challenges, the idea of creating a percussion ensemble, when there might not even be a brass or woodwind ensemble, can be a difficult sell. At Mt. Lebanon, we solved these three issues by:

1. Creating our own parent group, separate from the traditional band booster organization, to provide funding.
2. Scheduling all of our rehearsals and private lessons after school hours or on weekends.
3. Transforming little used spaces into a percussion studio/storage room.

**SBO:** What are the primary benefits to the overall music program of such groups?

**Jason Walsh:** I have found that percussion ensemble has affected every aspect of our program in a positive way. The marching band/drum line has benefitted from the students' enhanced rhythmic knowledge. The concert bands and orchestra have benefitted from the students' ability to listen effectively for balance and phrasing in an ensemble setting. It also helped the students' overall self-confidence, composure and logistical awareness in performance situations.

**Matthew McCready:** We are producing a higher level of percussionist, which in turn raises the overall quality of any ensemble they are a part of. Not to mention the fact that the students in the ensemble become great ambassadors for the band program and Fine Arts department. Whether they are involved in jazz band, orchestra, jazz choir, concert band, marching band, pep band, or pit orchestra for the musical,

well-trained percussionists can have a large and positive impact on a music program. We often use a smaller version of our drum line to go out and perform on a rotating basis for our 13 elementary schools and the various assemblies that they have. In addition, the percussion ensemble sometimes plays for community events when it may be inconvenient to send a whole band. Moving just 10 or so of these students and their equipment seems to always please and it gives the audience a great bang for their buck.



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**Rick Minnotte:** Quite simply, the more a student plays, the better he or she will become. While private lessons will always be an essential element in any successful music program, knowing that you will have the opportunity to use your developing skills in a performance ensemble provides the student with a compelling reason to practice. The more the student practices, the better musician they become. In the end, all of the performing ensembles in the school benefit from the increased talent of the students. A win for the individual student and a win for the overall music program!

### **Mark Stone:**

Because of the national stage, our percussion ensemble offers the program notoriety and the opportunity for the students to continue a competitive program through the second semester.

**SBO:** How about for young percussionists – how do these ensembles help improve them?

### **Rick Minnotte:**

Most beginning percussion students start with a snare drum (with the prerequisite rubber head cover so their parents don't call to ask why their son or daughter must practice at home) and maybe a small set of bells. Initially, the child is all excited and beats (I'm sorry, I meant plays) on the rubber pad and learns their first few patterns on the bell set. But then, they come back to school and hear their friends playing actual songs on their trumpets, flutes and clarinets. Now, all of a sudden, that rubber pad and limited set of bells is not quite as exciting as they thought. As time goes by, it can become even less so with a resulting decrease in practice time. This is where the percussion ensemble can come to the rescue. Just seeing and hearing the many and varied instruments that we as percussionists get to play is exciting to most of the students I have taught. To realize that your 'wonderful' practice pad will eventually turn into a snare drum, concert tom or timpani and that your tiny bell set will evolve into a full-sized marimba/xylophone/vibe, gives a student hope. Then to hear that percussionists can actually play music all by themselves, self-esteem begins to develop. The student realizes that percussionists are musicians too. And it is not necessary to have lots and lots of keyboard percussion instruments to have a percussion ensemble. We started off with one,

3-octave marimba, a set of bells and an old set of chimes. Even without that limited instrumentation, a percussion ensemble can still be created using empty boxes or cans along with accessory instruments such as triangles, tambourines, shakers and so on. The idea is to provide the young percussionist with the opportunity to 'see into the future' and realize that there is life beyond their practice pad and bell set. Most of us fell in love with percussion due to the unimaginable variety of sounds we were able to create. By creating their own sounds, your students will become hooked for life, just like the rest of us.



**Mark Stone:** The ensembles give the members the opportunity to perform and achieve on the highest level. Rarely in our lives do we have a chance to say we were part of the best – not the best in the city or state, but simply one of the best. It also gives the parent boosters the opportunity to share the experience with their children. I think this is an aspect that is often overlooked and undervalued.

**Matthew McCready:** Percussion ensembles have the potential to greatly improve students' technique and performance skills. Here at Union, by necessity, we have very large band classes. Small ensembles provide the opportunity for students to be individually and personally responsible for their performance.

**Jason Walsh:** This activity is great for young percussionists! It teaches them great skills for musicianship like listening, phrasing and confidence. It does this because it moves them to the front of the room instead of the back and usually they are playing solo parts. This greatly increases their confidence



and their ability to relate parts to each other. The biggest thing it does for me is give me a chance to work with individuals and see how they are progressing and where they need help. This is invaluable!

**SBO:** Do you have any specific tips for making the student experience during percussion ensembles a positive one?

**Rick Minnotte:** With the youngest ensembles (grades 4 – 7), concentrate your energy on making it a fun experience for the kids. I have seen directors insist on trying to play music that was too difficult for the students and ended up turning them off instead of turning them on. Let the students enjoy making new and different sounds, as well the thrill of playing with others. Once they become hooked, they and their parents will be more interested in private lessons. Then their technique and music reading skills will begin to expand fairly rapidly and the difficulty level of music they can perform will increase naturally.

**Jason Walsh:** I think educators should be willing to try anything! Then, assess what is most effective to create a plan for that specific group. Each year, the students have different ability levels, personalities and so forth. I need to meet them on their level and,

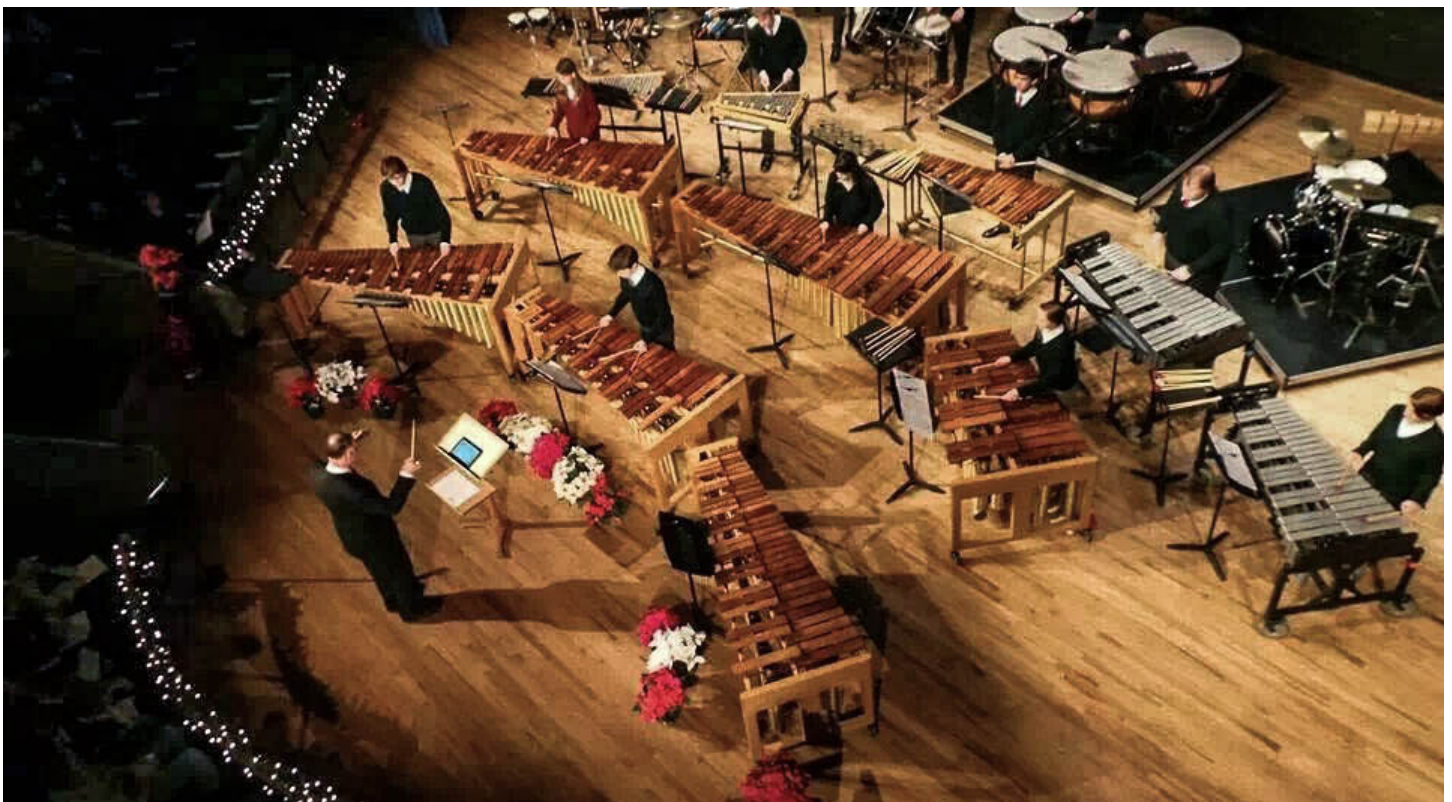
hopefully, raise it a notch or two. The thing I am most apprehensive about is losing my ability to connect with the students. The connection between student and teacher is where success is born and nourished. Once that connection is lost, it is difficult to rebuild.

**Matthew McCready:** I am constantly trying to improve the use of our student's rehearsal time. Try to stay open-minded to the concept that a percussionist may reap more benefits from working in a percussion ensemble during part of band class than sitting in the back of the rehearsal room while tacet on a piece.

**Mark Stone:** You need to deal with the competitive nature of the activity and always teach positive competition and sportsmanship. You also need to have a good understanding of the students' capability and design the program to match their skill set and the capability of the design and instructional staff.

*About Rick:*

*BME and MME – Duquesne University  
Director of Percussion Studies, Mt. Lebanon School District  
Educational Outreach Coordinator, Volkwein's Music  
Malletech, Remo and Vic Firth, Educational Artist*



# WHY VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC ?

## It's time to ask.

Volkwein's Music has been in business for over 125 years. Our dedication to improving the quality of music in Western Pennsylvania is unmatched. However, when it comes to renting an instrument, we know that you have a choice to make. If it's time to ask, we are ready to answer.

## Do the math.

It's no shock to us that decisions concerning instrument rental often come down to your bottom line. Let us show you why you get more for your dollar with Volkwein's Music than any other store.

### Peace of Mind

When you rent from Volkwein's Music, there are NO additional fees or charges, and all regular maintenance and repairs are covered including replacement due to loss or theft.\*

### Don't throw your money away.

Volkwein's Music rental program allows the rental customer to accrue 100% of monthly payments toward the purchase of a new instrument. Every dollar spent is a dollar earned.\*

*\*Rental Agreement Terms & Conditions Apply*

## Here is an example:

### Volkwein's Music Rental Rates:

Total monthly payment for Trumpet rental: **\$20.00**

- regular maintenance, repairs and replacement due to loss or theft are included.
- \$20.00 monthly accrual toward the purchase of a new instrument.

### Store B Rates:

Total monthly payment for Trumpet rental: **\$21.00**

- Rental fee: \$18.00
- Optional Maintenance fee (Does NOT include replacement): \$3.00
- \$18.00 monthly accrual toward the purchase of a new instrument.

### Store C Rates:

Total monthly payment for Trumpet rental: **\$21.00**

- Rental fee: \$18.00
- Optional Maintenance fee: \$3.00
- \$18.00 monthly accrual toward the purchase of a new instrument.

### **Total Amount Towards Purchase of a New Trumpet for 36 Month Term:**

<b>Volkwein's Music:</b>	Amount Paid: <b>\$741.99</b>	Amount Accrued: <b>\$741.99</b>
<b>Store B:</b>	Amount Paid: <b>\$781.00</b>	Amount Accrued: <b>\$669.00</b>
<b>Store C</b> (enforces limit before 36 mo):	Amount Paid: <b>\$777.00</b>	Amount Accrued: <b>\$595.00</b>

As you can see, in the same 36 month term you spend less, but accrue \$72 / \$146 more with Volkwein's Music than stores B / C respectively. Additionally, with Volkwein's you get better maintenance and repair services as well as replacement coverage. Of course you can choose to decline the optional maintenance fees with stores B & C, but repairs can be expensive and you will almost certainly end up spending far more than you save.

**Why pay more, for less? It's time to ask.**