The UW's percussion studies program emphasizes technical mastery and musicianship with a practical aim of preparing students to excel in a wide range of professional musical settings.

Graduates of the percussion studies program are teaching at universities, touring internationally as bandleaders and percussionists, performing in musical theater productions from Seattle to Broadway, and performing in jazz ensembles, orchestras, experimental contemporary music ensembles, and popular music groups.

DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

Faculty in the program include newly appointed chair Bonnie Whiting, whose research and performance interests include a range of percussion styles across centuries, in particular non-traditional notation,
interdisciplinary performance, improvisation, and the speaking percussionist. The program also benefits from related faculty in Jazz Studies, including drumset instructor Ted Poor, and Ethnomusicology, including gamelan specialist Christina Sunardi. Students in the program also perform in concerts and festivals related to the Harry Partch Instrument Collection, in long-term residence at the UW under the curatorship of composer Charles Corey.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Offering undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degree options, the program also presents performance opportunities open to undergraduates and non-majors. The UW Percussion Studio is a mix of undergraduate and graduate students, majors and non-majors, who perform in quarterly studio performances, present solo degree recitals, and participate in the School's many performance ensembles, including the UW Percussion Ensemble, UW Symphony Orchestra, various wind ensembles, small jazz ensembles, and the UW Big Band.

VISITING ARTISTS

Students also benefit from visiting artists who perform concerts with faculty and students and lead master classes and workshops. Some recent guest artists have included renowned percussionists Emil Richards, Alex Acuña, Ralph Humphrey, Michael Burritt, international marimba artist Julie Spencer, and others.

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

Percussion Lab: Percussion faculty and guest artists introduce a new percussion-related topic each week. Students actively participate in each session and complete short homework assignments that enhance the instruction.

Studio Class: Students investigate weekly percussion-related topics in class, during off-campus field trips to investigate specific percussion styles and opportunities (Taiko or African drumming, for example), and through visits by select guest speakers.

Percussion Ensemble: The UW Percussion Ensemble performs regularly throughout the school year in Meany Theater and Meany Studio Theater. The group, comprising undergraduate and graduate percussion majors, focuses on contemporary music of many genres composed for percussion ensembles ranging in size from trios to nonets and dectets.

Private Lessons: Private lessons with the UW's studio instructors enable students to tailor their lesson experience to their specific long-term goals and to discover areas of strength or specialty.

NON-MAJOR INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS

Students who are not majoring in music but who are interested in taking private instrumental lessons with faculty are welcome to audition! Non-major lessons auditions occur in September, January, and February each year for admission into a faculty studio beginning Fall term. More audition information can be found on the Audition Dates page. Lessons are offered on a space-available basis in faculty studios and occur weekly over the course of the academic year. If admitted to private lessons, students will be given a faculty code to register for the appropriate MUSICP course number. In addition to tuition, non-major lessons require a $500 course lesson fee.

STUDENT SUPPORT

In addition to student support distributed by the University of Washington's financial aid office, the School of Music distributes more than a half million dollars annually in merit-based and need-based student support. Graduate teaching assistantships are highly competitive and are granted in all areas of study.

HOW TO APPLY

For more information, contact SoMadmit@uw.edu

FACULTY IN THIS AREA
Bonnie Whiting
Chair, Percussion Studies; Assistant Professor

Christina Sunardi
Chair, Ethnomusicology; Associate Professor; Adelaide D. Currie Cole Endowed Professor

Ted Poor
Assistant Professor, Drums

FEATURED VIDEO

Introductions: Bonnie Whiting, Head of UW Percussion Studies

UPCOMING EVENTS
- Fall 2020 Entrance & Scholarship Auditions - Jan 11
- Fall 2020 Entrance & Scholarship Auditions - Jan 25
- Fall 2020 Entrance & Scholarship Auditions - Feb 8
- Concert and Campus Bands: Hearts Music - Mar 3 - 7:30pm
- Modern Music Ensemble - Mar 6 - 7:30pm

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS
- Festival of Historical Experimental Music for Percussion Nov. 19-22 (Oct 29, 2019)
- Congratulations, UW School of Music Class of 2019! (Jun 6, 2019)
- The Seattle Times: These musicians use cardboard boxes, books and rocks to create music focusing on wrongfully convicted prisoners (May 3, 2019)
- Faculty Notes: Winter 2019 (Jan 22, 2019)
- Meet the Artist: Amarilys Ríos, Ethnomusicology Community Artist-in-Residence, Winter 2019 (Jan 18, 2019)