



The World Percussion Group WPG

Jason Huxtable

The World Percussion Group (WPG) is an ensemble devised and developed by Jason Huxtable & Timothy Palmer (Maraca2 Percussion Duo) to address the professional development needs of young professional percussionists around the world.

Research process

The WPG's first tour took place in 2016 and the ensemble has, over the course of four previous incarnations, provided opportunities for 45 young performers from 18 different countries, engaging percussion students, staff and audiences at 27 leading Higher Education Institutions. In addition to the direct contact with percussive communities, the WPG social media video output has achieved over one million views through partnership with industry sponsors and media broadcasters.

Within this research an Impact Case Study is conducted with the intention of assessing the impact the WPG has made and the extent to which the original 'Rationale' for the project has been achieved.

A Thematic Analysis of previous member's Survey response provides the qualitative data, developing identity of themes which are then positioned within a 'Thematic Map' image.

Research insights

Thematic Analysis of survey data reveals that the WPG is a significant and prestigious project which provides tour members an opportunity to develop professionally and personally through a challenging, real-life tour experience. Outcomes of the project relate to both the individual members and the percussion community more broadly with the benefits of 'Cultural Sharing' straddling these two domains. The success of previous projects has fed back into the 'Prestige' of the group, creating a positive feedback loop for future participants.

This research shows that the WPG project is not only beneficial to individual members but to the Percussion Community more widely.

Dissemination

Media outputs produced by the WPG have been viewed over 1,000,000 times.

THE WORLD PERCUSSION GROUP (WPG)

RESEARCH REPORT

WPG RATIONALE

The World Percussion Group (WPG) is a pioneering ensemble which provides professional development opportunities for the next generation of drummer/percussion talent across the world, helping to build participants' international touring and teaching experience.

The ensemble was devised and developed by Jason Huxtable & Timothy Palmer (Maraca2 Percussion Duo) to address the professional development needs of young professional percussionists around the world. The rationale for the ensemble was composed through student responses to professional percussion development sessions delivered by Maraca2 at University percussion departments throughout the United States and Europe between 2008 and 2013.

The WPG's first tour took place in 2016 and the ensemble has, over the course of four previous incarnations, provided opportunities for 45 young performers from 18 different countries, engaging percussion students, staff and audiences at 27 leading Higher Education Institutions. In addition to the direct contact with percussive communities, the WPG social media video output has achieved over one million views through partnership with industry sponsors and media broadcasters.

The legacy of the WPG continues through the ongoing successes and impacts participants have made upon the global percussion community, evidencing the effectivity of this project to help develop leading young percussionists' international performance and education careers.

PORTFOLIO DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Included as supplementary data to evidence the activity and dissemination:

'The World Percussion Group: From Indianapolis and back again!' Published, Percussive Notes Sep 2016

'WPG 2017: European Tour Review'

'WPG 2019: European Tour Review'

Media Outputs and Dissemination Document

THE RESEARCH: KEY INFORMATION

Research Question: What has been the impact of the World Percussion Group project on participants, institutional collaborators and the global percussion community more broadly?

Intentionalities: To assess the impact of the WPG thus far and to gauge to what extent the 'Rationale' for the project plays out within members' responses. To initiate a more rigorous, empirically informed research process, building upon previous anecdotal, informal, qualitative data.

Research Method: Thematic Analysis

Research Data: Qualitative responses to survey completed by previous World Percussion Group members.

Outcome/Conclusion: Thematic Analysis of survey data reveals that the WPG is a significant and prestigious project which provides tour members an opportunity to develop professionally and personally through a challenging, real-life tour experience. Outcomes of the project relate to both the individual members and the percussion community more broadly with the benefits of 'Cultural Sharing' straddling these two domains. The success of previous projects has fed back into the 'Prestige' of the group, creating a positive feedback loop for future participants.

SURVEY CREATION AND DATA COLLECTION

To address the primary research question, a survey was constructed and disseminated to previous WPG members.

The questions on the survey were as follows:

How did the WPG project contribute to your development as a professional percussionist? What did you learn?

How has this learning contributed to future successes? What projects have you done since which have drawn upon this learning

What impact has the WPG project had upon you as a person?

What positive impacts did you observe the WPG making at the institutions visited? What positive impacts do you think WPG has made to the international percussion community more broadly?

Ethical Note: Respondents were assured their responses would be anonymised.

THE RAW DATA

The survey was sent out to all 45 previous WPG members. 33 completed the survey, a response rate of 73.3%

All completed anonymised surveys can be viewed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/izo0whyxyszmt5/AADVDjlxh00t1INI0t5VmjXaa?dl=0>

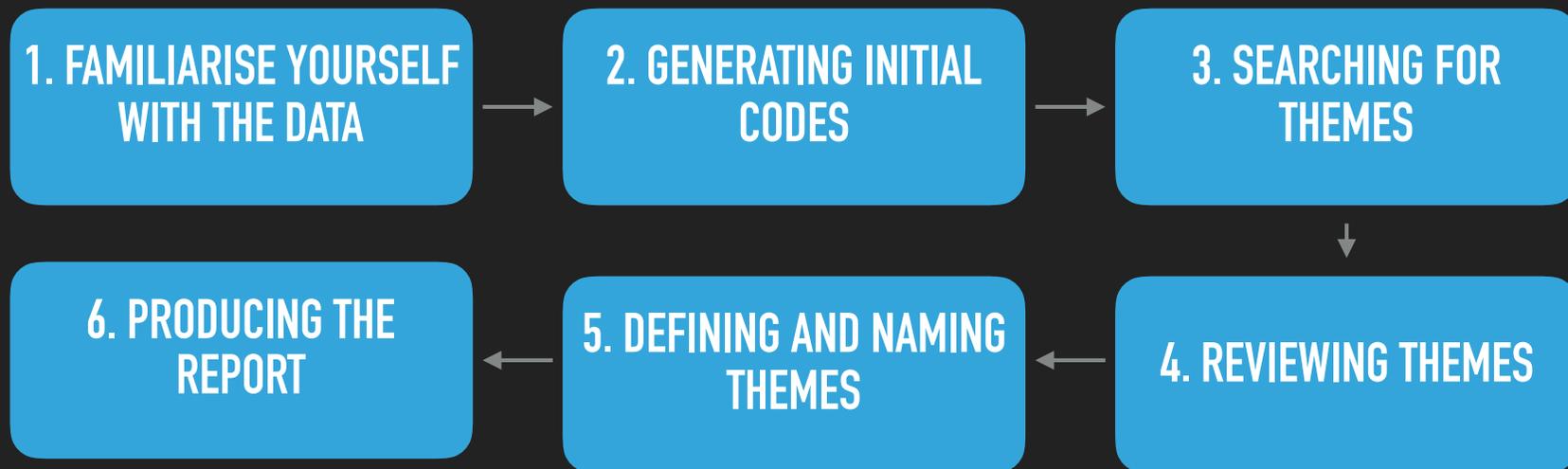
THEMATIC ANALYSIS

https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/preview/1043068/thematic_analysis_revised_-_final.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101

‘Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ and ‘interprets various aspects of the research topic.’

6 Phase Guide of Doing Thematic Analysis



METHODOLOGY

1. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE DATA

I first read all of the respondent surveys multiple times, 'listening' for initial themes and ideas.

2. GENERATING INITIAL CODES

I then extracted a wealth of 'codes', or interesting fragments of data. Initial coding can be found here. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/jkl8jlx8vu8r0i/Coding%20of%20Data.pages?dl=0>

3. SEARCHING FOR THEMES

I then began to group these codes together to create themes, or thematic patterns. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/21ntlhw446glnau/CODES%20to%20THEMES%201.pages?dl=0>

METHODOLOGY

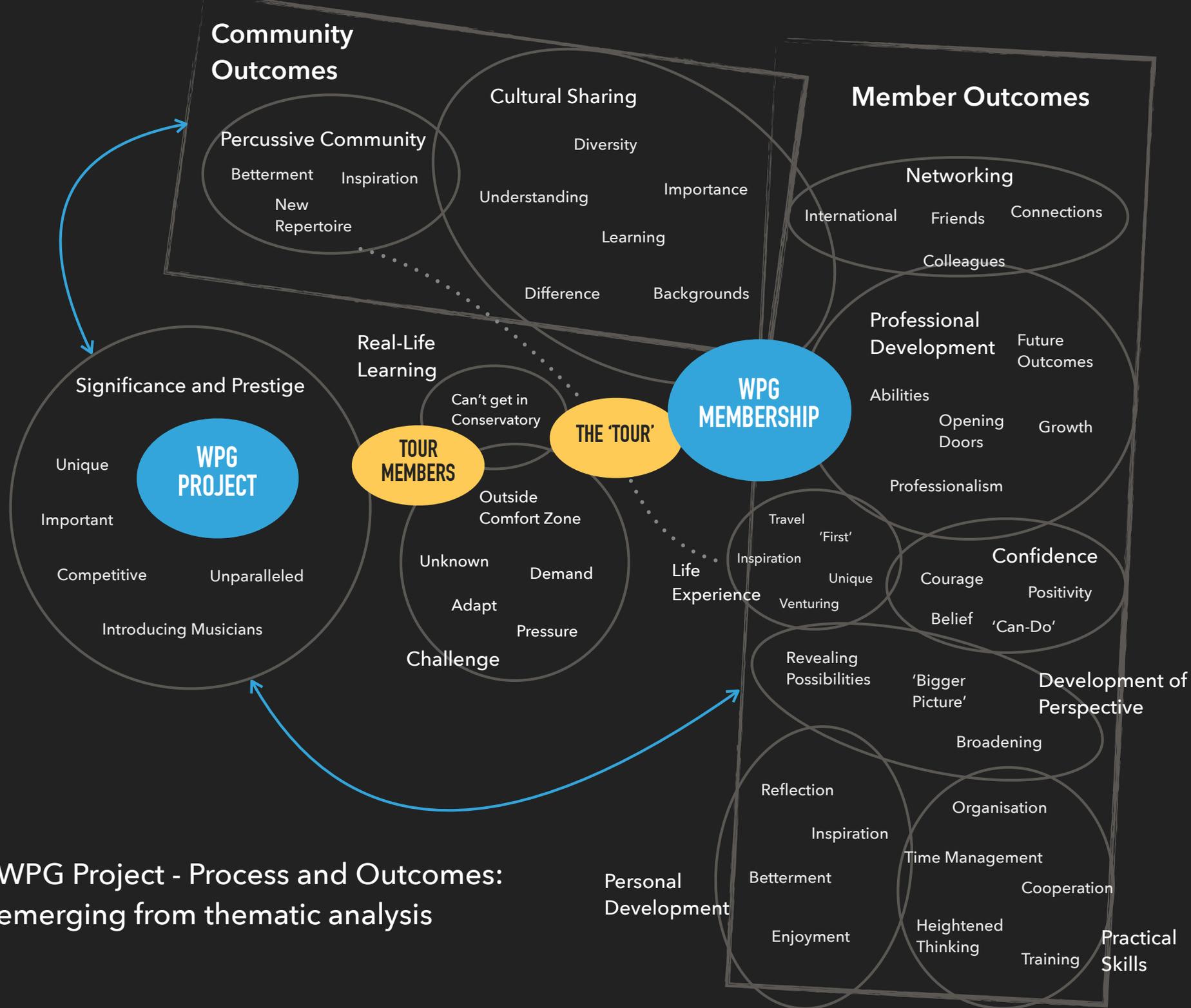
4. REVIEWING THEMES

5. DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES

6. PRODUCING THE REPORT

I then reviewed these themes, collapsed them to function as a distillation of the original data, associating the key words and quantities, feeding into production of the report. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/f0781z6waqwbdyf/Collapsing%20Themes.pages?dl=0>

I sought to produce a visual representation of the data, in relation to the 'process' of the tour project i.e. how the data from the survey is located within and around the WPG experience (see next slide)



WPG Project - Process and Outcomes:
emerging from thematic analysis

KEY CONNECTIONS – SYNTHESISING DATA

The WPG project is Significant and Prestigious

The tour experience is 'real-life' and challenging in demand

Member outcomes/impacts coalesce around: Networking, Professional Development, Life Experience, Confidence, Development of Perspective, Cultural Sharing, Practical Skills and Personal Development

Community outcomes/impacts coalesce around: Development of Percussive Communities and Cultural Sharing

The success of the project, and impacts upon members and communities feeds back into the Significance and Prestige of the project.

CONCLUSION: STATEMENT EMERGING FROM DATA

Thematic Analysis of survey data reveals that the WPG is a significant and prestigious project which provides tour members an opportunity to develop professionally and personally through a challenging, real-life tour experience. Outcomes of the project relate to both the individual members and the percussion community more broadly with the benefits of 'Cultural Sharing' straddling these two domains. The success of previous projects has fed back into the 'Prestige' of the group, creating a positive feedback loop for future participants.

May 26 2017 - June 18 2017

WPG 2017

European Tour Review:

Assembling the
World's elite -
Hitting your
local Percussion
Community.

Astonishing,
extraordinary and
absolutely World
Class!

Prof. Gert Mortensen

WPG 2017 EUROPEAN TOUR REVIEW:

The World Percussion Group comprises of some of the globes' top, young up-and-coming, percussion starlets. Coached by Maraca2 and guest coach Lynn Vartan, the group toured Europe extensively this Spring.

The World Percussion Group (WPG) represents the next chapter in the evolution of the Maraca2 Percussion Duo. Following the success of the WPG's 2016 US tour, over 100 applicants from around the World competed for a position in this years' ensemble.

The mission of WPG is to inspire audiences and students, provide an international platform to the best percussionists of the next generation, offering an unbeatable opportunity for cultural sharing.

The 2017 tour involved residencies at seven leading Conservatories around Europe including: Leeds College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Birmingham Conservatoire, Sibelius Academy of Music, Estonian Academy of Music, Royal Academy of Music in Denmark and the Norwegian Academy of Music. This years' artists involved musicians from Taiwan, USA,

UK, Hong Kong, Germany, Slovenia, Japan and Mexico.

Following an intense three days of rehearsals in Birmingham, allowing members to get to know each other musically and personally, WPG artists delivered their own presentations, clinics, lessons, performances, and masterclasses across Europe. The WPG 2017 delivered an extremely high quality 'mobile percussion festival' to the European educational market; to critical acclaim!

Maraca2 and the World Percussion group would like to thank Sabian cymbals, Marimba One marimbas, Innovative Percussion sticks and mallets, Remo drum heads, Tapspace Publications and the Pearl Drum Corporation for their support. We also thank P&O Cruises, Black Swamp Percussion and the Percussive Arts Society for their partnership in making this ambitious dream a vivid reality.



Caption:

The World Percussion Group 2017 line-up against a stunning P&O Britannia backdrop after a long day of masterclasses and concerts at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. Thursday 15th June 2017.

WPG 2017 TOUR



GLORIA YEHILEVSKY

"WPG was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. We took 12 individuals from different backgrounds and created an ensemble overnight!"

LINDSEY EASTHAM

"P&O Britannia provided us with great accommodation and gave us the perfect opportunity to rest, ready for arrival in the next country."

CAMERON LEACH

"The biggest benefit was being able to meet musicians from all over the world, develop those connections and plan collaborations moving forward."

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE



WPG Facebook Action

WPG have had numerous performance videos released on Facebook. These have resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response and, thanks to Classic FM, have received an estimated 1 million video views on social media.



WPG take the internet by Storm..

Providing a platform for artists to showcase their talents is at the heart of the WPG mission. What better way is there to display this talent than online! The WPG Facebook page hosts various performances from all over the World.

The WPG 2017 showcased some new arrangements, compositions and performances as they toured Europe. The signature WPG piece Balkan Red by Gavin Marwick and Brian McAlpine arr. J Huxtable has become a firm favourite amongst WPG fans. With it's unique blend of folk and balkan style, the arrangement sits well on percussion instruments of all varieties (Marimba, Vibes, Drums, Cymbals, World Percussion).

Sam Chan became a huge hit amongst the WPG with his spell-binding arrangements. His arrangement of 'Le tombeau de couperin'

for solo marimba was both arranged and performed with exquisite taste. Sam also arranged a real challenge for WPG artists Cameron

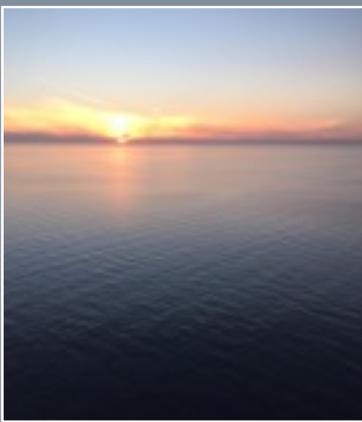
Leach and Vanessa Porter. Toccata by Prokofiev provided an exhilarating finale to the main concert. Sam's arrangement of English Suite No.2 was a huge success online having received over 200k views online in the last 6 weeks! The pure musicality and blend of musicians (Sam Chan / Hsin-Hsuan Wu) was astonishing.

YKJUR provided the audience with a tour de force executed by Gloria Yehlevsky, Simon Klavzar, Alex Howley and Gonzalo Mier. YKJUR 'Extreme measures' was intense in every meaning of the word! Finally, EASTHAMA duo wowed audiences with their incredibly challenging arrangement of Dukas' 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice'. Multiple mind-blowing performances were witnessed!

Classic FM features WPG 2017

| SOCIAL MEDIA STATS: | BACH - ENGLISH SUITE | SORCERER'S APPRENTICE | PROKOFIEV - TOCCATA | YKJUR |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Sam Chan, Hsin Hsuan-Wu | EASTHAMA Duo | Cameron Leach, Vanessa Porter | WPG Quartet |
| | 200k Views on Facebook | 80k Views on Facebook | 60k Views on Facebook | 10k Views on Facebook |
| | 4k Shares on Classic FM | 1k Shares on Classic FM | | |

CRUISE LIFE...



P&O Britannia

Traveling on board P&O Britannia provided an excellent opportunity to network at leisure with other like-minded musicians, structure and discuss residencies in a professional manner and relax between ports. Evening times created the perfect atmosphere with quality dining and entertainment.

WPG Artists to date:

Since WPG formed in 2016, 30 young up-and-coming International Percussionists have toured with Maraca2 extensively around the World. Representatives from 16 different Countries have been selected:

- Soloist: Hsin-Hsuan Wu (Taiwan)
- Soloist: Anders Kann Elten (Denmark)
- Soloist: Le-Yu (China)
- Principal: Samuel Chan (Hong Kong)
- Principal: Cameron Leach (USA)
- Principal: Heigo Rosin (Estonia)
- Principal: Konstantyn Napolov (Ukraine)
- WPG Artist: Vanessa Porter (Germany)
- WPG Artist: Simon Klavzar (Slovenia)
- WPG Artist: Hiromu Nagahama (Japan)
- WPG Artist: Lindsey Eastham (USA)
- WPG Artist: Mark D'Ambrosio (USA)
- WPG Artist: Jon Rodriguez (Mexico/USA)
- WPG Artist: Gloria Yehilevsky (USA)
- WPG Artist: Alex Howley (USA)
- WPG Artist: Gonzalo Mier (Mexico)
- WPG Artist: Yves Popow (Luxembourg)
- WPG Artist: Gabriele Petracco (Italy)
- WPG Artist: Antoine Fatout (France)
- WPG Artist: Joe Porter (Canada)
- WPG Artist: Shelby Blezinger-McCay

- WPG Artist: Jaime Esposito (USA)
- WPG Artist: Darin Hunsinger (USA)
- WPG Artist: Jen-Ting Chien (Taiwan)
- WPG Artist: Jen-Yu Chien (Taiwan)
- WPG Artist: Manuel Estop (Spain)
- WPG Artist: Borja Sarrion (Spain)
- WPG Artist: Paul Chambers (USA)
- WPG Artist: Zujing Zhang (China)
- WPG Artist: Ryan Cullen (USA)

Thank you to all of our WPG 2017 sponsors for making the WPG tour a reality.

Express thank you to **P&O Cruises** for supporting our travels and providing an incredible experience for our young artists.

Maraca2 will be back with a 2019 edition of WPG. Stay tuned on our Facebook page to find out more details about audition dates and destination information. We look forward to seeing you in 2019!



**WPG
in action at
the Norwegian
Academy of
Music**

March 27 2019 - April 20 2019

Apply for WPG 2020: www.worldpercussiongroup.com

WPG 2019

**European
Tour Review:**

Tim Palmer (Artistic Director)



WPG 2019 EUROPEAN TOUR REVIEW:

The World Percussion Group comprises of some of the globe's top young up-and-coming percussion artists. Coached by Maraca2, the group toured the UK, Spain and Portugal and visited numerous conservatoires.

The mission of the WPG is to inspire audiences and students, provide an international platform to the best percussionists of the next generation and offer an unbeatable opportunity for cultural sharing. The WPG 2019 tour showcased the talents of 14 incredible up-and-coming percussionists. Over 100 applicants from around the world, competed for a position in WPG 2019.

Selected WPG members delivered their own presentations, clinics, lessons, performances, and masterclasses and put together a touring ensemble, delivering an extremely high quality 'mobile percussion festival' to the European educational market.

The World Percussion Group would like to thank Sabian cymbals, Marimba One marimbas, Innovative Percussion sticks and mallets, Remo drum heads, Tapspace Publications and the Pearl Drum

Corporation for their support. We would also like to thank P&O Cruises, Black Swamp Percussion and the Percussive Arts Society for their partnership in making this ambitious dream a reality.

The 2019 tour involved residencies at 6 conservatoires around Europe, including: University of Leeds, Leeds Arts University, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espectáculo (Porto), Conservatorio de Música de Cartagena and the Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa. The tour was 'topped off' with a performance at the prestigious Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, UK.



Caption:

The World Percussion Group 2019 Artists showcased their talents whilst traveling in style onboard the P&O Azura Cruise Ship. (Design by Chase Banks - WPG 2019 Artist).



WPG 2019-2020



WPG 2019
Featured our first
Composer-in-
Residence, Caleb
Pickering.

KSENIJA KOMLJENOVIC

"My experience with the World Percussion Group has been amazing. Overall a spectacular experience."

ALEXANDER SMITH

"An amazing opportunity to spend so much time with like-minded artists, work with them, create new projects going forward and learn from everybody's unique backgrounds."

CAMERON LEACH

"Using a cruise ship as a method of transport worked out extremely smoothly. The biggest takeaway from WPG was being able to meet percussionists, build connections and create ideas for the future."



WPG 2019 EUROPEAN TOUR REVIEW:

From Leeds to Lisbon, the WPG 2019 traveled extensively across Europe, delivering concerts, clinics and masterclasses at top conservatories.

WPG 2019 saw the arrival of our first Composer-in-Residence position. The successful applicant was none other than Caleb Pickering from the USA. Caleb stunned us with an incredible brand new work, especially commissioned for the tour, entitled 'Powder Keg'. The piece really pushed the performing boundaries of artists Ksenija Komljenovic, Cheng Mei Kwan, Eugene Kwong and Ng Chin Pok Bevis. An energetic 'tour de force' encapsulated the intensity of the three week tour perfectly.

Soloist Alexander Smith offered a unique insight into his passion for Contemporary music. Focusing on music from James Wood to Karl Heinz Stockhausen, Alexander's recital provided perfect balance and blend to the groups repertoire offering. Expertly executing a true cutting edge performance, his recital captivated several audiences.

Co-Principal Jonas Thygesen brought to the table another very unique experience by showcasing his skills on the musical saw, offering a mind-blowing performance of 'Arabesques' by Per Norgard. Co-Principal Ksenija Komljenovic and Chen Yi

(Pictured right) performed a premiere arrangement of Debussy's 'L'isle Joyeuse' arranged by Kai Strobel. The two percussionists controlled a clean and polished dialogue of musicality, synchronicity and virtuosity.

Bryce Turner bought his maraca skills with him from over the Atlantic with a tremendous rendition of 'Temazcal' by Javier Alvarez. His crisp and clean performances once again showcased the diverse skill sets offered by the 2019 WPG. Antoine Fatout joined us for his second WPG Tour and offered support in the rhythm section for 'Espiritu Libre', 'Balkan Red' and 'Crossroads'. His expert artistry provided the perfect reliable bedrock for the ensemble at every available opportunity. Christina Cheon slowed things down with a luscious arrangement of 'Sleep' by Eric Whitacre.

The final showstopper 'No' for marimba quartet, featured William Brown, Nežka Prosenjak, Alissa Teachout and Chase Banks, sent WPG on to their next port of call with real panache, topping off a successful residency at multiple conservatoires. (Pictured below).



P&O Azura: WPG 2019 Official Mode of Transport. (Pictured Above)



Special thanks to Chase Banks. (Pictured Left) - Banks Media Group for Producing All Official WPG 2019 Videos

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE SINCE 2017



WPG Facebook Action

WPG have had numerous performance videos released on Facebook. These have resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response and thanks to Classic FM have received an estimated 1 million video views on social media.



Reflecting on WPG's History: The Group takes the internet by Storm..

Providing a platform for artists to showcase their talents is at the heart of the WPG mission. What better way is there to display this talent than online! The WPG Facebook page hosts various performances from all over the World.

The WPG 2017 group showcased some new arrangements, compositions and performances as they toured Europe. The signature WPG piece, 'Balkan Red' by Gavin Marwick and Brian McAlpine arr. J Huxtable, has become a firm favourite amongst WPG fans. With it's unique blend of folk and balkan style, the arrangement sits well on percussion instruments of all varieties (Marimba, Vibes, Drums, Cymbals, World Percussion).

Sam Chan became a huge hit amongst the WPG with his spell-binding arrangements. His arrangement of 'Le tombeau de couperin' for

Solo marimba was both arranged and performed with exquisite taste. Sam also arranged a real challenge for WPG artists Cameron Leach and

Vanessa Porter. 'Tocatta', by Prokofiev, provided an exhilarating finale to the main concert. Sam's arrangement of 'English Suite No.2', was also a huge success online, having received over 200k views. The pure musicality and blend of musicians (Sam Chan / Hsin-Hsuan Wu) was astonishing.

Classic FM features WPG

YKJUR provided the audience with a 'tour de force', executed by Gloria Yehlevsky, Simon Klavzar, Alex Howley and Gonzalo Mier. YKJUR 'Extreme measures' was intense in every meaning of the word! EASTHAMA duo wowed audiences with their incredibly challenging arrangement of Dukas' 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice'. Multiple mind-blowing performances were witnessed!

WPG 2019 videos will be released soon!

| SOCIAL MEDIA STATS: | BACH - ENGLISH SUITE | SORCERER'S APPRENTICE | PROKOFIEV - TOCCATA | YKJUR |
|---------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Sam Chan, Hsin Hsuan-Wu | EASTHAMA Duo | Cameron Leach, Vanessa Porter | WPG Quartet |
| | 200k Views on Facebook 4k Shares on Classic FM | 80k Views on Facebook 1k Shares on Classic FM | 60k Views on Facebook! | 10k Views on Facebook |

CONGRATULATIONS



WPG Wedding (Pictured Above)

Congratulations to Alexander Smith and Nežka Prosenjak, who will become Husband and Wife after meeting on WPG 2019. Life long friends can indeed be created on Tour!

WPG Artists to date:

Since WPG formed in 2016, 42 young up-and-coming international percussionists have toured with WPG extensively around the world. Representatives from 18 different Countries have been selected:

- Soloist: Alexander Smith (USA)
- Soloist: Hsin-Hsuan Wu (Taiwan)
- Soloist: Anders Kann Elten (Denmark)
- Soloist: Le-Yu (China)
- Principal: Ksenija Komljenovic (Serbia)
- Principal: Jonas Thygesen (Denmark)
- Principal: Samuel Chan (Hong Kong)
- Principal: Cameron Leach (USA)
- Principal: Heigo Rosin (Estonia)
- Principal: Konst. Napolov (Ukraine/Holland)
- WPG Artist: Christina Cheon (S. Korea/USA)
- WPG Artist: Chase Banks (USA)
- WPG Artist: Cheng Mei, Kwan (Hong Kong)
- WPG Artist: Eugene Kwong (Hong Kong)
- WPG Artist: Bryce Turner (USA)
- WPG Artist: Alissa Teachout (USA)
- WPG Artist: Nežka Prosenjak (Slovenia)
- WPG Artist: William Brown (USA)
- WPG Artist: Antoine Fatout (France)
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- WPG Artist: Ryan Cullen (USA)

Maraca2 will be back with a 2020 edition of WPG. Stay tuned on our Facebook page to find out more details about audition dates and destination information. We look forward to seeing you in 2020!



Special Thanks to Alissa Teachout for helping with logistics during the tour!

Pictured Above - Christina Cheon

The World Percussion Group

From Indianapolis and back again!

By Jason Huxtable

The Maraca2 World Percussion Group (WPG) was conceived on a windy November day in 2013. Tim Palmer and I were sitting in the departure lounge of the Indianapolis International Airport waiting for the extreme weather conditions to subside so we could return to the U.K. after our PASIC Thursday-night evening concert performance.

As we waited for the flight to come in, Tim and I reflected on the concert experience. Talk turned to what to do next. We had been traveling around the world for the last five years building to this event, meeting thousands of young percussionists, and performing in all sorts of situations. How we could move forward and take the duo to the next level?

Through our contact with percussion students all around the globe it was becoming clear that there was a common factor relating to their professional aspirations. Students were constantly saying that they wanted to be in percussion groups, be soloists, give clinics at university departments, and ultimately take professorial positions, but there was no obvious way to achieve this. A lot of really talented students were resigning themselves to finish their studies and be forced to get a “real job” to pay for the impending “real life”! We realized that there was an opportunity for us to help these students much more directly than in the educational work we were already doing, presenting masterclasses and concerts.

The philosophy of the World Percussion Group was to provide young professionals around the world a platform to launch their international careers through real life experience, *doing* the very activities they had been telling us they were interested in. We wanted to create a tour around the United States, featuring these young players, giving them the chance to teach lessons and to give clinics and top-class performances. We wanted to push forward the best up-and-coming soloists, duos, and ensemble players and share the cultural insights of these musicians with the local percussion communities in America. We wanted to assist in the professional development of these young artists and provide mentorship for their ongoing careers. It was an ambitious idea, but one that was highly exciting and proved hard to leave our minds over the next few weeks.

Inspired by these ideas, we started the process to see how realistic the creation of a tour of this sort would be. We sent out details of the project to all our percussion professor friends in the U.S. to see if they wanted to host the group and got an encouraging response. We then set up a load of meetings at PASIC14 and confirmed the core of the tour details. The schedule was two months long, and we decided that the project would work best as two one-month tours with two different groups. We now had a tour, we just needed some players.

After setting up our website (www.worldpercussiongroup.com) and writing the audition requirements, we were ready to go live and invite players to apply as either soloists or ensemble members. We were keen that no one was excluded from application due to monetary constraints and offered four full scholarships to our two soloists and two principal ensemble members. The audition tapes started flying in and we were thrilled to see such a varied range of countries represented. There was an even balance of players applying from North America, Europe, and Asia, with a few applicants coming from South America and Africa. After a grueling few days of audition-tape assessment, Tim started making

phone calls and we had our group selected. A great group of players had been assembled with an exciting range of performances fixed at a range of leading U.S. institutions.

The tour itinerary and personnel looked like this:

Tour One: February 16–March 13, 2016

Personnel:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Anders Elten | Denmark | Soloist |
| Konstantyn Napolov | Ukraine | Principal |
| Yves Popow | Luxembourg | Duo AKOM |
| Gabrielle Petracco | Italy | Duo AKOM |
| Antoine Fatout | France | Drumset Specialist |
| Joe Porter | Canada | Ensemble Member |
| Shelby Blezinger-McCay | USA | Ensemble Member |
| Jaime Esposito | USA | Ensemble Member |
| Darin Hunsinger | USA | Ensemble Member |
| Jeff Hewitt | USA | Tour Manager |

Training Location: College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada; Host: Bob Bonora

| Residency | Location | Professor |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| College of Southern Nevada | Las Vegas | Bob Bonora |
| Northern Arizona University | Flagstaff | Steve Hemphill |
| Southern Utah University | Cedar City | Lynn Vartan |
| Brigham Young University | Provo, Utah | Ron Brough |



World Percussion GROUP
Friday, November 11, 5:00 P.M.
Showcase Concert

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Colorado Mesa University | Grand Junction | Darin Kamstra |
| University of Northern Iowa | Cedar Falls | Randy Hogancamp |
| University of Missouri | Columbia | Megan Arns |
| University of Central Missouri | Warrensburg | Mike Sekelsky |
| University of Louisiana at Lafayette | Lafayette | Troy Breaux |

Tour Two: March 14–March 10, 2016

Personnel:

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Le Yu | China | Soloist |
| Heigo Rosin | Estonia | Principal |
| Jen-Ting Chien | Taiwan | Twincussion Duo |
| Jen-Yu Chien | Taiwan | Twincussion Duo |
| Ryan Cullen | USA | Drumset Specialist |
| Manuel Estop | Tenerife | Ensemble Member |
| Paul Chamber | USA | Ensemble Member |
| Borja Sarrion-Carbonell | Spain | Ensemble Member |
| Zujing Zhang | China | Ensemble Member |
| Jeff Hewitt | USA | Tour Manager |

Training Location: University of Texas, San Antonio; Host: Sherry Rubins

| Residency | Location | Professor |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Tarleton State University Gary Westbrook | | Stephenville, Texas |
| Abilene Christian University | Abilene, Texas | Allen Teel |
| University of Texas at San Antonio | San Antonio | Sherry Rubins, Graeme Francis |
| Michigan State University | East Lansing | Gwendolyn Dease |
| Eastern Illinois University | Charleston | Dwight Vaught, Jamie Ryan |
| Concordia College Percussion Day | Moorehead, Minnesota | David Eyler |

The next step to make this itinerary work was the most daunting and definitely the most challenging aspect of the project: obtaining visas for all WPG international members. Due to the complexity of this project in comparison with Maraca2's regular visa applications, we employed the services of a legal firm based in New York specializing in U.S. visas for musicians and touring arts groups. CoveyLaw assisted us in the application process, which took months of document collation and data collection.

The tour depended solely on the successful granting of the visa, and we were devastated to be notified that the group had, initially, not satisfied all criteria for the P1 visa. After a rallying of the percussion community through letters of support and appeal, we were relieved to hear that the U.S. immigration service overturned its original decision and agreed to issue the visas. Unfortunately, this had put us behind schedule by many months, but at least the tour was going ahead. The cancellation of the tour would have been a critical blow for Maraca2 who had, up to this point, expended significant resources to build the infrastructure for the ensemble.

TOUR ONE

Because of these delays due to legalities, some of WPG Group One only just made it in time for our first concert in Las Vegas. Bob Bonora at College of Southern Nevada was amazing and accommodated us magnificently despite all this disruption! Spirits were high after the first concert with all members of the group in the country. We headed back to our luxury WPG mansion (yes, mansion) for some rest before hitting the Las Vegas strip in style in our own party bus, playing "four square" late into the night at a brilliant bar with its own playground outside! Special thanks to Tyler Swick for exceptional party hosting.

Once on the road, the tour proved to be full of thrills (and a few spills!). Driving through all conceivable terrains across the U.S. was high-

ly inspiring for all the music making. We travelled from the deserts and mountains of the southwest through the great plains of the central region up to the freezing conditions of the north, down to the floods of Louisiana, all around Texas, and then all the way up again. We travelled in two vehicles—one for people, one for luggage—and managed to clock up over 10,000 miles over the course of the two months. This was a fantastic cultural experience, and the amazing scenery helped keep our energy and enthusiasm up for these long drives.

TOUR TWO

After our concert at University of Louisiana at Lafayette, it was time to say goodbye to the Tour One group and head to San Antonio to meet up with members of Tour Two. We had booked a lakeside retreat at nearby New Braunfels and settled in by the water before beginning our second training/rehearsal period at University of Texas at San Antonio.

After a month of being on the road we were very relieved to be staying in the same location for a whole week. We were particularly happy to have Heigo Rosin (Estonian percussionist and martial artist extraordinaire) with us to keep us healthy and fit. Every day started with a full warm-up routine and a number of exercises to improve our posture and sense of relaxation, and it was great fun to get together as a group in the morning and prepare for the rehearsals ahead. Tour Two was ready to go and we set off with enthusiasm for our Texas trip!

After the issues with the visa, we thought we had put the bad news behind us, but we were set to face another challenge that put the tour in jeopardy. We were back in San Antonio after a week on the road and had just performed a brilliant concert in their lovely hall. Spirits were high as we set out for dinner and drinks. On returning to our vehicle, we were about to set off when our tour manager, Jeff Hewitt, noticed that his mallet bag was no longer behind his seat. We went to look in the trunk to see if it was there and were horrified to discover that all our possessions were gone. Everything that had been in the van had been stolen!

As this devastating discovery sank in, the heavens opened with a fierce lightning storm and torrential rain. As we waited for the police to arrive, all our previous positivity was washed away as we calculated that we had lost over \$20,000 worth of laptops, iPads, mallets, cash, and most worryingly, a number of passports. How would the tour be able to continue and how would we get home?

The next few days were filled with multiple trips to various police department offices and CCTV offices and an interview on San Antonio local news. A visit from a locksmith found the damage to our van and CCTV confirmed that a group had used a screwdriver to break the lock, enter the vehicle, and clear it of anything of value. The word got out on social media that the group was in trouble and, inspired by a message from Ivan Trevino (with whom the group had lunch in Abilene a few days earlier) we decided to set up a GoFundMe project account. Ivan set the fund rolling with an amazingly generous donation and we were humbled by the influx of support. By the end of the funding project, we had raised \$11,000 to help us refund our losses. A huge thank you to everyone who donated!

The show had to go on, and we made the decision to continue the tour and hit the road. Our next concert was, luckily, a few days away, and we had a luxury property booked by the side of Lake Michigan. It was a two-day drive up to the house, and we were able to relax a little and begin to put the event in perspective. Thankfully, our location was close to Chicago (where many of the U.S. embassies were) and we were able to head into the city to attend our appointments for emergency passport replacements, allowing us to travel homeward. After the interviews and some great pizza, the tour was truly back on track and we continued onwards, concluding triumphantly with a concert at David Eyler's fantastic percussion festival at Concordia College, Minnesota.

The tour was over and it was time to head home. Despite the problems, it had been an incredible experience. The WPG members had, collectively, given concerts, lessons, and clinics at over 15 universities, had taught hundreds of students, met leading members of the U.S. percussion

community, traveled the country, and formed strong bonds with other members. There were so many performance highlights, and the standard was incredibly high. Overall, it was an incredibly inspiring experience for so many people. What seemed like a crazy ambition a few years earlier had transformed into a vibrant reality. The tour was over; what next for the WPG?

We had applied for PASIC16 and were thrilled to hear that we had been successful. We saw this as a fantastic opportunity to showcase the standard of the ensemble and inspire applications for our 2017 WPG adventure.

WPG 2017

The World Percussion Group 2017 tour will be taking place across Europe from May 27 to June 18. The tour will begin in the U.K. and will include a training period followed by performances at a range of British Conservatoires. Then we will head down to Southampton and board the *Britannia*, a luxury cruise ship operated by P&O Cruises. The cruise will dock at cities around Scandinavia and the Baltics, and we will be delivering performances and clinics at Conservatoires in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, and Estonia, with days off at sea and a night in St Petersburg.

We are looking for soloists, ensemble players, and drumkit artists between 18–30 years old who wish to develop their career and boost their CV with a range of international experiences. Audition details, FAQs, and registry can be found at our website, www.worldpercussiongroup.com.

All players who audition will receive personalized feedback from Maraca2, access to many hours of clinic/concert footage from WPG 2016 and 2017 tours and, of course, the chance to be part of this groundbreaking ensemble. The audition costs \$80 and successful members will be required to pay course fees of \$2,500. There are a range of scholarship opportunities available, so please do apply, even if financing may prove challenging.

The Maraca2 World Percussion Group will continue to promote the best up-and-coming percussionists active around the world. Please do get in touch if you want to part of our ongoing adventure!

Jason Huxtable is a member of Maraca2 percussion duo and co-director of the World Percussion Group. He is Senior Lecturer in Classical Percussion at Leeds College of Music, Tutor of Drumset and Percussion at Leeds University, and Visiting Tutor of Percussion and Pedagogy at Birmingham Conservatoire. **PN**

WPG Media Outputs and Dissemination

‘WPG have had numerous performance videos released on Facebook. These have resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response and thanks to Classic FM have received an estimated 1 million video views on social media’ 2019 European Tour Review Document

‘You haven’t heard Bach until you’ve heard it on marimba’, 22 June 2017, Classic Fm
<https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/videos/bach-marimba/>

‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice on marimba and vibraphone is... magical’, 08 June 2017, Classic Fm
<https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/videos/sorcerers-apprentice-marimba/>

‘World Percussion Group in Fire!’, 15 Oct 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCyAQIEH_JM

‘WPG - Anders Elten, (Denmark) performs Pius Cheung - D minor Etude for Marimba Solo’, 15 October 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76baSUJ1pVM>

‘Beautiful Arrangement - Over the Rainbow (Soloist Anders Elten)’, 15 October 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBNwDVvH-CQ>

‘WPG Artist - Konstantyn Napolov (Ukraine) plays TCHIK for Snare Drum’, 15 October 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOxBTULU2A4>

‘Duo AKOM Rock out to GYRO for Percussion - Yves Popow (Luxembourg), Gabriele Petracco, (Italy)’, 15 October 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Km-wzpQLA4A>

‘6 Mallets Joe Porter (Canada) meets Antoine Fatout (France) on Drums’, 15 October 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWNLcuSrAuY>

‘PASIC 2016 - World Percussion Group Performance’, 05 December 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxDonGocGrI>

World Percussion Group Facebook Media
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=world%20percussion%20group%20-%20wpg>