

The beat is on

Percussion Studio presents *The Big Drumbowski*, an action-packed, original performance

By LYCIA SHRUM
THE BATTALION

From the sounds of steel drums to the sounds of a wheelchair (yes, a wheelchair), Percussion Studio has constructed *The Big Drumbowski*, a show promised to be packed with drum ensembles to leave audiences grooving with the beat.

Percussion Studio is an organization devoted to students with passion for percussion.

Jeffrey Schmulen, a graduate student in applied physics and Kevin Grubbs, a senior computer engineering major, formed Percussion Studio in Fall 1999. Grubbs said Percussion Studio, which was originally TAMUdrums, was started for the students at A&M who wanted to be part of a drum ensemble.

Grubbs was in his high school band and was very involved with the percussion. He said it was something he missed in college and wanted to be able to continue.

"My high school had a very strong percussion group and I wanted to continue that here at A&M," Grubbs said.

Grubbs said after plastering 500 fliers around campus about tamudrums first informational meeting, about 30 people showed up and the group started to form.

Grubbs said Percussion Studio has produced four shows since it began, among a variety of other events. Percussion Studio has graced the stage at events such as Whoopstock, Aggies Up All Night, First Yell and the MSC Variety Show. The Variety Show was a highlight for Percussion Studio. After taking second place in the 1999 and 2000 MSC Variety Show, Percussion Studio won first place in 2001.

"Percussion Studio has really grown since 1999 from the size of the group to the size of the audience," Grubbs said. "Our first show, which

was at Bryan High School, had about 250 spectators, and our last show in April 2001 had maybe 650 people. There have been so many positive changes since our first show in 1999."

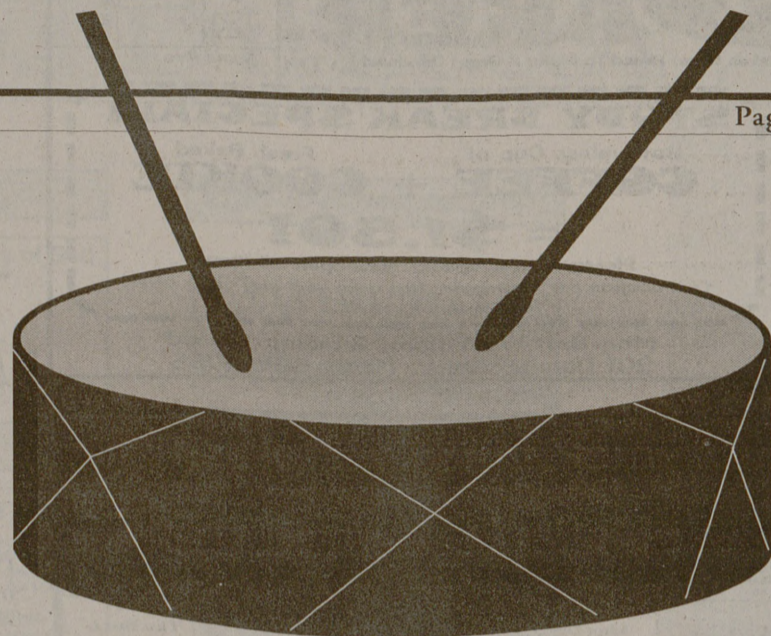
Some may have been in the audience and experienced Percussion Studio in action, and for others, Percussion Studio will be a new venture. No matter who attends, the show promises to be full of new ensembles.

"We like to keep variety a factor in each of our shows. We want the audience to see things they haven't seen before," Grubbs said.

When the members of Percussion Studio take stage, the audience is often surprised how detailed each drum piece and performance is.



ILLUSTRATION BY CODY WAGES • THE BATTALION



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Jason Ledlie, a senior psychology major and member of Percussion Studio, said the members create many of the pieces, while others are bought from publishers who sell percussion ensembles.

"Most of the pieces we came up with on our own. We did buy some ensembles like some mallet pieces because nobody really knew how to go about creating those," Ledlie said.

Ledlie said there is a total of 15 ensembles the audiences can look forward to at the show.

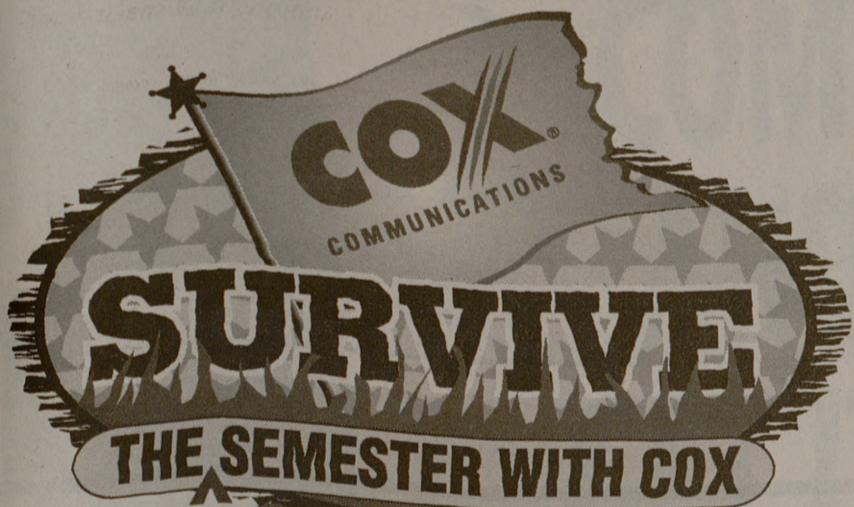
When it comes to the creative aspects of piecing together an ensemble, Ledlie said it begins with members of Percussion Studio bringing their ideas to the meetings. He said people have certain ideas about what they want to perform and from those ideas the ensemble seems to grow. Ledlie said a lot of the ensembles are usually a combination of music and theatre. He said many of the pieces Percussion Studio performs incorporate many unconventional instruments.

"In one of the pieces, Medical, we use a wheelchair as an instrument," Ledlie said. "We also have a stapler as an instrument and steel drums for an island-type feel."

Ledlie said the show will be "in your face, loud and fast drums with some melodious mallet pieces."

Grubbs described Percussion Studio's shows as having some elements of the group STOMP, which is a performance filled with movement and abstract ideas that use everyday objects to make music, as well as concert style ensembles mixed with some comedy.

The Big Drumbowski will be Saturday, Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium. Tickets can be purchased at the MSC Box Office or from any member of Percussion Studio for \$5 before the show or \$7 at the door.



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