

OREGON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

SOU hosts Northwest Percussion Festival in Ashland with 13 free community concerts

(Ashland, OR) – Southern Oregon University (SOU) will host the 2025 Northwest Percussion Festival (NWPF) from Friday, April 4, to Sunday, April 6. The three-day event will showcase a series of artistic percussion performances, bringing the Rogue Valley community 13 free concerts featuring world-renowned guest artists, a directors' concert, U.S. and world premieres of new music, and seven university percussion ensemble performances. All concerts will take place on the SOU campus and are free and open to the public – no tickets required.

The Northwest Percussion Festival is a premier event celebrating the artistry and innovation of percussion music. The three-day festival in Ashland also marks the 40th anniversary of the Northwest Percussion Festival event, which was founded in 1985 by John Baldwin of Boise State University, Charles Dowd of the University of Oregon and Martin Zyskowski of Eastern Washington University.

The festival aims to bring together classical percussion ensembles from across the Northwest, offering a platform for performances and the exchange of repertoire ideas for future collaborations. A key aspect of the weekend is fostering social connections among students and directors/conductors, who will also perform solo pieces in a "Directors Only Concert" for the participants. The festival's continued growth and success each year reflect the dedication and passion of the Northwest's percussionists in advancing the percussive arts. With hundreds of participants annually, the NWPF is a vibrant and inspiring event.

"The Northwest Percussion Festival is a rare event where all of the university percussion programs in the Northwest gather to perform for and inspire each other in a non-competitive, supportive environment," said Terry Longshore, professor of music, artist in residence, and director of Percussion Studies at SOU. "It's one of my favorite events anywhere, anytime! Guest artists are always blown away by the musicianship and the vibe – there's nothing like it anywhere!"

The festival opens at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 4, with a performance by the Southern Oregon University Percussion Ensemble, directed by Longshore. The program titled "Full Circle: Round Trip" will highlight the eclectic and diverse percussion studies program at SOU, and the ensemble will perform an uplifting program of music. Seven other university percussion ensembles from across Oregon, Washington and Idaho will not only participate in the weekend's events but each ensemble will also perform a concert during the weekend's festivities.

In addition to the university ensembles, performances will also include world-renowned guest artists Aiyun Huang, Geneva International Music Competition winner and Professor of Percussion at the University of Toronto; Mark Applebaum, the "mad scientist of music" and Professor of Composition at Stanford University; and the world-renowned Portland Percussion Group.

Portland Percussion Group, a chamber percussion ensemble focused on the creation of contemporary percussion music and percussion education, was formed in 2011 and since then has composed or commissioned more than 60 new contemporary works. Their performance program will include inti figgis-vizueta's "To give you form and breath," Alejandro Viñao's "Patterns and Form" and feature SOU's Terry Longshore and his son mackxswell on their own composition, "Cascade."

The SOU Percussion Ensemble's program "Full Circle: Round Trip" will include "Main Bersama-Sama" ("Playing Together") by Lou Harrison, for Sundanese gamelan degung, featuring euphonium soloist Alexander Gonzalez, SOU Director of Bands, and flute soloist Breckin Moore, SOU music student; "a series of accidents" by Shaun Tilburg, for percussion quartet; "recover." by Aeryn Santillan for percussion trio; "Cepheid Variables" by Michael Oesterle for percussion quartet with quarter-tone glockenspiel soloist, featuring Aiyun Huang; and "30: The First Decade & The Third Decade" by Mark Applebaum, with Aiyun Huang, soloist.

Also featured will be the world premiere of "Playing Dead" by Bryan Jeffs, SOU Raider Band Director and Adjunct Instructor of Music; and the U.S. Premiere of "Flambé Spring Breeze" by Aiyun Huang, performed by Huang and Terry Longshore. Two pieces performed by Maraval Road Steel Band will include "Rant and Rave" by Christopher "Tambu" Herbert, arranged by Shelly Irvine; and "Pan Can Jam!" by Tracy Thornton, arranged by Steve Popernack. The concert will conclude with Brazilian Carnival samba music that members of the SOU Percussion Ensemble recently learned at the 2025 Mardi Gras Brazil Carnival Conference in New Orleans.

NW Percussion Festival Schedule of Events:

Friday, April 4, 2025 - 7:30-9 p.m.

7:30pm – 9:00pm SOU Percussion Ensembles – Music Recital Hall

Saturday, April 5 – 9:00am-9:30pm

9:00am – Oregon State University – Music Recital Hall

10:00 - Boise State University – Main Stage Theatre

11:00 - University of Washington - Music Recital Hall

12:00pm - University of Oregon – Main Stage Theatre

2:30 - Guest Artist Concert - Portland Percussion Group featuring soloists mackxswell & Terry Longshore - Music Recital Hall

3:30 - Guest Artist Presentation: Mark Applebaum – Main Stage Theatre

4:30 - Guest Artist Master Class - Aiyun Huang - Music Recital Hall

8:00 - Directors Recital -Music Recital Hall

Sunday, April 6, 2025 – 9:00am-12:00pm

9:00am - Portland State University – Main Stage Theatre

10:00 - Central Washington University - Music Recital Hall

11:00 - Western Oregon University – Main Stage Theatre

All events are free, and open to the public. Parking will be free in Lot 36 on Mountain Ave. For programs, concert details, and a list of all performances, please visit our website at <https://oca.sou.edu/events>.