

The Steely Pan Steel Band[®]

Memory Book



20th Reunion
1985-2005

The Story of the Steely Pan Steel Band

Dr. Scott Meister, professor of percussion at Appalachian State University (ASU), became intrigued with the steel drum in 1983 when a colleague acquired an unfinished lead pan and left it with Dr. Meister to study. The drum, relatively crude, was Dr. Meister and his student's first introduction to the steel drum and its unique sound. That unique sound and basic construction led Dr. Meister to begin the formation of a steel drum ensemble.

With a lack of university funding, Dr. Meister and several of his percussion students began the process of making their own steel drums in the fall of 1984. A truckload of 55 gallon orange juice barrels, donated by the Carolina Dairy of Shelby, NC, was delivered to the School of Music in mid-September. With the help of Pete Seeger's book on making steel drums, and Jon Nedd, an Appalachian State University soccer star from Trinidad, the enormous project of building a steel band began in September of 1984.



Students making their first steel drums

The initial sinking and grooving took place outside the School of Music's Broyhill Music Building. Many complaints concerning noise were heard from professors in adjacent buildings and classrooms. All of the percussion students participated in the sinking using twelve and ten pound sledgehammers. Dr. Meister and his graduate assistant at the time, Richard Cox, did all the grooving and shaping of the notes. Because of university fire regulations the drums had to be burned over an open fire at Dr. Meister's home. Many of the drums were thrown out because of cracking during the sinking, and damage during the tuning. After weeks of Dr. Meister's tuning, the first set was finally completed. They consisted of a tenor, double seconds, triple cello, and a set of tenor basses. The first group was created.



Dr. Meister "firing" one of his first steel drums on the driveway of his home

The ensemble gave their first concert on the steps of the Broyhill Music Building in March of 1985. The drums were very crude, but were in tune. The band was able to play two songs:

“Mama Look A-Boo-Boo” and “Calypso Band.” Several photos were captured during the first performance and the students chose to wear “dashikis” as their performance outfits.

When making the drums, barrels were obtained anywhere Dr. Meister or his students could find them. Several of the newer barrels that worked well as basses were painted and ink barrels donated from the American Wicker Company. The original finished drums were painted bright yellow, but since they were “used”, many of them had dents and other imperfections. For that reason, red and black paint was randomly thrown and dripped on the barrels in order to hide the dents as well as add an abstract design to the pans. This unique paint scheme has become a trademark of the Steely Pan Steel Band.

In the Fall of 1985 Jim Strose, a maker and tuner from Trinidad visited the campus on his way back to the island from a tuning job in New York. Jim showed Dr. Meister and his students new patterns and some newer techniques in making and tuning the drums. From this point, new drums were made using the new patterns and designs. Also, Dr. Meister learned of Mr. Ellie Mannette, “the father of the steel drum.” In 1986 with graduate assistant Richard Cox, he visited Mr. Mannette in Perry, Georgia for two days. From this experience, Dr. Meister was able to fine-tune his drum making and tuning techniques and the band



Graduate student Richard Cox watching Ellie Mannette tune a pan

was able to begin to perform publicly for the first time. A long-standing friendship between Mr. Mannette and the Steely Pan Steel Band also began during this visit.



The very first performance on the front steps of the Broyhill Music Building

The band has performed before thousands and thousands of people over the last twenty years. They regularly perform at Appalachian State University and throughout the year for private and public schools, local festivals, educational clinics, and private parties. In 1998, the band traveled to Hawaii performing several concerts and in 2001 and 2003 the band went on southern Caribbean cruises.

Since the beginning, over seventy-five steel drums have been made and as new instruments were completed the older ones were discarded. The band has grown to twenty players with forty pans, drum set player, and percussion section (the “engine room”). Although the band no longer plays drums that they make, they perform with some of the finest drums in the world, made by Mr. Mannette and other well-known makers. Dr. Meister continues to tune the pans as needed.

The band has released four CD's – the first in 1996 and the most recent in 2004. The CD's are titled: *The Best of the Steely Pan Steel Band* ('96); *Steely Pan Steel Band Live with Friends* ('99); *"Beat Pan"* ('01); and *Steely Pan Steel Band plays the music of Trinidad and Tobago* ('03). The band also plans to record their fifth album in 2006. Each CD showcases the diversity and distinctive sound of the band.

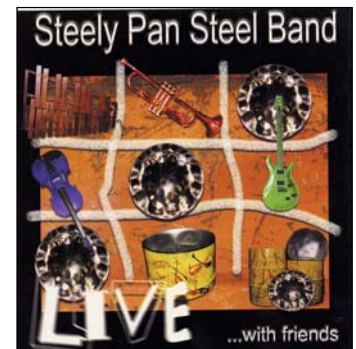
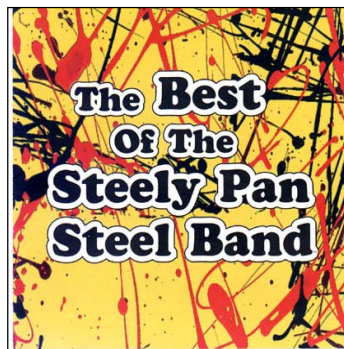
The steel band "performance attire" has gradually changed over the last twenty years from the African dashikis; to white dress pants with trademark flower shirts; to solid color t-shirts arranged by sections of the band; to today's formal black dress pants and flower shirts. The band has also gone through a variety of custom apparel including the original embroidered blue baseball jackets with a logo on its back, to the bright red baseball jacket worn by band members in the 1990's. Today, the band casually wears a variety of trademarked clothing including embroidered fleece jackets, custom hats, and t-shirts. In 2002, the *Steely Pan Steel Band*® title was legally registered as its official name.

Presently several band alumni continue to work with steel drums, including Chris Wabich ('91), who plays steel drums professionally in Los Angeles. Chris has become internationally known for his steel drum playing talent and tuning ability, tuning for over fifty bands each year. Other alumni continue to play and educate youth about the steel drum as band directors, music teachers and professors around the world. Numerous band alumni have started their own steel bands or have purchased drums and play as hired musicians. Many alumni also continue to be a part of the band by facilitating performances and attending concerts.

Every other year Dr. Meister takes students to Trinidad and Tobago to observe the panorama competitions and further his research of steel drums. In addition, he teaches an Appalachian State University study abroad course at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad every other summer. Dr. Meister has given guest presentations and lectures on the history and musicianship of the steel drum.

As the band celebrates their twentieth anniversary, they will continue to teach and entertain audiences with their beautiful sounds. The band has proven themselves as an asset to ASU, the region, and the entire music community. For additional information on the Steely Pan Steel Band... www.steelband.appstate.edu.

The Steely Pan Steel Band Albums



Steely Pan Steel Band Favorites

Thank you to those that completed the alumni survey. Many of the “favorite memories” have been incorporated into the chronological history pages below. Some of the “favorites” include:

FAVORITE TRIPS:

Hawaiian Tour in 1998



Mullins, SC Trip in 1991



Caribbean Cruise in 2001



Trinidad Program in '01, '03, and '05



Caribbean Cruise in 2003



Hiddenite Center “Performances”



FAVORITE SONGS:

- Pan in A Minor (overwhelming majority)
- Suncat
- Stranger
- Take On Me
- Appalachian Fiddle Tune
- Mambo Mindoro

FAVORITE CONCERTS:

- The "helmet" gig (early '90's)
- The annual fall concert in Farthing Auditorium ('95 – present)
- Hiddenite Center in Alexander County
- Boone parade on a truck ('88-'89)
- Murphy, NC
- WSOC-TV's Street Festival in Charlotte ('92)
- The fall concert in Room 119 (the band room) before the fire code enforcement ('87-'94)
- Greenville, SC Gig ('95)
- Hiddenite Center recording sessions

THE FRIENDS AND RELATIONSHIPS MADE:



Chris Barton and Bart Tulbert at the Invaders pan yard in Trinidad, West Indies



The 2001 Cruise



Dr. Meister and Kathy Indermill



The first-ever performance

1985



Memories...

“I was part of that first steel band back in 1984 or '85 and thoroughly enjoyed and laughed at the whole process. We had no idea what we were doing in making a steel drum, how they should sound, or how to groove or sink a pan. It truly was an educational experience. Back in '85 I was making a bass pan and when it came time to try and tune the pan, I had to crawl up inside there and bang on the inside of the 55 gallon barrel drum. ...well, it's damn loud inside there! and I would hit the drum, scream, then laugh at the whole process... over and over and over.”

-Julia Harrell

1986



Memories...

The kid that said the Tar (a round frame drum) was a good name for that instrument because it “looks like a tire.” This kid, with a very heavy southern accent was commenting on Docs explanation of the instruments used during the performance.

-Chris Wabich



One of the original band members jackets

1987



Memories...

“A huge congratulation to Dr. Meister for enduring... the steel band for twenty years! It’s hard to believe that ASU was within the first twenty college steel bands in the USA. That being said, it took great vision for Dr. Meister to see the potential in what was then a silly sounding instrument”

-Chris Wabich



Hardin Park Elementary School, Boone, NC

1988 – 1989



1989 Boone Christmas Parade, Downtown Boone

Memories...

Doc's idea that the band could play festive music while riding on the back of a borrowed flatbed truck driving around downtown Boone for the Christmas parade. The stands actually had to be nailed to the truck. And to make matters worse... it was freezing cold that day.

And who remembers the Mullins, SC trip... when the evening entertainment included "educational" videos and the hotel's free satellite television...

1990 – 1991



Parkway Elementary School, Boone, NC

Memories...

The Mullins, SC spring in 1991. “The kids wrote us fan letters and love letters after that trip. I had kids asking me for my autograph. It was the closest I've ever gotten to feeling like a rock star! It was awesome!” And “Dr. Meister talking about the FAT belly dancers of the Middle East that played the finger cymbals. AND wearing those GOD AWFUL white pants!!!!!!!!”

- Shari Edmisten Crabtree



Mullins, SC in 1991

1992 – 1993



Memories...

Seeing David Pruitt on the can while the rest of the band started to stack Brazil.

-Charlie Smtih

The fact that every audience we played to was 'the best audience ever' and loading the bus (before the band used the box van).

-Jenny Jones Goodwin

Using those black burlap sack drum cases to protect the drums when we loaded them onto the bus.

The recording session in the band room that was actually... never really recorded!

1994 – 1995



Memories...

"Waking up ten minutes after the bus left to go to Spartanburg, getting in the car, flying down the mountain, and getting there in the nick of time."

-Charlie Smith

Telling stories after the FIRST recording session at Hiddenite... Doc has this way of sucking you into his stories.

-Jody Wooten



Greenville, SC outdoor performance in 1995

1996



Memories...

Dr. Meister's favorite saying at every gig... "No kidding, you guys are the best audience we have ever played for."

-Charlie smith

Dr. Meister having to stop a high school performance because a mosh pit had broken out during a song that had gotten way out of hand. And the teachers just letting it happen.

A 10+ year steel band tradition when performing in Ashe County... seeing cheese made at the Ashe County Cheese Factory.

1997



Memories...

“My very first gig at Mount Airy High School and the percussion section and drum set having no idea what was happening. Several times the band would end a song and the rhythm section kept on playing. That’s when I learned having fun and “faking it” was half the performance.”

-Ehren Meister



1998



Performing in May 1998 at the Ala Moana Shopping Center in Hawaii

Memories...

“Here lizard, lizard” and “how about them apples.”

Said by Shi-Hao Lo



March 1998 at the ASU Student Union

1999



Memories...

The Mideast Ensemble performance during each gig when Doc would attempt to explain the instruments used while not offending any one in the audience. Whether it was the weight and size of the belly dancers, the 2x4's that can be found on your "mobile home" and played as spagani sticks, or the fromunda clappers – there was always a laugh or embarrassing moment.

-Ehren Meister

The "Chancellor for a Day" contest when Dr. Borkowski came to rehearsal as a student in the band and played in the percussion section (and danced).



2000



Memories...

Someone (can't remember who... maybe Butterfield) falling asleep on the floor behind their pans between shows and waking up to the drum set starting off the next show. They were the only one on stage.

And Dr. Meister's amazing steaks at the end of the year parties.

-Josh Harris

"We added a hip thrust as a dance move in one of the tunes. Once, at a school gig, the band tricked Dr. Meister – when it was time to do the move, the members of the band squatted and pointed at him as he did the move in front of everyone. I have never seen him so red. We could barely finish the tune because we were laughing so hard. Overall he took it well... thank God for Dr. Meister's sense of humor!"

-Krista Lapio

2001



Memories...

It (steel band) taught me that there isn't always a dress rehearsal in life. Sometimes you have to just show up, set up and play the gig.

-Chris Barton

One of my most humorous moments was dancing the Cha-Cha with Emily Stringer to "Cha Cha Sandwich."

-Bart Tulbert



2002



Memories...

A pair of pan mallets... \$15. A flower shirt... \$20. A pair of black dress pants for formal gigs... \$40. Telling Doc at 6:30 AM that things got out of hand the night before while playing "wallball" and there's now a significant hole in the wall of the Hiddenite Center... PRICELESS!!!

Keithen Melton's impersonation of a Puerto Rican bus driving tour guide.

What's Dr. Meister's favorite road-gig restaurant? GOLDEN CORRAL
[Disclaimer: Doc promises he gets no commission for taking 20 college students there during every road trip]

2003



The 2003 band with band alumni State Trooper Josh Church ('99) in Wilmington, NC

Memories...

At the fall concert in 2003, Mr. Ellie Manette (the "father of the steel drum"), traveled to Boone to perform as a guest artist with the band during the fall concert. The band also premiered a song composed by Mr. Manette.

"This (SPSB) journey was filled with talented people that shared their gifts with all those around them."

-Gene Branon



2004-2005



Memories...

The private school gig on Halloween that included private school students dressed as “public schools kids.”

The band set up and played on the street in front of the music building during the 2004 Homecoming Parade. The band was performing in honor of two of its members riding in the parade that were selected to be on the ASU Homecoming Court, Milton and Rebecca. Later that Saturday at the football game Milton was crowned the 2004 ASU Homecoming King. This was the first time a band member was nominated and crowned as homecoming king.

“It has been a blessing to share in the encouragement, education and inspirations to so many people through the travels and performances of the SPSB.”

-Gene Branon

2005: The Reunion



The Steely Pan Steel Band Alumni Band
Farthing Auditorium
April 23, 2005



More Reunion Weekend Memories



More Reunion Weekend Memories



The Dr. Scott Meister Steely Pan Steel Band Scholarship Fund

During the reunion weekend activities, the steel band founder and long time director, Dr. Meister, was honored with the establishment of the “The Dr. Scott Meister Steely Pan Steel Band Scholarship Fund” for his many years of leadership, research, and dramatic influence on countless students, alumni and friends. Fundraising for this scholarship has already begun, and the band hopes to collect enough donations from alumni and friends of the Steel Band to award the first scholarship within the next two years. This unique scholarship fund will financially assist music students, while achieving the mission of the Hayes School of Music. If you would like to show your support for Dr. Meister and the steel band, please make a contribution to the “The Dr. Scott Meister Steely Pan Steel Band Scholarship Fund.”



Retired Chancellor Frank Borkowski surprising Doc with the establishment of the scholarship fund at the reunion dinner

Please send your contributions to:

The Scott Meister Scholarship Fund
Attn: Anna C. Kuhlman
Hayes School of Music
Appalachian State University
ASU Box 32096
Boone, NC 28608-2096
828.262.2084

Where are they now: Alumni Addresses

Band Alumni	Mailing Address	City & State	Postal Code
Bobbie Akines	4187 Baker Farm Rd.	Sophia NC	27350-8005
Chris Allen	4211 Coopersdale Rd.	Charlotte NC	28273
Christopher Barton	1029 Hammond Dr.	Stallings NC	28104
Birgit Blythe	2041 Tobaccoville Rd.	Rural Hall NC	27045
Gene Branon	1061 Old Oak Dr.	Yadkinville NC	27055
Heather Brown	415 Volkert Place, Apt 7	Cincinnati OH	45219
David Browne	PO Box 1266	Sneads Ferry NC	28460-1212
John Burn	800 Padgett Rd.	Shelby NC	28150-7906
Jeff Butterfield	Unknown		
Josh Church	1122 Harbor Dr., Apt. 203	Wilmington NC	28401
Susan Church	PO Box 629	South Sutton NH	03273-0629
Richard Cox	1240 Cherry Lane Rd.	Graham NC	27253-9595
Catherine Culpepper	3300 Meadow Bluff Dr.	Charlotte NC	28226
Josh Day	126 Alexander Dr.	Boone NC	28607
David Deese	637 Wafford Circle	Lexington NC	27292-6243
Anna Doerfler Haggerty	1049 Chena Rd.	Ft. Wainwright AK	99703
Gilbert Doggett	105 Pickens St.	Clover SC	29710
Shari Edmisten Crabtree	2273 38th Avenue NE	Hickory NC	28601
Shawn Elbel	1010 Edgewood Ave.	Burlington NC	27215
Christopher Ellis	6408 English Oaks Drive	Raleigh NC	27615
James Farrant	2306 E. Hwy 55	Clover SC	29710
Bill Flemming	3100 North Elm St., Apt. 8B	Greensboro NC	27408-4929
Jenny Jones Goodwin	3928 Hope Valley Rd.	Durham NC	27707
Travis Goodwin	3928 Hope Valley Rd.	Durham NC	27707
Jason Graves	2333 Declaration Dr.	Raleigh NC	27615-5638
Michael Greenspon	124 Allison Way	Cary NC	27511
Julia Harrell	58 Lochinvar Rd.	San Rafael CA	94901
Joshua Harris	110 B Quail Ridge Lane	Boone NC	28607
Justin Harris	1205 Hounslow Dr.	Greensboro NC	27410
Bradley Haywood	941 Council St. Apt. B	High Point NC	27262-3703
Charles Helms	905 Hazelwood Lane	Martinsville VA	24112
Michael Helsabeck	675 Wildflower Trail	Lexington NC	27295
Chad Higdon	51 Heritage Lane	Marble NC	28905-8605
Anthony Hole	3075 Upland Place	Clemmons NC	27012-8606
Nicholas Hope	1603 Stoneybrook Dr.	High Point NC	27265
Lisa Anne Hutson	354 Oakwood Dr.	Mount Holly NC	28120
Kathy Indermill	12100 Tango Lane, Apt. 101	Raleigh NC	27613
Ronald Johnson	2173 Rosebud Road	Walnut Cove NC	27052
Jeff Jones	3909 Reserve Dr. Apt. 1524	Tallahassee FL	32311-1283
Ronald Johnson	2173 Rosebud Rd.	Walnut Cove NC	27052
Jason Jordan	Unknown		
Shannon Kilpatrick	131 Sherwood Circle	Rock Hill SC	29730
Jamie Lafavers	2316 Oxford Dr.	Kannapolis NC	28081-8759
Brian Lang	108 Thornton Breen Place	Holly Spings NC	27540

Krista Lapiro	225 E. 95 th St. Apt 2C	New York, NY	10128
John Leeds	504 Tibbys Dr.	Wilmington NC	28411
John Leupold	4164 Sheridan Drive	Charlotte NC	28205
Shi-Hao Lo	Unknown	Taiwan, China	
Jonathan Maness	2472 NC 8 & 89 S	Walnut Cove NC	27052
Lisha Matthews	PO Box 40	Wade NC	28395-0040
Ehren Meister	2623 Wellington Ridge Loop	Cary NC	27511-8826
Dr. Scott Meister	Hayes School of Music	Boone NC	28608
Keithan Melton	4204 Hillcrest Ave	Nashville TN	37204
Jack Micholson	1110 Hamilton Way	Durham NC	27713
Michael Morel	ASU BOX 12858	Boone NC	28608
Philip Morgan	3664 Stonefield Street SW	Concord NC	28027
Amy Mueller	312 North Pine Run Rd.	Boone NC	28607
Jeremy Muller	ASU Box 15543	Boone NC	28608
David Nebrig	1309 Lashley Park Dr.	Gibonsville NC	27249-2209
Christopher Nelson	281 School Rd E	Asheville NC	28803
Bradley Oliver	2048 Statesville Rd.	Hamptonville NC	27020-7842
Jennifer Olson Jones	4054 Evelyn Ave.	Charlotte NC	28213
Michelle Phipps	576 Timberline Dr.	Galax VA	24333
Lynda Plocinik	3325 S 5th Ave Apt. 64	Whitehall PA	18052-3042
Michael Plowman	527 Kelly Ridge Dr.	Apex NC	27502-1358
Gregory Pope	217 Adams Court	Franklin TN	37064
David Pruett	1420 Meridian Rd, Apt 122	Tallahassee FL	32303
Heather Puckett	802 North 9th St.	Bessemer City NC	28016
Shawn Roberts	22 West Main St. Apt. 203	Morgantown WV	26501
Lindsay Scarborough	444 Aldridge Road	Banner Elk NC	28604
Naren Schoenacher	311 Jordan Rd.	Brevard NC	28712
Robert Simyon	4736 Myers Lane	Harrisburg NC	28705
Charles Smith	312 Wildwood Rd.	Lenoir NC	28645
Jason Smith	55 Sunnyside Dr.	Athens OH	45701-3853
Jayne Sprinkle	135 Summerchase Lane	Morresville NC	28117
Katheryn Starnes	1640 Alhambra Rd.	South Pasadena CA	91030
Sean Stover	107 Hermitage Park Dr.	Hermitage TN	37076
Emily Stringer	108 Pheasant Court	Rocky Mount NC	27804
Julie Summey	PO Box 566	Ware Shoals SC	29692
Shirazette Lez Tinnin	237 N Sunset Dr. Apt. 4	Winston-Salem NC	27101
Sarah Trotter	9900 Cedar Circle Dr. Apt 203	Charlotte NC	28210
Bart Tulbert	183 Ashmont Dr.	Kannapolis NC	28081
Chris Vetrone	404 Davie Ave.	Winston-Salem NC	27127
Chris Wabich	967 E. Edgeware Rd.	Los Angeles CA	90026
Colin Welch-McLoy	5797 Colonial Dr.	New Port Richey FL	34653
Rachel Welch	PO Box 308	Cordova NC	28330
Paul White	1404 Stonethrow Dr.	Austin TX	28748
Thomas White	406 Meadow Dr.	Fuquay-Varina NC	27526
James Woody	935 Lansing Dr.	Mt. Pleasant NC	29464
Jody Wooten	13109 Hermitage Rd.	Savannah GA	31419

Friends of the Band			
Dr. Frank Borkowski	303 Daisy Trace	Banner Elk NC	28604
Mr. dwaine coley	Hiddenite Center, PO Box 311	Hiddenite NC	28636
Mr. R.A. Cornett	ASU Motor Pool	Boone NC	28608
Ms. Barbara Daye	164 Old Fairway Dr.	Boone NC	28607
Mr. Rick Dilling	Hayes School of Music	Boone NC	28608
Dr. Harvey Durham	564 Hillcrest Dr.	Boone NC	28607
Dr. Robert Falvo	Hayes School of Music	Boone NC	28608
Ms. Pam Fisher	164 Old Fairway Dr.	Boone NC	28607
Dean William Harbinson	Hayes School of Music	Boone NC	28608
Dr. Victor Mansure	Hayes School of Music	Boone NC	28608
Ms. Joy Mitchell	ASU Motor Pool	Boone NC	28608
Hunans Restaurant	214 South Gate Dr.	Boone NC	28607
Mr. Randal Outland	Hayes School of Music	Boone NC	28608
Dr. Clinton Parker	PO BOX 2073	Hiddenite NC	28636
Dr. Max Smith	1386 Rhododendron Run	West Jefferson NC	28626
Dr. John Thomas	342 Wild Wood Run	Banner Elk NC	28604

Note: Addresses updated April 2005

Special Thanks To...

The Reunion Committee:

Jenny and Travis Goodwin, Co-chairs

Gene Branon

Kathy Indermill

Ehren Meister

Special Reunion Weekend Contributors:

Dr. Frank Borkowski, ASU Chancellor-Retired

Dr. Bill Harbinson, Dean, Hayes School of Music

The Hayes School of Music

Appalachian State University

Mr. dwaine coley

Duke University Medical Center Staff

Kappa Kappa Psi



Jenny and Travis Goodwin

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