



Standing Wave LLC

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Drum Brothers present high energy performances that celebrate a diverse mix of world instruments and sounds: West African djembe and dunun drums, Egyptian and Irish frame drums, Australian didgeridoo, close harmony vocals, bass & acoustic guitar, saxophone and flute, and original arrangements and compositions. They've been at the forefront of the American hand drumming movement since it began in the early 1990s. Over the years, they have offered numerous school and community rhythm classes, drum circles, and more recently, interactive team building events for organizations and community groups. The ensemble is comprised of Matthew and Michael Marsolek, Lawrence Duncan, Tracy Topp, and Ravi Topp Marsolek.



"I HIGHLY recommend them to any community! But BEWARE! Their energy is contagious!" -Janice Torry, Salmon Arts Council

Select highlights:

- 1999-2019 - Residencies and community concerts in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Alberta, Canada
- 2008 - Performed with Ladysmith Black Mambazo in Billings and Bozeman, Montana
- 2006 - Began offering team building "rhythm experience" events to organizations and corporations throughout the Northwest.
- 2004-2019 - Community rhythm presentations at children's bereavement camps.
- 2001 - 2019 - Rhythm Retreats, at Camp Mimanagish on the Boulder River, the Walking Lightly Ranch near Whitefish, Camp Mak-a-dream, and numerous venues throughout the Northwest.

Montana PBS and recordings

Drum Brothers have been a featured act on Montana PBS's Emmy Award winning program, **11th and Grant with Eric Funk**. To watch the group on this program, just type "Drum Brothers 11th and Grant" into a YouTube search.

Drum Brother have also released two recordings entitled, Power of Rhythm and Remember. Both of these albums can be heard on YouTube, iTunes, Spotify, CDbaby, and most other streaming platforms. On the Remember release, they are joined by mentor and friend, Abdoul Doumbia, from Mali, West Africa.

History: A spark of rhythm

In the late 1980's, Matthew and his brother Patrick Marsolek were inspired by the rhythmic music created during evening circles at the Feathered Pipe Ranch, an educational center west of Helena, Montana. Patrick began making drums for himself, but the instruments were so popular with the Feathered Pipe's guests that they all were purchased immediately. Matthew soon joined him in this new entrepreneurial effort and the two set up shop in the Ranch's garage. During this time, Matthew began studying West African music with his friend and teacher, Michael Harrison.

Drum Brothers

In the fall of 1989, Michael Marsolek left Portland, where he worked in the restaurant business, and moved to Montana to join Matthew and Patrick in the musical trio, *The Marsolek Brothers*. The three also worked together in the newly named drum-building company, *Drum Brothers Drums*. Not long after this, their father David, who had been building drums in Wisconsin and working as a family therapist, also moved to Montana to be part of the venture. *Drum Brothers Drums*, now based in Arlee, Montana, has distributed hand-crafted instruments across the United States and in Canada.

World percussion ensemble

Drum Brothers began performing together as a musical group on New Year's Eve 1994 as a part of Missoula's inaugural First Night celebration. The early group consisted of Matthew, Michael and David Marsolek, and Casey Alexander. The band soon developed a following in Western Montana and released their debut CD, *Power of Rhythm*, in early 1997. In mid 1997, David and Casey left the band to follow other interests (David continues to manage the drum-making shop in Arlee Montana).

Multi-instrumentalist Lawrence Duncan, joined the band in June, 1997. Nathan Zavalney, who first connected with Drum Brothers as Matthew's student, followed in November. Nathan played with Drum Brothers for 10 fun filled years and in March of 2007 left the group to follow other pursuits. Colin Ruggiero (now a renowned documentary film maker) also played with the group from 2008 until 2017. As of 2018, the ensemble's newest members are Tracy Topp on vocals and percussion and Ravi Annan Marsolek (Tracy and Matthew's son) who plays bass guitar, octave mandolin, and percussion.

Individuals make the band

Matthew Marsolek has received awards of excellence from the University of Montana for his musical work with theater and dance. He has studied East Indian and West African music for the past 2 decades with a variety of teachers, including Mukesh Desai from India and Abdoul Doumbia from Mali, West Africa. Matthew has experience and training in jazz, classical, and Hindustani vocal technique and is also an accomplished jazz and classical guitarist. As a recording artist, he has released projects with Drum Brothers and Mandir as well as two solo recordings, the most recent entitled, "The Bhakti Road". A dedicated and charismatic educator, Matthew has a passion for rhythm, harmonic relationships, and the healing and community building potentials of music. He teaches classes and clinics in voice, rhythm, and hand drumming throughout the Northwest.

Michael Marsolek has performed as a vocalist and percussionist in various ensembles including *The Marsolek Brothers* and *Mandir*. He's currently the program director for KUFM/KGPR Montana Public Radio. Michael has produced and performed on the *The Stories Project* (1996) and *A Musical Dreamtime Journey* with Lawrence Duncan released in 2002. A student of the didgeridoo and Native American flute, Michael continues to follow a fascination with exotic percussion instruments, including the riqq, tar and udu-drum.

Lawrence Duncan's contribution to the *Drum Brothers* ensemble is anchored in 25 years of professional woodwind and vocal performance. He is comfortable in diverse musical idioms on instruments that include saxophone, harp, flutes, and ethnic percussion. As well as performing with *Mandir*, Lawrence has collaborated with videographer Dick Ostheimer in the award-winning series *Open Spaces* and has collaborated with Michael Marsolek on their recent 2002 release, *A Musical Dreamtime Journey*.

A dancer since she was three, **Tracy Topp** has choreography experience and training in many dance styles, including West African, Middle Eastern, modern, and jazz. She has studied African drumming and dance with many teachers including; Youssouf Koumbassa, Mabiba Baenge, and Djeneba Sako. A self described renaissance girl, Tracy has a B.A. in Arts from Nebraska Wesleyan and is also a singer and multi-instrumentalist. Since 2002, she has been contributing her artistic talents to Drum Brothers in the manufacture of djembe, ashiko, and frame drums. Tracy also teaches weekly hand drumming classes in Missoula, Montana.

Ravi Annan Marsolek is the home-schooled son of Matthew and Tracy who has been playing and studying music since he was very young. Having grown up in the Drum Brothers music community, rhythm and drumming are a second nature to him. In addition to music-making, Ravi's also passionate about Argentine Tango and dances regularly with the Missoula Tango community. A budding multi-instrumentalist, he's currently exploring and studying bass, mandolin, guitar, piano, and percussion.