

## How Did You Guys Meet?

Contributed by Larry Lawless  
Monday, 17 July 2006

The goal this morning is to run through everything, put a little spit polish on the notes. Doug is teaching a jazz history class this summer session, so today we perform for his class. This gives us a chance to see what it all does together as well as giving us some audience feedback.

As we run the songs, we find we are still tweaking and making arrangement changes as we go. Sometimes there are just too many good ideas, and we have to simply pick one and go with it. After three days of intense rehearsal, our brains and bodies are a little fried. But the performance goes well, we all have enough of the performer (or should that read "ham") in us that we step it up in front of people, taking time for each composer to introduce his piece and tell the thoughts behind it.

One student asks the question of how we all got together, so I'll share that here. Doug and I (as well as Dan) met at the University of North Texas when we were students in the 1970's. We have kept in touch over the years, and when I first started getting serious about the project, I emailed Doug to see what he thought of this crazy idea. He immediately answered "Love it. We could do the recording here and ..." that started the ball rolling. Bart and I met through his drummer forum board, the DrummerCafe. At one point he was touring with a country recording artist from Nashville, and they played in Ft. Worth, just an hour up the road from me in Stephenville, so I went to see him play and meet him. I introduced myself at a break, and we sat down for some conversation, hit it off right away. A few months later he actually played in Stephenville, so my family and I took Bart out to dinner, had him over to the house. He made the mistake of saying "if you ever need a place to stay in Nashville...", well the Percussive Arts Society International Convention just happened to be in Nashville that year, so I mooched off Bart for three days. After that he hasn't been able to get rid of me. Originally, James Walker of Connecticut was going to be with us, but had to back out fairly early on. Through a mutual friend of Doug and I, Dan Lidster of Encore Mallets, I contacted Rich at Winona State University. Rich was also a North Texas grad, so he fit right in. His suggestions for the project all along have been a great help to me. Finally, when John Mark Piper had to pull out fairly late along in the project (we had already been practicing his 2 pieces), Doug suggested his student David, who was moving back to the Chicago area after finishing his Masters and a little start on a Doctorate at the University of Colorado. David jumped right in, had one tune already, but basically put together the second one in a matter of days to get us the notes to learn. With the farflung diversity of the group, considering that this project has been put together by email and phone call, I'm amazed at how well things are falling into place.