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The beautiful and quiet evening of Tuesday, April 9 was pleasantly interrupted by the loud booms of tom drums, unique pings of triangles and gankogui (an African double bell), and memorable melodies of intense marimba playing.

The Radford University Percussion Ensemble performed its annual Spring Percussion concert that sincerely left the audience craving more.

Each semester the RU Percussion Ensemble puts on a concert that features works of all sorts of percussion music that directly reflects music from different cultures from all over the world. This concert, however, featured a very special guest artist that has created a legacy that, as Dr. Rob Sanderl, director of percussion studies at Radford, describes, easily makes him “one of the most important percussionists of the last 50 years.”

A world-traveling percussion performer, pedagogue, and clinician, Bill Cahn was a fantastic accent on the annual Spring Percussion concert! Cahn, having been in Radford for three days teaching clinics about music improvisation and music business, running rehearsals with the students in preparation for the concert, certainly had an impact on the percussion students at Radford.

As put by Jenna Duranko, a senior music business major, “I thought it was one of the most exciting concerts we’ve had, having Bill Cahn here. Getting to play in a piece with him was amazing!”

To make the concert even a bit more special was performing some pieces composed by Cahn himself. “Just sing” and “Time Traveler” were two pieces performed completely by the students and “Kebjar Bali” was another piece composed by Cahn that he soloed on. Patrick McBride, a freshman music education major, expressed his thoughts on having Cahn perform on the concert:

“It was encouraging having the composer of the songs we were playing there and leading us through the right interpretation. Having a founder of modern percussion at Radford for a weekend clinic is an honor and something I’ll always remember.” It is clear that members of the RU Percussion Ensemble were very thrilled to host such an esteemed member of the percussion community.

The concert itself incorporated many different types of arts, as well. Dr. Richard Bay, former professor of art at RU, improvised a painting while the ensemble performed ‘Blue Burn.’

Danah bella, a dance professor at RU, improvised modern dance moves while the ensemble improvised on various percussion instruments.

Even some digital art was displayed while the performers played a few pieces. The percussion ensemble concerts always add extra elements to all that is already going on increasing the intensity of the performers and engagement of the audience.

Kyle Osterhaus, a senior Music Business major, described his last percussion concert with RU as a “fun, closing concert for my undergraduate program.”

The Radford University Percussion Ensemble strives to put on the most exhilarating concerts with all different styles of art displayed so that the audience may appreciate and have fun at the engaging concerts they put on.

This concert was especially a treat for all of those who attended and it is without question that, the next time the Radford University Percussion Ensemble is performing, people will be flocking to experience a little taste of the world!