

Jim Santi Owen

Jim Santi Owen is an American percussionist, educator, producer, and performer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Drumming since the age of eight, Owen began an intensive training in the North Indian percussion instrument *tabla* in 1991, studying under Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri at the Ali Akbar College of Music, the California Institute of the Arts, and in India. In 1995, Owen began studying South Indian percussion instruments including *mridangam*, *ghatam*, *kanjira* and *morsing* with master percussionist T.H. Subash Chandran, and the temple drum, *thavil*, with K. Sekar. At Cal Arts, Owen studied Jazz with Charlie Haden, James Newton, and Tootie Heath and African drumming and dance from the Ladzekpo Brothers. He was fortunate to study North Indian music and *tabla* accompaniment from the great Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. Owen also studied the art of accompaniment for the North Indian dance known as *Kathak* from one of India's greatest dancers, the late Pandit Chitresh Das. Owen holds a Bachelor's of Humanities from New College of California and a Master's degree in World Music from California Institute of the Arts. He served as the Music Director for the San Francisco World Music Festival from 2009 to 2014 and is on faculty at Dominican University, The Jazz Conservatory, LINES Ballet School, and the Ali Akbar College of Music. He is currently serving a 3-year term as a panelist on the Zellerbach Family Fund's Community Arts Panel.

Jim Santi Owen has performed extensively with world-class musicians from a myriad of cultural and musical backgrounds. These include his gurus, Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri, Subash Chandran, and K. Sekar with whom he performed both in India and the U.S. Other internationally renowned artists with whom Owen has performed include: Jazz legend Pharoah Sanders, Nubian musician Hamza el Din, guitar innovator Stanley Jordan, Kathak dance master Pandit Chitresh Das, *sitar* maestro Kartik Seshadri, renowned Persian vocalist Sharam Nazeri, drumset virtuoso Steve Smith, minimalist composer Terry Riley, Jazz saxophonist Joseph Jarman (Art Ensemble of Chicago), Israeli *oud* player Yair Dalal, young *sarode* maestro Alam Khan, *tabla* virtuoso Bikram Ghosh, *kanjira* exponent Ganesh Kumar, Indo-Jazz fusion artist George Brooks, didgeridoo master Stephen Kent, devotional singer Jai Uttal, avant-garde pianist Myra Melford, Italian percussionist Alessandra Belloni, Tibetan artist Techung, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Burmese *pot-waing* player Kyaw Kyaw Naing, Rova Saxophone Quartet, Cuban pianist Omar Sosa and *bansuri* flute exponent Steve Gorn. Owen has also appeared on numerous recordings in America and has recorded in India with *ghatam* maestro T.H. Vikku Vinayakram and *kanjira* wizard Selva Ganesh.

As Music Director for the San Francisco World Music Festival, Owen directed a Youth World Music Orchestra and collaborated with master musicians from China, South Korea, Tibet, India, Spain, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mali, Azerbaijan, and Burma, and indigenous musicians from the

Thao culture of Taiwan and the Coastanoan Rumsen Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area.

In 1999, Owen received a fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies (A.I.I.S.) which enabled him to spend two and a half years living in India conducting research on classical and folk percussion ensembles. During this time, Owen was based alternately in Kolkata and Chennai but traveled extensively throughout India to document drumming traditions in Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and West Bengal. In addition to the A.I.I.S. fellowship, Owen has been awarded five grants from the Zellerbach Family Fund, a fellowship from The National Gugak Center of South Korea, an Isadora Duncan Award, a Black Box Award from the SF Weekly, and numerous grants to support his work as Music Director of the San Francisco World Music Festival (please see below).

The San Francisco dance community has embraced Owen as an award winning composer and performer. Owen has worked with numerous dancers and choreographers, including the San Francisco Ballet, Pandit Chitresh Das, Alonzo King, Kim Epifano, Joanna Haigood and Zaccho Dance Theater, Yannis Adoniou, Keith Hennessey, and K.J. Holmes. He has studied and taught Contact Improvisation and other body-based improvisational forms. From 1994 through 1998, Owen collaborated with dancer/musician Jules Beckman on an evolving form of dance, voice, and bucket drumming called Percussion Theater, which he continues to teach. Owen is currently on faculty with Dominican University, the San Francisco Dance Conservatory, LINES Ballet School, LINES Pre-Professional Program, and the ODC Children's Program where he teaches music, drumming, and performance to hundreds of young dancers.

As an educator, Owen has extensive experience working with students ranging in age from pre-school to the post-graduate level and beyond. Trained and certified in an approach to children's music and dance education known as Orff-Schulwerk, Owen has taught music to children in numerous schools throughout California and around the world including Synergy, the San Francisco School, Park Day School, Marin Country Day School, and the Greenwood School. He has taught master classes for youth and adults in Hong Kong, Spain, and India. Owen was a featured clinician at the 2002 and 2007 AOSA (American Orff-Schulwerk Association) National Conferences and the 2000 NCOSA (Northern California Orff-Schulwerk Association) mini-conference. He has been a guest clinician, an art specialist for youth, a director of a K-8 music program and a lead teacher with Cal Art's Community Arts Partnership. At the university level, Owen is on faculty at Dominican University and the Jazz Conservatory. He has been a guest instructor with the Experimental Performance Institute of New College of California and has taught at Cornish University, California State University, Sacramento, and Cal Arts. Owen has twice been a featured performer and clinician at the Seattle World Rhythm Festival, California State

University Sacramento's Day of Percussion, and the Percussion Arts Society's Day of Percussion.

Owen co-directs the award-winning Indian percussion ensemble Tabla Rasa with whom he produced San Francisco's first Festival of Sacred Drumming, Dance, and Song in 1998 and the beloved Sacred Drums of India concerts.

Selected Employment:

2013-Present

Community Arts Panelist, Zellerbach Family Foundation, San Francisco, CA

2009-2014

Music Director, San Francisco World Music Festival, San Francisco, CA

2010-Present

Faculty, The Jazz Conservatory, Berkeley, CA

1986-Present

Freelance Performing Musician, Teacher, Clinician, Director, and Producer

2006-Present

Dominican University, LINES BFA Program, San Rafael, CA

2004-Present

LINES Summer Program, San Francisco, CA

2005-2014

Lines Ballet, LBSET Program, San Francisco, CA

2005-2006

San Francisco Dance Conservatory, San Francisco, CA

2006

San Francisco School, Orff Music And Dance Specialist, San Francisco, CA

2005-2006

San Francisco Arts Education Project, San Francisco, CA

2005-2006

Oakland Youth Chorus, Orff Music And Dance Specialist, Oakland, CA

2001-Present

Ali Akbar College of Music, Faculty, San Rafael, CA

2003-2005

California Institute of the Arts, Teaching Assistant in South Indian Percussion and World Music Survey, Valencia, CA

2003-2005

California Institute of the Arts, Community Arts Partnership, Lead Teacher, Valencia, CA

2003-2005

P.S. Arts, Orff Music And Dance Specialist, Los Angeles, CA

2002-2003

Creative Arts Charter School, Director of K-8 Orff Music Program, San Francisco, CA

1995-1998

Orff Music And Dance Specialist - Synergy, San Francisco School, Park Day School, Marin Country Day School, and the Greenwood School.

Selected Education:

2003-2005

California Institute of the Arts, MFA in World Music Performance, Valencia, CA

2002-2003

New College of California, BA in Humanities, San Francisco, CA

1991-2015

Ali Akbar College of Music, Ongoing Study of North Indian Classical Music, San Rafael, CA

1994-2001

Study of Classical Indian percussion, India

1995-2001

Mills College, Orff-Schulwerk Certification, Oakland, CA

1991-1992

California Institute of the Arts, Undergraduate Jazz and World Music Studies, Performance, Valencia, CA

1987-1990

Fresno City College, Jazz and Humanities, Fresno, CA

1989

California State University, Fresno, Upper Division Poetry Studies, Fresno, CA

1985-1989

Hoover High School, College Prep Courses, Fresno CA

Selected Fellowships, Awards, and Grants:

1998-2001

American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Senior Performing Arts Fellowship,
Study and Research of Percussion Ensemble in India

1998

Black Box Award, Best New Score for Dance

1996

Isadora Duncun Award, Best New Score for Dance

1998/2002/2003/2013/2014

Zellerbach Family Fund

2009-2014

The following foundations funded Owen's work as Music Director for the San Francisco World Music Festival:

Arts Loan Fund, Bothin Foundation, California Arts Council, Grants for the Arts, Wattis Foundation, Sam Mazza Foundation, Westaf, Sun Culture Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Columbia Foundation, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, Fleishhacker Foundation, Christensen Fund, Bill Graham Memorial Fund, March Foundation, Morgan Family Foundation, Panta Rhea Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Fresno Regional Foundation.

Selected Productions:

2009-2014

San Francisco World Music Festival

2000-2005

Sacred Drums of India

1998

Festival of Sacred Drumming, Dance, and Song

1998

World Music Sundays

Selected Publications:

2002

“Sophisticated Simplicity: North and South Indian Rhythmic Concepts as Applied to the Orff-Schulwerk,” Orff Echo, fall 2002, Volume XXXV, Number 1.

Selected Workshops:

2015

Master classes for Youth and Teachers, Mumbai, India

2013-2014

Master classes for Youth and Teachers, Beijing, China

2013

Master Classes for Music Educators, Barcelona and Madrid, Spain

2012

Master classes for Youth and Teachers, Hong Kong

2010

Master Classes for Orff Teachers, Washington D.C.

2011

Master Classes for Orff Teachers, Idaho

2007

AOSA National Conference, San Jose, CA

2006

Bay Area Tap Festival, Indian Rhythmic Concepts

2006

Bay Area Orff Certification Course, Drumming Skills and Indian Rhythmic Concepts

2006

Doug Goodkin’s Jazz Course, Jazz Drumming

2006

Kripalu Sacred Pulse Festival, Indian Rhythmic Concepts

2004-2012

LINES Ballet School, Drumming for Dancers

2005 – 2006

San Francisco Dance Conservatory, Drumming for Dancers

Spring 2006
San Francisco School, Time, Technique, and Theory

June 2005
Percussive Arts Society, Indian Rhythmic Concepts

2003 - 2005
New College of California, Percussion Theater Workshops for the Experimental
Performance Institute

2003
Cornish University, Master Classes for the Dance and Music Departments

2002 and 2004
California State University, Sacramento, Indian Rhythmic Concepts

2002
AOSA National Conference in Las Vegas, NV, Indian Rhythmic Concepts

2000
Bay Area Orff Schulwerk Association, Indian Rhythmic Concepts