

THE MALLET GUY: 45 YEARS (and counting) OF JERRY TACHOIR
BY JOSH GOTTRY

2017 marks Grammy-nominated Jerry Tachoir's 45th year as an artist and clinician, but even while Jerry was still a junior in high school, he was already known as "The Mallet Guy." Growing up in Pittsburgh, he studied primarily as a classical percussionist with Eugene "Babe" Fabrizi, and his proficiency on all the mallet instruments opened performance opportunities that have included the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the McKeesport Symphony, the American Wind Symphony, and the International Symphony in Switzerland.



At the same time, back in 1972 when Jerry was starting to distinguish himself, the Musser Company was developing their first prototype of the keylon marimba, an instrument they brought to Pittsburgh to demo. Jerry got the call to play this new marimba and was then signed to his long-standing endorsement deal with Musser. Thanks also to William F. Ludwig, Jerry had the opportunity to meet Gary Burton, at which point he expressed an interest in learning advanced harmony and improvisation. At Gary's suggestion, Jerry attended Berklee College of Music in Boston and, after graduating in 1976, Jerry taught at Berklee for two years. Following a brief stint in New York City, Jerry was encouraged to move to Nashville as his mallet skills would be in high demand. The decision paid off as a centrally located hub for his many tours. Additionally, Jerry's talents were quickly utilized throughout this music capital and he remains the top mallet recording artist in Nashville.

His quartet, The Jerry Tachoir Group, has released numerous recordings and performed at most of the major concert halls and jazz festivals throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, including the Northsea Jazz Festival in Holland,

the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, the Montreal International Jazz Festival, the Ottawa Jazz Festival, and the Pittsburgh Mellon Jazz Festival. Additionally, Jerry has established himself as a respected clinician within the percussion community. He has presented mallet instrument masterclasses and jazz improvisation clinic/performances at numerous colleges and universities, both in the U.S. and internationally. Jerry was the first to release an educational DVD (in two volumes) for the vibraphone on Master Study Series. His method book, *A Contemporary Mallet Method - An Approach to the Vibraphone and Marimba* has become a standard in mallet percussion education and is required study at several major music schools.

Jerry's activity within the Percussive Arts Society is equally noteworthy. He has performed or presented at PASIC five times, as early as 1982 and as recently as 2004 for a Late Night Keyboard Performance. His contributions have regularly been featured in Percussive Notes, starting with a 1984 article entitled "Clarity in Executing Lines on the Vibraphone Through the Use of Dampening" and recently asking the question "Two Or Four Mallets?" in 2011.

Check out an interview with Jerry Tachoir and listen to some of his music at <https://youtu.be/Y7p7tYqEF7g>.