

*Different Drum* was founded by multi-instrumentalist/composer Alex Weiss in 1991. The name was derived from the poem by Henry David Thoreau that talks about people who march to the beat of a different drum (not the Linda Ronstadt song).

In the beginning there was: cornet, saxophone, French horn, quinto, conga, tumbadora, bongos, djembe, dunnun, kenkene (*W. African drums*) and many Afro/Latin percussion instruments. Instrumentation has also included: tuba, trombone, baritone sax, bass guitar, acoustic guitar, violin, keyboards, drum set and a full range of West African & Latin percussion. In the two decades of the band's existence a couple of dozen musicians have worked with Different Drum. The musicians who have performed in this ensemble have come from: Columbia, Peru, Equator, Taiwan, Ghana, Germany, as well as from Louisiana to Maine, USA.

What remains consistent with this ensemble is the emphasis on melody & rhythm, bridging the sounds of Africa and the Americas. Alex has composed about one third of the band's arrangements incorporating traditional Latin, or African rhythms. A third of the repertoire is folkloric or traditional songs from: Cuba, the Andes, South Africa, West Africa, Trinidad, Brazil; and the final third are jazz standards that lend themselves to Different Drum's multi-ethnic beat.

The versatility of this ensemble has led to a wide range of performances, such as: Opening the show for the three time Grammy nominee jazz singer Tierney Sutton at the Carolina Theatre in Durham, sharing the stage with Chuck Davis and the African American Dance Ensemble at the International Folk Festival in Fayetteville, Duke Gardens summer concert series, Durham Public Library *bi-lingual music and stories*, as well as performances in many other festivals and schools throughout North Carolina.

In 1993 Alex received a Songwriters Fellowship from the North Carolina Arts Council. Mr. Weiss used these funds to record his first CD featuring his original compositions with the ensemble Different Drum. (*Changes in a Dream*)

Alex now has six CDs available on the Silent Dayze Music label that feature or incorporate Different Drum. Alex's most recent release featuring the band is "*The Adventures of Alex Weiss & Different Drum*" a compilation of favorites recorded between 1986 and 2006.

Since 2001 the consistent foundation for this versatile ensemble has been:

**Brian Pearl:** bass guitar, shekeré, bass drum, bell, and clave.

**Li-Lan Hsiang Weiss:** conga & tumbadora, clave & maracas, dunnun & kenkene , tamborín & castanets, dance (salsa, cumbia merengue).

**Alex Weiss:** trumpet, alto, soprano & sopranino recorders, harmonica, bongos, quinto, conga, tumbadora, djembe, dunnun, kenkene, clave, bell, quiro, afuche, shaker, & shekeré.

And the beat goes on...

Alex Weiss

Director, Different Drum