

## Different Drum Bio

Led by award-winning composer and multi-instrumentalist Alex Weiss, Different Drum bridges the sounds of Africa & the Americas. Playful Calypsos, beautiful Brazilian Sambas and lively South African Township music are some of the fabric that holds this band together.

"Beautiful Melody, in fact, is the soundtrack not to a film, but to Weiss' expansive imagination. Musically speaking, he's a bonafide vagabond tempered by uncommon discipline." Joe Vanderford, Independent Weekly May, 2004

Since 1992 Different Drum has been performing at festivals, public/private schools, and universities from Georgetown, South Carolina to Charlotte, North Carolina. This versatile ensemble is also available through the Arts Council for Fayetteville and Cumberland County for educational performances and residencies in schools. Different Drum's recent performances include Greenville(SC) International Festival, Fayetteville International Folk Festival, Jacksonville Spring Family Fun Day, NC Turkey Festival (Raeford, NC), Duke Gardens Summer Concert Series (Durham, NC) and numerous schools throughout the state. Alex Weiss & Different Drum also book weddings and private parties.

Different Drum performs as a trio, quartet, or quintet. Alex and Li-Lan are also available for residencies or performances incorporating stories and music of Africa and the Americas.

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**Li-Lan Hsiang-Weiss** (La Chinita) (congas & percussion) was born in Taiwan, but raised in Central America. So she grew up listening to Latin music, learned Spanish from an early age, and spoke Mandarin to her parents at home. Music and dance have always been part of her life: Li-lan has loved to dance since she was three, studied piano for ten years, and has been playing and studying Latin and African rhythms since 2000. Li-Lan has performed in festivals, libraries, and cafes as a duo with her husband Alex, with Trillium the nine piece Marimba ensemble, Son Libre and Different Drum Afro/Latin ensemble. She holds a Master in Oriental Medicine and is a licensed acupuncturist in North Carolina [www.armoniahealth.com](http://www.armoniahealth.com).

**Lisa Lindsay** (alto saxophone) is an alto saxophonist and historian living in Chapel Hill. She began playing jazz in her native Louisiana, but her musical influences also stem from travels and study in the Caribbean and Africa. She has played merengue in the Dominican Republic, cumbia with a US-based Columbian band, highlife in Ghana, afrobeat in Nigeria, and South African jazz in Cape Town. The highlight of Lisa's musical life so far was joining Fela Kuti and his band onstage at his Shrine when she was living in Lagos in the 1990s. Before that, she studied jazz improvisation at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Now a professor of African history, she teaches at the University of North Carolina.

**Brian Pearl** (bass & percussion) - Brian's roots can be traced back to Mexico (Missouri). Mr. Pearl grew up in Chicago and played in jazz and rock bands, before moving to Boston in 1996. In the fall of 2000 Brian and his wife relocated to North Carolina and joined Different Drum shortly thereafter. Brian owns his own marketing & consulting company and is currently the worship leader at Vineyard Community Church in Wake Forest.

**Alex Weiss** (trumpet, flute & congas) - Composer, multi instrumentalist and director for Different Drum, Señor Weiss comes from Farockaway, a small costal village on the edge of New York City. His love of music began as a little boy watching the marching bands parade through town on the national holidays. El muchacho Weiss played in the school bands and in several blues, and rock/jazz fusion bands before leaving New York and taking to the road at age 20. Alex's interest in other cultures and lifestyles led him to travels across the US, through Mexico and eventually to Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Central America. Alex lives in Durham, N.C. with his wife and partner in music Li-Lan. Alex or, Señor Blanco as he's known, has five Cd's available on the Silent Dayze Music label.

**Pavelid Castañeda** - Born in Colombia, Pavelid completed high school and university studies in Bogota, Colombia. He studied Music Education at the National Pedagogical University of Colombia. Pavelid's life has been completely dedicated to music... singer; music director, composer and teacher. In 1992 he relocated his family in Babylon, NY and soon thereafter he started his career as a renowned harpist, playing in the most renowned venues in New York. At this time Pavelid and his wife Gladis enjoy a more relaxing life in North Carolina. Mr. Castañeda is a multi instrumentalist performing on accordion, cuatro, and piano, but his main instrument remains the Llanera Harp - Folk harp of the plains of Colombia.

\*Pavelid is available as part of Different Drum's multi-cultural school performances.

**Hector Cano** - Hector is from Medellin Colombia. Hector began playing music on plastic tubes simulating a flute when he was six years old. Next Señor Cano took up the congas and played percussion in a traditional Colombian dance group as a teenager. Mr. Cano then added trumpet to his repertoire of instruments and studied at the music school at the Antioquia University.

In 2004 Hector and his family moved to Raleigh, NC. He meet Alex Weiss during a performance at Fiesta del Pueblo 2003, and joined Different Drum soon after. Mr. Cano also performed with Sajaso, West end Mambo, and Samecumba .Hector and Alex also created The Son Libre project featuring vocalist Claudia Gomez (2005-06).

**Erich Lieth** - Erich began his musical journey on the recorder at age 6 in his native Germany. However, his aspiration was to learn guitar, which he took up at age 10 after his family moved to Chapel Hill, NC. Later he added piano, and keyboard remains his primary performance instrument, though he has taught all three instruments. After a twenty year detour conducting research in neuroscience, Dr. Lieth returned to his musical roots to teach, compose, perform and record. He co-founded the Latin group Saludos Compay, and is principal and music director of One Sun, a world beat jazz collective of musicians. In 2008 he joined Different Drum and since then has performed with Mr. Weiss (Señor Blanco) in many contexts. Erich lives in Chapel Hill with his wife, Marya, and two children. [www.erichlieth.com](http://www.erichlieth.com)