Brian T. O'Neill

Eclectic Percussionist & Broadway/Pops Drummer

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"Percussion master and musical polymath"
—Boston Phoenix

"Incredible musicianship"
—Downbeat

Why Work With Me?

My biggest strength is being a chameleon: I work as an orchestral percussionist, a Broadway drummer, and as a jazz/world hand percussionist. As such, I am frequently called when a chair requires all the usual instruments and something unusual: playing bodhran in a Broadway show; covering section percussion and Pops drum set on a single show; playing tabla or frame drumming with a symphony; or to improvise and be flexible in a choral setting. I enjoy the process of serving the music, being easy to work with, and making it easy for my colleagues to do their best work too.

Orchestral, Chamber, Solo, Choral Performance (+d=drumset also played)

ENSEMBLE (AS PERCUSSIONIST)

- **Orchestral sub list:**
  Boston Festival Orchestra (2026–), Albany Symphony > American Music Festival '22-23 (principal), Albany Symphony (+d) (2016-), Portland Symphony Orchestra (2018–), New Bedford Symphony (2024-), NH Music Festival (2024), Boston Modern Orchestra Project (2017-), Springfield Symphony (2016-) and others
- **Chamber:**
  Albany Symphony Dogs of Desire (+d) (2022,2023),
  Cape Cod Chamber Orchestra (2019-),
  New England Brass (d), Fenway Quintet (d)
- **Choral Ensembles:**
  Polymnia Choral Society (MA); Orchestra Pro Musica (Albany), Spectrum Singers (MA), Chorus of Westerly (RI), Wellesley Chorus (MA), HalaLisa Singers (MA)

SOLOIST

- Northern Arizona University Percussion Ensemble. Premiered Chris Vennel's "Losing the Shackles" for percussion soloist and ensemble ('11)
- Concerto winner (vibes):
  Sun Cities Sym. of the West Valley (AZ) ('99)
- Concerto winner (vibes)
  Northern Arizona University Orch. ('99)

Musical Theater

LOCAL ON NATIONAL TOURS

- American Repertory Theater: *Evita* (sub) ('23)
- Providence Performing Arts Center (RI):
  *Ain't Too Proud** ('24,'22) (p);
  Anastasia – National Tour ('18) (d/p);
- Hanover Theater, Worcester (MA):
  Motown the Musical ('17) (p)
- Boston Opera House: (MA)
  Motown the Musical ('15) (p);
  Kristin Chenoweth ('12) (p)

REGIONAL PRODUCTIONS

- North Shore Music Theatre: *Come From Away ('26)* (*bodhrán*/p), *Fiddler on the Roof* ('24) (d/p), *Mamma Mia* ('21, '18) (p), *The Bodyguard* ('19) (p), *Hairspray* ('18) (p), *42nd Street** ('17) (p); *Spamalot** ('16) (d/p); *West Side Story* ('16) (p); *Shrek** ('15) (d/p); *Anything Goes** ('14) (d/p)
- Lyric Stage Company (MA): *Hello, Dolly!* ('25) (d/p), *Urinetown* ('24) (d/p), *Sister Act* ('23) (d), *Pacific Overtures* ('19) (d/p)
- Cape Playhouse (MA): *Come From Away* ('25) (*bodhrán*/p); *The Fantasticks* ('22) (d/p)
- Speakeasy Stage (MA): *Swept Away ('26)*

Jazz, Commercial, Star Attraction, and Other Performance Experience

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

- The Who @ TD Garden Boston ('22)
- Sonic Symphony (video game orch.) @ Symphony Hall Boston ('24), Emerson Colonial Theatre Boston ('23)
- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica (artistic director, vibes)
  - Norton Museum of Art (FL) ('23)
  - Capitol Center for the Arts (NH) ('22)
  - Artist Concert Series of Sarasota (FL) ('18)
  - South Miami Dade Cultural Arts Center (FL) ('18)
  - Detroit Institute of Arts (MI) ('17)
  - New Music Edmonton (CAN) ('17)
  - Lied Center (KS) ('17)
  - Huntington Summer Arts Festival (NY) ('17)
  - Musical Instrument Museum (AZ) ('17)
  - Montreal Jazz Festival – Main Stage (CAN) ('12)
  - Wassermusik Festival Berlin (GER) ('13)
  - Celebrate Mexico Now (NY) ('13)
- Kingdom Hearts (video game orchestra) @ The Wang Theatre ('18)
- Boston Irish Festival w/ Ishna ('16,'17)
- Kennedy Center w/ Klezwoods ('12)
- Donna Summer *Crayons* Tour (multiple cities) ('08)

ENSEMBLE MEMBERSHIP

- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica: 22-pc Esquivel Megaband & global jazz/exotic chamber quintet (artistic director, composer, performer)
- Czarna Wolgastar (drumset, artistic director)
- Ishna (world percussion, *bodhrán*)
- Bert Seager's The Why (chamber jazz)
- Jeni Jol (Turkish/Otto-Americana duo)
- Klezwoods (Klezmer/Balkan)
- David Wax Museum (guest drummer)
- Previous Ensembles: cordis, Newpoli, Aljashu, La Tuza, Orchestra of This

Recordings, Awards, Teaching, Media

RECENT RECORDINGS

- Ishna: *Slí Amach* ('26)
- Albany Symphony: ***Michael Daugherty: Blue Electra* ('25),** *Viet Cuong Renewal* ('25), *Adventures Underground* ('22)
- Mehmet Sanlikol: *Turkish Hipster* ('23)
- Klezwoods: *Toy Monkey* ('18)
- cordis: *Seams* ('16)
- Bert Seager's The Why: *The Why* ('14)
- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica: *Where Here Meets There* ('13)
- Klezwoods: *The 30th Meridian: From Cairo to St. Petersburg with Love* ('12)
- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica: *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel* ('10) & *Third River Rangoon* ('11)
- David Wax Museum: *Everything Is Saved* ('11)
- Klezwoods: *Oy Yeah!* ('10)

AWARDS, EDUCATION, AFFILIATIONS, SKILLS

- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica
  - Named 2012 Best World Music Act (*Boston Phoenix* annual readers' poll)
  - Nominated 2012 International Artist of the Year (*Boston Music Awards*)
- Recorded percussion on 2011 Song of the Year by David Wax Museum (*Boston Music Awards*)
- Bachelor of Music, Percussion Performance (*Summa Cum Laude*), Northern Arizona University (Dr. Steven Hemphill)
- 11 years of formal piano studies
- Member, American Federation of Musicians (AFM)
- Languages: English, Brazilian Portuguese (interm.), Spanish (interm.), Polish (beg.)

MASTER CLASSES AND TEACHING

- Various percussion masterclasses at
  - University of Nevada Las Vegas ('14)
  - University of Massachusetts Lowell ('12, '14)
  - Frederick Maryland PAS Day of Percussion ('13)
  - WUMB Radio ('11)
- New England Conservatory (substitute teaching): World Rhythms class ('10)
- Somerville High School Drumline Coach ('07, '08)

RADIO AND TV HIGHLIGHTS

- WNYC New Sounds - feature spot about Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica and other "global Jazz" artists ('13)
- PBS: Music supervisor for the film, *Plastic Paradise: A Swingin' Trip Through America's Polynesian Obsession* ('12)
- Additional appearances: Ibero 90.9 (Mexico), WUMB; Channel 11 (Mexico City), Panamerika (lat-am), KHON, WYEP, WBCN, WAAF