

# DEREK GRAY

Drums/Percussion/Teacher

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## Personal Details:

Male, 26 Years Old  
Canadian Citizen

## Education:

MA in Ethnomusicology - York University (2014-2016)  
Bachelor of Contemporary Music (Honours) - Humber College (2007-2011)  
Kodaly Level I Teaching Certificate - Royal Conservatory of Music (ongoing)  
Orff Level I Teaching Certificate - Royal Conservatory of Music (2015)

## Education (Other):

### 2013 Folkloric Music - Biel/Bienne, Switzerland

In October 2013, Derek spent two weeks studying Batá with **Julio Davalos (Conjunto Folklorico de Cuba)**. Originally from Havana, Julio is a master drummer of folkloric Afro-Cuban styles (Batá, Rumba, Guaguanco, Columbia, etc.) Currently based in Switzerland, Julio co-authored a series of books documenting the folkloric vocal traditions of Cuba, *Cantos Afro-Cubano*. With Julio, Derek studied the Batá tradition - a continuation of his studies in Cuba earlier in the year.

### 2013 Winter Residency - Banff Centre

In February/March 2013, Derek was invited to spend 5 weeks as a practicing artist at the **Banff Centre**. Over the course of his residency, Derek focused on refining/internalizing the Cuban Batá repertoire through transcription and practice. He also began the process of adapting Batá rhythms to the drum kit. For the final two weeks of the residency, Derek was joined by the members of **Roarshaq**, a Toronto-based creative music ensemble. The group focused their residency on composing new music, rehearsing, and workshopping musical concepts in preparation for a tour/recording in April 2013.

## 2013 Folkloric Music - Havana, Cuba

In January 2013, Derek travelled to Cuba where he studied folkloric music. For 6 weeks, Derek studied Batá with **Eryk Michael Duarte Herrera**, aka. "Lucumi" (**Jane Bunnett, Rumberos de Cuba**). Focusing on Batá (drumming tradition closely related to the Santeria religion), Derek studied the drum language, vocal "cantos", and the spiritual context of the music. In addition, Derek studied Rumba with **Diunis Valdes O'Farrill**, leader of **Rumba Morena** (the only all-female group in Havana).

## 2012 Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Contemporary Music

In 2011, Derek was invited to participate in the three-week intensive music program at the **Banff Centre for the Arts**. Working alongside an inspired group of promising jazz musicians, and a faculty of world-renowned performers/educators, Derek had the opportunity to learn from/share with artists from around the world (including Australia, Europe and South America).

## 2011 Betty Carter Jazz Ahead Residency

Derek was selected to attend the **Betty Carter Jazz Ahead** residency in Washington, DC. This two-week program gathered young jazz musicians/composers from around the world, and helped to refine their music/performance skills. There were 21 musicians (from Israel, Amsterdam, New Orleans, New York, and Chicago) participating in the program. Derek was one of only two musicians chosen to represent Canada. This two-week long program culminated in three performances on the Millennium Stage at the **Kennedy Centre**. As the program had a strong emphasis on composition, these concerts featured songs written by students in the program, including Derek's original, "Big Mac".

## 2009 Traditional Music - Ghana, West Africa

In the summer of 2009, Derek travelled to Ghana, where he studied traditional West African hand drumming with local masters. Over the course of two months in Ghana, he completed an Ethnomusicology course run jointly by the University of Alberta and University of Ghana. This course allowed him to explore Ghana and learn many styles of music from around the country. Finally, he spent three weeks living in Dagbamete, a village in the Volta Region. While in the village, he studied West African percussion with master drummers **Kwasi Dunyo** and **Ledzi Agudzemegah**.

## 2008-2015 Private Studying (Notable Teachers)

**Mark Kelso** (Head of Drums/Percussion, Humber College)

**Steve Mancuso** (Teacher, Humber College)

**Clarence Penn** (Dave Douglas, Maria Schneider)

**Jose Luis Quintana**, aka. “**Changuito**” (Los Van Van)

**Ruy Lopez Nussa** (La Academia, Mezcla)

**Dan Weiss** (Chris Tarry Group, David Binney)

**Jonathan Blake** (Grammy-nominated drummer, Donny McCaslin, Tom Harrell)

**Larnell Lewis** (Teacher, Humber College)

**Nate Smith** (Chris Potter, Dave Holland)

## Work Experience (Musician):

### 2013-2015 Traditional Batá Ensemble (Director/Lead Drummer/Singer)

Lead drummer/singer of the Toronto-based Afro-Cuban folkloric ensemble. The group performs toques (rhythms) and cantos (vocal songs) of the Batá tradition. In addition, the group gives workshops to all ages in the Toronto area.

### 2009-2015 Gray Matter (Co-Leader/Composition/Drums)

Co-leader of **Gray Matter** with bassist Justin Gray. This contemporary jazz quintet, featuring Grammy-award trumpeter **Ingrid Jensen** and 35-time international award-winning saxophonist **Eli Bennett**, released their debut album, *Footsteps* in March 2015. The album has been received with critical acclaim and regular radio play (Jazz FM, Earshot).

### 2014-2015 Ventanas (Cajón/Doumbek)

**Ventanas** weaves in and out of Bulgarian dance tunes, heart-wrenching Greek, Turkish, and Sephardic love songs and passionate Flamenco dances, leading captive audiences through windows into other lands and cultures. In July and August 2014, Ventanas, lead by vocalist Tamar Ilana, toured the country, performing at festivals (Vancouver Folk Festival, Traditions du Bout du Monde in Sherbrooke, Summerfolk) and venues (Sala Rosa in Montreal, Edmonton’s The Artery) across Canada.

## 2012-2015 Roarshaq (Composition/Drums)

**Roarshaq** is collective of four young Toronto musicians/composers dedicated to creating new and original works in jazz and improvised music. The group was accepted to participate in the Banff Centre's Winter Residency Program in March 2013. Upon completion of the residency, the group toured Ontario and Quebec, and recorded their debut EP.

## 2008-2015 Tesseract (Band Leader/Composition/Drums)

Performing a unique style of jazz, with influences ranging from rock to world music, **Tesseract** always strives to connect with the audience. In November 2013, the group released their sophomore album, *Visions of Collisions*, coinciding with a tour through Southern Ontario. Following the critical success of their debut CD, *Impossible Images*, the group was invited to record at McGill Studios in Montreal. In 2011, **Tesseract** was featured in the Atina Jazz Festival in Italy.

## 2010-2015 Monsoon:Synthesis (Percussion/Tibetan Singing Bowls)

**Monsoon:Synthesis** is an Indo-Jazz ensemble that presents an eclectic blend of contemporary Jazz and Indian classical music. Joined by **Justin Gray** on Bass Veena, and **Ed Hanley** (Autorichshaw) on tabla, Derek has developed a chromatic, xylophone-esque approach to the Tibetan Singing Bowls. This trio of highly accomplished musicians brings together their diverse musical backgrounds and strong musicality to create a powerful and fresh approach to world music and the blending of eastern and western music traditions.

## 2007-2015 Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (Drums)

Drummer in the weekly evening service. Also, annual feature performances at **Pride Toronto**.

## 2007-2015: Freelance Jazz Musician

Regular concerts with some of Toronto's finest musicians. Recent performances include engagements with internationally-renowned saxophonist **Pat LaBarbera**, award-winning jazz trumpeter **David Buchbinder**, CFMA-winning Flamenco guitarist **Jorge Miguel**, late-South Korean saxophonist **Suyun Kim**, Canadian violin virtuoso **Jaron Freeman-Fox**, **Bageshree Vaze** and many others.

## 2009-2012 Ghanaian Drum/Dance Ensemble (Director/Lead Drummer)

Director of Toronto-based hand-drumming ensemble. This ensemble performs Ghanaian repertoire in the traditional style, with drummers, dancers, and singers.

## 2012 Anton Apostolov's Balkania Orchestra (Drums)

**Anton Apostolov**, currently one of Toronto's finest Balkan musicians, originally hails from Bulgaria. In 2011, the Balkania Orchestra performed a sold-out concert at the Glenn Gould Studio in support of their CD, 'Balkania After the Rain'.

## 2011 Diasporic Genius: *Tumbling Into Light* (Percussion)

Founded by award-winning trumpet player David Buchbinder, Diasporic Genius presented *Tumbling Into Light*. This music-centred, multidisciplinary performance made its debut at the Enwave Theatre, to a wealth of critical and popular praise.

## 2010-2011 Humber College Studio Jazz Ensemble (Drums)

Under the direction of **Denny Christianson** - Humber's flagship/recruiting ensemble. Guest artists include **Bob Mintzer** and **Dave Holland**.

## 2009-2010 Jazz In the Schools (Drums/Percussion)

Each year, Humber College puts together a band of the top music students to travel around Toronto showcasing and teaching music, and informing the students about the music program. Derek was selected by **Mark Kelso** (head of drums at Humber) to play percussion and drums in this group for the two consecutive years. This ensemble traveled to two schools each day, playing for 10,000 students from grades 2 to 12.

## **Work Experience (Teaching):**

### **2015-present Humber College Community Music School**

Instructor - Ensemble (10-11 yrs - beginning jazz) & Young Musicianship (3-4 yrs - early childhood music w/ Orff & Kodaly pedagogy)

### **2008-present Hand Drumming in the Schools**

Founder, Organizer, Instructor. Taught hand drumming at schools across Canada (Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta).

### **2012-present Scarborough Bluffs Music**

West-African Hand Drum Instructor, Early Childhood Music Educator

### **2009-present Soul Drums**

Private/Group Instructor - Drum Kit/Percussion, Community Hand Drum Facilitator of 100+ participants

### **2013 Ronald McDonald House**

Drum Circle Facilitator

### **2008-2011 Humber College Community Music School**

Classroom Assistant

### **2010 At-Youth Risk in Regent Park**

Instructor

### **2009 Hand Drum Ensemble at C.R. Marchant**

Ensemble Director

### **2008 Camp Choice**

Hand Drumming Instructor/Camp Counselor

## Work Experience (Pit Band):

2011 *Tumbling Into Light* (Drums/Percussion)  
Diasporic Genius Production at the Enwave Theatre (One Week Run)

2009 *School's Out* (Drums)  
*Beggar's Bag* (One Week Run)

2007 *West Side Story*  
Malvern Collegiate Institute (One Week Run)

2007 *The Princess and the Pea* (Drums)  
Adam Beck Public School (One Week Run)

2006 *Anne of Green Gables* (Drums)  
Adam Beck Public School (One Week Run)

2005 *Tom Sawyer* (Drums)  
Adam Beck Public School (One Week Run)

## Discography (Leader):

*Footsteps*, Independent (2015)  
**Gray Matter**  
Drums/Production/Composition

*Roarshaq*, Independent (2014)  
**Roarshaq**  
Drums/Composition

*Visions of Collisions*  
**Tesseract**, Indie (2013)  
Drums/Composition

*EP*, Independent (2013)  
**Roarshaq**  
Drums/Composition

*Impossible Images*  
Tesseract, Indie (2012)  
Drums/Composition

*Sketches*  
Derek Gray, Indie (2011)  
Drums/Composition

## Discography (Producer):

*Self-Titled*  
Alastair Whitehead, Indie

## Discography (Sideman):

*Arrelumbre*, Independent, 2015  
**Ventanas**  
Cajon/Tibetan Meditation Bowls/ Percussion

*Self-Titled*, Independent, 2015  
**Crooked House Road**  
Drums/Percussion

*Mandala*, Independent, 2014  
**Monsoon**  
Drums/Tibetan Meditation Bowls/Batá/Percussion

*Vestiges*, Mojito Records, 2012  
**Nick Scott Group**  
Drums

*Bring It On*, 2012  
**Humber Studio Jazz Ensemble**  
Drums

*Wire Circus*, 2012  
**Patrick O'Reilly**, Indie  
Drums

*Self-Titled*, 2012  
**Felipe Debastos**, Indie  
Drums

*Djul*, 2012



**Yongwon Cho** Indie  
Drums

*The Ephemeral*, 2011  
**Andrew Kobus**, Indie  
Drums

*The Escapist*, 2011  
**Edwin Sheard**, Indie  
Drums

*Points in Between*, 2011  
**Andrew Jackson**, Indie  
Drums

*Lullaby for Lillian*, 2011  
**Elizabeth Roach**, Indie  
Percussion

*Compose To Color: Music As Media, Music as Art*  
**Danny Sabatino**, Indie  
Drums

*Pequod*  
**Nic Ladouceur**, Indie  
Drums

*Perpetual Motion*  
**Mike Allentoff**, Indie  
Humber Studio Jazz Ensemble

## 2010 Discography (Sideman):

*Pat Labarbera's Contemporary Jazz Ensemble*  
**New Standards Volume 13**, Humber Records  
Drums

*Ravi Naimpally's Indian Nonet*  
**New Standards Volume 13**, Humber Records  
Drums

*Little Tribune Bay EP*  
**Dive Sparrow**, Indie  
Drums/Percussion

## Awards:

### 2011 President's Award (Humber College)

Awarded by the president of Humber College to a student who has contributed to his/her school and to Humber College, by demonstrating leadership and participation in both the academic and student life of the College, while maintaining a strong overall academic record.

### 2007-2011 Garfield Weston National Level Scholarship

In recognition of strong commitment to field of study and strong interest in making positive contributions to the community through leadership and volunteerism

### 2010 Edward L. Frankel Award (Humber College)

Awarded to a music student in recognition of community service, good academic standing, and strong performance ability

### 2009 Sabian Cymbals Award Scholarship (Humber College)

Awarded to a percussion student with high academic achievement and performance skills

### 2007 George McCrae Award

For musical excellence

### 2007 Principal's Award for Student Leadership

In recognition of involvement as Music Council President at Malvern Collegiate

## References:

**Mark Kelso** (former teacher)

Head of Drum/Percussion, Humber College

416-675-6622 EXT 3401

mark.kelso@humber.ca

**Vern Roth** (retired teacher)

Invited me to teach music in the Canmore, AB school board

403-609-2070

vroth2@telus.net

**Doug Sole** (mentor)

Soul Drums Founder/International Hand Drum Facilitator

416-225-5295

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