



*PERCUSSION  
THEATRE*

*KINETIC  
SCULPTURES*

*PASSIONATE  
PERFORMERS*

*PRIMAL  
CHOREOGRAPHY*

*ORIGINAL  
COMPOSITIONS*

## OVERVIEW

SWARM, Vancouver's original hyper-kinetic percussion troupe, presents theatrical shows of invented instruments, experimental world music combined with intense physical choreography. The performers jump and spin about the stage twirling large-scale industrial drum sculptures. They evoke primal rhythms from the drums and ethereal soundscapes from a wide range of musical sculptures. The mesmerizing contemporary collage of music, movement and mass, thrills audiences of all ages.

Visual artist and musician, Bill Wallace, is the founder and director of SWARM. He designs and constructs all the instruments that include over 100 drum sculptures, longstrings, marimbas, water gongs, vacuum whirligigs, tuned artillery shells, exhaust pipes, plungers, musical body costumes and parachute projection screens. They are made from a variety of recycled materials such as PVC pipes, wheelchair rims and metal cans. Principal composers, Curtis Mathewson and Bill Wallace collaborate with SWARM members as well as other local and international dancers, drummers and musicians to create the visceral theatrics of SWARM. The one-of-a-kind instruments, the movements they invoke and the creative collaboration of the SWARM troupe propels percussion theatre to new heights.

SWARM will tailor their show to meet your personal needs and is ideal for:

1. Festivals and other outdoor venues
2. Theatres
3. Galas
4. Conferences
5. Grand Openings
6. Corporate product launches, business meetings etc.
7. Movies & TV

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## Show Formats

SWARM offers a variety of shows:

**School Show: 60 minute show with Q&A.** This is a humorous fun-filled show where performers spin the drums around the stage, play them with plungers, and throw them back and forth with bungee cords. A water filled bathtub on wheels creates a slap-stick pitch-shifting opus of water, stainless steel pots and pans & rubber duckies. Recycled rubber exhaust tubes and a pentatonically tuned marimba sculpture add a melodic counterpoint to the shows intensity. The unique choreography exemplifies the advantages of teamwork and shows a creative approach to physical fitness. The instruments expose children to a unique use of recycled materials and the possibilities of thinking "outside the box". A comprehensive Study Guide is provided which outlines educational projects in Music, Drama, Visual Arts and Environmental Studies.

**Festival Show: 45-60 minute show.** This is a high-energy acoustic show for all ages. It features the Marimbas, Xylophones and tuned Exhaust Tubes from the school show plus more of the hardcore action-drumming choreography that SWARM is famous for. The wheeled instruments allow the stage to be set up and torn down in less than five minutes. The passionate performers create a show that is fun and exhilarating for the kids, has disciplined choreography and detailed craftsmanship to appeal to grandparents, and is high-octane and wild enough for teenagers.

**Theatrical Show: 60 or 90 minute show plus intermission.** This powerful action-packed show recontextualizes many of the elements from the other shows plus many unique instruments and pieces which due to their scale and complexity are only suitable for a theatrical setting. There is a giant drum kit clustered with stainless drums, midi-triggers and orbiting cymbals that provide the eletro-acoustic backbone of the second half of the show. Pendulum longstrings and a bass, pivot and spin around the stage in an architectonic ballet of futuristic structures. Vacuum bagpipe-whirligig costumes create a doppler drone effect combined with gas mask accordions. Interactive video is woven throughout the entire show and combine with shadows of the performers that are cast onto the 16' round parachute screen. This show is a multimedia extravaganza unlike any other on the planet.

**Club Show: any length.** This show is tailored for smaller venues and is more dance orientated. This show features many of the melodic instruments, video projection and electronic elements of the theatrical show but limits the choreography to conform to a smaller stage. The show is still very physical, with jumps, kicks and spins but excludes all the larger instrument movements and transitions. For this show, we play with a predominately stationary setup like a regular band. By focusing on the music and maintaining a driving dance groove it is much more practical to collaborate with other guest musicians, DJs and artists.

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## PROMOTIONAL STATEMENTS

### **In One Sentence:**

**SWARM's** extreme drumming captures the audience with funky invented instruments, passionate performers and powerful energizing music.

**SWARM** explodes into the spotlight bringing their style of extreme percussion theatre to new levels of complexity with an exciting merger of invented instruments, powerful energizing music and passionate performers.

### **In Fifty Words:**

**SWARM**, the hyper-kinetic percussion troupe jumps into action with their fusion of original dynamic rhythms, ingeniously created instruments, and hyper-kinetic choreography. Veteran action-drummer, Bill Wallace, collaborates with the other performers to bring you the continually evolving repertoire that is a contemporary collage of evocative experimental sounds, mobile mechanical stage design, and exquisite primal movements.

### **In One Hundred Words:**

**SWARM** is Vancouver's original hyper-kinetic percussion troupe. *SWARM* merges innovative instruments with a symphony of experimental sounds and passionate performers who spin, jump, and dance while playing the instruments. *SWARM* founder and Director, Bill Wallace, has created funky futuristic instruments out of metal, sewer pipes and other recycled materials that move and spin around on wheels. His musical compositions, as well as those of Curtis Mathewson, will thrill you with their aural immediacy. All the performers collaborate to bring you a contemporary collage of exquisite primal movements intertwined with evocative experimental sounds and sculptures that function as set design, orchestra, props and actors, all in one.

### **The Members of SWARM are:**

Bill Wallace - Founder, Director, Composer, Sculptor, Choreographer & Performer

Wayne Mercier - Collaborator & Performer

Dan Lunn - Collaborator & Performer

●Please note that performers may change.

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## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Pacific Contact Showcase 2009, BCTC** Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby, BC 03/29/09  
**Work Less Party**, Japanese Hall, Vancouver, BC 03-07-09  
**Burn BC - Sunshine, Lolipops & Rainbows**, The Waldorf, Vancouver, BC 02/27/09  
**Winterruption, Coastal Blues & Jazz**: 1 theatrical show & 2 workshops, Granville Island, BC 02/21-22/09  
**Evergreen Cultural Centre**: Family Theatrical Show, Coquitlam, BC 02/15/09  
**Surrey Arts Centre**: Children's Show, Surrey, BC 02/08/09  
**Capitol Theatre**: Theatrical Show, Nelson BC 11/16/08  
**Suzuki Association** Workshops, Nelson, BC 11/15 & 18/08  
**ArtStarts in Schools**: Over 60 School Shows in lower mainland and Eastern BC 11/08 - 06/09  
**OSAC Jr. Concerts Fall Tour**: 68 School Shows, several workshops throughout Saskatchewan 09/05 - 10/24/08  
**OSAC - Estevan Arts Council: Theatrical Show, Estevan, SK 10/16/08/**  
**Science World, Disney: The Music Behind The Magic Collaboration.** Imax Theatrical Show & 6 Workshops. Vancouver, BC 08/15, 16, 17/08  
**Mary Irwin Theatre**, New Theatrical Show, Kelowna, BC 04/12, 13/08  
**Celtic Parade**, Vancouver, BC 03/16/08  
**BC Ferries Conference**, Two performances. Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, BC 03/04/08  
**Whistler Celebration 2010**, Opening act, Whistler, BC 02/12/08  
**12 Minutes Max**, Firehall Theatre, Vancouver, BC 12/11/07  
**Pfizer Conference**, Canada Place, Vancouver, BC 11/06/07  
**Atlas Van Lines Conference**, Pan Pacific Hotel, Vancouver, BC 10/12/07  
**Over 600 Elementary & Secondary School Shows.** Tours throughout BC 2003 - 2008  
**ARTSPRING - Island Arts Centre Society**, Salt Spring Island, BC 08/26/07  
**The Downtown Street Beats 2007**, TD Plaza & Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC 08/2/3/10/13/07  
**Steve Nash Foundation Charity Basketball Game**, Opening & half-time. GM Place, Vancouver, BC 07/21/07  
**Coastal Jazz & Blues Society Commission for Bill Wallace, Crash, Bang, Boom** - International Jazz Festival Vancouver, BC 06/30/07  
**Fat Cat Festival**, Kelowna, BC 06/09/07  
**Yam Jam & Port Moody Children's Festival**, Port Moody, BC 06/01, 02/07  
**Vancouver Children's Festival**, Vancouver, BC 05/21/07  
**Canmore Children's Festival**, Canmore, AB 05/18/19/07  
**Life & Arts Festival**, Mary Irwin Theatre & Lake City Casino, Kelowna, BC 05/11, 12, 13/07  
**ArtScan Showcase, 2003 & 2007**, Roundhouse Community Centre Theatre, Vancouver, BC, 03/28/07  
**Vic Jubba Community Theatre**, Lloydminster, AB, 03/25/07  
**The E.A. Rawlinson Centre for the Arts**, Prince Albert, Sask. 03/25/07  
**Stettler Performing Arts Centre, Stettler, AB 03/19/07**  
**School Shows** in Alberta and Saskatchewan 03/18 - 20/07  
**Surrey Children's Festival**, Surrey Arts Centre, Surrey BC 06/01, 02, 03/06  
**Sony Corporate Conference**, Whistler, BC 05/17/06  
**Port Moody Festival of the Arts Gala Opening**, Inlet Theatre, Port Moody, BC 03/31/06  
**Pacific Rim Whale Festival**, 2 workshops & 1 show, Tofino & Ucluelet, BC 03/16-19/06  
**Alberta Winter Games**, two shows, Edson & Wildwood, AB 02/25, 26/06  
**Community Concert**, East Vancouver Cultural Centre, Vancouver, BC 01/18/06



**PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS Continued...**

**SWARM Theatrical Show**, Capilano College Theatre, North Vancouver, BC 01/20/06  
**Ontario Contact 2005, Showcase**, Royal Bank Theatre, Living Arts Centre, Mississauga, ON. 10/22/05  
**Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta, Showcase**, Festival Place, Sherwood Park, AB. 10/14/05  
**Children's Festival**, Kamloops, BC. 09/18/05  
**Comox Valley Kidsfest**, Comox BC. 09/10/05  
**Illuminates Lantern Festival**, The Public Dreams Society, Vancouver, BC. 07/27/02, 07/23/05  
**Medicine Hat Jazz Festival**, Medicine Hat, AB. 06/25,26/04, 06/24,25/05  
**Maple Sugar Festival**, Nanaimo, BC. 02/23,24/05  
**Cultural Cabaret (countdown to 2010), and SWARM Show**, ML Place, Whistler, BC. 02/12/05  
**Arts Northwest Conference & Showcase**, Bellevue, WA. 10/18-21/04  
**Heart of the City Festival, Festival Launch & Gala**, Vancouver, BC. 10/08 & 10/04  
**Dance Allsorts, Workshop & Show**, Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver, BC. 09/25/04, 09/26/04  
**Western Arts Alliance Conference Juried Showcase**, Spokane, WA. 09/07/04 -09/11/04  
**Filberg Festival**, Courtenay, BC. 07/3/04, 08/01/04.  
**Celebrate Toronto Street Festival**, Toronto, ON. 07/09/04, 07/10/04, 07/11/04  
**Millennium Centre**, Show & collaborations with techno underground, Winnipeg, Man. 07/03/04  
**Canada Day Celebrations**, Osborne Biz Inc, Winnipeg, Man. 07/01/04  
**Arts in the Park, Moody Park**, New Westminster, BC. 06/05/04  
**SWARM Theatrical Extravaganza**, Capilano College Theatre, North Vancouver, BC. 05/07/04  
**Arts Umbrella Tribute Gala**, The Centre for the Performing Arts, Vancouver, BC. 02/01/04  
**Maurice Young Millennium Place**, Whistler, BC. 08/09/02, 01/17/04  
**2003 Weightlifting Championships Opening Ceremony**, Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC 11/14/03  
**Hornby Island Festival**, Hornby Island, BC. 08/04/03  
**Filberg Festival**, Courtenay, BC. 08/01/03, 08/02/03, 08/01/04, 08/02/04  
**Commodore Ball Room**, Flight Centre Corporate Event, Vancouver, BC. 07/05/03  
**Canada Day Celebrations**, Comox, BC. 06/30/03, 07/01/03  
**Western Front 30th Anniversary**, Vancouver, BC. 07/21/03  
**Sarah McLachlan Music Outreach-An Arts Umbrella Project**, Vancouver, BC. 05/23/03  
**Terry Fox Theatre**, Port Coquitlam, BC. 05/04/03  
**Chutzpah! Festival 2003**, Norman Rothstein Theatre, Vancouver, BC. 02/23/03, 03/08/03  
**First Night**, The Public Dreams Society, Granville Island, Vancouver, BC. 12/31/02  
**The Gay Pride Parade Main Stage**, Vancouver, BC. 08/04/02  
**Canada Day Celebrations**, Port Moody, BC. 07/01/02  
**Skills Canada Opening Ceremonies**, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver, BC. 05/30/02  
**BC Festival of the Arts Opening Gala**, Chandos Pattison Auditorium, Surrey, BC. 05/27/02



## **SWARM REVIEWS**

"In human form, SWARM consists of five trained and talented musicians... By the time their 90-minute show has ended, they have evoked the primitive, embodied the hip and reached out toward an almost extraterrestrial avant-garde."

Lawrence Van Gelder, The New York Times

"... let me rave about SWARM. These four highly creative, talented and personable musicians played to a sold out audience Saturday night and the show was held over for a matinee on Sunday. The humour made it so kids thoroughly enjoyed it, and the sheer high energy level kept everyone's eyes riveted to the stage. From toilet plungers to tea kettles, PVC tubing to oil cans, you just never knew what was going to be turned into a percussion instrument next as these four made everyone dizzy, spinning the instruments around the stage in some wild and crazy dance. It's been a while since I've seen something so innovative, fresh and crazy. What a score for the RCA to bring in this show. Well done." Glenna Turnbull, Kelowna Capital News

"The audience, from toddlers to senior citizens, was totally spellbound. The level of creativity, imagination, musicianship, choreography, and entertainment is unrivaled by anything I've seen, and I've seen a lot."

Filberg Festival - J.S.

"SWARM is one of those rare acts that truly is for everyone. From the very young to the very old - you can't resist this group. They have created a very original show that is entertaining as well as highly artistic. The skill involved with the choreography and the execution of playing the instruments, not to mention the great music being created all works in a wonderful way. It is delightful for young folks yet isn't a kids show by any means. The experience of SWARM is immediate, vital and unforgettable. For anyone wanting to book a show that will be a season highlight for everyone in your audience - this is the show for you!"

Fiona Black, Director of Programming, Capilano College Performing Arts Theatre

"The intensity and sonic power has to be seen to be believed!!!!"

Under the Volcano Music Festival

"SWARM is like taking taiko drumming, adapting it for the West, urbanizing it for the inner city, and playing on incredible sculpted instruments. They're made out of recycled material like exhaust pipe, plungers, and garbage cans. It's hard to believe all the energy these guys release, especially in kids."

Terry Hunter, Producer of The Heart of the City Festival & Executive Director of Vancouver Moving Theatre

"Dress-ed in orange jumpsuits with rolling drums attached to hip harnesses, Swarm gyrated around the stage beating feverish rhythms and playing eerie wavering notes on their musical inventions. The "Long Strings" instrument- produces a tone that sounds like a thousand chanting voices and its harmonies sweep like waves through the audience."

Joshua Samuelsen, The Origon

"It is a visual extravaganza of deceptively simple sophistication. Playing gigantic instruments they've constructed themselves, they are never stationary, never silent...Swirling their huge drums around the floor, they leap, they chant; they bang their sticks on the floor demanding sound out of every available surface."

Lyn Cockburn, Calgary Sun

"...SWARM opened with a unique and refreshing production. From kitchenware to exhaust pipe hoses to artillery shells, the five member band amazed the audience with the variety and quality of sounds they were able to produce with instruments made from recycled materials."

"SWARM had the audience smiling throughout the show, with even a few comic moments involving splashing water and toilet plungers..."

Oliver Asselin, The Medicine Hat News

"Taiko on steroids. Very dynamic. Performance exposes kids to possibilities! Spectacular piece - great entertainment. Great sounds, wonderful rhythms. Visually interesting. Good variety. Neat use of found materials. Amazing carefully choreographed percussion. Fantastic coordination. Loved the energy and enthusiasm - very professional! Very creative and audience friendly! Great Intensity. Very "together" group. Visually effective and appealing. Rhythmics and patterning complex and appealing. What energy. Awesome! Works well with any age!! Original and inventive - children will see their own possibilities. Great talent. Contemporary. It's all right to be different-to let creativity open new doors."

ArtStarts Showcase Comments

"It's brash. It's even a bit bonkers...Listen long enough to them (SWARM) and the STOMP comparisons are drowned out. SWARM is more musical, although trying to spot cultural touchstones of these musicians is near to impossible, even for them."

Peter Grainger, Reporter, CTV. Vancouver, BC

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## BIOGRAPHIES

**Bill Wallace:** Director, Sculptor, Composer, Choreographer & Performer



Bill has been a key figure in the emerging style of action drumming and percussion theatre. Bill attended *Fanshawe College* in Ontario where he was apprentice sculptor for *Patrick Tiebert*. He went on to study Video, Sound, Critical Theory and Ceramics earning his BFA at the *Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*. At *The School of Art Institute of Chicago* he received his MFA in Sculpture, studying Metal Casting, Performance Art, Kinetics and Robotics. His commissioned permanent installations include the *Earth Wheel*, a massive interactive mechanical box for the playground of the *Sir Frederick Fraser School for the Visually Impaired* in Halifax; and the *Wild Ones*, three interactive musical totems for the Chicago Children's Museum. While in Chicago Bill designed and built instruments for performance groups *Jellyeye & Mass* and collaborated on the compositions and choreography; he also designed and built a percussive industrial skyline for a theatrical production of *A Clockwork Orange*. Since moving to Vancouver, Bill has merged his sculptural background, performance experience and his unique vision to form SWARM. Bill creates and maintains SWARM's web site and graphics; does all the audio-visual recording, engineering and production, as well as building all of SWARM's instruments. By bringing together unexpected combinations of materials, methods and media, Bill is creating a new interdisciplinary performance language aimed at the simultaneity of music, movement and mass.

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## BIOGRAPHIES Continued

**Wayne Mercier:** Collaborator, Video DJ & Performer



Wayne was born and raised in Sudbury, Ontario and has played drums and found objects incessantly since twelve years of age. An electronic music composer, projection artist and poet, Wayne operates independently under the name *eightprime*. He brings a diverse set of skills to the SWARM collective while participating in the group's kinetic exuberance. Wayne has been performing poetry solo and with DJ accompaniment since 1998. He first made his mark in Vancouver as an orator and acclaimed regular at the infamous *Vancouver Poetry Slam*. His slam career culminated in 2004 with the publication of his first collection, *Opsethai*. His resume includes regular shows at *Shambhala*, Lately Wayne has emerged as a powerful component of the local dance underground with visuals performances at *Shambhala* and the *New Forms Festival*. He lives online at [www.eightprime.net](http://www.eightprime.net)

**Daniel Lunn:** Choreographer, Collaborator & Performer



Daniel originates from the frigid flatlands of the Ottawa Valley. He brings unbridled enthusiasm to all his efforts with SWARM. Dan engaged with the group's intense energy and found the opportunity to grow as a musician and an artisan. As an entrepreneur, Dan brings his characteristic vigour to his business *What Box Woodworks*. He has merged his building skills with his artistic vision to include instrument building, musical composition and performance. Dan continues his artistic apprenticeship with SWARM by contributing to the collaborative creative process.

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## PERCUSSION WORKSHOP

*SWARM's* workshop provides a unique hands-on experience full of fun, movement, and music. The workshop is geared towards students within a school environment and events such as children's festivals.

A typical workshop begins with a performance and demonstration of action drumming by *SWARM*. The troupe then gives a short talk on the various percussive, sculptural, and musical elements of *SWARM*. After the students are given the opportunity to ask questions, the interactive portion of the workshop begins.

Several workshop formats are offered. Two formats are dependent on the age of the children. Both formats begin with an exploration of basic action drumming techniques where students learn how to move expressively while performing the music. Older students learn more in-depth movement and rhythm patterns excerpted from a *SWARM* drum piece. For younger students the workshop focuses on simple rhythms, clapping and stepping patterns. The students are then placed in small groups. Each group works with a troupe member to compose a section of music using their individual creativity. After practicing, each group rejoins with the other groups to collaborate on an all-out performance that rewards them for their efforts and creativity.

One of our most exciting workshops is a giant drum circle for people of all ages where we play a game of call-and-response inter-woven with looping grooves. The participants learn to mimic the many rhythms, vocal calls and crazy physical gestures of the lead drummer. The more advanced members of the drum circle get an opportunity to lead the drum circle, building confidence and dismantling the hierarchy of the teacher-pupil relationship. The workshops naturally reinforce the value of teamwork and encourages community bonding through a simple fun structure of collaborative group activity that encourage's individual spontaneity.

*SWARM* would be most pleased to provide you with a comprehensive Study Guide that outlines pre-show and post-show activities. There are many projects outlined that relate to the Music, Drama and Visual Arts courses of study. The highlight being a detailed lesson plan for constructing imaginative papier-mache shakers.

The objective of the workshop is to inspire interest in the arts and expose the students to alternative methods of composing music and building instruments. *SWARM's* workshop provides a positive educational environment where the children discover a fascinating new approach to drumming. The members of *SWARM* wish to have the children take away a new appreciation for modern art and music. The workshop will help the students to gain the confidence that they have the ability and talent to create sophisticated art and music.

Length of workshop:	1 hour (or longer, dependent on client's needs).
Number of students per workshop:	10-30
Suggested venues:	School Gymnasium      School Auditorium      Theatre Stage Festival Stage/Tent      Paved Outdoor Space

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