

John Damberg-Resume

Vibist, Marimbist, Percussionist, Composer, Educator

John Damberg is a master vibist, marimbist, percussionist, composer and educator who has enjoyed a successful career in music spanning 50 years. John resides in Anchorage, Alaska where he is the leader of the **John Damberg Latin Jazz Quintet**, the **Instructor of Percussion at the University of Alaska Anchorage**, the founder and **President of the Alaska Jazz Workshop (AJW)**, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit community service organization promoting jazz education and performance opportunities in Alaska. He is the past President and Vice President of the Percussive Arts Society Alaska Chapter. John is an active performer and educator in Alaska and Pacific Northwest. He is an ardent promoter of jazz & percussion education.

Background: John was born in 1952 in Kittery, Maine and received his early music training in Detroit, Michigan. He moved to Seattle in 1979 and was very active on the Seattle Music scene until 1991, when he moved to Anchorage, AK to teach at UAA. John holds BM and MM degrees in Percussion Performance, Jazz Studies and Ethnomusicology, and a BM degree in Music Education.

Artistic Statement: John's major passions in life are sharing his joy for composing, playing music with others & exploring the great outdoors!

When you first experience the positive energy of John Damberg's live performances and his approach to teaching, you know you are in for an exhilarating and enlightening experience. You get the sense that you are in the presence of a highly motivated visionary and charismatic spirit who loves to share his deep love for music, the outdoors, and living life to its fullest to inspire his audiences and students.

John's deep passion for composing, performing, and teaching life skills through music has been a constant, unbridled force throughout his life's long and fulfilling journey. His interest in music, nature, and different world cultures over the last 55 years has taken him on many varied and interesting musical journeys throughout North, Central, South America, Sweden and Norway. From the high mountains of Glacier National Park, Montana to the warm islands of the Caribbean and back to the incredible scenery and native cultures that make up Alaska, John has experienced the music of the land and the diverse music cultures of its native inhabitants. Through these experiences, John developed his focus on using improvisatory music as a vehicle for self-expression and communication to develop a sense of balance between one's inner spirit and the surrounding world. John is a firm believer that an artist's sense of place in the world comes into focus and has deep meaning when the artist is actively practicing his or her art form. In this space, time ceases to exist and the artist becomes whole.

As a percussionist, John has performed in a wide variety of musical settings nationally and internationally including: original Latin and jazz ensembles, recording studio dates, with the Detroit, Seattle and Anchorage Symphony Orchestras and Broadway touring shows. John has performed and collaborated with internationally acclaimed jazz artists including: Wynton Marsalis, Rebeca Mauleon, Eddie Palmieri, Jovino Santos Neto, Kristin Korb, Milt Jackson, Amina Figarova, Bart Platteau, Denis Deblasio, Brian Lynch, Oscar Stagnaro, Allison Miller, Jay Thomas, Michael Davis, Mimi Fox, Bobby Shew, Peggy Stern, Vince Cherico, Carl Saunders, Barney McClure, Mike Doolin, Paul Lucas, and Cedar Walton; Alaska Jazz Artists including: Yngvil Vatn Guttu, Rick Zelinsky, Karen Strid, Mark Manners, Melissa Fischer, Cameron Cartland, Nick Petumenos, Tom Bargelski, Bob Andrews, Dirk Westfall, Jacques Annandale, Pat Owens, Yngvil Vatn Guttu, Alex Cruver, and with nationally renowned entertainers including: Harry Connick Jr., Ray Charles, Quincy Jones, the Temptations, Gladys Knight and the Pips, and Sammy Davis Jr., Steve Allen, Joel Gray, and Liberace.

As a composer, John writes music for his Latin Jazz Ensemble and for other creative projects including: movie sound tracks, travel videos and children's educational videos. John's compositions have been featured on the 2005 CD release **Azure** by the JoMaLa Jazz Quintet, the 1998 CD release of **Angie's Samba** by the John Damberg Latin Jazz Quintet, the 1993 release of **Human Hands: a Composers and Improvisers Ensemble**, on his 1985 release of **Soaring** and on videos including "**Cruising Alaska's Inside Passage**" and the award winning children's video "**Monty the Moose**". John is currently finishing his new CD titled **Happy Dance** of original jazz, Latin, and funk music to be released in 2023 featuring the John Damberg Alaska Jazz Quintet.

As an educator, John is a passionate educator who uses his love for people, music and self expression to help his students develop effective strategies to realize their passions, goals and dreams while building well balanced and rewarding lives. He is a visionary actively promoting creative collaborations with other individuals in strong leadership teams to enhance the growth and well being of the Alaska Music and Arts community. He is the founder and the President of the **Alaska Jazz Workshop (AJW)**, a 501 (c) 3 community arts and service organization founded in 2000 to promote jazz education and performance opportunities in Alaska. John and his fellow AJW instructors have mentored with over 2,500 Middle and High School students through the Alaska Jazz Workshop. John is the Instructor of Percussion at UAA, a post he has held since 1991 and the past President and Vice President of the AK Chapter of the Percussive Arts Society from 1992-2008, promoting percussion education. John maintains an active private percussion and piano teaching studio of 30-40 students each week. He has also been a guest music adjudicator and clinician from 2004-present at many Alaska community music festivals including Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla, Fairbanks, Cordova, Valdez, Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, and Dillingham.

Education:

BM University of Alaska Anchorage-in secondary Music education-1997

MM University of Washington-Jazz Studies and Ethnomusicology-1989

BM Wayne State University-Percussion performance-1976

Continuing Education:

To be an effective educator John believes that one has to be a life long student as well. To the effect he has attended many seminars, workshops, and summer camps including: the 2014-15 & 2020 Jazz Educators Conventions, the 2010 & 2013 California Brazil Camps, the 2011 Pan Ramajay Steel Drum Camp, the 2010 Rebeca Mauleon Afro-Cuban Music Workshop, the 2008 Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, the 2007 Valerie Naranjo African Percussion and Gyl Workshop at UAA, the AJW Summer 2000-2017 Jazz improvisation workshops at UAA, the 1999-2005 IAJE Conventions, the 2001 & 2012 Chamber Music America Conventions, 1994 & 1997 Nigerian Talking Drum workshops with Francis Awe, and the 1993 Afro Cubanismo Festival in Banff, Canada, and the 1990 Ellie Mannette Steel Drum performance and building camp in Cannon Beach, Oregon.

Awards

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| 2024 | John Stites Jazz Awards Grant for attending 3 jazz camps in Summer 2025 including Jazz Camp West, Jazz Port Townsend, and Victor Wooten's Jazz Camp |
| 2022 | Alaska Governor's and ASCA Individual Artist Award for outstanding contributions that have increased the artistic excellence of Alaska |
| 2021 | AK State Council on the Arts Adaptation and Innovation Grant of \$2,000 made possible with funding from Rasmuson Foundation |
| 2020 | Muni of Anchorage Covid 19 Individual Artist Relief Grant of \$5,000 |
| 2013 | Recipient of \$400 Career Opportunity Grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts to attend the California Brazil Summer Music Camp in Cazadero, CA |
| 2010 | Recipient of the Rasmuson Foundation Artist Fellowship grant of \$12,000 for Music Composition in Jazz |
| 2001 | Recipient of CMA Travel Grant to attend the CMA Convention (Chamber Music America) in New York City. |

- 2000 Honorable Mention-Anchorage APRN Song of the Year Competition for his song **Angie's Samba**
- 1997-2000 Recipient of the Percussive Arts Society State Chapter Grants supporting the Alaska Day of Percussion Festival at UAA and UAF
- 1994 Recipient Artist Development grant to attend Afro Cubanismo Festival at the Banff Centre for the Arts: Alaska State Council on the Arts