

# Now Introducing (drum roll please) Alana Dym

By Penny Randell

You better have your running shoes on if you hope to catch up to Alana Dym, drummer, teacher and audio engineer. This major talent is also a mallet percussionist, trained on xylophone, glockenspiel (bells), vibraphone, marimba, and others. Today Dym lives in Denver and is always busy, usually teaching music or playing drums in a band. Adoring nature, she also makes a practice of visiting the mountain community and performing for its various venues whenever possible.

After growing up in a Fort Lauderdale suburb, Dym relocated to attend the University of Miami. College was difficult, for learning to be an audio engineer meant a load of math and science. Dym said, "Engineering is very involved. You must understand acoustics and electrical equipment, and of course, microphones. She prevailed though, and graduated four years later with her degree in hand.

After graduation, Dym remained in Miami for another four years. She said the area intrigued her, for it is a melting pot of various cultures. "Miami was wonderful when considering my career choice. Columbia, South and Central America, Mexico and Europe influence all genres of music there, and I fell in love with it," she said. In addition, Dym taught percussion at an elementary school in Miami. She embraced the opportunity and rapidly sharpened her educational skills to become a valued teacher.

Supported by her parents, and always auditioning her talents, Dym responded to an ad concerning an all girl band based in California. She got the job, grabbed her pet cat, and headed for Los Angeles, with Dad's company along the way. "I literally dropped everything I was doing, packed, and held tight to my dad," Dym said. Writing music and rehearsing five hours a day, five days a week was a comfortable and enviable regimen for her. Unfortunately, after one year the group suffered financial problems and was forced to disband.

Again, Dym rose to the occasion and found employment with other bands. Nonetheless, she reports that there simply wasn't enough money to live on. She said, "Life in L.A. is terribly expensive and I ran through my savings in no time. I had to move on." From there Dym set her mind on Denver, having heard it was musically "the place to be." She had visited the area on tour with her band and also had relatives in town and that sealed the deal. A plan was hatched and she moved in with the relatives, expecting to work at their restaurant. As it turned out, she found employment as a percussion instructor and never needed to work with her relatives to make ends meet.

The very day she arrived in Denver, she answered an ad for a teaching position and was requested to audition. After an 18-hour road trip from L.A. she readied herself to play at noon the following day. She says it was amazing that she made it because a terrific sand and wind storm had taken out her internet that morning, forcing her to locate another source in a town she didn't know in order to print off a resume. Once again Dym prevailed. She showed up on time complete with resume and got the job.

Next came a Craig's List posting to facilitate her search for students. Dym confides that she received three job offers her first week in Denver and has had continued success for two and a half years now. She also says, "L.A. was a great experience, but nothing can surpass Denver and the mountain area. I love it here and so does my cat." Today Dym has accumulated 20 students and plays in several bands, including Coal Town Reunion. Too, she is the local director of Lessons in Your Home, where she not only teaches, but also hires and manages a staff of instructors.

Of late, one of her newest endeavors has been with Playing For Change. This ensemble includes performers from all over the world. Their intention is to create a movement that will inspire, strengthen, and connect the world through music. Dym says working with these people is like nothing else she has experienced. Last month she was able to perform with them and observed, "To play with people from Congo, Japan, Israel, and South Africa was a huge compliment. This band has over a million subscribers on YouTube."

When asked about dreams, Dym says that she has many. She looks forward to touring outside America and coming face-to-face with all the cultures with which she has become acquainted. In the meantime, she will continue to develop her style by watching others perform and playing with different bands. Dym says, "I don't think I've ever been so happy. For now all my wants and needs are satisfied and I know how fortunate I am."