

# MUSICAL HERITAGE AT USD



A photo of the 1896 University of South Dakota Band from the National Music Museum Archives.

(Photo courtesy of the National Music Museum)



(Photo courtesy of the National Music Museum)



(Photo courtesy of the National Music Museum)



The University of South Dakota Cadet Band, Fall 1899.

(Photo courtesy of the National Music Museum)

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singing in church and to WNAX in the car anytime she was on the road with her dad. Highlights have been singing three songs with the house band at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge in Nashville, TN, and performing before the Trick Pony concert. She has been with the band for 14 years.

Tom Zoss, Yankton (formerly from Beresford), has been drumming all his life. "I used to beat all the neighborhood garbage cans with twigs and used to make complete drum sets out of pots, pans, Tinker

Toys, and just about anything else that made noise," said Zoss. Tom's formal training started in fifth grade and continued through college. He fine-tuned his craft by watching "live concerts" on MTV and by borrowing the school drum set on weekends. During high school, Tom and high school buddies formed the Prairie Wind Band. He was called upon by the late Gary Knutson to be the original drummer of the Poker Alice Band.

Since then Tom has played/filled in for over 20 area bands playing anything from country to jazz to rock and blues. Tom returned to his country roots by joining the Clay Creek Deaf Cowboy Band

in 2002, but still plays blues and rock with other local musicians. Tom's influences include Phil Collins, Chester Thompson and Def Leppard's one-armed drummer Rick Allen. Highlights from Tom's career include the Trick Pony show, opening for Foghat, Marshall Tucker Band, and Johnny Johnson, and playing the Sioux City Blues Fest and the Sioux Falls Jazz Fest. He has been with Clay Creek Deaf Cowboy Band for 11 years.

--Editor's note: Many thanks to Dawn Nelson for providing us the background information about the Clay Creek Deaf Cowboy Band and the biographical sketches of its members.

# Arthur Barrow: Frank Zappa's 'drill sergeant'

By Travis Gulbrandson  
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When Texas native Arthur Barrow arrived in Los Angeles in 1975, all he wanted to do was to play bass for Frank Zappa.

By 1978, that's exactly what he was doing.

"Somehow I got lucky," Barrow said.

Barrow came to the University of South Dakota in September to speak with students, as well as play a concert of Zappa music for the public in a group consisting of himself, USD students and faculty members.

"I'm really going to try to assimilate a half-length version of a Frank Zappa concert," he said the afternoon before his evening performance. "One of the things that (Zappa) always did was segue all the songs together. Once the show started, it didn't stop for 90 minutes. The music never stopped. It was just one song after another, after another, after another, after another."

Among the Zappa tunes the Vermillion audience heard the night of the concert were "Chuga's Revenge," "Cyborg," "Ain't Got No Heart" and "Peaches En Regalia."

A graduate of North Texas University, Barrow got Zappa's contact information through his friendship with keyboardist Don Preston.

In the summer of 1978, Barrow heard Zappa was looking for a new bass player.

"I thought, 'This is my opportunity,' so I got his number and got him on the phone," Barrow said. "I told him I learned a piece called 'Inca Roads,' a very complicated piece ... and I think he didn't even believe me."

Zappa told him to learn another piece – "St. Alphonzo's Pancake Breakfast" – by ear for his audition, as well.

"I played it, and he said,



Arthur Barrow plays the bass during a presentation for University of South Dakota students in September. Barrow visited USD to perform a concert of the music of Frank Zappa – with whom he played for several years from the late 1970s to the early 1980s.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

"Well, I heard a few wrong notes, but you have potential. Can you stick around for a while?" Barrow said.

He ended up joining the band for 2 ½ years, and recorded with Zappa after that, as well.

It wasn't easy. Despite Zappa's renowned perfectionism, he was constantly changing songs during rehearsals – stringing them together, changing speeds, adding repeats.

"I would literally feel my brain spasm inside my head with all the information," Barrow said.

Eventually, Barrow became the "Clonemeister," which was the name used for the person who directed rehearsals when Zappa wasn't around.

"Rehearsals were usually about eight hours long, and Frank would only show up for the second half," Barrow said. "When he was there, he would say, 'You do this and you do this. ...'

"I had a tape recorder and I'm taking notes, and I would go home at night with my tape and notes and write down what everybody was supposed to do, and I'd come back the next day," he said.

It was more like being a drill sergeant than a musical director, Barrow said.

"If somebody would forget what Frank told them to do, I would say, 'No, no, you were supposed to do that.' I'd drill the song a few times until it was the way he wanted it the night before. Then he would come in, and usually change it all again."

Rehearsals usually took six weeks or more. Barrow said band members could have picked up everything if there had been charts outlining what Zappa wanted to do.

"But that wasn't the way he worked," Barrow said.

Despite all the hard work, Barrow said rehearsals were almost more fun than the concerts themselves.

"It was so great to be part of the creative process, to be (Zappa's) tool," Barrow said. "He would figure out what each musician was good at, and he would adapt arrangements to the ensemble that he had. He would really challenge you. He would ask me to do something that, on my own, I would have thought, 'Well, that's impossible. I can't do that.' He'd say, 'Well, try it.'"

"I'd say, 'Well, if Frank thinks I can do it, maybe I can do it.' He'd try and really push the envelope ... and really expand you as a musician."

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