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Next Meeting: Tues, January 12 @7:00 p.m.

For this month's meeting we will have a presentation by Mark Pelt, master woodworker with 30 years experience in the trade. For 25 years, Mark owned Architectural Wood Designs, Tallahassee's premier woodworking shop. He now serves as International Trainer and Developer of New World Markets for the Planit cabinet making software company. Mark will give us an overview of cabinet making trends around the world. He will also be happy to answer any of your woodworking or tool questions.

The January meeting will be held at our regular meeting place, Tri States Automotive, 745 W. Gaines Street in Tallahassee (see map on next page).

Highlights From the December Meeting



Matt Coe playing one of his marimbas.

Imagine you are a music instruction major at Florida State University with a typical student's limited financial means. Your specific area of musical interest is percussion. For the first time in your life you have the opportunity to play a marimba—a percussion instrument with beautiful wooden keys that produce a hauntingly sweet sound when amplified through the resonating tubes suspended below. You fall in love with the instrument and long for a marimba of your own, but the price for a quality model

approaches \$10,000. What do you do? What Mat Coe did was build one for himself.

That was over ten years ago and was the beginning of his business, Coe Percussion. Our December program was a Field Trip to Coe Percussion, maker of premier marimbas and xylophones.

Matt is self taught at his profession and is one of only a few independent marimba craftsmen in the country. Initially he tried to get on with larger instrument companies to learn from them, and almost did, but things did not work out. Now he is happy it didn't. Coe's business has steadily increased and he stays quite busy these days making his quality instruments. Last year was his best yet with the production of seven of his high-end models—including one for the New York City Ballet Company.

Wood plays a major role in this percussion instrument. Matt makes the keys out of Honduran Rosewood. Each key is cut to a specific size and then the underside precisely shaped to produce the desired tone. Matt says he first tunes each key to one note above its intended final pitch. After he completes the fitting and finishing he re-tunes each one down to the desired note. This isn't done just by ear, either. Matt uses some sophisticated electronic devices

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Dues Are Due

This is a reminder that club dues are based on the calendar year, so it is time to pay your 2010 dues. The amount is \$25.00 and you can deliver your payment to our treasurer, Austin Tatum, at the next meeting you attend.





MEETING HIGHLIGHTS *(Continued from page 1)*

to ensure the accuracy of his marimbas' keys.

Additional quality control procedures are also employed. Matt normally keeps his shop at a constant 70 degrees and less than 50% humidity to insure the stability of the Rosewood keys. However, when taking orders, it is common for him to inquire as to the typical climate where the marimba will reside so he can make allowances for unusual circumstances. Matt has tried numerous other types of wood for the keys, but nothing works as well as Rosewood. Since Rosewood has become difficult to obtain, he stocks up when he can and keeps a good supply of the wood on hand in a special climate controlled room.

Besides making the wooden marimba keys, which Matt confessed is not challenging from a woodworking perspective, he also constructs the wooden end panels of his marimba stands. For this he typically uses White Oak, Maple, or Black Walnut with mortise and tenon jointery.



There is also significant metal work in the making of Coe's marimbas and stands and he does that, too. He designed a unique adjustable resonator which allows each key's resonator tube to be individually adjusted for volume to balance the overall instrument sound for a particular concert environment.

Matt has always been a tinkerer. When he was little, he used to aggravate his parents by taking things apart to see how they worked. By the time he was seven, he was putting them back together again. Matt says now when he visits his childhood home, he is usually overwhelmed with requests to fix things.

Woodworking and metal working are two of Matt Coe's passions. He says he is pleased to have found a career that allows him to do both.

And that original marimba Matt constructed, he still has it but admits it doesn't sound near as good as the instruments he builds today.

At the request of one of our members, Matt played us a short number on one of his marimbas. Members who received this newsletter by e-mail will receive a separate e-mail with a recording of that performance attached.

You can visit Coe Percussion's web site at <http://www.coepercussion.com> for more information.

Directions to the regular meeting location.

