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GLEN VELEZ

**Three-time Grammy Award Winning
Master Drummer, Composer and Educator**

The name Glen Velez is synonymous with the words frame drum. Glen is regarded as one of the most influential percussionists and world music composers of our time and is largely responsible for increasing the popularity of Frame Drums in the United States and around the world. His performances inspired the Remo Drum Co. in 1983 to develop a line of frame drums called the Glen Velez Signature Series, and the Cooperman Drum Co. introduced a hand made Signature Series Glen Velez Tambourine and Frame Drum line in 1999.

Of Mexican American ancestry, Velez grew up in Texas but relocated to New York City in 1967. He began by playing jazz on the drum set but soon gravitated to hand drums from around the world (frame drums in particular), seeking out teachers from many different musical traditions. Among the many instruments Velez favors in his work are the Irish bodhrán, the Brazilian pandeiro, the Arabic riq, the North African bendir, and the Azerbaijani ghaval. Although these instruments are similar in construction they all have their own characteristic playing techniques. Glen has studied each instrument traditionally, but has also developed his own cross-cultural musical vocabulary, mixing and adapting techniques from various cultures and developing new ones

Glen has gained international recognition as a solo artist and is known for his 15 year recording and performing collaborations with composer Steve Reich as well as the Paul Winter Consort. Even twentieth century composer John Cage acknowledged Velez' mastery when he wrote a solo frame drum piece especially for him in 1989. He has also collaborated with Tan Dun, Israel Philharmonic, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Opera Orchestra of New York, Suzanne Vega, Pat Metheny, Zakir Hussein, New York City Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's, and Orpheus Chamber Ensemble. His own

compositions have been featured on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and John Schaefer's *New Sounds* and have been commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation, Jerome Foundation, and

Reader's Digest. He has written music for theater and dance and recorded numerous albums on ECM, CBS, RCA, GRP, Warner Brothers, Deutsche Gramophone, Geffen, Nonesuch, Capital, and Sony.

Glen has several instructional videos, five instructional books and over a dozen recordings of his own music on CMP, Music of the World, Sounds True, Interworld, Ellipsis Arts and DafTof Records. Glen is a master teacher who conducts workshops worldwide and has published numerous books and articles on the subject. He has developed his own teaching approach, called "The Handance Method," which incorporates voice and body movement into the process of learning to play the frame drum and has been presented in hundreds of universities worldwide. He currently teaches frame drums at the Mannes School of Music, as well as series of master classes at The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music.

Glen is also an expert in Central Asian Overtone Singing (split-tone/harmonic singing). In addition to singing this style in performance, Glen engages and delights his audiences with a crash course in overtone singing, which as a result, turns into a glorious interactive overtone choir.

Glen regularly performs and records with Coleman Barks, the world renowned scholar and translator of the poetry of Rumi. He is also active with his own *Glen Velez Ensemble*, along with his duo performances with vocalist/rhythm singer Lori Cotler. Selections from their new recording are available on iTunes.