

**West Valley Symphony
Eugene (Gene) Cervantes
Principal Timpanist**



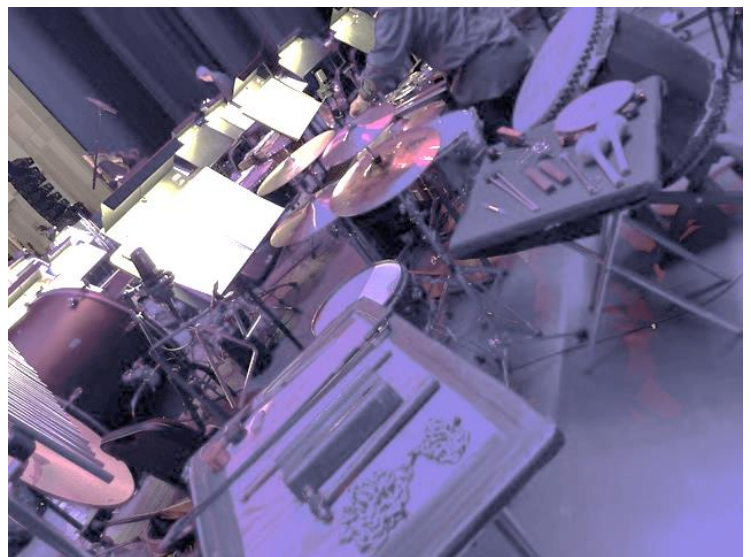
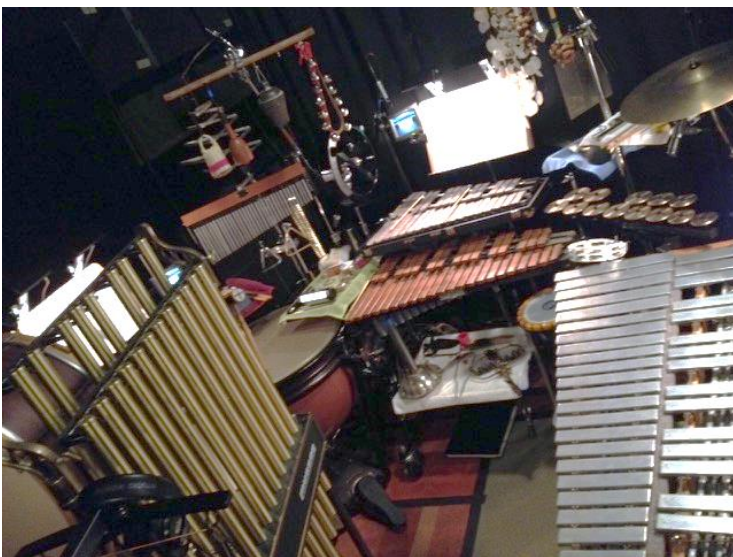
Tell us a little about yourself: My hometown is Bakersfield, CA, and I graduated from Bakersfield High School in 1978. I started playing percussion at nine years old and began studies with Robert Wolfersberger, who went on to teach Music Education at Kansas University. I studied at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education in 1983 and from the University of Kentucky with a Master of Music Performance (Conducting) in 1985. I taught orchestra at Tempe High School and band at Clark High School in Las Vegas. For something completely different, I played viola in the Las Vegas Civic Symphony, Chandler Symphony and Mesa Symphony (I am not a very good violist).

Vocation: I was an electrician with Golka Electric for 35 years (retired).

Married to Sidney Williams (Violist), and we've been together since our NAU days.

In addition to WVS, I play Percussion and Timpani as a substitute with The Phoenix Symphony, Arizona Opera and Arizona MusicFest Orchestra. I'm also Timpanist in the Symphony of the Southwest and I play local Percussion in the Broadway National Touring Company Shows at ASU's Gammage Auditorium. Here are a couple of photos showing those set ups, which can look pretty busy sometimes.

The photo on the left is at ASU Gammage for *Wicked*, and the second is with The Phoenix Symphony at Symphony Hall for *Jurassic Park*.



Favorite Book: I have very much enjoyed going back and re-reading the Classics, but it's a tough call between Hugo's *Hunchback* & Sabatini's *Scaramouche*. And I guess Sabatini gets the nod for that famous opening line (*Yes, that is an invitation to look it up*). Honorable mention goes to Umberto Eco for his trilogy of modern masterpieces: *The Name of the Rose*, *Foucault's Pendulum*, and *Baudolino*.

Favorite musician/composer:

It's another tough call...this time between Beethoven and Prokofiev. My favorite working musician was The Jazz Vibraphonist, Milt Jackson, who performed with such elegant fluidity in his solos.

Best binge watch: Falset and Dirk Gently's Holisitc Detective Agency



Someone gifts you a first-class, all expenses paid trip. Where to? Back to London where I visited Greenwich. It's a unique place, particularly since the "prime meridian" is there. I found it fascinating that most of the observatory was devoted to humans trying to figure out where the heck they were at sea, and all three versions of the Harrison maritime clock are there.

In the photo below I am playing a 'tar'. The *tar* is an ancient, single-headed frame drum, commonly played in the Middle East and North Africa.

The drumhead was usually made from animal skin like goats, while the actual frame was made of wood. This photo was taken at a Phoenix Symphony rehearsal for Tan Dun's 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' concerto.

