



Andrew Wallen

student tenure: May 2013 – August 2019

Although quite adept in drum set, timpani and mallet skills, Andrew was unquestionably one of the finest snare drummers to ever come through the percussion studio. Most students find a primary area of interest, and to say that Andrew dedicated himself to becoming a first-rate snare drummer would be an understatement. His accomplishments include:

- KMEA 6A State Orchestra, First Chair Snare Drum (2019)
- KMEA 6A District Band, First Chair Snare Drum (2018)
- KSHSAA State First Division (I) ratings for percussion solo- snare (2018, 2019)
- KSHSAA Regional First Division (I) ratings for percussion solo- snare (2018, 2019)
- KSHSAA State First Division (I) ratings for percussion ensemble (2018, 2019)
- KSHSAA Regional First Division (I) ratings for percussion ensemble (2018, 2019)
- Lawrence High School Marching Band, *snare line* (2016-2018)
Center Snare and Section Leader (2018)
- Lawrence High School Wind Ensemble, *First Chair Percussion* (2018-2019)
- Lawrence High School Symphonic Band, *First Chair Percussion* (2016-2017)

Andrew will be starting his sophomore year at The University of Kansas in the Fall 2020 semester where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Music Education Degree. He also plays drum set in the Men's Basketball Band and performs in the KU Marching Band.

Some reflections about Andrew from Steve Riley...

It would be prudent to say that a teacher looks forward to every student's lesson each week with equal enthusiasm, but I must say that I looked forward to Andrew's more than most. The kid just always has a way of lighting up a room with a smile and enthusiasm. I can't remember how many times Andrew left his lesson having put me in a much better mood than before he arrived, but it was a lot.
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Andrew began taking lessons during his 6th grade year of middle school, and I could tell right away that he was going to be a great student. Although he had yet to learn how to master double strokes, he was extremely inquisitive and quite mature for a 12 year old. As his skills began to progress he would still have weeks whereby he would fluff off on practicing and I had to get in his business a little bit about it- because I could see how much enormous potential this young man had. On those occasions when I knew I'd gotten him a bit agitated, he'd come back the next week with a steely resolve in his eye, proceed to blast through whatever I told him to work and improve upon, and then give me a stoic stare afterwards as if to say "Take that!" But the situation that was the absolute turning point for Andrew was when he took a snare drum solo to Regional Contest his sophomore year and received a II rating. Although this teacher does not consider a II to be a bad rating, Andrew was devastated. Almost immediately, the way he continued to apply himself moving forward was staggering. In no time his snare drum skills simply skyrocketed. No where was this dedication more evident then when he put the crowning touch to his accomplishments by earning a I rating at State Festival his senior year by performing "Train Wreck" by Nick Angelis from the TapSpace "Violent Ice Cream" collection – some of the most extremely advanced and difficult snare drum solos ever written. Andrew also had a great love for drum set, particularly liking to work on a lot of groove-oriented books and exercises. As a teacher, you always have a special place for those students who took lessons past the 5-year mark, but then there are those really special students that you'll never forget for a multitude of reasons. Andrew is certainly one of those kiddos for me.



Andrew performing "Train Wreck" by Nick Angelis during his State Festival performance his senior year, for which he received the superior I rating. This piece was amongst the most demanding snare drum works that any student from the studio had ever performed for a contest.



One of the greatest joys for a teacher is when your students have become good enough players that you feel comfortable hiring them to do a professional gig with you! Here is Andrew pictured with fellow "Special Alumni" members Elijah Rupprecht (center) and Keaton Hoy (right) at a church service we all played together at First Methodist Church in Lawrence back in December 2017.

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Andrew in the back center performing (what else? 😊) the snare drum part to "Mercury Rising" by Nathan Daughtrey as the Lawrence High Percussion Ensemble prepares for their State Festival performance.



A wonderful senior year photo shoot of Andrew and his twin sister, Olivia.