

# Friday night drum Circle brings large crowd

KATIE WALKER

A&F Staff Writer  
kwalker6@unca.edu

Booming drums echo through close by streets. Dancers move to the beat in the middle of downtown Asheville as people gather around Pritchard Park listening to the music, nodding their heads along.

Attracting both tourists and locals, the event brings people together from all over. Susan Ponder, from Allen, Texas, said she had never been to the drum circle before.

"It looked like a fun community event," Ponder said. "The event itself is fun and awesome to watch. People enjoy themselves and there are all walks of life."

The Asheville Drum Circle takes place every Friday evening in Pritchard Park while the weather remains warm. According to Romantic Asheville, the drum circle began in 2001 and has become a way for people to see the city's individuality.

Abby Dunn, 20, from Sevierville, Tennessee, stood behind the main group of drummers as they work themselves into another rhythm.

Dunn said she found herself drawn to the event after she heard the drums as she was walking downtown. When she saw the drums, Dunn decided to stay for a while and enjoy the event.

"I just heard the music," Dunn said. "I was on the way to Avett Brothers concert and took a detour."

This was her first time coming to the drum circle and Dunn said she would come again.

People arrive steadily through the night to participate, either by dancing, playing the drums, or just to watch. The number of drummers raises from seven to 15 as the event reaches its peak.

Bystanders notice the large crowd and deviate from their path, taking a few minutes to relax and enjoy the music. Some choose to stay farther away from the drummers so they can talk with one another, while others venture closer to the music.

Throughout the event people

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come and go. A man walks onto the dance floor and begins singing and chanting along with the beat of the drums. Dancers encourage crowd members to join the fun, most continue watching.

Fresh off the dance floor Jess Figueroa, from Leicester, came to the event with her parents. Though she has lived close to Asheville for a long time, she had never made her way to the Friday night event.

"I think the drum circle has a good sense of community and brings a bunch of diverse people to one place so they can feel the music," Figueroa said.

She said she liked seeing people dancing along to the music rather than just listening to drums. Figueroa said she would like to participate in the drum circle in the future but would have to remember to bring her drum.

Dancers collect in the middle of the park, some with partners while others come by themselves. They let the music guide their movements, little kids run around and dance with some of the older participants.

To participate in the event, people simply show up with their drum, sit down and begin playing. The drummers listen to each other and create their own beat, letting one person take control of the sound for a period of time then reigning them back in.

Jennifer Walls, freshman music



PHOTO BY HOLLY GOSWICK

The Asheville community gathers in Pritchard Park every Friday night for the drum circle.

student at UNC Asheville, said she enjoys coming to the drum circle and watching the dynamic of the group.

"You can tell when the beat is going to change," Walls said. "The main girl looks at the guy with three drums and the beat changes soon after."

Walls said she first came to the event simply because she thought it was a really cool idea. She came to Asheville from Leonardtown,

Maryland and had never seen anything like the drum circle.

Drum circle regular Dave Bukovinac has lived in Asheville for the past three years and attends the Drum Circle whenever he can.

Bukovinac said he has never played at the event but enjoys watching everyone who comes to participate. The exhilarating music and beat keeps him coming back.

"All you need is a drum and a place to sit," Bukovinac said.