In June 1982, Cloyd Duff presented his first Timpani Masterclass. In the years since, the class has become an annual event, attracting timpanists from across the country and around the world. Students and teachers, amateurs and professionals alike, have attended the class to learn about the Duff school of playing...an approach to the instrument that earned the late Cloyd Duff a reputation as one of the finest timpanists of the 20th century, known the world over for his beautiful, singing sound and his flawless musicianship.

The class covers every aspect of the Cloyd Duff school, from the fundamentals of technique to the most advanced orchestral repertoire. The traditions of this great class have been preserved and several new sessions added: the specifics of instrument maintenance, stick making, calf head tucking, changing and clearing heads, and a new week long audition program. In 1999, Cloyd Duff asked Jim Atwood, his assistant at these classes for many years, to take over the direction of the masterclass program, saying: “Under Jim’s direction, I expect that this class will continue to flourish for another two decades.”
Tuesday morning
9:30 am - 12:30 pm | Lecture
• Playing ranges of each timpani and why
• More discussion and recommendation of calf and plastic heads
• Ear and tuning problems
• Hand-muffling the timpani and the use of suede pads
• Cross sticking: Advantages and disadvantages
• Counting rests
• Careful preparation and marking of timpani parts

Tuesday afternoon
3:00 - 5:30 p.m.
Afternoon Masterclass Sessions:
Advanced Performers

Wednesday morning
9:30 - 12:30 p.m. | Lecture
• Complete study of rolls
• Special roll techniques
• Examples from the repertoire
• Complete study of clearing heads
• Correction and maintenance
• How to develop your ability to clear heads
• Full discussion of timpani sticks
• Discussion of all the variables in timpani stick making
• Styles, makes, characteristics of different stick types.
• Stick covering techniques
• Discussion of stick weights and tonal properties
• Question and answer period for any timpani stick problems
• Examples from the class

Wednesday afternoon
3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Audition Masterclass, Part 1:
Timpani audition preparation with specific instruction on how to practice more effectively and efficiently for auditions, performance of standard timpani audition repertoire, and demonstration of personal audition preparation methods.

Thursday morning
9:30 am - 12:30 pm | Lecture
• Complete study of rhythmic interpretation
• Working for rhythmic clarity of all dynamics
• Rhythmic interpretation applied to different periods and composers
• Stick choices to enhance both tone and definition
• Special muffling techniques to enhance clarity
• Timpani anatomy: detail instruction on timpani of all makes and models including basic maintenance, trouble shooting, and repair
• Discussion of different timpani makes: advantages and disadvantages
• Results of different-shapes kettles

Thursday Afternoon 3:00-5:30pm
Audition masterclass, Part 2: in depth masterclass on audition performance, including instruction focusing on performing consistently and more musically in auditions, and further performances of timpani audition repertoire

Friday Morning
9:30 am -12:30pm | Lecture
• Study of Duff’s recording and a special video presentation
• Discussion of symphony orchestra experience
• Special problems in recording sessions
• Mature ability, finesse, and musicianship
• Timpani demonstration and display of repertory

Friday Afternoon
3:00 - 5:00 pm
• Afternoon masterclass sessions: advanced plus performers

5:30 pm
End of class gathering