



**FOCUS
DAY
2006**

P·A·S·I·C
— ★ —
AUSTIN 2006 TEXAS

**PERCUSSION 2, 3, 4
Chamber Music For
Percussion**

Hosted by Rick Kurasz
Presented by the
PAS New Music/Research Committee

Elementalities (2000) by Christian Ledroit

performed by Shawn Mativetsky (tabla), Marie-Hélène Breault (flute) and Catherine Meunier (vibraphone)

"Elementalities" is a set of short pieces, all based on different presentations and mutations of elements. The piece started with the idea of creating elements (short melodic and/or rhythmic fragments) and transforming them, and grew into a suite of five "mind games," all related to each other, but independent" such that any combination of movements may be played in concert. The outer movements, Elemental I and II, are concerned almost exclusively with basic presentation and permutation of elements. Elemental I offers four different unmetered settings of a set of elements, presenting them in different instruments, different orders and different registers. Elemental II treats a different set of elements to similar procedures, but places them in a metered setting. The second movement, Cereal, strings certain melodic and rhythmic elements of the other movements into a single melodic line. This melodic line is placed in one of several rhythmic/metric layers and is then put through several serial permutations to create the structure. The middle movement, Floating, sets a rhapsodic flute line, drawn from the various elements of the other movements, floating above a mechanical, slowly changing background in the percussion. The fourth movement, Orange, gives the players basic materials and instructs them to improvise on them, in the way a rock band improvises on a melodic "lick" or chord progression. The piece was commissioned and premiered by Montreal's Lithium Ensemble and was awarded second prize in the 2001 SOCAN Awards for Young Composers, chamber music category.

Tangling Shadows by Nathan Daughtrey

performed by Lisa Rogers (percussion) and Amy Anderson (oboe)

"Tangling Shadows" for oboe and vibraphone by Nathan Daughtrey was commissioned by oboist Amy Anderson and percussionist Lisa Rogers, both professors in the School of Music at Texas Tech University. The eight-minute work is based upon the Pablo Neruda poem, "Thinking, Tangling Shadows."

Legal Highs by David P. Jones

performed by Gilmar Goulart (marimba) and Julie Mellon (violin)

"Legal Highs" won the 1988 Marimolin Composition Competition. Its three movements "Mr. Coffee," "Men-thology," and "Sweet Thing" present interaction between violin and marimba through dialogue, counterpoint, and solo with accompaniment. Even though it plays with changing meters, it does have a dance quality throughout.

Duo by O. Jealska

performed by Ivana Bilic (vibraphone) and Ana Domancic (flute)

The piece was written for and premiered by Ivana Bilic and Ana Domancic in 1997. Vibraphone and flute are treated as two living creatures chatting about everyday life, sometimes listening and interacting, sometimes talking for themselves, present in the same time and space and yet distant and different. The soft sound of the triangle reaches for the world that lies beyond expression. The work is divided in three parts with the triangle marking the passages between them.

And Legions will Rise by Kevin Puts

performed by Members of the PNME: Lisa Pegher (marimba) Minghuan Xu (violin) and Kevin Schempf (clarinet)

Composed in the summer of 2001, "And Legions Will Rise" is about the power in all of us to transcend during times of tragedy and personal crisis. While I was writing it, I kept imagining one of those war scenes in blockbuster films, with masses of troops made ready before a great battle. I think we have forces like this inside of us, ready to do battle when we are at our lowest moments.

Commissioned by Kobe Shinbun Newspaper. Premiere: Matsukata Hall, Kobe, Japan 2001

39 a manicheus alma/beFORe JOHN by Holló Aurél

performed by Iain Moyer, Ian Hale, Brian Tinkel and Dave Wolf

"39 a manicheus alma/beFORe JOHN" is a percussion quartet utilizing four marimba players performing on three marimbas and a small percussion setup. The work is highly energetic in nature and utilizes repeated ostinatos that change at the performers discretion.

Ligare (2002/2004) by Alexandre Lunsqui (b. 1969)

performed by Due East (Greg Beyer, percussion and Erin Lesser, flute)

The western flute and percussion families have natural counterparts in folkloric music the world over. Afro-Brazilian music is no exception. In "Ligare," ('linked'), the Brazilian composer Alexandre Lunsqui utilizes this fact to great advantage. "Ligare" is a piece that literally links the two instrumental colors into a rapid flow of singular gestures. The performers are frequently connected in rhythmic unisons, rhythms clearly informed by Afro-Brazilian vocabulary. Lunsqui is not writing in imitation of such music; if anything, he transcends it with a sculptured sonic sensibility that is unmistakably modern and individual. "Ligare" links the contemporary with the folkloric, and in doing so succeeds in a beautiful fusion representative of the celebratory aspects of music globalization.

Circling Dawn by Roger Zehab

performed by Bill Sallak (marimba) and Stephen Crichlow (violin)

"Circling Dawn" pairs the marimba and violin in a truly equal relationship, with added percussive and frictional interest provided by a glass bowl and several glass tumblers. Various blends of tone are achieved: the marimba and violin at the beginning, the marimba and glass bowls throughout the body of the work, and violin harmonies and scraped glass in the coda.

Eclipse by Franck Dentresangle

performed by Frederic Macarez (percussion) and Sandrine Façois (flute)

"Eclipse" is a duet for flute and percussion in two movements, inspired by the mixed culture in Dentresangle's life. Franck is from the center of France and studied with Frederic Macarez in Paris. He is a great jazz vibraphone player and is now a recognized teacher, too. His wife is originally from Brazil but her father is from Africa. This is why travels and different cultures are the basis of Dentresangle's music. In June 2004, George Frock wrote in *Percussive Notes*: "The first movement, "Molto Rubato," written for

flute and vibraphone, is an AB form and has the feeling of free expression, although notated with straight rhythmic patterns. The second movement adds suspended cymbal, a pair of conga drums, and bongos to the vibe texture. This movement is lively, rhythmic and has several meter changes. The dialogue between the vibraphone and drums is technically challenging..."

Time to Burn by Judith Shatin

I-Jen Fang (percussion), Michael Schutz (percussion) and Scott Perry (oboe)

"Time to Burn," for oboe and two percussionists, was fueled by my rage and sadness at the burning that has erupted around us. One is hard pressed to keep track of it all. The past decade has been an era of renewed holocausts driven by ethnic and religious hatred. The rampant intolerance in our world is reminiscent of the "burning time" of the Inquisition or the burning of witches. "Time to Burn" was commissioned by percussionists I-Jen Fang and Michael Schutz.

Three Haiku by Joseph Klein

performed by MarimbaSong (Andrew Spencer, percussion and Mia Spencer, mezzo-soprano)

"Three Haiku" for mezzo-soprano and percussion was composed in September of 1989, and is a setting of three haiku by John Ashbery. My continuing interest in numerical sequences and resultant cyclical patterns directed me toward a formal design based upon the simple progression 3, 4 and 5, which is applied proportionally at several structural levels and manifested in a variety of ways. This relationship is reflected at the deepest level in the durations of each haiku setting: the first setting is 1' 20", the second is 1' 40" and the third is 1' 00" (thus resulting in the ratio 4:5:3); each individual setting is itself proportioned similarly, these diversions being delineated by textural and dynamic contrast as well as pitch distribution (pitch material being likewise divided into groupings of 3, 4 and 5); finally, this pattern is reflected at the surface within the basic rhythmic structure.

As for the actual setting of the texts, each of the three haiku is itself separated into three parts, these portions then being set in contrasting ways according to the system outlined above. Thus, while the texts themselves are brief, the interpretive possibilities contained within them are thoroughly explored in this ostensibly rigid (though inevitably liberating) manner of text setting.

—Joseph Klein

- i. A pencil on glass—shattered! The water runs down the drain.
- ii. In rags and crystals, sometimes with a shred of sense, an odd dignity
- iii. What is the past, what is it all for? A mental sandwich

—John Ashbery

exit wound (2004) from Local Economy (2004–05) by James Gardner

performed by duo Contour (Leff Forrest Feguston, percussion and Stephen Altoft, trumpet)

Unlike some governments I could mention, I had a clear idea of my exit strategy when I started out on this incursion into foreign territory. As a result, "exit wound"—the final module of the larger work-in-progress Local Economy was the first to be completed. I've finished, so I'll start...

Of course the 19-tone trumpet—like humans—is full of tubing and compromises, and just like its more familiar incarnation, it aspires to, rather than reliably embodies, its nominal temperament. I don't see this as a problem, as I'm not one to cling to any temperament or tuning system with religious zeal.

In a very early phase of the composition I did in fact make a systematic exploration of some 19-tone pitch resources, but the results struck me as sounding far too much like pedagogical exercises to be of interest. Vestiges of these 'warming-up licks' do, however, remain.

A useful way of approaching the piece might be to think of the trumpet as the character, familiar from science fiction movies, who wakes up one morning to find himself in a new body, and who goes through the clichéd ritual of studying the alien contours of his new visage in the mirror with a mixture of horror and fascination.

By the same token, the percussionist could, perhaps, be imagined as some sort of sidekick, offering advice, encouragement and occasionally a dissenting voice.

But this is, after all, a piece of music and such crassly reductive quasi-programmatic schemes don't hold for long.

The percussionist's set-up, and the performative energies deployed in the part are modeled on those of an improvising percussionist, inspired in part by the Wellington-based percussionist Anthony Donaldson, who ought not be blamed for any shortcomings in this place.

Thanks must go to Stephen Altoft and Lee Ferguson not only for commissioning the piece with funding from Creative New Zealand, but also for their enthusiasm and forbearance in the face of continually missed deadlines.

—James Gardner

Islands That Never Were by James Romig

performed by Tony Oliver, percussion and (vibraphone) and Ashlee Mack, piano

"Islands That Never Were," scored for vibraphone and piano, was commissioned by the Hoffmann/Goldstein Duo for premiere performances in the fall of 2003. The work's title is a reference to fractal-generated "landscapes" illustrated in Benoit Mandelbrot's text, *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*. In Mandelbrot's groundbreaking study, simple but precise rules produce highly complex fractal images that appear, counterintuitively, to be completely "natural." Recent performances of this work include recitals in Israel, Italy, Baltimore, and Michigan. The composition, lasting approximately nine minutes, also exists in a version for solo piano.

James Romig (b. 1971) studied at the University of Iowa and Rutgers University, where he earned a Ph.D. under the tutelage of Charles Wuorinen and Milton Babbitt. His works—commissioned by soloists, ensembles, and arts organizations—have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. Recent guest composer visits include Northwestern University, Columbia University, the University of Illinois, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory, and The Juilliard School. He has taught at the University of Iowa, Rutgers University, Bucknell University, and is currently on faculty at Western Illinois University. As a presenter of new music, Romig tours and records as conductor of the Luna Nova new-music ensemble and serves as co-director of The Society for Chromatic Art, a NYC-based ensemble/organization founded in 1997. His works are available from Parallax Music Press, Curving Walkway Publications, Flute World, and www.jamesromig.com.

Sanctuary by Akemi Naito

performed by Proper Glue Duo (Melanie Sehman and Steve Sehman)

"Sanctuary" was originally scored for an accordion solo that I composed in 1998. While preparing for its recording in April 2005, I had the opportunity to rethink the piece. I was captured by an inspiration to transcribe it to a marimba duo.

Because of the similarities of its timbre to that of the sho (mouth organ) and the pipe organ, the sound of the accordion, for me, evokes a certain spirituality, a religious sublimity. I wanted to capture that image in a serene space and time. The longing for the sound is always backed by purity.

That is the first step into the sacred precincts. Marimbas simply follow the accordion except for position of the chords, and they are played by tremolo throughout the piece. Marimba I can be played with a 4 & 1/3 octave instrument, and Marimba II requires a 5-octave instrument. I would like to express my thankfulness to Alan Zimmerman and Diana Herold who helped me to realize this work.

—Akemi Naito

Sojourn (2004) by Serra Hwang

performed by Sole Nero – Piano and Percussion Duo

(Jessica Johnson, piano and Anthony Di Sanza, percussion)

"Sojourn" is a Korean folk drumming inspired piece. The rhythmic cycles used for the piece, such as 8+9+10+10+9 or 10+6+10+10 are combinations of patterns that are common in folk drumming, especially folk ritual music of traditional Korea. Within cycle, groupings between 2 and 3 are constantly changing to create an active and evolving energy flow. And the large recurring rhythmic cycle produces a distinctive groove. Above this groove of percussion, the piano flows more freely, singing, telling, and chanting a story. It is to give the listeners a chance to sojourn into rural Korea.

—Serra Hwang

Skye Lines (2001), by Bruce P. Mahin

performed by Al Wojtera (vibraphone and bass drum), David Allen (clarinet) and Wayne Gallops (piano)

The Cuillin
Dunvegan Castle
Highlander Games
Old Man of Storr
McHugh's Castle
The Quiraing

This piece takes its name and inspiration from the Isle of Skye, located near the western coast of Scotland. The beautiful but rugged island presents the visitor with a contrast of geological formations battered by centuries of prevailing ocean winds and sea currents. Storms sweep across the land mass with a severity and suddenness which is both startling and potentially dangerous. Overall, the island serves as a reminder of the universal truth that struggle is at the heart of all things and that time is the only other constant in our world. This, then, is the overall theme of this piece, exemplified in a variety of ways musical.

—Bruce P. Mahin

Bruce P. Mahin is a Professor of Music, and Director of the Radford University Center for Music Technology. Mahin is a former president of the Southeastern Composers League, a former co-chair of Society of Composers Region 3, a research fellow at the University of Glasgow (Scotland), and the recipient of awards from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Meet the Composer, Annapolis Fine Arts Foundation, Res Musica, Southeastern Composers League and others. His works are available on compact disc through Capstone Recordings (CPS-8624, CPS-8611, CPS-8748) and published in score by Pioneer Percussion, Ltd. and in the Society of Composers Journal of Musical Scores.

The Loneliness of Santa Claus by Fredrik Andersson

performed by Coalescence Percussion Duo (Gregrey Secor and Judy Moonert)

"The Loneliness of Santa Claus" was originally commissioned by RE: Percussion in 1994. Like Fredrik Andersson's other compositions "Imagine There was Nothing" for bells, 2 vibes and marimba, and his solo marimba work "Not Everything which Happens is in the Newspaper," "The Loneliness of Santa Claus" is an exploration of sound and silence combined with lush harmonies. The simplicity and modality of the melodic material is reminiscent of Gregorian Chant. There is intimacy and space with in the piece which brings forward for the natural resonance, nuance and beauty of the marimba.

"The piece could be considered as a contemplation/meditation for musician, listener, room and, of course, time. About the titles of my music, it is worth mentioning that those should be seen as an introduction to a certain kind of atmosphere that comes along with the music. For reflection, one might say. Possible therefor, is to end up with several "entrances" to the actual sense of the piece."

—Fredrik Andersson

Percussion Duo (1979) by Charles Wuorinen

performed by Steven Schick, percussion & James Avery piano

"Percussion Duo" was commissioned and premiered by James Avery and Steven Schick at the University of Iowa in November, 1979.

Lion Lying Down by Mark Dancigers

performed by Yale Percussion Group

New timbres can provoke emotional responses. When Joshua Quillen approached me about writing a piece for steel drums, I was excited about every aspect of the project. I wanted to see how this sound, so rare in a "classical" context, could interact with the bright, clear world of other metallic percussion instruments. I knew that the main focus of the work and its main source of emotional content would be the way the steel drums expand this distinct palette. The material is written to let the sounds of these instruments naturally emerge and mingle. The title is an image I like. I sometimes wonder what a sleeping lion dreams about, and what sounds it hears.

—Mark Dancigers

Okho (1989) by Iannis Xenakis

Conundrum (Terry Longshore, Brett Reed, Tomm Roland)

Composer, architect, and mathematician Iannis Xenakis is known for his complex, stochastic compositional style as well as a fascination with extremes of timbre. In "Okho," he scores for three identical (except in tuning) djembe drums (goblet shaped hand drums from west Africa). He scores for six independent striking areas/techniques in order to explore various sounds on the drums. The composition begins with fairly simple rhythms which the performers exchange and layer. It develops rhythmically into much more complex rhythmic passages and eventually into one of Xenakis' favored techniques in which each performer is playing a tempo independent of the others, then all coming together again after the mathematically structured alignment of the three tempos. Despite the compositional techniques employed, the unique sound of the djembe brings a distinctly west African sound to the music.

Deep Carving by Aaron Travers

Third Coast Percussion Quartet

"Deep Carving" was commissioned by the Third Coast Percussion Quartet in November 2005 and premiered by the group in May 2006. The title is a phrase used by the Northwest Coast First Nations people to denote "well-making."

Something that is deeply carved is said to be of great artistic merit and is highly valued among the community. My piece is both an attempt at likewise creating something "deeply carved," as well as serving as an analog to the unique aesthetic of the carvings and paintings of these people. All of their visual art uses a small set of shapes which can be pulled, compressed, and generally molded to serve various functions within a clearly defined frame. Almost all of the images carved or painted are of archetypal human or animal figures in their mythological pantheon. Because much of this visual art is used on ceremonial boxes and the sides of homes, the frame, the boundary, becomes very important. The images seem to rush to the boundaries before folding back in, repeating the process until the space is completely filled, sometimes yielding a high degree of abstraction. The First Nations peoples of the Northwest Coast region began carving on the materials around them, including bone, wood and ivory. As the Europeans arrived and proceeded to dismantle the rituals and practices that defined the First Nations culture, they also introduced metal to the region, a material which artists in the 20th century began to carve to great effect, particularly the late Haida artist, Bill Reid.

My own piece, as an analog, clearly defines its boundaries by starting with the registral boundaries (low bass drum, high glockenspiel), which are echoed by the physical boundaries on the stage (Percussion I and IV as the outer players). In addition, it uses a small number of rhythmic patterns that are, like the shapes of the First Nations artists, compressed, expanded, fractured, and re-ordered to create a maximum variety with limited materials. As a final analog, the piece begins with mostly wood and skin instruments, eventually yielding considerably to unpitched metal, a reference to the recent introduction of metal in the First Nations community, as well as to the unfortunate disintegration of their culture (to date, there are no Haida villages remaining).

—Aaron Travers

Like a Sick, Breathing Tambura by Andrew McKenna Lee

performed by Third Coast Percussion Quartet

This piece is based on a North Indian rhythmic 'tala' or beat cycle. It's called Tala Pacham Sawari, and it's a 15 beat cycle. The rhythm has a great feel, especially on beats 11-15 where it becomes syncopated—the whole thing feels very "cantabile" to me, which is sort of unusual (in my experience) for something that is strictly rhythmic. My piece just uses the basic feel of this rhythm and then goes off to do something totally different...

Indian music doesn't really inform any other part of the piece, with the exception of the beginning (and the "optional" ending) where I was trying to simulate the sound of a tambura by using two bowed cymbals and a bowed vibraphone. The name of the piece is an allusion to this—it was originally just supposed to be an imaginative tempo marking but it grew on me and in lieu of finding something different. I just kept it! I think it's evocative and perhaps a little off the wall, but I like that.

—Andrew McKenna Lee

Village Burial with Fire (1989) by James Wood

performed by Yale Percussion Duo

Paul Klee used to refer to his own work as 'abstract with memories'. I hope he will allow me to borrow the term, at least in this instance. Here the memories are of a Hindu, princely funeral ceremony—for two months the villagers have been making preparations—hundreds have turned out wearing their most lavish and colourful clothes, and carrying offerings of food on their heads. First there is the noisy procession down to the river for purification of the soul, then a short ceremony, and then the vast funeral pyre is set alight. At this moment it seems as though the whole village has exploded into music and dancing—soon, some go into trance. Gradually the physical form of the pyre disintegrates, and the spirit of the deceased is formally set free to mingle with the spirit world. In the evening, when the festivities have moved on to another place, some mourners lament beside the glowing embers. "Village Burial with Fire" was commissioned by the Hungarian percussion group, Amadinda for the 1989 Arts Council Contemporary Music Network, with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. The first nine performances were given by Amadinda during their Arts Council tour of Britain during November 1989 in London, Leicester, Winchester, Cheltenham, Bristol, Manchester, Durham, Sheffield and Huddersfield.

—James Wood

Cymbalism by Tom Baker

performed by Two Percussion Group

"Cymbalism" was written in 2005 for Dale Speicher and

Chris Leonard. Dale and Chris were interested in a piece that could travel easily, using very few instruments. I have worked with Dale and Chris before, and was fascinated by the interplay and interconnectedness of their work. Cymbalism tries to exploit this interplay, as both players work together on the same three cymbals, gong and triangle, muting for each other, striking simultaneously, and completing rhythmic figures that the other starts. I also wanted to use "Cymbalism" to explore the idea of increasing resonance, where the entire work evolves from a dry, tight sound towards maximum resonance.

New Composition by Anders Astrand
performed by Christopher Norton, Anders Astrand,
Leslie Norton and Kevin Schempf

Focus Day by Frederic Macarez

performed by Paris-Perçu (Sandrine François, flute; Olivia Gay, cello; Cecile Monsinjon, harp; Frederic Macarez, percussion)
This quartet will receive its world premiere at PASIC 2006. "For a long time I wanted to write this piece," says Macarez. "Most of these instruments are used to playing together in duets: flute with harp, flute with percussion, etc. But it's quite challenging to have these four instruments all together. Also I love to combine sounds and rhythms mixed into different parts. "This quartet is based on dreams, imagination, and travel. This piece is inspired by North Africa. Time is suspended in this quartet, where virtuosity doesn't have place because it's not musical expression."

Partnership (1980) by Irwin Bazelon

performed by William Moersch and Jonathan Haas with Anna Kepe, physical theater artist

"Partnership" is a musical dialogue between timpani (five drums) and marimba of about nine to ten minutes duration. Each instrument has its own solos and virtuoso techniques. In the case of the marimba, the performer utilizes two mallets in each hand, playing chords, complicated passages and counterpoint between top and bottom registers. The work is lyrical, not dramatic, in spite of certain rhythmic interjections that occur from time to time. Prominence of instrumentation is determined by dynamics, phrasing, and the general character of the music, which is often quite subdued, light, and somewhat wispy.

"Partnership" was commissioned by Jonathan Haas, and written expressly for Jonathan Haas and William Moersch. The world premiere took place on 19 May 1980 at the Carnegie Recital Hall, New York City.

Prelude to Endgame by Philip Glass

performed by William Moersch and Jonathan Haas

My goal as the arranger is to remain true to Philip Glass' sonic world. I am very conscious of Glass' compositional intentions in transcribing the double bass part to a five octave marimba. From an orchestration view, the marimba fits into the range of the original instrument, the double bass. The advantages of using a marimba is that it gave me the tools to create a thicker and more balanced sound with the four timpani.

Therefore, I take full advantage of the range of the marimba to build the intensity of the seeming simplicity of repeated sounds, comprised of evolving patterns of rhythms, which are quite complex, and rhythmic. The brilliance of Endgame is in how the parallel motives interact with the vertical harmony and then is created a third dimension within the various changing meters. "Prelude to Endgame," was commissioned by the American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, MA, for a production of Samuel Beckett's play "Endgame." Philip Glass composed the Prelude in 1984 for timpani and bass and was performed by Jonathan Haas.

The idea of the "Endgame" is taken from the game of chess where the concept designates the last, and entirely predictable, stage of a game. It is a one-act play for four characters. It was originally written in French, entitled *Fin de partie*. But was translated into English by Beckett and published in 1957. Endgame is on the subject of leaving. We have the impression of watching the end of something, the end possibly of the human race, and the fears of being left alone, the last person on the earth.

The main premise in Endgame is:

- The play portrays a universe which is nearing its end but which could continue repeating itself; the end which all seem to be moving toward is both certain and elusive.
- Setting and situation suggests an underground bomb shelter, possibly after the occurrence of a nuclear holocaust.
- Existentialist themes: awareness of absurdity and meaninglessness of the human condition but also attempts to construct meaning through language and imagination.
- Literary allusions to Eliot's *Waste Land*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Dante's *Inferno*: sense of eternal torment, characters doomed to re-stage and repeat their crime, which can be viewed as their "life"; repetition is not only a technique in Beckett, but also a theme.
- Meaninglessness and absoluteness of time; past, present, and future seem to mean nothing and everything; the play represents a cyclic pattern of repetition and also an unavoidable linear progression toward nothingness.

Ruby Cohn in her book *Back to Beckett*, writes that "Beckett felt his most important sentence is Nell's 'Nothing is funnier than unhappiness.' And he directed his play to show the fun of unhappiness."

—James Orlick