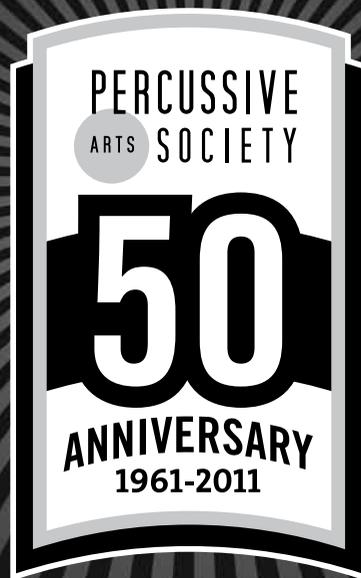


Focus Day 2011

“Five Decades of New Music for Percussion 1961–2011”



Hosted by Eugene Novotney
Presented by the
PAS New Music/Research Committee

Focus Day 2011

Five Decades of New Music for Percussion: 1961–2011

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Percussive Arts Society, the New Music/Research Committee is extremely excited to present **Focus Day 2011: Five Decades of New Music for Percussion**. Featuring masterworks of the last fifty years of our repertoire performed by some of the most significant artists of our generation, Focus Day 2011 marks a monumental achievement for the Percussive Arts Society and its membership. As the Percussive Arts Society as a whole celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is fitting that the New Music Research Committee is celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Focus Day (formerly New Music/Research Day) at PASIC. Since its founding by Stuart Smith in 1986, the mission of the New Music/Research Committee has been to present creative, innovative, and imaginative programming that exposes new compositional trends while maintaining connections to the historically significant composers and performers of our field who together shaped the contemporary art-form of new music for percussion.

Certainly, Focus Day 2011 defines this mission in every way. Many of the major masterworks by the most important composers of our field from 1961–2011 will be presented throughout the day, including works from Mark Applebaum, Herbert Brün, Michael Colgrass, Christopher Deane, Morton Feldman, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Gordon, David Lang, Steve Reich, Paul Smadbeck, Stuart Smith, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Gordon Stout, Michael Udow, Julia Wolfe, and Iannis Xenakis. The New Music Research Committee also encourages the presentation of new and previously unknown works at PASIC, and we are delighted that Focus Day 2011 will include two PASIC Premieres—a unique new composition by Judith Shatin, and a truly epic new percussion ensemble work by one of the leading composers of our time, James Wood.

In developing the theme for this year's Focus Day, I was compelled to look up the dictionary definition of the word "masterwork". The earliest meanings of the term refer to "a piece of work by a craftsman accepted as qualification for membership of a guild as an acknowledged master". These "masterworks" were then preserved and studied, and in time, they became the standards by which all future works were measured. Today, the word "masterwork" has come to mean "a work of outstanding artistry, skill, or workmanship, and often, an artist's or craftsman's best piece of work". Like the masterworks of old, these new masterworks are preserved and studied, and on occasions like today, we witness them come to life through performance. Focus Day 2011 offers a golden opportunity to immerse oneself in the 50-year history of the Percussive Arts Society through a series of outstanding and historic concerts and presentations. I thank you for sharing your passion and respect for new music and for our art form through your attendance at these historically significant presentations.

—Eugene Novotney, Chair, New Music Research Committee; Host, Focus Day 2011

P.A.S. New Music/Research Committee

Don Baker
Greg Beyer
Michael Bump
Thomas Goldstein
Brian Johnson
Kathleen Kastner
Rick Kurasz
John Lane
Eugene Novotney, Committee Chair
Morris Palter
Bill Sallak
Melanie Sehman
Benjamin Toth

Past New Music/Research Committee Chairs

Stuart Smith (founder)
Larry Snider

Special Thanks to our Consultants for Focus Day 2011

Tom Siwe
Larry Snider

Focus Day Program Historical Essays

Kathleen Kastner

Focus Day 2011 Coordinator and Host

Eugene Novotney

Focus Day 2012, Austin TX **“Thank You, John Cage, For EVERYTHING”!**

Thank You for the Bells We Ring,
(and the pianos we abuse,
the amplification of our chews,
the cacti that we pluck,
the water gongs we've struck,
the philosophies you have fused,
the kitchenware we've used,
for your gifts to the immensely rich sonic world we call percussion,
and showing us the beauty of listening to nothing)
Thank You, John Cage, For EVERYTHING!

2012 is the centenary of the birth of John Cage, often considered to be the most influential composer of the 20th century. More than any other composer, his work brought about a radical, dramatic adjustment in what we allow ourselves to think of as music. A particular beneficiary of Cage's work is the realm of Percussion. He not only brought the world-wide family of percussion instruments out of the dark ages and into the performing and compositional fore, but his endless inventiveness opened the door to an expansion of the percussive/sonic realm that made the 20th century the “Century of Percussion,” from which we as percussionists still benefit today.

In honor and celebration of the life and work of this creative and gentle genius, the PAS Focus Day Committee will present a day dedicated to the percussion and sonic works of John Cage. The day will also include scholarly presentations regarding his creations and approaches to music making, percussion music by other composers who were directly influenced by and utilize his methods and philosophies, percussion music which influenced his development, and other potentially related presentations.

The committee seeks submissions for participation in the day which will present high quality, historically accurate performances of his major and minor percussion music from throughout the entire span of his creative life, as well as music with other instruments including voice; of influenced and influencing works, and scholarly presentations.

While Cage's oeuvre is rich, the committee is also interested in the work of established and especially, emerging composers currently working within the realm of Cage's methods and philosophies, and seeks the works of these composers for inclusion in the day. Proposals for performance of non-Cage historical and new works should include a clear and concise defense on how they relate to Cage's creative processes and products, or the nature of their influence on or of John Cage.

Please note: expenses and the securing of instruments and funding sources will be the sole responsibility of the artist(s) themselves. This includes all logistical and financial considerations associated with the performance. Please prepare and submit your proposal with this consideration in mind.

Applications being accepted Sept. 15–Dec. 15, 2011 at www.pas.org
For additional information, please contact:
Brian Johnson, Host
New Music/ Research Committee
bjohnson@flynncenter.org

Focus Day: Hosts & Themes 1986–2011

1986	Washington DC	Stuart Smith/Michael Udow	“New Literature & Notation”
1987	St. Louis	Jean-Charles Francois	“Percussion & Timbre Elaboration”
1988	San Antonio	Stuart Smith/Jean-Charles Francois	“20 th Century Technologies”
1989	Nashville	Stuart Smith	“Percussion Ecology”
1990	Philadelphia	Chris Shultis	“Experiment & Revolution”
1991	Anaheim	Larry Snider	“Lou Harrison/World Music”
1992	New Orleans	Chris Shultis	“Improvisation in Experimental Mus.”
1993	Columbus	Steven Schick	“European Percussion Music”
1994	Atlanta	Eugene Novotney	“Percussion in Traditional Musics”
1995	Phoenix	Michael Bump	“Visual Percussion”
1996	Nashville	Tom Goldstein	“Percussion in Discussion”
1997	Anaheim	Brian Johnson	“Instrument Innovations”
1998	Orlando	Tom Goldstein	“Percussionist as Composer”
1999	Columbus	Benjamin Toth	“John Cage Retrospective”
2000	Dallas	Larry Snider	“Time for Marimba”
2001	Nashville	Peggy Benkeser	“Wired for Percussion”
2002	Columbus	Eugene Novotney	“Percussion Ensemble Retrospective”
2003	Louisville	Rob Falvo	“Moving Sound”
2004	Nashville	Tom Goldstein	“The Avante Garde: Old & New”
2005	Columbus	Brian Johnson	“Music for a Crowded Planet”
2006	Austin	Rick Kurasz	“Perc. 2-3-4: Chamber Music”
2007	Columbus	Michael Bump	“Paukenzeit - New Music for Timpani”
2008	Austin	Benjamin Toth	“Out of Africa”
2009	Indianapolis	Greg Beyer	“The Global Economy”
2010	Indianapolis	Morris Palter	“The Ecology of Percussion”
2011	Indianapolis	Eugene Novotney	“1961 – 2011: Five Decades of New Music for Percussion”

As we celebrate 50 years of the Percussive Arts Society (1961–2011), the New Music Research Committee offers a brief historical perspective of how we arrived at 1961 in the areas of Multiple Percussion, Keyboard Percussion and the Percussion Ensemble.

All of the music you will hear on Wednesday evening and throughout the day on Thursday as part of the New Music Focus Day program is informed by our percussion history prior to 1961. It is important to have an awareness of this history not just as we listen to the music heard at PASIC, but as we move forward in the next 50 years of the Percussive Arts Society.

MULTIPLE PERCUSSION: THE JOURNEY TO 1961

The development of the concept of “multiple percussion” in the twentieth century can be viewed through two different paths. The lesser-known path is that of early percussion solos published by Alphonse Leduc in Paris. These included *Concert Asiatique* by Henri Tomasi (1901–1971); *Rhythmic* by Eugene Bozza (1905–1991); *Theme et Variations* by Yvonne Desportes (1907–1993); and *Suite Ancienne* by Maurice Jarre (1924–2009). Each of these multi-movement works for percussion was accompanied by piano, and offered a uniquely early view of “multiple percussion,” in that there was often one or two keyboard-based movements for marimba, vibes or xylophone, a timpani movement and a “batterie” movement, which would combine several instruments: snare drum, triangle, tambourine, woodblock, etc. This early approach perhaps suggested an orchestral perspective of percussion, in that the timpani and keyboard instruments were distinctly set apart from the non-pitched snare drum and accessory instruments, yet all were musically held together with the presence of the piano.

The notable exception to this approach was Darius Milhaud’s *Concerto for Percussion and Small Orchestra*, Op. 109, premiered in 1930. In this ground-breaking multiple percussion solo, Milhaud includes 15 percussion instruments plus 4 timpani and requires the performer to possess sufficient physical dexterity in order to get to each instrument in time and be able to balance the variety of timbres. Additionally, the performer is stretched by the need to decipher the multiple single-line staff notation, a skill that continues to challenge the percussionist when facing a different notational system for each new multi-percussion score.

Beyond the early percussion solos, the more familiar path of multiple percussion development is seen and heard in the early chamber pieces written by Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud and Bela Bartok. In 1918, Stravinsky composed *Histoire du Soldat* for seven instruments: violin, double bass, trumpet, trombone, clarinet, bassoon and percussion. The percussion part requires 7 instruments, grouped together as a whole and playable by one person. This multiple percussion set-up also provided the player challenges in reading the single line notation, though subsequent editions of the percussion part have made the performance a much easier task. Five years later, Darius Milhaud composed *La Creation du Monde*, a large chamber ensemble (16 wind and string players, including a solo saxophone), which was inspired by his exposure to American jazz. This work is scored for two

percussionists, playing 9 instruments plus timpani and included a drum set part, with bass drum & pedal. Once again, the percussionists are challenged by the single-line notation as well as beaming between multiple staves, but the overall concept of the percussion is as an integrated whole.

In 1937, Bela Bartok’s *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* was premiered, with two performers playing a total of 7 percussion instruments. What is particularly notable about Bartok’s writing is the detail of sound that Bartok requires as he indicates specific positions on the snare drum and cymbals for a variety of timbres. From an historical perspective, this marks a move forward in the development of sound and technique in percussion playing.

In 1959, just two years shy of the founding of the Percussive Arts Society, Karlheinz Stockhausen composed his landmark piece, *Zyklus* for 21 percussion instruments. Using symbols inspired by those used in electronic circuitry, the notation was and is a real challenge to players. It is difficult to imagine the last 50 years of multiple percussion music without this ground-breaking work. Every previous aspect of multiple percussion playing and composition was challenged by Stockhausen’s approach to structure, notation, timbre and the physicality to perform the work. Percussionist Christoph Caskel first performed *Zyklus* in 1959 in Amsterdam and then toured the United States in the 1960s with Stockhausen, playing the work. Percussionist, Max Neuhaus learned the Caskel version of *Zyklus* so that he could replace him when Christoph had to return to Germany for another gig and could not finish the tour. Neuhaus had first performed *Zyklus* for his graduation recital from Manhattan School of Music in 1961 and was the first to record it for Wergo in 1963 (WER 60010). Throughout the years, *Zyklus* has remained one of the most significant and challenging pieces in the multiple percussion repertoire. Many notable works followed (and will be heard on our 50th Anniversary concerts) but Karlheinz Stockhausen fundamentally changed the way we think about multiple percussion.

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION: THE JOURNEY TO 1961

Addressing the history of keyboard percussion is a daunting task, considering that there are separate histories of the marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, chimes, and the glockenspiel. When we narrow our focus to solo keyboard repertoire, we are left with the marimba, vibraphone and xylophone, however, for the purpose of our 50th anniversary, just the marimba will be considered in this brief historical overview.

The marimba has a long history, with origins attributed to Asia or Africa. Eventually the marimba found its way to Guatemala, where marimba sounds were heard in the context of an ensemble, typically with two marimbas, each played by three or four players, depending on the size of the instrument. This Guatemalan tradition initially came to the United States in 1908, when the youngest members of the Hurtado family, a famous Guatemalan *marimbero* family, made a successful three-year tour

through North America. In 1915, the Hurtado brothers recorded 30 pieces from their repertoire for the Victor Company and also recorded for the Columbia Record Company under the name of the Royal Marimba Band. Celso Hurtado and Jose Bethancourt, a member of another important family of Guatemalan marimbists, both gained fame as exceptional soloists. Bethancourt settled in Chicago where he was influential in the development of the marimba through his own radio program for which he played solo marimba music in addition to directing several marimba bands.

PAS Hall of Fame member, Clair Omar Musser's (1901–1998) influence on all aspects of the marimba was significant. His solo compositions, transcriptions and ensemble arrangements enjoyed great popularity and his large marimba orchestras, including the 100-piece Century of Progress Marimba Orchestra for the 1933 International Exposition in Chicago, were acclaimed throughout the world. He taught marimba at Northwestern University for ten years and his innovations in grip, mallets and technique revolutionized marimba playing.

The beginning of solo marimba music consisted of transcriptions of popular tunes, light classics and folk tunes published by Gamble, Rubank, Belwin, Forster and Alfred Publishing companies in the 1930s and 40s. In 1940, Clair Musser edited *Masterworks for the Marimba: Music of Chopin*, which essentially scored the pianistic melodies of Chopin for two-mallet marimba solo with piano accompaniment. In 1949, Art Jolliff's two-volume, *78 Solos for Marimba* provided two-, three- and four-mallet solos for the beginning to intermediate marimbist.

The marimba's first solo concerto appeared in 1940 from the pen of Paul Creston. The concerto was commissioned by Miss Frederique Petrides, who was at that time the director of the 30-member all-girl Orchestrette Classique in New York City. Ruth Stuber Jeanne was the soloist for the premiere of Creston's *Concertino for Marimba* on April 29, 1940 in New York's Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. The work was in three movements with the outside movements written for two mallets and the middle movement predominantly four-mallets. Creston described his approach to marimba technique, recounted by Vida Chenoweth: "he went to the piano and whatever he could do with four fingers or the pointer fingers of either hand became the technique that was used for the marimba." This approach explains the predominance of close voicings in the second movement, as well as the limited tessitura and the gradual movement up and down the registers of the instrument, as opposed to the use of wide leaps found in later marimba works.

The second concerto composed for marimba includes a vibraphone and was written by Darius Milhaud in 1947. The work was commissioned by Jack Connor and had its premiere with Connor as soloist with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra on February 12, 1949. Concerning the circumstances of the commission, Connor selected Milhaud because he liked the composer's music and knew that he had previously written individual concerti for percussion, harmonica and clarinet (among others) and he believed Milhaud would be receptive to the idea

of writing a work for marimba. In response to Connor's written request, Milhaud replied that "he didn't think that the marimba would be well received in a concerto or other performing context." Connor persisted and eventually traveled to Mills College in Oakland, California, where Milhaud was teaching. Connor played both the marimba and vibraphone for Milhaud, performing Bach, some jazz and other examples that Milhaud requested. After hearing Connor play, Milhaud agreed to write a work for him, the result of which was the concerto. Notable in this work is Milhaud's indication of precise mallet types in 14 different places, along with calling for the use of the hands (without mallets) and playing with the shaft of the mallet.

In 1956 Robert Kurka completed his *Concerto for Marimba* and dedicated it to PAS Hall of Fame marimbist Vida Chenoweth, who premiered the work on November 11, 1959 in Carnegie Hall with the Orchestra of America. Chenoweth had invited Kurka to observe several practice sessions in order to allow him to understand the potential of the instrument. After she finished, his primary comment was that he didn't realize the marimba was such a visual instrument. Unlike the previously mentioned concerti, Kurka's concerto is characterized by wide, abrupt leaps, which require agility and control, making the visual aspect of the piece notable.

As for Vida Chenoweth, her influence in Kurka's work was extremely significant, in that her diligent pursuit of every detail of the score in spite of its difficulty contributed to a final result which pushed marimba repertoire and technique into a new realm. Hailed as the "first concert marimbist," Chenoweth, following in the steps of Clair Omar Musser, was one of the most influential artists ever to perform on the instrument. She pioneered many techniques commonly used on the instrument today, including the performance of polyphonic music via independent mallets. Chenoweth, perhaps more than any other artist, is responsible for raising the solo marimba to a level of respect equal in stature to violin, piano or guitar.

Many new developments in solo marimba and marimba ensemble have emerged since the founding of the Percussive Arts Society in 1961. In many ways the history of the marimba since 1961 is more detailed and diverse than the one that has been just presented, but the efforts of the pioneers: Paul Creston, Darius Milhaud, Robert Kurka, Clair Omar Musser and Vida Chenoweth, elevated the marimba to a vital and imaginative means of musical expression and laid the foundation for further development

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE: THE JOURNEY TO 1961

Early glimmerings of a literature for the Percussion Ensemble began in 1930 with Amadeo Roldan (1900–1939) and his *Ritmicas No. 5* and *6*, two short works for 11 percussionists each, that combined Latin American instruments (bongos, maracas, guiro, claves, cowbell, timbales, bombo) in a *son*, a form that originated in Cuba.

More pertinent to the development of the Percussion Ensemble was PAS Hall of Fame member, Edgard Varèse's (1883–1965) *Ionisation*, composed in 1931 for 13 percussionists playing 39 instruments. This innovative work was both rhythmic in

nature, and unique in its startling timbres and is one of the most important pieces in the early percussion ensemble repertoire.

In the 1930's, experimental composer, Johanna Beyer (1888–1944), who was closely associated with Henry Cowell, contributed a half dozen works to the Percussion Ensemble repertoire: *Percussion Suite* (1933); *IV* (1935); *March for 30 Percussion Instruments* (1939); *Percussion, Op. 14* (1939); *Three Movements for Percussion* (1939) and *Waltz for Percussion* (1939). While her work has mostly gone unnoticed, it has recently become more widely available.

Other significant contributions to the Percussion Ensemble were made in the 1930's by experimental composer, Henry Cowell (1897-1965) His *Ostinato Pianissimo* (1934) and *Pulse* (1939) drew on Asian influences with his use of Korean Dragon's Mouths, Chinese tom-toms, Japanese temple gongs and rice bowls. His influence on Lou Harrison and John Cage was notable as they made their own contributions to the Percussion Ensemble.

PAS Hall of Fame composer Lou Harrison (1917–2003), who studied with Henry Cowell from 1934–35, wrote five percussion ensembles between 1939 and 1942: *Bomba* (1939) *Canticle No. 1* (1940), *Canticle No. 3* (1940), *Labyrinth* (1941) and *Fugue* (1941). In addition he composed two other works for percussion with other instruments: *Concerto No. 1 for Flute and Percussion* (1939) and *Concerto for Violin and Percussion Orchestra* (1940). *Double Music*, a collaboration with John Cage for percussion ensemble was written in 1941.

Of all the composers in the history of percussion, it is PAS Hall of Fame member, John Cage (1912–1992) who can arguably be considered the most influential when it comes to the history of the Percussion Ensemble. Between 1935 and 1943, Cage composed a dozen works for Percussion Ensemble: *Quartet* (1935); *Trio* (1936); *First Construction* (in metal) (1939); *Second Construction* (1940); *Living Room Music* (1940); *Dance Music for Elfrid Ide* (1940); *Third Construction* (1941); *Imaginary Landscape No. 2* (1942); *Imaginary Landscape No. 3* (1942); *Credo in US* (1942); *Amores Suite* (1943) and with Lou Harrison: *Double Music* (1941).

While the sheer number of Cage's and Harrison's works for Percussion Ensemble is impressive, it is their aesthetic that garners respect from percussionists. Their willingness to explore new sound resources such as the water gong, spring coils and brake drums (to name a few), along with their acceptance of noise as a viable element of musical sound instead of its normally subordinate role to pitched sound was particularly significant for percussionists. The series of concerts they mounted on the West Coast in the 1930s generated a modest body of literature that was playable by dancers as well as percussionists. The impact of these two men on the development of our ensemble literature still resonates today.

Also notable is Carlos Chávez (1899–1978), a very influential figure in the musical life of Mexico. He had a lifelong fascination with percussion instruments and the exploration of broader roles for them. His *Toccata for Percussion* (1942) is a classic in the Percusion Ensemble repertoire; its popularity

continues to this day. Chávez himself wrote that it was written as an experiment with percussion instruments regularly found in symphony orchestras. He uses standard compositional devices of imitation and repetition within the formalistic structure of a toccata creating a work that, decades later, concert audiences continue to enjoy.

In 1949, under the direction of PAS Hall of Fame member, Paul Price, the first University-accredited Percussion Ensemble in the world was born. It continued through the tenures of Jack McKenzie, PAS Hall of Fame member, Thomas Siwe, and Frederick Fairchild. At various times the home of Harry Partch, John Cage, and the Percussive Arts Society, the University of Illinois has played a significant role in the development and evolution of percussion education. In these early days, one of the criteria set forth by Paul Price to sustain this new program was the creation of original music for percussion. He insisted that solo recital literature had to be original compositions, not arrangements or transcriptions and he strongly encouraged his students to write both ensembles and solos. As a result, new music for percussion ensemble appears in the mid-to-late 1950's including a number of works from PAS Hall of Fame member Michael Colgrass: *Three Brothers* (1951); *Improvisation* (1952); *Percussion Music* (1952) *Chamber Piece* (1954); *Inventions on a Motive* (1955) and *Fantasy-Variations* (1961). Additionally, Colgrass penned *Six Unaccompanied Solos for Snare Drum* in 1955 and the *Variations for Four Tuned Drums and Viola* in 1957, as part of the push for new percussion repertoire. Jack McKenzie, a founding member of the Percussive Arts Society, and a student of Paul Price at the University of Illinois, also contributed three percussion ensembles during the early 1950's: *Three Dances* (1951), *Introduction and Allegro* (1951) and *Nonet* (1954).

In a 1961 *HiFi/Stereo Review* article, Paul Price wrote: "The passage of a single generation, 1930-60, has seen come into being a concert literature scored exclusively for percussion ensemble." Starting in the 1950s, colleges and conservatories began adding percussion specialists to their faculties. In the following two decades, accredited university percussion education began to emerge and develop; it was not a stretch to envision the formation of the Percussive Arts Society. The goal of the fourteen percussionists and educators who met for dinner at the 1960 Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago was simply to discuss the possibility of establishing a national organization that would "bring up to date the present standards in solo and ensemble contests, stimulate a greater interest in percussion performance and teaching, and promote better teaching of percussion instruments." In retrospect, the journey toward the formation of the Percussive Arts Society in 1961 was logical from the perspective of the development of percussion technique and literature. It was the right time to bring the many aspects of percussion together.

—Kathleen Kastner

WEDNESDAY EVENING FOCUS DAY CONCERT

Sagamore Ballroom
8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

“MASTERWORKS”

Psappha (1975)

by Iannis Xenakis

Performed by Steven Schick

Bone Alphabet (1991)

by Brian Ferneyhough

Performed by Steven Schick

“From some of LAM-MOT (Qu Xiao-song), through WATER MUSIC (Tan Dun), to portions of DRAMA (Guo Wen-jing)”

Performed by Percussion Group Cincinnati

——INTERMISSION——

The Anvil Chorus (1991)

by David Lang

Performed by Steven Schick

The So-Called Laws of Nature, mvt II (2002)

by David Lang

Performed by So Percussion

Dark Full Ride, section 1 (2002)

by Julia Wolfe

Performed by So Percussion

XY (1997)

by Michael Gordon

Performed by Doug Perkins

Timber, section 1 (2009)

by Michael Gordon

Performed by Mantra Percussion

Name of Selection: Psappha (1975) by Iannis Xenakis

Performed By: Steven Schick

Publisher: Salabert

Duration: 12’

I know that I am not alone among percussionists specializing in contemporary music to acknowledge a great debt to Iannis Xenakis. Many of us learned to play percussion by playing his music. From the perspective of an early twenty-first-century percussionist who can find a plentiful and growing repertoire for solo percussion without having to look too hard, it is simply impossible to imagine the situation in the late 1960s and early 1970s when there was just a bare handful of important pieces. So in the mid-1970s, when we heard about Xenakis’s new piece *Psappha*, it seemed as if everything changed overnight. I made the trip from Iowa to New York to hear Donald Knaack’s Carnegie Hall performance, arriving at Penn Station almost literally right off the farm. That day, I fell in love with New York City, walking nearly the length of Manhattan from the Upper West Side to Edgard Varèse’s Sullivan Street apartment. That night I heard *Psappha* for the first time. It was one of the most purely happy days of my life. It was a happy day with a dramatic twist. *Psappha*, as we know, is savage and frightening. The sheer loudness of it, the naked rhythms, the brutal mechanics of composition—the implications were staggering. Until that point, percussion music seemed no different from other music; familiar ideas were simply scored for percussion. I could understand everything in the contemporary percussion repertoire, including the complexities of *Zyklus*, by applying the notions of phrasing, form, and expression that I had learned by studying Brahms or *Pierrot Lunaire*. Trying to understand *Psappha* using those models was like going to a church social and discovering that someone had spiked the punch—you got something a lot stronger than you expected.

—Steve Schick, *The Percussionists Art*, University of Rochester Press, 2006.

Name of Selection: Bone Alphabet (1992)

by Brian Ferneyhough

Performed By: Steven Schick

Publisher: Edition Peters

Duration: 11’

Because of its highly inflected score and the intellectual demands it places on a performer, there is a widely held misapprehension that *Bone Alphabet* is a purely rational exercise. Some people feel that it is music for the brain alone. Both in the case of *Bone Alphabet* and with Ferneyhough’s music in general, nothing could be further from the truth. To me, playing *Bone Alphabet* is a passionate experience, much like playing the timpani solo in Brahms’s *Fourth Symphony* is, or what I imagine it must have been like to play with Miles Davis or Janis Joplin.

For a performer *Bone Alphabet* poses an equation that forces the integration of the intellect with the senses. One sees this most clearly in the curious combination of a highly detailed and highly rationalized rhythmic language with performance instructions that border on the poetic. One is asked to execute a rhythm like 11:8 or 17:16 but to do so in modo analitico or danzando or as an ostinato frustrato. Organicity results. A persuasive performance of *Bone Alphabet* demands more than technical facility and intelligence; it requires a complete human being, one for whom thinking and doing are indistinguishable and interdependent. I am grateful to Brian Ferneyhough for *Bone Alphabet*: for its invitation to reevaluate the basic tenets of the percussive art and for the life-changing experience of learning it. In the immortal words of Prince, “Thank you for a very funky time.”

—Steve Schick, *The Percussionists Art*, University of Rochester Press, 2006.)

**Name of Selection: “From some of LAM-MOT
(Qu Xiao-song), through WATER MUSIC
(Tan Dun), to portions of DRAMA (Guo Wen-jing)”**

Performed by: Percussion Group Cincinnati

Duration: 30’

The New Chinese Contribution: The first group of post-Cultural Revolution Chinese composers is known in China as “The 5th Generation”, and they are a famous collection of musicians. Most of them were friends, studying together in the Central Conservatory in Beijing after returning from being “sent down to countryside” during the Cultural Revolution. Xiao-song wrote a number of pieces for us during the years he lived in New York. In addition to Guo, with whom we also worked closely, and Tan Dun, other successful classmates and peers include Chen Yi, Chen Qi-gong (head of music for the Beijing Olympics), and Bright Sheng. This is one continuous creative piece—we are connecting portions of the two pieces written for us with music that Tan Dun extracted from two larger works of his which we have previously done: The Water Percussion Concerto, and the Water Passion After St. Matthew.

—Allen Otte

**Name of Selection: The Anvil Chorus (1991)
by David Lang**

Performed By: Steven Schick

Publisher: Red Poppy

Duration: 7’

When percussionist Steve Schick asked me to write him a solo piece I wanted to do something that showed percussion’s connection to real life activities. I didn’t want to work with the pretty instruments, like vibraphone or chimes, that were invented so that percussionists could play politely with other musicians. I wanted to write a

piece that reminded the listener of the glorious history of percussion—that since the beginning of time people have always banged on things as a result of their professions.

Then I remembered that I had once read a book on the history of blacksmithing, and I had become particularly interested in how medieval blacksmiths used song to help them in their work. Although small jobs could be accomplished by individual smiths, larger jobs created an interesting problem—how could several smiths hammer on a single piece of metal without getting in each other’s way? Smiths solved this problem by singing songs together which would control the beat patterns of the hammers. There was a different song for each number of participating blacksmiths—obviously, a song that allowed for three hammer strokes would be confusing and even dangerous if used to coordinate four smiths.

My solo percussion piece *The Anvil Chorus* also uses a “melody” to control various beat patterns. The “melody” is played on resonant junk metals of the percussionist’s choosing, and, by adding certain rules, it triggers an odd accompaniment of non-resonant junk metals, played both by hand and by foot.

—David Lang

**Name of Selection: The So-Called Laws of Nature
(2002), Mvt. II by David Lang**

Performed By: So Percussion

Publisher: Red Poppy

Duration: 11’

I went to college to study science. I was expected to become a doctor, or at the very least a medical researcher, and I spent much of my undergraduate years studying math and chemistry and physics, hanging out with future scientists, going to their parties, sharing their apartments, eavesdropping on their conversations. I remember a particularly heated discussion about a quote from Wittgenstein: “At the basis of the whole modern view of the world lies the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanation of natural phenomena.” This quote rankled all us future scientists, as it implied that science can’t explain the universe but can only offer mere descriptions of things observed. Over the years it occurred to me that this could be rephrased as a musical problem.

Because music is made of proportions and numbers and formulas and patterns, I always wonder what these numbers actually mean. Do the numbers themselves generate a certain structure, creating the context and the meaning and the form, or are they just the incidental byproducts of other, deeper, more mysterious processes? My piece *The So-Called Laws of Nature* tries to explore the “meaning” of various processes and formulas. The individual parts are virtually identical – the percussion-

ists play identical patterns throughout, playing unison rhythms on subtly different instruments. Most of these instruments the performers are required to build themselves. Some of the patterns between the players are displaced in time. Some are on instruments which have a kind of incoherence built into their sound. Does the music come out of the patterns or in spite of them? I am not sure which, but I know that this piece is as close to becoming a scientist as I will ever get.

—David Lang

Name of Selection: Dark Full Ride (2002), section 1 by Julia Wolfe

Performed By: So Percussion

Publisher: Red Poppy

Duration: 11'

When Talujon Percussion Quartet asked me to write a piece for 4 percussionists I immediately thought of the drums. I am a long time fan of drummers and their ability to play simultaneously with both hands and feet, so I thought why not four of them? I went to David Cosin's studio to try ideas out. When we got to the hi-hat I became mesmerized. It's an amazing instrument—2 cymbals crashing together by means of a foot pedal and struck from above. It produces an enormous range of shimmering colors. Just opening and closing the cymbals allow for symphonic possibilities. You can play the cymbals on the edge, play on the bell (top), roll, at-tack, be delicate, and my favorite - make the hi-hat roar. The first 7 minutes of the piece are entirely on hi-hats. Then I add in cymbals. That's where the title of the piece comes from—it was printed on the back of one of the ride cymbals. From there the piece spreads out to the drums, eventually leading to a cacophony of conflicting pounding speeds on the whole drum set. Towards the end of Dark Full Ride the four players are playing beats at different tempos while speeding up and slowing down relative to each other.

—Julia Wolfe

Name of Selection: XY (1997) by Michael Gordon

Performed By: Doug Perkins

Publisher: Red Poppy

Duration: 15'

XY is a percussion solo for five tuned drums. In *XY*, the right and left hand of the performer get louder and softer in reverse symmetry. That is, while the right hand gets louder and louder, the left hand, which was loud, gets softer and softer, and so on. The performer's hands do this continually. Eventually, each hand moves at different speeds. For instance, if the right hand plays four notes to the beat, the left hand might play five. As the drum-

ming of the right hand fades away, the drumming of the left hand emerges at a faster rate. Also, the length of time that the hands take to emerge and fade contracts and expands.

I am speaking of the hands of the performer as if they were independent beings, and indeed they practically are. When I was imagining the music of *XY*, I thought of the double helix of DNA, which wraps around itself and spirals upwards.

—Michael Gordon

Name of Selection: Timber (2009) by Michael Gordon

Performed By: Mantra Percussion

Publisher: Red Poppy

Duration: 20'

Timber, section 1

I began working on *Timber* in 2009 at the invitation of the Dutch-based dance group, Club Guy & Roni, and the percussion ensembles Slagwerk Den Haag and Mantra Percussion. I had written many orchestral works over the decade, beginning with *Decasia* in 2001 up to *Dystopia* in 2007, and I wanted to clear my mind of pitches and orchestration.

For that reason, I decided early on that *Timber* would be for non-tuned percussion and that each percussionist would play one instrument only. I thought of composing this music as being like taking a trip out into the desert. I was counting on the stark palette and the challenge of survival to clear my brain and bring on visions.

I imagined that the six instruments would go from high to low, and that, through a shifting of dynamics from one instrument to the next, the group could make seamless and unified descending or ascending patterns. After working on rhythmic sketches with Mantra Percussion in early 2009, I went to Amsterdam in June to workshop my ideas with Slagwerk Den Haag. I had the plan but I was searching for the right instruments.

After some experimentation, Slagwerk's Fedor Teunisse brought out a set of wooden simantras. These slabs of wood, which looked like standard building materials from a lumberyard to me, had a gorgeous sound. It was distinct enough so that the clarity of the percussive hits could be heard, and was also extremely resonant, producing a complex field of overtones. With inspiration from this discovery, I returned to New York to finish the music for Club Guy & Roni's extravaganza "Pinball and Grace," which premiered in October of 2009.

Timber was co-commissioned by Club Guy and Roni, Slagwerk Den Haag and Mantra Percussion with support from the Nief Norf project.

—Michael Gordon, New York City, 2011

Contemporary Ensemble Showcase Concert

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 9:00 a.m.

Wabash Ballroom

Name of Selection: Cloud-Polyphonies by James Wood
Performed By: Oberlin Percussion Group

Publisher: James Wood

Availability: <http://www.choroi.demon.co.uk/>

Duration: 35'

Cloud-Polyphonies was commissioned by a consortium of American and Canadian Universities, Conservatories and individuals, headed by Michael Rosen (Oberlin Conservatory of Music), in cooperation with Slagwerk Den Haag, Holland.

The North American consortium comprised the following institutions and individuals:

Michael Rosen—Oberlin Conservatory of Music

University of Akron—Larry Snider

Baylor University—Todd Meehan

Eastman School of Music—Michael Burritt

University of Kentucky—James Campbell

University of Massachusetts, Amherst—Ayano Kataoka

Matthew McClung

McGill University—Aiyun Huang

University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble

Michigan State University—Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher

New England Conservatory Percussion Ensemble, Frank Epstein

Nief-norf Project—Andy Bliss, Kerry O'Brien, Erin

Walker, Eric Willie, Mike Truesdell, Bill Sallak

Northern Illinois University—Greg Beyer

University of North Carolina/Pembroke—Tracy Wiggins

Steven Schick—in memory of Fred Cooper

Yale University School of Music and Norfolk

Chamber Music Festival—Robert Van Sice

I - Starlings

The first movement of *Cloud-Polyphonies* concerns the extraordinary aerobatic displays of starlings, as they gather together before migration. At first just a few starlings gather on telegraph wires, nervously testing their aerobatic potential individually. As more and more starlings gather, these pre-migration test-flights become increasingly spectacular until finally several thousand birds form up together to perform an extended synchronised display. From this moment on, focus on

any particular individual bird is lost, as one becomes mesmerized by the brilliantly synchronised aerobatics and shape--transformations of an enormous black cloud of several thousand starlings. Gradually, following some arcane signal, the cloud disappears and is gone for the winter.

II – Clouds

Just once in my life I have had the experience of going hot-air ballooning. It was a beautiful day in July, and for a couple of hours we glided silently over the Oxfordshire countryside. Never before have I been so conscious of the presence and activities of the clouds. As we drifted up to our cruising altitude, focus on these mystical, intangible and supernatural phenomena was intensified as we gradually became enveloped by an overwhelming sensation of deepest silence. Our pilot explained how to 'read' the clouds - an essential skill for all hot-air balloonists. Active clouds (cumulus, or cumulus congestus) are those huge structures with sharply defined edges, which build from the powerful upward draught of a thermal within them - they are dangerous, and therefore avoided by balloonists. Passive clouds (cirrus) are generally at a much higher altitude, and have more of a wispy appearance - these are harmless, although should be watched, in case they develop into active clouds. In Clouds, passive clouds are represented by sounds produced by bowing, scraping or rubbing, and active clouds by sounds produced by striking. Between these two extremes come sounds sustained by tremolandi - these represent the clouds' transitional state, as they develop from passive into active.

III – Buffalo

The final movement of *Cloud-Polyphonies* invokes that quintessential American symbol, the North American Bison, or Buffalo. Here the continuously changing waves of sound which zigzag across the line of 66 drums recall the sound of herds of galloping buffalo - however the sound comes not from the animals, but from the earth itself - an ever-changing terrain of mud, stone, brush, pampas and water becomes the surface for a thousand pounding buffalo hooves, as the herd stampedes swiftly across the plains.

—James Wood, 2011

Name of Selection: Catfish by Mark Applebaum

Performed By: Aiyun Huang, Terry Longshore, and Brett Reed

Publisher: Mark Applebaum

Availability: Available from composer

Duration: 5'30"

Catfish was originally the overture to a planned but later abandoned multi-movement dramatic oratorio, in reaction to the peculiar cultural richness of Starkville, Mississippi. Unsure of its own location on a continuum from trivia to mythology, the work features house-hunting safaris with an idiosyncratic local realtor/information oracle, chancy excursions into Walmart, rain delays at the Golden Triangle Regional Airport, and warm visits with the local Ford dealer whose television commercials end with the grinning declaration "I ain't gonna lie to you."

Catfish is for percussion trio. Each player chooses three instruments: a high-, middle-, and low-pitched instrument within one of three material categories—metal, wood, and skin. Various challenges confront both player and listener: first, the overlapping of rhythms (poly-rhythms) creates a dense and rich tapestry of moments in time; second, metric modulations—where an uncommon division of the beat becomes the beat itself—occur frequently; and third, short time spans occasionally arise during which each individual player is free to play the given events at any time as long as they are articulated within the time span.

Catfish was composed in 1997 during a residency at the Villa Montalvo Artist Colony in Northern California.

—Mark Applebaum

Name of Selection: Volume by Missy Mazzoli (2006)

Performed By: Shawn Galvin and Dennis Hoffmann

Publisher: G. Schirmer

Duration: 10'

Volume was inspired by the inventiveness of the musicians of Trinidad. Drumming was banned in Trinidad in the late 19th Century, since it was used as a form of communication between slaves. Enslaved musicians were forced to improvise, and used whatever materials they could find to construct instruments. Prototypes of the steel pan were made of biscuit tins, paint cans and oil drums, and bottles were struck with spoons to provide a high percussive accompaniment. *Volume*, a work scored for steel pan, vibraphone and a junkyard array of other instruments is a raucous work and a joyful work, an homage to the steel pan tradition and the spirit of innovative music making.

Historic Pieces, Groundbreakers, and New Classics

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

Wabash Ballroom

Name of Selection: Fantasy-Variations

by Michael Colgrass

Performed By: University of Nebraska, Omaha

Percussion Ensemble

Publisher: Music for Percussion

Michael Colgrass, born in Chicago, graduated from the University of Illinois in 1956. His principal teachers were Wallingford Riegger, Eugene Weigel, Darius Milhaud, Ben Weber, and Paul Price. His composition *Deja Vu*, for percussion and orchestra, was awarded the 1978 Pulitzer Prize for Music. *Fantasy-Variations*, composed in 1961 for Paul Price and the Manhattan School of Music Percussion Ensemble, is scored for a soloist playing eight exactly pitched chromatic drums and six supporting musicians who between them play 35 pitched and non-pitched instruments. Colgrass has written "The object of this work is to provide a musical and technical challenge for the solo percussionist on a par with works for string, woodwind, and brass layers. The musical idea is to create a kind of Baroque feeling-light, airy, contrapuntal- while exploring the lyric potential of percussion instruments." The premiere was given at Carnegie Hall in October of 1961 with the composer as soloist and Paul Price conducting.

Conductor—Barry Ford* Soloist—Dr. Tomm Roland* Ensemble—Erik Molin, Megan Durham, Michael Schreier, Scott Shinbara*, Alex Casimiro, Skye Stinson

* faculty at UNO

Name of Selection: CONTRASTS by James Sewrey

Performed By: Randall Foat, Quinten Petersen,

Arik McGathe, and Jim Sewrey

Publisher: Hal Leonard, 1984

Duration: 8'

The solo was fashioned from a group of educational pieces, written for class or individual instruction, published in the Special Studies section of the Drum edition for the Hal Leonard ADVANCED BAND METHOD—1963. Composed in four episodes, the concert solo *Contrasts* showcases a myriad of technical skills and musical performance ideas...closed and open drags, closed and open flams, single, alternating and double stickings, measured and unmeasured sustained notational durations, meter and tempo changes, matched and traditional grip stick-holdings, the articulations of

staccato, legato and marcato, the use of tonal areas found on a batter-head and on-the-shaft of a drum stick, and the use of the agogic-accent principle in the phrasing of rhythmic lines for musical nuance. The choice of four different size drums, having different shell materials, snare mechanisms with different snare types and number of snare-strands, mounted with different weight heads, specifically tuned and played with different stick sizes, provides for a great mix of textures and timbres for expressing the character of the music found in each of the episodes...fanfare, ostinato, scherzo and marche.

Name of Selection: The King of Denmark

by Morton Feldman

Performed By: Benjamin Fraley

Publisher: C.F. Peters

Duration: 6–8'

There are many aspects of Morton Feldman's *The King of Denmark* that make it a significant piece of percussion literature. The year it was composed, the execution, the notation, the concept of sound, and the freedom of sound selection are all factors that make *The King of Denmark* a truly, unique work of musical art. Composed by hand in one afternoon in August 1964, the piece is one of the first works for solo percussion. The piece is to be played with no mallets or sticks and only with fingers, hands, or arms at a very consistent soft dynamic. The grid notation is a simple way of communicating and navigating the piece, but still unique for its time. Feldman's notation illustrates when to use specified instruments and when to use unspecified instruments, the range the sound or sounds should occur, whether the sounds are to be played in unison or linearly, and duration. However, with all of these rather conventional musical specifications, there is a great deal of freedom allowed when it comes to timbre and sound choice and in some cases the order in which chosen sounds occur. The realizations that can be discovered and created when preparing and performing this piece are really only limited by one's imagination.

Name of Selection: Timbrack Quartet (1978)

by Michael Udow

Performed By: Roger Braun, Anthony Di Sanza,

Patrick Roulet, Alison Shaw

Publisher: EQUILIBRIUM

Availability: www.equilibri.com

Duration: 4'

Each performer has a graduated like set-up of twelve idiophones, arranged on foam pads in a keyboard configuration; the keyboard notation thus specifies location of timbres rather than frequency. The concept of the Timbrack came about through collaborations

with my composition professor, Herbert Brün, when he was composing the percussion part that I played for the premiere performance of his 1974 chamber work, "In and and out" (Smith Publications). Years later, composer, Richard Wernick, made the astute observation that this concept has its roots in the timpani parts of J. S. Bach—where on the staff pitches C and G are notated, but at the top of the part the true pitches to be tuned are given. Certainly John Cage's prepared piano also is a locative timbre system as well. This work is published (score and parts) by Equilibrium and recorded on the Equilibrium Label (EQ 01) www.equilibri.com.

—Michael Udow

Performers Roger Braun (Ohio University) Anthony Di Sanza (University of Wisconsin) Patrick Roulet (Towson University) and Alison Shaw (University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh) were students of Michael Udow at the University of Michigan.

Name of Selection: Blue Too (1981) by Stuart Smith

Performed By: Jude Traxler

Publisher: Smith Publications

Duration: 10'

The drumset is a uniquely American instrument. It has a rich aural tradition. I've long thought that the instrument also needed a written literature as well. *Blue Too* is a third stream piece, meaning that it draws on both the classical tradition of drumming and the jazz tradition of drumming. Just when you think the music is going to establish a grove, there is a non sequitur. The surface of *Blue Too* is hard bop. The underpinnings are new.

—Stuart Smith

Name of Selection: Mourning Dove Sonnet

by Christopher Deane

Performed By: Christopher Allan Davis

Publisher: Innovative Percussion

Duration: 8'

Mourning Dove Sonnet was composed as a concert vibraphone solo in which the musical material was focused on an integration of traditional and non-traditional performance techniques. It is, in it's essence, a wordless art song for vibraphone. The performer is musically free to be flexible with the tempo, however, a sense of pulse and forward motion is necessary for this piece to "sing" as intended. The piece should never feel rushed to the point that the special sounds such as harmonics, pitch bends and bowed notes are sacrificed.

Christopher Deane premiered *Mourning Dove Sonnet* at the 1983 North Carolina Percussive Arts Society chapter Day of Percussion. This piece was dedicated to Sherwood Shaffer.

**Name of Selection: A Minute of News (1990)
for Snare Drum by Eugene Novotney (b. 1960)
Performed by: Jason Baker
Publisher: Smith Publications
Duration: 2'45"**

In 1989, I was travelling in Baja, Mexico, and near the end of my trip, I found myself in the city of Ensenada for the evening looking for some live music. I heard several good string bands, and even a horn band (almost a municipal-type band), but not much percussion at all. Then, I came across this group that was just walking down the road looking for a spot to set up. I followed them, out of curiosity, because they had with them a drummer that caught my attention. He was carrying an old, beat-up snare drum over his shoulder that just looked awful, and I had to see what he was going to do with it. The band stopped and set-up, and I observed that the snare drum was actually permanently taped-on to the snare stand, and that the snare mechanism, which engaged and disengaged the snares, was badly broken. In addition, the drummer did not have a matched pair of sticks or mallets in his possession, but instead, seemed to have “one” of everything instead. I was expecting the worst, but to my surprise, that drummer used everything about the situation to his advantage. He turned that broken drum and those mismatched sticks into an entire trap-set with his skill, imagination, and creativity. He used different beaters in different hands to create lead and accompaniment patterns, he used the broken strainer as a sound-effect, and he grooved throughout in a clave-based ostinato that just amazed me. It was that moment delivered by that drummer that inspired my composition, *A Minute of News*. In essence, he “read me the news” that very day! That drummer, whom I had discounted before hearing because of his poor equipment, taught me a great lesson about the connection between poverty and creativity, a great connection that I’ve seen repeated many times since then. The drummer inspired me to use limitation as a means of producing variety. I will never forget that unknown drummer who put on such a show for me that one day in Ensenada, and it is because of him that I composed *A Minute of News*.

—Eugene Novotney

Focus Day Panel Discussion: “On the Nature of Percussion Masterworks” Thursday, November 10, 2011, 12:00 p.m. Convention Center Room 201

Almost every established field of music has its masterworks, and almost any group of musicians can hold a lively discussion about which works those might be. What about percussionists? Do we have our masterworks? What might those pieces be?

**Moderator: Bill Sallak
Panelists: Allen Otte, Morris Palter, Chris Shultis, Stuart Smith**

Innovations in Keyboard Percussion Solo Thursday, November 10, 2011, 1:00 p.m. Wabash Ballroom

**Name of Selection: Two Mexican Dances (1974)
by Gordon Stout
Performed By: Adam Blackstock
Publisher: Studio 4 Productions
Duration: 5'**

Two Mexican Dances fully explores the ability of the marimbist with four mallets, to play melody, harmony, and rhythm simultaneously. The complex interplay between the rapidly alternating hands serves to produce a deceptively smooth melody and complete harmonic background in the beginning and ending sections of the first dance. The outer sections of the second dance, being more rhythmically complex, are contrasted with the slower middle section, giving the marimbist opportunity to demonstrate lyrical and expressive capabilities. The first Mexican Dance was originally the ninth etude from *Etudes for Marimba, Book 2*. Warren Benson thought that the character of the music of the first dance was very different from the rest of the etudes of Book 2. He suggested that I remove it from that collection, write a second piece in a similar style, and call them *Two Mexican Dances*. Thus the dedication of the two pieces to Warren Benson. I didn't think of the first dance as being Mexican. I had never been to Mexico at that point in my life. Warren Benson however, heard something that made him think that. The first dance was composed in one day, with no revisions or changes. The second dance was begun on vibes, and took much longer to compose.”

—Gordon Stout

**Name of Selection: Night Rhapsody for Marimba (1979) by John Serry
Performed By: Thomas Burritt
Publisher: KPP
Duration: 9'**

Rhapsody for Marimba, “Night Rhapsody” was commissioned by Leigh Howard Stevens for his 1979 New York City Town Hall Debut concert. In it, I have tried to tap all of the seemingly unlimited resources of Leigh's technique. Two motifs, one chromatic and the other modal, form the basis of the melodic material in the exposition. Additional motifs (including the thirteenth century Dies Irae) are then introduced and subsequently juxtaposed in the development section. A two-voiced choral in the left hand, pitted against a modified version of the main chromatic motif in the right hand eventually yield to a full four-voiced choral. This in turn leads to the recapitulation.

—John Serry

**Name of Selection: Rhythm Song by Paul Smadbeck
Performed By: Paul Smadbeck and Gordon Stout
Publisher: Keyboard Percussion Publications
Duration: 9'6"**

Composed in 1981, *Rhythm Song* is acknowledged as one of the most popular works for marimba ever written. It has been recorded over the years by dozens of artists throughout the globe including Evelyn Glennie's debut CD *Rhythm Song* on RCA. It also formed the score for the dance piece *Black Milk*, choreographed by Ohad Naharin and performed over many years internationally by the Batsheva Dance Company of Israel and the Alvin Ailey Dance Company of New York.

Rhythm Song contains a unique combination of African, minimalist, and jazz/world music influences. The entire work is based on a single sticking pattern and a simple eight-measure theme that is repeated in various guises throughout the first section of the piece, building in intensity with each statement. This gives way to a development of various interwoven lines, ending in a “rhythmic modulation” from the original, driving pulse in 7/4 to a quieter and more lilting 6/8 with a decidedly African feel.

Rhythm Song was originally written as a marimba solo and is quite effective when performed as such. However, I discovered in the latter stages of composition that the contrasting patterns were brought out more keenly and the overall impact was increased when the work was performed simultaneously by two players, in octaves. For this reason, in my original 1982 recording I played it twice, over-dubbing a second take an octave higher to create a two-player performance, which is the form I am honored to present at PASIC 2011 with the able assistance of my good friend and mentor, Gordon Stout.

**Name of Selection: Merlin (1985), by Andrew Thomas
Performed By: William Moersch
Publisher: Margun Music
Availability: Distributed by Shawnee Press, Inc.
Duration: 11'**

Merlin was composed for and is dedicated to William Moersch, who gave the premiere performance on 17 March 1987 in Merkin Concert Hall at the Abraham Goodman House in New York City. The poem *Merlin* by Edwin Arlington Robison is a long narrative retelling of the King Arthur legend and of the destruction of his court. I have used two quotes from the poem to set the tone of the two movements of the score.

—A.T.

1.
“GAWAINE, GAWAINE, what look ye for to see,
So far beyond the faint edge of the world?
D'ye look to see the lady Vivian,
Pursued by divers ominous vile demons
That have another king more fierce than ours?
Or think ye that if ye look far enough
And hard enough into the feathery west
Ye'll have a glimmer of the Grail itself?
And if ye look for neither Grail nor lady,
What look ye for to see, Gawaine, Gawaine?”

2.
...Time's way with you and me
Is our way, in that we are out of Time
And out of tune with Time.
from *Merlin*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson

Other marimba works by Andrew Thomas include *Moon's Ending* (1983, with cello), *Dances for Five* (1983, with flute, clarinet, bass, and percussion), *Brief, on Flying Night* (1986, and vibraphone), *Hexengeheule* (Witchhowl) (1987, with timpani), *Loving Mad Tom: Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* (1990), *Great Spangled Frittillary* (1991, with violin), *Wind* (2000), *Three Transformations* (2001, marimba duo), and *Valse Triste* (2005).

**Name of Selection: Links #5 (Sitting on the Edge of Nothing) (1987) by Stuart Smith
Performed By: Aiyun Huang
Publisher: Smith Publications
Duration: 12'**

I saw a photograph of a man sitting on top of a helium balloon floating in the air. He was repairing it—it had a leak. He was just sitting there, not fearful. One false move and he would perish. He was brave. Just sitting on the edge of nothing.

—Stuart Smith

Name of Selection: Khan Variations
by Alejandro Viñao

Performed By: Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher

Publisher: Alejandro Viñao

Availability: www.vinao.com

Duration: approx. 10'

For some years I have listened to the Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. He was perhaps the greatest exponent of Qawwali, the music of the sufi mystics. This music in general, and Ali Khan's singing in particular, are characterized by remarkable rhythmic and melismatic subtlety.

The *Kahn Variations* are a set of 8 rhythmic variations based on a traditional theme from Qawwali music as sang by Ali Kahn. The basic pulse and 'feel' of the music has lingered in my mind ever since I first heard the recording in the early 90's. I developed each of the 8 variations—which are played as a continuous piece—exploring a different rhythmic and melodic aspect of the original theme. However, from the harmonic point of view the piece is rather static, respecting the lack or harmony—in the western sense—of the original traditional theme.

As I look at the score now, I can recognize a range of influences from Conlon Nancarrow, tango music, and my own previous pieces for marimba. All these influences have one thing in common: the articulation of pulse, or multiple simultaneous pulses to create a dramatic musical discourse.

Khan Variations was jointly commissioned by Bogdan Bacanu, Michael Burritt, Ricardo Gallardo, Eduardo Leandro, Nanae Mimura, William Moersch, Peter Prommel, Gordon Stout, Jack Van Geem, Robert Van Sice, Nancy Zeltsman and Alan Zimmerman, with the assistance of New Music Marimba. Nancy Zeltsman was the "Project Organiser".

—Alejandro Viñao

Innovations in Multiple Percussion Solos

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 3:00 p.m.

Wabash Ballroom

Name of Selection: Touch and Go

computer graphic: Herbert Brün, 1967 realization:

Allen Otte, 1995/2004

Performed by: Allen Otte

Touch and Go is the second of three compositions for solo percussion, the others being *Plot* and *Stalks and Trees and Drops and Clouds*. For each of the three pieces a Fortran program was written by the composer and run on the IBM 7094. The output tape contained the instructions for the CalComp plotter to draw the score. The notated "language" consists of the distribution, size, and position of symbols on the pages and aims at eliciting from the musician a "musical" response that combines instrumental action and coherent interpretation. *Touch and Go* is, by the skin of the true, the rarest interpreter's teeth, an imperative: "Your goal is to transform commonplace contortions on an apparently ill-conditioned time scale, reminding yourself here and there of the sentence, 'Old favorites one heartbeat ago: Look! Now they are leeches!'"

—Herbert Brün

... there are 17 symbols indicating "implements of actuation" which the player chooses/assigns—but nothing as to the surface(s) upon which to use them. This piece, since the 60's, was traditionally done on a large multiple set-up, but I felt this drew attention away from the focus of the piece, which is obviously the action of fingers, hand, wrist, arm—every degree of up-stroke and down-stroke at everyone of those levels—its all about touch, and not about the pitches and timbres of traditional percussion instruments. Therefore—there had to be no instrument, so that the focus would incontrovertibly be on the micro-choreography of a percussionists' touch.

—Allen Otte

Name of Selection: Toucher (1973) by Vinko Globokar

Performed By: Morris Palter

Publisher: CF Peters

Length of Piece: 6'

One of the most famous solo theater percussion works, *Toucher* (1973) illustrates the French-born avant-gardist Vinko Globokar's delight in combining spoken and instrumental sound to the point where the elements seem to form a single language. The text is from Bertolt Brecht's powerful play, *The Life of Galileo*, a series of

short of dialectical scenes involving discussions with the great astronomer/philosopher on the nature of faith and heroism. A single performer reads all the parts (including stage directions) in French, and accompanies him or herself on seven instruments of choice, using only the fingers and palm of the hand (hence "Toucher"). The attempt is to integrate instrumental and vocal sounds so that the instruments themselves seem to be "speaking."

Name of Selection: Rebonds (1989) by Iannis Xenakis

Performed By: Ayano Kataoka

Publisher: Salabert

Duration: 11'

Rebonds is a work in two movements, called *Rebonds A* and *Rebonds B*. The order of the movements in performance is free and to be played without interruption. *Rebonds A* is scored for skin instruments only: two bongos, three tom-toms, and two bass drums. (Xenakis lists only two tom-toms in the legend of the manuscript, but three tom-toms are in fact required.) *Rebonds B* is scored for two bongos, tumba (an Afro-Cuban barrel drum), tom-tom, bass drum, and five wood blocks. The scale represented by skins and woods should be as wide as possible ... each movement of *Rebonds* begins with structures that are preloaded with energy. The source of energy is therefore internal, produced by friction among forces within the music.

—Steve Schick, *The Percussionists Art*, University of Rochester Press, 2006.)

Rebonds by Iannis Xenakis is probably the most well-known and popular masterpiece for percussion solo in these days. I perform *Rebonds* from memory, so as a number of other percussionists do. The method for the memorization that I took in was the way that tabla players memorize their hundreds of rhythmic patterns. One day I was fascinated by a tabla player when he vocalized some rhythmic pattern by using syllables and demonstrated the exact same pattern on drums. From the inspiration, I came up with the idea of assigning a syllable on each drum, rewriting the whole score, and vocalizing them—speaking with syllables throughout the music. As I got it vocalized through, I gained a very natural feeling with the piece, which is almost as the same feeling the way I speak in my native language.

—Ayano Kataoka

Name of Selection: Nana and Victorio by Peter Garland (1990)

Performed By: John Lane

Publisher: Frog Peak

Duration: 8'

Nana and Victorio, for solo percussionist, was a specific commission from the Center for Contemporary Arts

in Santa Fe and funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation. Garland was outraged by the politically motivated invasions of Granada and Panama by Western powers in the 1980s, which led to a great deal of interest in this region. *Nana and Victorio* was spawned by a period of intensive research on Central and South America. Each movement of the work is preceded in the score and inspired by poems from Edward Dorn's *Recollections of Gran Apacheria*. Nana and Victorio were Apache chiefs who fought against the U.S. Government in the last decades of the 19th century. Each poem presents figurative images and descriptions of leaders and important figures in Apache history, centering on Nana and Victorio.

Name of Selection: Sic Transit

Performed By: I-Jen Fang and CADI (Configurable Automatic Drumming Instrument) (made by EMMI (ExpressiveMachines.org))

Publisher: Wendigo Music

Availability: Available, Robots would need to be rented/purchased from EMMI

Duration: 9'

Sic Transit, is scored for percussionist and six percussion bots, which are computer-controlled mechanical arms. The percussionist and the bots each play a combination of wood, metal, and skin instruments, simultaneously linking and separating their voices. The piece traces the passing of time, through which everything moves, rising and falling, compressing, expanding, beginning, ending. Some events can be anticipated; others are surprises. One has intimations of the future and recollections of the past, and responds as one's emotional and behavioral repertoires allow. There are times when the percussionist is completely aware of what the bots will do and enters into a conversation with them, and there are others when s/he can only respond to what happens in the moment, drawing on a repertoire of possible moves, ranging from dancing to dueling. There are also times when the percussionist sticks to the path, regardless of what the bots are doing. The composer extends her thanks to Steve Kemper and Peter Traub for their help in developing the Max patch that enabled the creation of the bots' music. The instruments were developed by EMMI (Expressive Machines Musical Instruments), comprised of composer/inventors Scott Barton, Steve Kemper, and Troy Rogers. For more information on the composer, visit www.judithshatin.com.

—Judith Shatin

Classic Ensemble Showcase Concert

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 5:00 p.m.

Wabash Ballroom

Name of Selection: Nagoya Marimbas (1994) by Steve Reich

Performed By: Adam Blackstock and Gordon Stout

Publisher: B & H

Duration: 5'

Nagoya Marimbas (1994) is somewhat similar to my pieces from the 1960s and '70s in that there are repeating patterns played on both marimbas, one or more beats of out phase, creating a series of two-part unison canons. However, these patterns are more melodically developed, change frequently and each is usually repeated no more than three times, similar to my more recent work. The piece is also considerably more difficult to play than my earlier ones and requires two virtuosic performer. The work was commissioned by the Conservatory in Nagoya, Japan to mark the opening of the new Shirakawa Hall."

—Steve Reich

Name of Selection: Six Marimbas by Steve Reich

Performed By: nief-norf Project

Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes

Duration: 20–24'

Rescored by Steve Reich in 1986, *Six Marimbas* was first written in 1973 as *Six Pianos*. The work commences with a ceaseless stream of pulses that serves as a foundation upon which new patterns emerge to the surface—sometimes these patterns are presented bit by bit, other times subtly and gradually, but each time they challenge us to listen to sound and to each other in a new way.

Reich is well known for employing numerous musical techniques that challenge our aural perceptions. In *Six Marimbas*, Reich features “resulting patterns”— patterns that are created through separate voices sounding together. When six marimbists play multiple, interlocking pulses, unexpected patterns emerge to the surface. While some of these patterns are notated, many others will arise anew in each presentation of the work, allowing for fundamentally different rehearsals of the work with each performance.

Music critic Tim Page, writing immediately after hearing the premiere of Reich’s *Music for 18 Musicians*

(1976), perhaps described this aspect of Reich’s music best:

Minerva-like, the music springs to life fully formed—from dead silence to fever pitch... Imagine... trying to impose a frame on a running river—making it a finite, enclosed work of art yet leaving it flowing freely on all sides. It has been done. Steve Reich has framed the river.

As you hear the nief-norf Project’s performance of *Six Marimbas*, we urge you to step fully into this river, to hear some of the old patterns and surely discover some new ones, as well.

Name of Selection: Musik im Bauch (1975)

by Karlheinz Stockhausen

Performed by: Akros Percussion Collective

Publisher: Stockhausen-Verlag

Duration: 30'

Described both as a “fairy-tale for children” and as a surrealistic depiction of Mexican Indian myths and rites, Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Musik im Bauch* (*Music in the Belly*) (1975) represents one of the most unique works for percussion in its bizarre theatrical content and unusual orchestration. Inspired first by the strange sounds emanating one night from his two-year-old daughter’s stomach (an event that generated the title), the composer purported that the piece is nearly an exact reconstruction of a dream he had several years later. The scene centers around Miron, a larger-than-life bird-man looming over the performance space. The players, acting as mechanical dolls, perform on bell plates, marimba, crotales, and glockenspiel. After whipping switches in the air and cleansing it of evil spirits, three performers turn them on Miron with increasing frenzy. Eventually, one retreats from the stage, returning with a giant pair of scissors to cut open Miron’s abdomen; he reaches inside to find a music box, and, intrigued by its melody, accompanies it with glockenspiel. The other two performers follow suit, finding music boxes with different melodies. Though not immediately apparent, the entire performance is derived from these boxes (which feature tunes composed by Stockhausen to represent signs of the Zodiac); the bell plates and marimba perform the melodies in augmentation, the rhythms of the switches imitate those of the melodies, and even the stylized movements of the players are an extension of the boxes’ mechanisms.

Performed By: Akros Percussion Collective (Gustavo Aguilar, Matt Dudack, Kevin Lewis, Jeff Neitzke, Bill Sallak, Chris Vandall)