

Focus Day 2013

Above and Beyond: The Expanding Definitions of Percussion

Several centuries ago—around 1706, most likely—someone became the first person ever to be presented a snare drum part. Over time, the snare drum has become one of our most standard instruments, but that first performer had to answer a question that almost every percussionist has faced since: what do I do with this new unusual object?

Percussionists in the Western tradition have a unique role: rather than play one instrument, we are called upon to play the "everything else" that is not specifically associated with winds, strings, brass, or the piano. Each of the instruments that we think of as a standard part of the percussionist's arsenal was once freshly exotic: the almglocken of Mahler's Sixth Symphony, the tuned gongs of *Turandot*, the typewriter of *Parade*, the brake drums of *Double Music*, the amplified cactus of *Child of Tree*...

Our role has always been an expanding one, and the rate of this expansion increased dramatically in the twentieth century. Moreover, the percussionist's tasks are not limited to learning how to hit strange new objects; contemporary literature for percussion also draws on elements of theatre, technology, and world music, and works that incorporate indeterminacy enlist the percussionist in the act of composition as well.

The Committee seeks applications that directly address and celebrate this expanding definition of percussion. Proposals should either 1) highlight significant historical advances in the expansion of the percussionist's role, in terms of new instruments, techniques, compositional inspiration, or interdisciplinary craft, or 2) illustrate the state of the art today, offering new possibilities and directions for the continued expansion of Western percussion performance. **Proposals should clearly describe how the work in question relates to the overall Focus Day theme.**

As always, the Committee is interested in the participation of both emerging and established artists, and applications from performers, composers, scholars, and ensembles are encouraged. All proposals that meet the criteria and qualify for inclusion on Focus Day performances will be given complete and careful consideration. Please note that **all expenses, as well as 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.

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