

Evelyn Glennie

By Lauren Vogel Weiss



Joseph Schwantner's "Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra" begins with a thunderous cacophony of drumming. As soloist Evelyn Glennie performs the work, producing a huge bass drum sound that equals the volume of a full orchestra, her petite size seems more appropriate to the tinkling of the triangle that follows. As marimba notes begin to flow, the listener is swept up in the electrifying performance of this dynamic musician.

Glennie can coax the barest whisper out of a cymbal, triangle, or marimba, allowing her listeners to experience the silence from which her music emerges. She can also lay into her instruments with the force of a football player, pounding out hundreds of fast, rhythmic notes in less than a minute. In between she captures the many moods of the music through a delicate bowing of a vibraphone, the shimmering crash of a cymbal, the mysterious tones of a gong. And in the fast and furious ending of Schwantner's concerto, few can duplicate the energy Evelyn creates while playing her "standing drumset" and producing a throbbing pulse more akin to a marching drum line or rock drumset player than to a classical percussionist. From almost inaudible *pianissimos* to ear-splitting *sforzandos* on keyboards, drums, and cymbals, she pulls listeners deep into her percussive soul.

During her Spring 2002 U.S. tour, Glennie will perform Schwantner's percussion concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, and Louisville Orchestra. Although the piece has been widely identified with her, she is quick to point out that it was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for its 150th anniversary in 1992 and premiered by the Philharmonic's Principal Percussionist, Christopher Lamb, in 1995.

"Since it was written for Chris Lamb," Glennie explains, "the composer set the soloist in an orchestral position." She plays the first and third movements from a raised platform at the rear of the orchestra, and only during the middle "Misterioso" movement does she move to the usual soloist position in front of the orchestra.

Glennie first performed the piece in 1996 when she recorded it with the National Symphony under the direction of Leonard Slatkin, who also conducted the world premiere. (The CD was released in 1997 and was nominated for a Grammy award.) She is also the driving force (along with a consortium of symphony orchestras) behind the commission of a second percussion concerto by Schwantner, which should be premiered in 2004 or 2005.

Some orchestras request that Glennie perform the Schwantner concerto; other times she suggests it. "Depending on how much rehearsal time is scheduled," Glennie

explains, "an orchestra can fairly quickly prepare this piece. It has a very difficult horn section and there are also involved parts for the timpanist and four percussionists, as well as for harp and piano. This piece has a good combination of lighting possibilities, theatrics and, of course, music. It also has a lot of emotion in it, especially the second movement.

"I begin the first movement from the back of the orchestra playing more or less in unison rhythmically with the percussion section, basically as an orchestral percussionist. There is a marimba and a set of multi drums. Sometimes I add octobans or Rototoms or an extra bass drum. You can add, or not add, whatever you want; it's up to you. Gradually," she says, as the "r"s roll off her tongue in her lilting Scottish brogue, "I move up to the front of the stage and become more soloistic." The other percussion parts are tacet during the second movement to focus all the attention on the soloist.

The composer describes two principal ideas at work during the slow movement: a pair of recurrent, ringing sonorities played on the vibraphone, and an insistent "heartbeat" motif played on the bass drum. Glennie describes the instruments used as "gold—the rich, resonant metallic sounds." In addition to the vibraphone, she also uses crotales, cymbals, and triangles, and even lowers a tam tam into a large kettledrum

filled with water. "I quite like the resonance of a timpani bowl for this effect," she says with a smile, "and it's an unusual thing for the audience to look at." The third movement begins with an improvisational section for the soloist as it returns to the faster tempos and quicker rhythms of the first movement.

Another addition to Glennie's performance is the use of theatrical lighting on stage whenever possible. "When I go to a concert," she explains, "I want every single one of my senses entertained, so I believe that the lighting does enhance the performance. An example would be in the second movement of the Schwantner, which would be lit in a fairly cold blue because, even though it is very slow, there are a lot of sharp attacks. The first movement is bright—the sort of sound that is right there 'in your face'—so we like to have vivid colors. Then, in the last movement, we have a combination of reds, greens, and blues because that movement gradually becomes more and more aggressive as we hear some of the first movement ideas come back. Sometimes we're able to clear all the lights from the orchestra and just leave the lights on the drums during the cadenza. Of course, the lighting possibilities can vary from hall to hall.

"Not every piece needs blues and reds and greens," continues Glennie. "There are times when the pureness of a white light is absolutely beautiful. Other times, just a subtle



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palette of color creates a mood. It's like when you go into a restaurant and they dim the lights a little later in the evening. It's for a reason."

Glennie's attention to performance detail extends to what she wears on stage. Her clothes reflect a combination of her personality and the music. For example, when she performs Michael Daugherty's "UFO" she wears a reflective silver suit, appropriate for the "space alien" character she is portraying through the music. When playing Ravel's "Bolero," Evelyn sports a black toreador-style jacket with a bright red corset-style vest.

When she is not trying to visually represent the music in her attire, she reflects the contemporary woman behind the "solo percussionist," oftentimes with long jackets or flowing pantsuits, stylish as well as practical for someone moving around a stage full of percussion instruments. Even her colors reflect the mood of the music, from bright to dark, but she is always an eye-catching presence—whether alone on stage or in the midst of a hundred tuxedo-clad musicians.

Evelyn is also a very visual performer. "The audience can see the instrument and the sticks, so they can hear the sound even before you strike the note," she says. "It makes people listen."

Glennie has recently added a multi-media show to her repertoire, loosely based on her

Shadow Behind the Iron Sun CD, released in 2000, which was her first totally improvised recording. "At the moment we call the show 'Shadow,'" Glennie explains. "It's kind of a three-dimensional improvised concert that features lighting, sound, and music on an equal basis. So if the lighting man decides to improvise, I will go with that. If I improvise, he will go with that. We have performed it in Europe, and next year we plan to tour it in the Far East. Hopefully, one day, I will perform it in the States."

In addition to her performances this spring with symphony orchestras, Glennie will be presenting solo recitals in Salt Lake City, Utah; Houston, Texas; Cedar Falls, Iowa; and Akron, Ohio, accompanied by pianist Philip Smith, with whom she has performed regularly since 1986.

She recently performed with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir during a special performance for the Paralympics in Salt Lake City as well as two concerts for the Winter Olympics where she also played the Schwantner concerto. A special arrangement of Glennie's "A Little Prayer"—a piece she wrote when she was thirteen years old—was arranged for marimba and choir especially for the occasion.

This past fall, Evelyn was involved in her second percussion-festival collaboration with Leonard Slatkin and the National Symphony Orchestra. "Over the past few years, I have

developed quite a good rapport with Leonard," explains Evelyn. "He's very experimental with repertoire, and when we recorded the Schwantner, he suggested that some day we should do some type of educational project to give something back to the music system. The orchestra has done other types of festivals—a jazz festival and a piano festival as some examples—and soon the idea developed into a percussion festival."

The first "Drums Along the Potomac" festival was held in April 1999 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. There, Glennie performed five percussion concertos—including one world premiere and one U.S. premiere—and also played Great Highland Bagpipes in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's "An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise" and snare drum in "Bolero."

In October 2001, Glennie and Slatkin teamed up again as Co-Artistic Directors when the National Symphony Orchestra hosted "More Drums Along the Potomac." (Two concerts were repeated later that month in New York City's Carnegie Hall). Glennie performed two world premieres commissioned by the NSO's John and June Hechinger Commissioning Fund for New Orchestral Works—Joan Tower's percussion concerto "Strike Zones" and George Tsontakis's percussion concerto "Mirologhia"—along with two concertos from her vast repertoire, "Gorilla in a Cage" by Stewart Wallace and Chen Yi's "Percussion Concerto."

Glennie says that Tower's "Strike Zone" was *not* named for baseball, nor for the tragic events that took place in the U.S. this past September. "Joan felt the name was appropriate for a piece that involves striking percussion instruments," Glennie explains. "It's as simple as that! It's a fairly standard setup, which includes bass drums, tom-toms, timbales, snare drum, and really nice xylophone, vibraphone, and glockenspiel parts for the soloist. Two of the orchestra's percussionists play crotales and castanets, and are placed in different parts of the concert hall. It's really quite a classical piece of music—conventional, but very well done."

The Tsontakis piece called for Glennie to sing and chant in Greek! She compares his style of writing to an orchestral section that is played by one player. "There are tom-



Evelyn rehearsing with Béla Fleck for his album *Perpetual Motion*.

PHOTO BY JAMES WILSON

toms, octobans, eight to ten skinned instruments, and a big bass drum," she says. "The part instructs the soloist to cover the entire head of one bass drum with a round piece of plywood and to strike it with tubular-bell mallets, which produces an enormous *crack* of a sound." Glennie growls out a guttural "kah!" as she imitates the effect.

"He also wrote for a set of crowbars, which make a very resonant sound, and you sing along with these crowbars at the end. The snare drum gives enormous climaxes, and there are parts for vibraphone, woodblocks, cowbells, egg shakers, cabasa, cymbals, and hi-hat—lots of tinkly bits and pieces. It's like a story being told through sound—almost a different kind of language altogether. So it is quite interesting to play."

Chen Yi's percussion concerto explored the roots of Beijing opera and called for Glennie to recite a portion of an ancient poem in Mandarin. "I had a few sessions with Chen Yi herself, which inspired me to learn some of the language," she explains. "So I've been learning a few bits and pieces. It really is *so* interesting." Stewart Wallace's piece also utilized her voice, opening with Glennie "ooh"-ing and "aah"-ing into a head mic she wears as she moves about the stage.

These five concerts also featured other "percussion friendly" pieces such as Edgard Varèse's "Ionisation," Silvestre Revueltas's "La Noche de los Mayas," and a performance of "Bolero" featuring seven snare drummers.

Asked to recall her most memorable concert, Glennie cites the 1992 premiere of James MacMillan's "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel" in London as part of the Proms concerts at the Albert Hall. "There was such an *incredible* ovation for the piece, and that's always what I'm interested in—projecting the piece," she says. "It was just extraordinary and really quite emotional, so that performance always stands out in my mind."

On the flip side, she is reticent about identifying her least memorable performances. "There have been some tense concerts, let's put it like that," she says, grinning. "Sometimes it was because of conductors and other times because of orchestras—a lack of rehearsals or conductors being unprepared. It happens, and you learn through experience what to do next time."

Does she have a favorite composer? She

replies, diplomatically, "That's impossible to say, don't you think? They're all interesting in their own ways. Of course, I would love to have a Mozart marimba concerto or a Beethoven timpani concerto. Many of the pieces I commission now are from composers I admire. That doesn't guarantee that I'm going to get an interesting piece of music, but at least I start in the right way by choosing someone who has already written works that I like."

Of all the percussion instruments that Glennie plays, does she have a favorite? "Probably the snare drum," she says after pausing to consider the question. "I play Askeff Masson's snare drum concerto a lot, as well as his recital piece, 'Prim.' It's really difficult coming across good pieces for solo snare drum—that is, *musical* pieces. Obvi-

ously, a lot of them are in the military or marching style, which is fine, but in the context of a recital, I'm looking for interesting pieces of music."

A few of Glennie's favorite possessions combine her love of collecting antiques with her love of collecting percussion instruments. "One piece is a glass xylophone that dates back to the 1780s," she says. "It's quite beautiful. Another is a glass harmonica that is over one hundred years old and was found in a farmhouse in Scotland—really quite unusual."

A question frequently asked of Evelyn concerns how many hours each day she practices—a question that is nearly impossible to answer. Performing over a hundred concerts a year, traveling all over the world, and averaging less than forty nights a year in



PHOTO BY JAMES WILSON



PHOTO BY JAMES WILSON

her own bed in Cambridgeshire, seventy miles north of London, leaves little time for a normal practice routine. Perhaps a better question would be how she learns a new piece of music, something she does frequently, having commissioned over one hundred new percussion works.

"I quite literally begin by looking at the score," Glennie replies. "If it's a multi piece, I begin by drawing different types of setups, although a lot of changing is done once I start performing the piece in concert. Experimenting is very important. Also, the eye can actually see a lot of mechanical details—the physical details of playing where there could be awkward spots and things like that. Once I've sorted those out, I'm not stumbling over myself when I actually go to my instrument. I am prepared for those little corners, and they're not so scary anymore.

"I might look at it for a week or so," she continues, "and then I will go to the instruments, pop the music on the stand, and just experiment a bit because, by that time, I've got the groundwork done as far as what the piece is about—what kind of emotion I want to put in it. Is it an angry piece? Is it a happy piece? Is it light, serious, sad? Once I've got the general mood sorted out, I can deal with the fine details when I'm with the instruments. That's when I can experiment with specifics, and the various parts of the surfaces, and all sorts of things like that.

"Of course," she adds, "every single piece of music is dealt with differently because it really does depend how much time I have with that piece before I must perform it. Very often, the music comes so late that I just pop it on the stand and literally learn the notes. And I *hate* doing that because I'm just learning the notes without knowing what I want to do with the piece—what the direction is. So I like to take a piece, learn it a bit, leave it for a while, then go back to it, leave it again, and so on, so that there's room to breathe.

"It's quite rare for me to come across a piece of music by a composer who doesn't want to change something after the first performance. That's why the exclusivity terms are quite important; there's time for the piece to breathe, there's time for the composer to make adjustments, and then there's time for the publisher to get a final copy produced. So the version you hear next year won't be exactly the same as the premiere performance."

Evelyn says that everything she plays is, ultimately, her own interpretation, based on her inner feeling for the music. She does not recommend learning a piece in a "parrot fashion" from someone else. "It's like an accent," she explains. "When I was born, I picked up a Scottish Averdorian accent because that was the first thing I heard. Likewise, when you first hear someone performing a piece, *that's* the initial interpretation that you get, and you'll always remember and be influenced by that, even though you play it your own way later on. That memory is still there, like the accent that your mother spoke to you in. So I'm totally Evelyn when I play."

A native of Aberdeen, Scotland, Evelyn Glennie, the daughter of a farmer, began studying percussion and timpani at the age of 12—the same age that she was discovered to be profoundly deaf. With her combination of incredible musicianship and deft lip-reading skills, she has conquered any preconceived notions of her impairment. A unique facet of her concerts is that she performs barefoot so that she can "hear" the vibrations through her body.

Evelyn does not consider herself a "deaf musician," but rather a musician with a hearing impairment. During a recent inter-

view with James R. Destreich of *The New York Times*, she bluntly asked if a journalist without 20/20 vision would be considered a "blind writer." Glennie wishes to be judged as a musician—and nothing else. (For more details on Evelyn's views on hearing disabilities and how deafness has affected her, visit her Web site at www.evelyn.co.uk.)

At the young age of 19, Evelyn graduated with an Honours Degree from the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she met and studied with the late James Blades, who soon became her mentor and friend.

"He influenced so many people in the U.K., and around the world really," says Evelyn, with a wistful look in her eye. "He was just an extraordinary man. James was already in his late seventies when we met, so I've always known him to be an old man—but unbelievably young at heart.

"He was like a walking encyclopedia," Evelyn continues. "He instilled real respect for what you do in every sense. It wasn't just a case of playing the instruments; he delved into the whole historic aspect of what you were doing. He loved to collaborate with composers; he was great with young folk; he did so much for music therapy; and he and his wife gave absolutely hundreds of lectures and demonstrations throughout the country.

For anyone unfamiliar with James Blades, Evelyn recommends starting with his landmark book, *Percussion Instruments and Their History*. "That is as close as you can get to James Blades at this point in time," she says. "If you can read his autobiography, *Drum Roll*, that's an extra bonus! He was so eloquent with words. And you have to realize that when you're playing a piece by Benjamin Britten or Igor Stravinsky, James Blades was part of the percussion writing; he talked to those people and played for them. Just think about that!"

Blades also introduced Glennie to PAS and traveled with her to Los Angeles when she made her PASIC debut in 1985, which was the year she began her solo percussion career. "It was unbelievable that my regular percussion teacher at the Academy didn't tell me about PAS, which was just a disgrace," she says. "I was completely overawed by the whole [PASIC] convention. I'd never, ever been exposed to anything like that before. I just couldn't sleep, it was so incredible."

Glennie has performed concerts, clinics,

and master classes at six PASICs in all, most recently at PASIC '99 in Columbus. At PASIC '94 in Atlanta, she was the keynote speaker at the Hall of Fame Banquet. She has also attended other PASICs as, in her words, "just another PAS member."

Glennie typically performs in almost two dozen countries each year, and she has per-

formed on five continents. Approximately one-third of each year is spent performing recitals, concerts, and master classes across North America. She has premiered over one hundred percussion pieces written especially for her, including MacMillan's "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel," Christopher Rouse's "Der gerettete Alberich" ("Fantasy for Solo Per-

cussion and Orchestra"), and the final piece by Iannis Xenakis, "O-Mega."

Glennie has collaborated with indigenous musicians throughout Britain, Ireland, India, and Korea, and has performed with gamelan orchestras in Indonesia and samba bands in Brazil. She has also performed with artists as diverse as Brazilian percussionist and vo-

James Wilson Evelyn Glennie's Percussion Tech

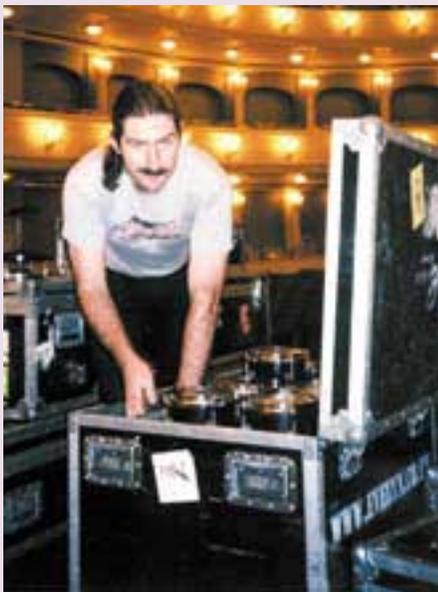


PHOTO BY LAUREN VOGEL WEISS

Getting Evelyn Glennie and her equipment around the world is literally more than one person could do alone. When Glennie's tour schedule began taking her to several continents, she started traveling with a full-time technician. Her current "tech" and traveling companion is James Wilson, who has a tough—but interesting—job.

Wilson began working for Glennie in June 2000. "I was getting fed up with a dead-end insurance job," he recalls. "I saw two adverts at a nearby job agency. One was for a travel executive, which sounded interesting but probably wasn't, and the other was for a 'percussion technician.' I got that job, which definitely *is* interesting!"

A native of Australia, Wilson and his family came to the U.K. when he was seven. Following a six-year stint in the

British Royal Air Force, he worked as a photo technician (which serves him well as the "semi-official" photographer for Glennie on the road), a truck driver (also a useful skill for moving large quantities of percussion equipment), and manager of a bike shop. He also speaks fluent German. His years of singing in the church choir have helped him with basics such as tuning drums but, other than that, Wilson had no formal musical training.

For tours in Europe and the U.K., Glennie's equipment is loaded into her 7 1/2-ton equipment truck and driven by Wilson to the performing venue. Glennie also stores approximately two hundred instruments in the U.S.A. to be used for North American performances. Those are shipped to the concert venues via trucking companies—sometimes as many as sixty cases at a time. Tours in Asia and Australia are treated the same as a North American tour, with instruments being shipped from venue to venue.

"Evelyn and I will fly to the first city on a tour," says Wilson. "Once we get to the hall, I unpack the boxes and assemble all the equipment for whatever Evelyn may be playing. Once I've set up the instruments, I try to get the lighting and sound coordinated as best I can. Sometimes it's easier than other times, depending on the venue and what sort of concert it is. If it's a recital, then I have virtually free range to do whatever I like with the lighting and sound, given the restrictions of the venue. I'm involved in all aspects of the production of the show, even calling the cues from the side of the stage and making sure everything is where it should be. After that, it's the same thing in reverse."

During the Fall 2001 tour of the U.S., Glennie was traveling with forty-two cases, including a five-octave marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, glockenspiel, multi-tom

kit, several sets of cymbals, octobans, Roto-toms, timbales, tubular bells, an air-raid siren, all of the hardware for this equipment, and a few "toys." She also travels with her own replacement heads so that if something breaks, it can be repaired in moments, not days.

Wilson describes a recent week in Fort Worth, Texas: "Evelyn and I arrived at Bass Hall on Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m., and by 10:00 a.m. she was rehearsing with the [Fort Worth Symphony] orchestra. On the whole, the local crews we work with are very helpful, even when we ask for lighting requests that they were maybe not expecting."

Once Glennie's performance is over—usually the soloist performs just before intermission—Wilson sets to work again. "In Fort Worth, we were able to pack up the instruments that were downstage during the interval and second half of the show," he says. "Sometimes we can't start until the entire concert is over." With Glennie's help—she kept track of the mallets and accessories, and assisted in packing some of the smaller instruments—Wilson finished packing all forty-two cases in less than two hours after the concert was over.

"This job is a lot more challenging than I expected it to be," Wilson says. "It's probably my own fault because I decided I didn't want to sit around most of the day twiddling my thumbs once the equipment was set up. There are a lot of things that can be done to improve the presentation from a lighting or sound aspect. Especially when Evelyn is involved in a concerto, we feel it can benefit from more enhancement than most orchestras currently give their shows. Evelyn tends to draw a younger, more dynamic crowd who often expect more production values than are usually found in symphony concerts."

calist Nana Vasconcelos and Icelandic pop star Björk. She also plays the Great Highland Bagpipes and is committed to bringing the instrument and its music to a wider public.

Evelyn's debut recording, *Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, with the late Sir Georg Solti, Murray Perahia, and David Corkhill, won a Grammy Award in 1989.

MacMillan: Veni, Veni, Emmanuel with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (Jukka-Pekka Saraste, conductor) won a Classical CD award, the British equivalent of a Grammy.

Recently, Glennie found playing marimba with banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck to be an interesting experience. Their tracks on *Béla Fleck - Perpetual Motion* include Bach's "Two-Part Invention No. 11," "Two-Part Invention No. 13," and "Three-Part Invention No. 15" (with violinist Joshua Bell), and Brahms' "Presto in g minor after Bach."

"Béla is known as a specialist in bluegrass," Glennie explains. "This is his first 'classical' CD. I didn't know how he was going to get around these pieces on a banjo," she says, singing the running sixteenth notes from one of the Bach inventions. "I could hardly play because I was so fascinated watching him perform. I wasn't sure if marimba and banjo would work, but it does! And he was such a super guy to work with. We met for the first time and rehearsed on the same day we recorded."

Glennie's most recent release (on the Klavier label) features the music of Michael Daugherty and was recorded in April 2001 by the North Texas Wind Symphony under the direction of Eugene Migliaro Corporon. Glennie is the soloist in the new wind-ensemble arrangement of "UFO" (originally premiered by the National Symphony Orchestra in 1999). Four other works by Daugherty—"Motown Metal," "Niagara Falls," "Desi," and "Red Cape Tango"—are also on the CD. She will record the orchestral version of "UFO" in November 2002 with the Colorado Symphony under the direction of Marin Alsop.

Another CD has been recorded and is scheduled for release this year. Glennie performed the xylophone concerto "Fantasy on Japanese Wood Prints" by the late Alan Hovhaness. "I played on a xylophone and a lithophone, which is based on an ancient instrument," she explains. "The bars are made of serpentine, or stone." That recording will

also include Chen Yi's "Percussion Concerto" and Thea Musgrave's "Figure in a Japanese Landscape" for marimba and winds.

Does Glennie have a favorite solo recording? "It's difficult for me to view the CDs positively because I'm always very critical of them," she replies. "I think the one with the Black Dyke Brass Band [*Reflected in Brass*] is quite interesting. It was so very different to the previous ones, and we had a lot of fun making that CD. The brass band movement is an amateur movement in the United Kingdom, so there's a real feeling that they love to play. Their concentration levels are so high, their musicianship is fantastic, and their technical skills are just incredible—not to mention their sight-reading is amazing! I can hardly praise them enough. When we went into the studio, they literally got the parts for the first time, rehearsed it, recorded it, and then we went on to the next piece. I don't play that kind of repertoire every day, although I might use it for an encore.

"I suppose my absolute favorite is *Shadow Behind the Iron Sun*, which was a totally improvised recording. But it's hard for me to stand back and look objectively at my recordings. What's the most interesting to me is the diversity of the repertoire."

Evelyn was the subject of a 1984 BBC television documentary titled *A Will To Win*. She has also been featured in several other productions, including *Good Vibrations*, *Evelyn in Rio*, and the *Soundbites* and *Great Journeys II* series.

At the tender age of twenty-seven, Evelyn was designated as an Officer of the British Empire (OBE)—a privilege for any musician but a rare honor to be recognized before the age of fifty. In 1993, she garnered more votes than Luciano Pavarotti when she was named "Personality of the Year" by the International Classical Music Awards, and she was voted "Scots Woman of the Decade" in 1990.

The *New York Times* has called Glennie "a musician, pure and simple" and stated that "her musicianship is extraordinary. One has to pause in sheer wonder at what she has accomplished. She is quite simply a phenomenon of a performer." And in the words of Leonard Slatkin, Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra, "She has done for percussion what James Galway did for

the flute and Richard Stolzman for the clarinet."

Normally, after percussion equipment is unpacked, the trunks are carefully stored backstage and out of the way. But during a master class in Fort Worth, Texas, the travel cases—some open, some closed—were positioned all around the stage, almost like a "sound shell." Near the five-octave marimba were some of the massive trunks used to transport it. On the other side of the stage were almost a dozen tom toms—and almost as many cases. "It's important for me to play, but also to explain a bit about what goes on behind the scenes," Glennie says. "Hence, the cases."

Most of the high school students were interested in the music. How did she play this instrument? Why did she play that instrument? Others were fascinated by the logistics of moving a percussionist from place to place. She patiently answered questions from the audience and demonstrated musical moments, drawing ripples of laughter as well as spontaneous applause. The teenage audience was relating quite well to their guest speaker—an energetic young Scotswoman who had been in school not too many years before.

Evelyn says she has always been interested in sharing music with young people. "I remember going to my first orchestral concert as a teenager," she recalls. "It was the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, who was visiting the Music Hall in Aberdeen, Scotland. The conductor happened to be John McLeod, who wrote one of the very early percussion concertos. I can't remember what the orchestra played, but I do remember the *feeling*. The whole spectacle of seeing an orchestra onstage in a grand hall left quite an impression on me. Even riding the bus to the venue made it a special occasion. I hope that some of my performances can inspire young folk in the same way."

Glennie often performs concerts specifically targeted to young students, many in conjunction with the educational programs of major symphony orchestras. "This type of concert has to be very carefully considered," she explains. "Who is actually going to be communicating [conductor or soloist]? How is this communication going to happen? How many kids are you going to be playing to?"

What do you want them to walk out with? And so on. It's something that really has to be monitored and constantly fine tuned.

"It's great if an orchestra, or individual members of an orchestra, can communicate with the kids, even by having sections of the orchestra demonstrate their instruments. The difficulty when you're in a large hall is really being able to communicate with your young audience—or at least *feel* you are communicating with them. Of course, a good sound system is important, so that even if I'm standing in a setup at the back of the stage, I can explain things."

She has also done educational concerts as part of recital programs. "I choose from a selection of pieces for a particular children's concert," Glennie says. "It depends on the age group, on how long I need to play for them, and on whether it is a lecture/demo or an actual concert. The kids really dictate what I play. If I'm working with a smaller group of kids in a more intimate room than a theater, then there will be participation. But in a big hall, I just want them to listen and experience the music."

On a one-to-one scale, Evelyn also gives a handful of master classes each year. "Very often when I give master classes, I come across some wonderful technicians," she says. "But they don't seem to understand how to project their music. They have to take what they're able to do technically and transport that into an experience for an audience who is not familiar with the percussion language. They have to distinguish the difference between being a percussionist/instrumentalist and a musician; it's as simple as that.

"I try to teach them to think about how to walk on the platform, how to create the mood before they play any notes, and so on, until finally there is some expression in the piece," she continues. "The difference is quite extraordinary—one they can really see and *feel*. It's difficult understanding that through words; you have to do it through action.

"Being a musician is about living," Glennie insists. "It's your *life*. It's not only about picking up the stick and practicing for hours and hours. There are non-musical things that you can relate to your music."

Despite her busy schedule, Glennie makes time to pursue hobbies and interests such

as shooting and archery, which would seem to have no relation to music. But Evelyn sees a connection. "Those activities have to do with focus, concentration, balance, and coordination," she says. "It's also a matter of trying something new—being in a different environment with different people. And at the end of the day, to be a musician, you have to be as flexible and fluid as possible. Putting yourself into different situations and aspects other than music helps your confidence as a musician."

The more one scratches the surface of this talented musician, the more layers are uncovered. And all of these factors combine to form the musician that Evelyn is today. Her wide range of interests also include drawing, painting, and even the martial arts. She was accepted by the Open University program in the U.K. where she is studying criminal law and psychology.

"When I started my career, I wanted to be a solo percussionist," Glennie says. "People told me that it wasn't possible; there was no repertoire. Well, now the repertoire exists and it *is* possible to sustain a career as a soloist.

"I have to keep moving forward and find other aspects of music that are of interest to me. That's why the multi-media project is important, even though we still have a long way to go. There are so many new things out there to learn."

For up-to-date information on Evelyn Glennie's tour schedules (including repertoire) and recordings, visit her Web site: www.evelyn.co.uk

Lauren Vogel Weiss is President of Percussion Events Registry Company, which schedules percussion clinics and concerts for many prominent percussionists. A summa cum laude graduate in music from the University of Texas at Dallas, she performs regularly with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and teaches private percussion lessons for the Hurst-Euless-Bedford School District. A former member of the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps, she is a contributing writer for *Drum Business*, *Drum Corps World*, *Modern Drummer*, and *Percussive Notes*. She has also served as President of the Texas PAS Chapter for 15 years and was recognized as Outstanding Chapter President in 1992. PN

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