

SPRING PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE CONCERT

THAD ANDERSON, KIRK GAY, & JEFF MOORE, DIRECTORS

MEEHAN/PERKINS DUO, GUEST ARTIST

Friday, April 2, 2010
8:00 p.m.
Visual Arts Auditorium

— PROGRAM —

<i>IV (Variation I)</i>	Johanna Beyer
<i>Russian Sailor's Dance</i>	Reinhold Gliere, arr. Gordon Peters
<i>IV (Variation II)</i>	Johanna Beyer
<i>Tributes to Charon</i> I. Passage Through Darkness II. Counterdance in the Spring	Lou Harrison
<i>IV (Variation III)</i>	Johanna Beyer
<i>Hungarian Dance No. 5</i>	Johannes Brahms, arr. Gordon Peters

— INTERMISSION —

<i>Shifty</i>	Dennis DeSantis
<i>Splendid Wood</i>	Jennifer Higdon
<i>Travel Diary</i>	Paul Lansky
Meehan/Perkins Duo	
<i>The So-Called Laws of Nature, Part II</i>	David Lang

Please join us in the lobby for Black Steel, UCF's steel drum ensemble

<i>Hard Times</i>	Len "Boogsie" Sharp
<i>Gymnopedie No. 1</i>	Eric Satie, arr. Elizabeth DeLamater
<i>This Love</i>	Adam Levine, arr. Jeff Moore
<i>Rant and Rave</i>	Christopher "Tambu" Herbert

— PERSONNEL —

Percussion Ensemble Personnel

Kaylee Bonatakis
Josh Brink
Jordan Christenot
Corey Geiger
Tia Harvey
Justin Iadonisi
Jorge Jimenez
Chris Lin
Erin Morgan
Justin Nelson
Matt Roberts
Marissa Turney
Will Vizoso

Steel Band Personnel

Kaylee Bonatakis (Tenor)
Josh Brink (Tenor)
Corey Geiger (Double Tenor)
Tia Harvey (Double Second)
Jorge Jimenez (Cello)
Chris Lin (Cello)
Wendell Raulerson (Drum Set)
Matt Roberts (Tenor)
Will Vizoso (Bass)

Upcoming UCF Percussion Events

Sunday, April 11 @ 7:30 p.m. — Chris Lin, percussion recital (Music Rehearsal Hall)
Saturday, April 24 @ 7:30 p.m. — Corey Geiger, senior percussion recital (Music Rehearsal Hall)
Monday, April 26 @ 7:00 p.m. — Josh Brink, senior percussion recital (Music Rehearsal Hall)

www.music.ucf.edu/percussion

— PROGRAM NOTES —

IV (1935) | Johanna Beyer

IV represents one of six works for percussion ensemble that Johanna Beyer composed between 1933 and 1939. Beyer does not designate instrumentation for this particular piece. Rather, performers are to choose percussive sounds almost at random. For this performance, the ensemble will perform three variations: the first with wood and metallic idiophones, the second with membranophones, and the third with a combination of the first two groups.

The first, and only publication of Beyer's music was in the New Music Orchestra Series #18 of 1936, an edition devoted entirely to percussion music. Beyer's *IV* appeared along with music of Harold Davidson, Ray Green, William Russell, Gerald Strang, and the Dance Rhythms of the choreographer Doris Humphrey, as notated by Wallingford Riegger. *IV* is made up of six, eight bar phrases that gradually speed up and slow down. Not only are the instruments indeterminate, there is a constant ebb and flow within the ensemble as the work progresses.

Born in Leipzig in 1888, Johanna Beyer came to New York in 1924, one year after graduating from a German music conservatory at the age of 35. By 1928, she had two degrees from the Mannes College of Music, and in this period began studying composition with Dane Rudhyar, Ruth Crawford, Charles Seeger, and Henry Cowell. She earned her living by teaching piano, the profession listed on her death certificate. Though never listed as a faculty member, colleagues recall she long taught at Greenwich House Music School, perhaps as a substitute for Henry Cowell. From 1936 to 1940, during Henry Cowell's imprisonment in San Quentin, Beyer worked as Cowell's secretary. She helped manage the affairs of the New Music Editions, handled Cowell's correspondence and advocated his work.

Russian Sailor's Dance (1927/2008) | Reinhold Gliere, arr. Gordon Peters

This highly-popular orchestral work first appeared at the end of the first act of the ballet *The Red Poppy*, which premiered in Moscow in 1927. The famous theme is derived from a Russian folk-song called *Yablochko (Little Apple)*, which originally served as background music for urban Russian tunes called *chastushki*. In Gliere's work, it is treated to a number of variations which build in momentum and intensity and lead to a powerful, energetic conclusion. The sailor's dance is Gliere's most popular work, as well as the most popular work from the ballet.

Reinhold Gliere (1875-1956) was a Russian composer and teacher with over 400 compositions to his credit. Though he is most well-known for his ballets, Gliere also wrote three symphonies, numerous concerti, and operas. He graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1920 and began teaching private students at the request of his teacher Sergei Ivanovich Taneev; among these were Nikolai Mjaskovski and Sergei Prokofiev. From 1914 to 1920, Gliere taught at the Kiev Conservatory, and in 1920, he returned to the Moscow Conservatory and taught composition there until 1941. He held a doctorate in art criticism, was the winner of numerous Soviet State prizes, and acted as President of the All-USSR Composers' Union between 1938 and 1948.

This arrangement was done by Gordon Peters in 2008, in the style of the music of the Eastman Marimba Masters. This prolific ensemble led to the creation of approximately 100 similar works, for the instrumentation of four marimbas, one xylophone, and string bass. These numerous works included arrangements of classical and pop music (by Peters and others), as well as original commissions by the members of the Marimba Masters from composition students at the Eastman School of Music.

Tributes to Charon (1939/1982) | Lou Harrison

Lou Harrison takes us on a journey to the Underworld. *Tributes to Charon* (Charon is the ferryman of the Underworld, who carried souls across the River Styx) tells the story of the unfortunate fate of Proserpine, who was captured and wed to Pluto, god of the underworld. Proserpine was tricked into drinking the juice of a pomegranate, sealing her fate to Pluto for half a year, while she spends the other half of the year with her mother, Ceres.

Passage Through Darkness begins the journey to the underworld with an opening of alarm clocks that decrescendo and crescendo. Unlike its second movement counterpart, *Passage Through Darkness* focuses on suspended timbres such as gongs and suspended cymbals, as well as the alarm clocks that open and close the movement. Both movements open with a unit of five, although the units are not emphasized in the first movement.

Counterdance in Spring is, although not written for dance, a great example of Harrison's experience as a dance instructor, as the piece is sometimes performed with choreography. *Counterdance* is derived from three motives, meaning each performer plays a pattern in three different time signatures: 3/8, 5/8, and 4/8. Each motif will enter one by one on a different instrument, and each will repeat their patterns, forming complex cross-rhythms, until all three performers unify, then repeat the process of introducing different motives. In *Counterdance* the instrumentation is brighter and more organic, with examples such a turtle shells and woodblocks.

Although *Passage Through Darkness* is the first movement, it was the second piece written, in 1982, whereas *Counterdance in Spring* was written in 1939. *Counterdance* was performed extensively by John Cage, one of the most important figures in percussion ensemble literature, and his percussion ensemble at the Cornish School in Seattle, Washington. In 1982 both movements as a whole were premiered at Mills College by William Winant.

Hungarian Dance No. 5 (c.1869/1956) | Johannes Brahms, arr. Gordon Peters

In 1869, Johannes Brahms finished and published 10 energetic Hungarian dances for piano four-hands, each of which were based on catchy gypsy melodies. The complete set of 21 dances was finished and published in two volumes in 1880. These dances for piano gained Brahms the rapport of the amateur musicians of his day, and are standards in the modern orchestral repertoire. The dances represent Brahms' uncanny ability to blend "high art" with folk culture, as well as his admiration for Hungarian folk melodies.

Hungarian Dance No. 5, originally in the key of F# minor, continues to be the most well remembered of these works. It was based on a czardas by Hungarian composer Keler Bela, and orchestrated for the symphony in the key of G minor by Martin Schmeling. It was also, along with the rest of the first 10 dances, orchestrated by Brahms himself for solo piano.

This arrangement was done by Gordon Peters in 1956 for the historical Eastman Marimba Masters, a student-run marimba band in the mid 1950s. They began as a laboratory class at the Eastman School of Music, led by Peters, which met twice a week to read the marimba choir transcriptions of Clair Omar Musser. Peters had studied marimba with Musser at Northwestern University, and was hoping to continue his experience at Eastman. He also strove to provide mallet percussionists with a chance to perform in a chamber setting, in a manner similar to brass, woodwind, and string instruments. The group began publically performing in March 1954, mostly in Rochester, NY, and went on to perform 47 times in five years. They received national acclaim in 1955 when they appeared on *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* and again in 1958 when they appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. The Marimba Masters also have 11 public broadcasts on television and radio to their credit, as well as a full-length album which they recorded in 1956. Many of the members of this groundbreaking ensemble went on to become important and influential teachers and performers, including Mitchell Peters and John Beck. The Marimba Masters was one of the most important percussion ensembles of the 20th century, securing a place for mallet percussionists in chamber settings.

Shifty (2001) | Dennis DeSantis

Shifty is all about messing around with the listener's perceptions of meter and tempo. Patterns stick around for long enough to suggest that they might imply the tempo of the piece, but then are suddenly (or gradually) replaced (or displaced) by patterns that disrupt that mode of listening and assert themselves instead. The idea is to blur the lines between material that's metrically strong and material that is syncopated. —Dennis DeSantis

Dennis DeSantis is an American composer and percussionist. He grew up listening to musicians such as Stravinsky and Joni Mitchell. DeSantis has an impressive background in electronic music and has produced a number of successful techno albums. This influence can readily be heard in *Shifty*. While the meters and tempo modulations are complex, there always exists a sub tactile pulse: a groove. As the dynamics shift, sometimes suddenly, one can also imagine opening and closing of noise gates. *Shifty* was commissioned by the So Percussion Group.

Splendid Wood (2006) | Jennifer Higdon

Splendid Wood was composed in 2006. The work was commissioned by Bradford and Dorothea Endicott for Frank Epstein and the New England Conservatory Percussion Ensemble. *Splendid Wood* features six percussionists on three marimbas. Jennifer Higdon says that wood is the material that gives the marimba its unique sound, with a "round" sort of attack and a tone that blossoms out. This work reflects the evolving patterns inside a piece of wood, always shifting, and yet every part is related and contributes to the magnificence of the whole. The piece represents a celebration of the splendor of the marimba. *Splendid Wood* had its New York Premier on May 2, 2007 by the Mannes Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of James Preiss.

Jennifer Higdon (b. Brooklyn, NY, December 31, 1962) makes her living from commissions and her music is known for its technical skill and audience appeal. She went to Bowling Green State University (B.M. in flute performance) and the University of Pennsylvania (M.A. and Ph.D. in composition). She also attended the Curtis Institute of Music (Artist Diploma). She currently holds the Milton L. Rock Chair in Composition Studies at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Jennifer Higdon received a 2010 GRAMMY for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for her Percussion Concerto.

Travel Diary (2009) | Paul Lansky

Travel Diary, is a kind of meditation on travel, particularly for those who don't do it that much. While not literally programmatic, each movement has some characteristics that reflect the sense of its title. The first movement, *Leaving Home*, surveys the percussion ensemble, looking around to see what we've packed for the trip, making sure we have what we need. In the second movement, *Cruising Speed*, we get onto the highway or into the air and are on our way. The third movement, *Lost in Philly*, was inspired by a minor disaster I once had after packing my wife and two small children in the car for a trip from Princeton to Los Angeles and promptly taking a wrong turn leaving us searching for a way to get past Philadelphia (with the younger child asking 'are we there yet?'). Finally, the last movement, *Arrived, Phone Home*, has some references to old signaling devices, horn calls, morse code, and ends with a spirited feeling of relief to have finally arrived, only to sink into a relaxing sleep at the end. *Travel Diary* was commissioned by the Meehan/ Perkins Duo in 2007 and first performed by them at the Round Top Percussion Galore! Festival in March 2008. —Paul Lansky

The So-Called Laws of Nature, Part 2 (2002) | David Lang

Pulitzer Prize winner, David Lang, is a post minimalist composer currently teaching composition at Yale University. Lang co-founded New York's famous new music festival, *Bang on a Can*. *The So-Called Laws of Nature* was commissioned by Lang for the *So Percussion Group*. The piece was first inspired by a quote by, philosopher, Ludwig 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 was confusing to Lang, who at the time was studying math, chemistry and physics, because it meant that science could only describe our world rather than explain it. Lang then tried to use this idea to compose music because, like the Ancient Greeks, he noticed that music is made up of numbers, proportions, and patterns and could be viewed as a science itself.

The So-Called Laws of Nature is in three movements. Part two is written for seven tuned steel pipes (created by the performers), three tom toms, a kick bass drum, and a "nasty metal". There are three distinct sections in the piece. The first is solely for steel pipes, which is followed by the addition of the tom toms in the second section and the addition of the nasty metal and kick bass drum in the final section. Each instrument has a formula it must follow causing all four players to play essentially the same notes generated by those formulae. Lang wanted to explore the question of whether the music comes "out of the patterns, or in spite of them?" To Lang, this is the closest he will come to being a scientist.