

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE



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ERIC
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CSU FACULTY **PERCUSSION**

NOVEMBER 3, 2021



Colorado State University



ERIC HOLLENBECK, FACULTY RECITAL

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021
ORGAN RECITAL HALL

THE SNAKE'S DREAM (2010) / ERIC SAMMUT (B. 1968)

MIRAGE (1971) / YASUO SUEYOSHI (1937-2018)

MARCH (2009) / JOE TOMPKINS (B. 1970)

FOUR EPISODES (1999) / GORDON STOUT (B. 1952)

CASSINI (2019) - KEVIN POELKING (B. 1988)

Stanley Curtis, trumpet
Tim Burns, piano

THE 9'S (2008) - DANIEL MCCARTHY (B. 1955)

VALSE BRILLIANT (1927) - GEORGE HAMILTON GREEN (1893-1970)

PROGRAM NOTES

***The Snake's Dream* (2010)**

Eric Sammut (b. 1968)

Known for his majestic playing style, world-renowned marimbist Eric Sammut is a cherished composer and performer. Eric Hollenbeck describes him as, "one of the most respected and prized musicians in the percussion field." Principal percussionist in the Orchestre de Paris, he also teaches percussion at the Royal Academy of Music in London and Glasgow. Several of his compositions for solo marimba and percussion ensembles are published in France, the United States, Norway, and Japan. *The Snake's Dream* is a quick, dream-like marimba solo that will appeal to all listeners. Sammut's composition has three primary sections with a coda tagged onto the end. The opening section provides a lush, flowing, and quick introduction. While staying in constant motion, *The Snake's Dream* takes a subtle turn and opens up into a dream-like "fantasy." The flowing, chromatic motions imitate a snake slithering, as the piece recalls the beginning passages. After this restatement, the music jumps quickly into the final measures for a peacefully conclusion.

***Mirage* (1971)**

Yasuo Sueyoshi (1937–2018)

Yasuo Sueyoshi is a leading figure in Japanese contemporary music. Many of his compositions are found in repertoires for flute, voice, and percussion. Since Sueyoshi is not a marimbist, *Mirage* is not considered to be idiomatic for a mallet instrument. This is what makes Sueyoshi's composition so difficult. The piece evokes Japanese culture such as Kabuki Theater, a traditional form of dramatic entertainment featuring costumes, acting, and dancing that largely influenced Japanese music in the sixties and seventies. These subtle hints of Kabuki Theater are heard as the marimbist hops from note to note, moving into a quick run. In *Mirage*, Sueyoshi focuses on second and seventh intervals and on chromaticism. You will hear this in slower sections as the notes move up by step. This composition is not easy to perform. While listening, you will notice that Sueyoshi leaves no room for the performer to take musical liberties. The dynamics, tempi, and the direction of the piece are all provided and manipulated. For example, the composer labels the beginning "Liberamento," which means "with liberty but rapid/quick." *Mirage* includes seven different sections, each heralded by a restated idea. Hollenbeck paints his vision of the piece: "I picture a conversation within relationships (husband and wife, parent and child), such as a family in a house, holding a conversation... Imagine you are in an apartment complex and you can hear your neighbors discussing something but cannot make out the words. Though you cannot make out the words you can hear the male and female voices (one voice is angry while the other is staying calm)." These snippets of conversations are heard through the extreme dynamic changes and the different voicings on the marimba.

***March* (2009)**

Joe Tompkins (b. 1970)

As an active performer, Joe Tompkins performed with groups such as the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and the Cleveland Orchestra. He even performed in twenty-three Broadway productions. He also was a member of a percussion trio called Timetable, a group dedicated to performing new percussion literature. As a composer, Tompkins has produced several internationally-recognized snare drum compositions. He is also the commissioned composer for percussion sections in the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and Atlanta Symphony. Currently Tompkins is Head of Percussion at Rutgers University.

Dedicated to Alan Abel, Joe Tompkins' *March* is scored for solo snare drum and kick drum. Commissioned in 2009 for the Atlanta Symphony Modern Snare Drum Competition, *March* is written for a standing performer, a small, pedaled kick drum, and snare. The bass drum holds a steady pulse at pianissimo as the snare drum performs complex rhythms. The score provides that "the piece employs some of the rhythms found in Guy LeFevre's *Progressive Etudes for the Snare Drum*, Vol. 2, particularly embedded triplet figures and quintuplets over the bass drums half notes."

***Four Episodes* (1999)**

Gordon Stout (b. 1952)

Gordon Stout recently retired from his position as Professor of Percussion at Ithaca College in New York. During his own university years he studied with world-renowned composers such as Joseph Schwanter, Samuel Adler, and Warren Benson. He also studied percussion with James Salmon and John Beck. As a composer, his compositions and recordings have become a part of the standard marimba repertoire worldwide. Stout is considered a modal composer who enjoys incorporating Dorian and Locrian modes while focusing on intervals such as the sixth, seventh, and octave. He has premiered many contemporary works including a multitude of his own compositions. He is also known for influencing young musicians by providing performances and marimba clinics all around the world.

Stout composed his *Four Episodes* as a collection of short pieces for solo marimba. Each of the Episodes is intended to portray a contrasting musical style. Some say that the *Four Episodes* are a bridge between his older works and Stout's current compositions. The composer states, "the first one is a reworking of an earlier composition. The second one is my way of paying homage to Smadbeck's *Rhythm Song*. The third to Chick Corea's *Children's Songs*, and finally the fourth episode is a result of spare time in the office." The final episode was not originally included in the set of four. Stout composed this piece and then later decided that the time and length fit well with the other three *Episodes*. He also indicates in the score how the *Episodes* should be performed: either as a set of four, by numerical order, as the performer feels, and/or each can be played separately. Marimba size differs between *Episodes 1* through *3* and *Episode 4*. If the performer chooses to play the first three they need a low F, four-and-half octave marimba, while a five-octave marimba is required for *Episode 4*.

***Cassini* (2019)**

Kevin Poelking (b. 1988)

Kevin Poelking became interested in music at a very young age. Some of the earliest music to which he was exposed was live marching bands in a small town in Northern Illinois. Poelking was most interested in the drumline. At this time, he often disappeared into his grandmother's basement to play on her old, out-of-tune piano and experimented by playing small melodies and different improvisations. Once he entered the sixth grade, he was offered formal lessons in instrumental music and he decided to play percussion. He was introduced to many opportunities, such as experimenting on an actual drum set. Eventually, he found himself in the high school marching band, where he played marching tenors for the duration of his time there. Because of this, he did not develop skills in reading pitched notation. All of his musical writings were done by ear. In his later high school years, he started composing different drumline and percussion music. He also began inputting the music he wrote by hand into music notation software. At this point, he decided on a career in music education and enrolled in piano lessons at the request of his band director. Poelking graduated high school in May 2007 and started his education in music education at the University of South Carolina. During his time at USC, he gained significant interests in orchestral and concert band music.

Cassini was inspired by the Cassini spacecraft that set out to explore Saturn. Cassini completed 294 orbits around the sun during its twenty years in space, traveled nearly five billion miles, and took 453,048 images. For more than a decade, this spacecraft sent many pictures of Saturn and its moons. Finally, after thirteen years, Cassini exhausted its fuel supply. In order to protect the surrounding moons of Saturn, NASA sent the spacecraft on its final mission. Cassini then dove directly into Saturn's atmosphere, bringing back multitudes of science data as it went.

The piece *Cassini* is written in three movements, all representing a different stage in the spacecraft's journey. *Final Pass* drops the listener into the cold, icy depths of space. There are moments of peace, nobility, and beauty. Nevertheless, overall, the tone is very somber, as its journey was coming to an end. In *Into the Black...* Cassini has finally dropped into the planet's orbit, and from here, it starts to develop speed. *Plunge*, the final movement, represents the spacecraft's radio emissions as it catapulted towards the surface of Saturn. Within the trumpet lines, there is a steady pulse and quickly ascending and descending lines. Finally, after experiencing the planet for so long, the spacecraft takes its final plunge to the surface.

***The 9's* (2008)**

Daniel McCarthy (b. 1955)

Daniel W. McCarthy has written pieces that have become standard repertoire for many ensembles and artists worldwide. McCarthy primarily composes pieces for percussion, chamber ensembles, and symphonic bands. He has won many awards and grants and has received four nominations for the Pulitzer Prize. He currently is Chair of Composition and Theory at the University of Akron School of Music.

The 9's was written for Brian Fraiser of the Boston Conservatory. Fraiser was a timpani student of Keith Aleo, Director of Orchestral Percussion at the Zildjian Cymbal Company. The piece functions as a play based on the role of the timpani in a symphony. A multitude of solo excerpts from many different symphonic works are heard, but none is as present as the second movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. The opening timpani solo is later accompanied by a groovy section that has the performer playing the drums with their hands. Additionally, there are caricatured samples from selected orchestral music. Perhaps most interestingly, at times the timpani soloist plays along with an actual timpani solo with symphony via a recording. This effect creates a timpani duet between the soloist and the recordings.

***Valse Brilliant* (1927)**

George Hamilton Green (1893–1970)

During the early twentieth century, many magazines and newspapers covered the talent and abilities of xylophonist George Hamilton Green. Widely considered one of the most fabulous musicians in percussion history, he explored new frontiers while developing efficient and virtuosic playing to a high degree of competency. His primary focus was on popular music. He produced some of the cleanest and most musical sounds possible from the xylophone and created a large amount of literature for the instrument. Green became a prolific composer in different styles such as ragtime, dance music, and novelty music. Additionally, he created many arrangements of different standards, which included various violin concerti, concert piano works, orchestral overtures, and rhapsodies. Essentially, he became a sort of superstar in the percussion world, having written many compositions and pedagogical materials, teaching privately, producing radio broadcasts, and he even had a part in creating modern keyboard percussion instruments. Despite all of this, Green's musical life is generally underexplored. There are hardly any writings on his personal life. An untapped amount of information on Green, however, exists in the form of three scrapbooks stored in the privately-owned Green Family archives.

In 1936, Carl Fischer Music, published a set of eight different xylophone solos with piano accompaniment by Green. *Valse Brillante* was part of his original collection of xylophone rags. The composition is different from most rags. It is in a slow 3/4 waltz time, and there is much room for rubato. In terms of timing, this piece is quite tricky, and most of the musical phrases require a great deal of *ritardando* and *accelerando* with vast amounts of space between each. *Valse Brillante* was written for solo xylophone and two marimba players. Bob Becker is credited with this particular arrangement.

— notes by Mikael Leonhardt



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