

Programs

Composer Portraits

Lou Harrison – A journey through the magical and eclectic world of the grandfather of American percussion music.

Astor Piazzolla – A showcase exploring the passionate and energetic works of the great master of the modern Argentine tango.

Marta Ptaszynska – A highly varied and engaging program featuring the meditative and sonorous sounds of this award-winning Polish composer and percussionist.

Justinian Tamusuza – A collection of works based on the colors and rhythms of traditional Bugandan court music from one of Africa's finest contemporary classical composers.

Inspired Programs

Africa: Tradition and Beyond

This program features a variety of works spanning the African continent, including traditional works for drums, marimba and mbira; stylistically surprising and exquisitely crafted compositions by some of Africa's best classical composers—Kevin Volans, Justinian Tamusuza and Peter Kltazow—and Percussia's own fresh arrangements of modern and traditional tunes.

The Pacific Rim

This concert celebrates Asian music and Asian influences on American music, as well as works from Japan's great tradition of marimba writing. The program includes works by Lou Harrison, Gareth Farr, David MacBride, Toru Takemitsu, Takayoshi Yoshioka, and Teruyuki Noda, as well as Percussia's own arrangements of Asian folk music styles.

Inspired by Gamelan

Comprised entirely of works influenced by the gong- and percussion-based gamelan orchestras of the Indonesian islands of Java and Bali, this program features works by Colin McPhee, Gareth Farr, Steve Reich, Suzanne Farrin, Urs Wiesner and Matthew Welch.

Xylo-Klezmer Jam

Ideal for a nightclub setting, this avant-guard program showcases the xylophone and an assortment of other groovy instruments. The concert features modern klezmer-inspired tunes as well as modern interpretations of classic klezmer songs and traditional Balkan favorites.

Percussia World Premieres

Heartbreakthrough (2008) by George Cork Maul

A light-spirited yet energetic work for flute, harp and marimba. The composer writes: “Heartbreakthrough was written for Percussia with the unique talents of the group in mind. It is an attempt to document the journey of transformation that occurs when a broken heart forces us to re-evaluate our sense of self, redefine our priorities and find our way back to the openness that allows us to love again. I could talk at length about the structure of the piece, but I would much rather let the music speak for itself”.

Starfish at Pescadero (2007) by Dennis Tobenski

A gorgeous work for percussion, viola, harp and soprano with a text based on the poetry of Idris Anderson.

Serenade (2007) by Marga Richter

This Peruvian-inspired piece reveals the delicate side of percussion with meditative finger cymbals and delicate kendhangan drums from the Javanese gamelan, as well as features lyrical melodies for the flute and harp.

Calliope: The Muse of Eloquence (2007) by George Cork Maul

Inspired by Calliope, the muse of epic poetry in Greek mythology, this piece explores the percussive side of the flute in an homage to the original calliope instrument. The work also includes harp and a collection of seven percussion instruments—a triangle, a tambourine, two woodblocks, two bongos, and a wrench hit with a brass mallet.

Evocation 1 (2006) by Demetrius Spaneas

Bringing together musical elements from the Balkans, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Jazz, this spiritually inspired duet for woodwinds and percussion evokes shamanistic practices in a modern-day take on an ancient ceremony.

Kusanganisa (2005) by Charles Griffin

Based on the melodic material of Griffin’s 2003 work, this piece, scored for two marimba players and flute, explores the concept of cyclical time through the use of a musical palindrome and hard-driving groove.

Time’s Arrow, Time’s Cycle (2003) by Charles Griffin

Scored for two percussionists, violin, cello, flute and audience participation, audience members are asked to play along with Percussia on water-filled mason jars and super-ball mallets in an energetic, fun, call-and-response section. The melodic material in this piece is based around the mbira dza vadzimu from Zimbabwe, which is prominently featured in this piece.