

# Student Recital

G. Fluke, *percussion*

**Sunday, April 30, 2023**

**1:30 PM**

**Kirmser Hall (McCain 204), Kansas State University**

## PROGRAM

*Corruption* (2022).....Russell Wharton (b. 1990)

*Spare Change* (2017).....Anthony Di Bartolo (b. 1987)

*A Cricket Sang and Set the Sun* (2013).....Blake Tyson (b. 1969)

*Piano Randomness* (2023).....G. Fluke (b. 2001)

## Program Notes

### Corruption

Corruption is an outlandish, spooky multi-percussion piece. Wharton himself describes it as "telling a Faustian story of unchecked ambition, unholy bargains, and unfortunate consequences." The piece itself sets a twisted soundscape through the use of a multimedia backing track. In addition, it has high intensity rhythmic passages which spark a feeling of fear and anxiety to the audience. All of which is played on various instruments, such as wood slats, wine bottles, and skin headed drums such as the bongos and a single conga. It also highlights sounds of a liquid triangle and an Aztec death whistle. The audio accompaniment explores otherworldly ideas throughout, which the player is supposed to emulate through improvisational call-and-response. Throughout the piece, it should feel like anxiety is bubbling to the surface, making it feel uncomfortable in a twisted good way. The heart of the piece lies within the Aztec death whistle itself. Even though it is only used before the final section. This type of whistle was first discovered at an ancient temple in Mexico City in the 1990's and mimics a ghastly shriek. The haunting sounds of all these instruments create a uniquely dark tone, fitting for this piece.

Russell Wharton is a percussion educator, performer, arranger, and composer living in Nashville, Tennessee. Wharton received his Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Texas Christian University in 2013 and Master of Music degree from Indiana University in 2018. With a wide range of experiences and influences, Russell brings a well-rounded approach to every musical scenario. His experiences include being a faculty member for percussion at Middle Tennessee State University, He is also the Battery Coordinator for The Cavaliers Drum & Bugle Corps, since 2015. From 2013-16, Russell was a percussion teacher at Keller High School in Texas, where he worked every day with students. He also has worked with the Boston Crusaders, Monarch Independent, and Cavaliers Indoor.

### **Spare Change**

Spare Change is a unique snare drum solo that uses both improvisational gestures and the use of coins. Much of the piece utilizes improvisation, which is needed at times when the coins are being used. The player often is instructed to interact with the coins in some way whether it involves tapping, swishing, or even tossing the coins on the drumhead. The point of the coins in the piece is to gradually add texture and dampen slowly the sound of the snare drum itself. The solo also utilizes various parts of the snare drum and the sticks the player is using too. Those of which are the rim, the head and where to hit and using various parts of the stick. The inspiration for this piece came from the Cathedral Kitchen. A service that feeds thousands of people and is based on donation. Within purchasing the solo, half of the profit was donated to The Cathedral Kitchen in support of their deeds. The solo itself provides various motifs that become improvised upon and intensifies as the piece goes on. The louder, the more coins go flying and add a rattling texture. This piece, despite not being an origin of humor, can be made humorous with theatrical gestures from the player which are also completely improvisational.

Anthony Di Bartolo is a New Jersey-based percussionist, composer, improviser, and teacher. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Rowan University and a Master's of Music degree from Ithaca College and teaches through a private studio based in New York. Di Bartolo performs with a variety of classical music groups such as Orchestra 2001, Garden State Philharmonic, Bay Atlantic Symphony, Philadelphia Virtuosi and the Patriot Brass Ensemble. He is also a member of the New York-based new music group Glass Farm Ensemble. The music he writes ranges from fully notated compositions to loosely sketched improvisational pieces left open for interpretation.

### **A Cricket Sang and Set the Sun**

A Cricket Sang and Set the Sun is a very melodic and lyrical piece as it keeps moving with rhythmic motifs. Tyson states that "the work takes its title from an Emily Dickinson poem that begins, 'The cricket sang, And set the sun.' When I read these words, I was moved by the powerful ideas they evoked." The beginning is very soft, instantly providing the feeling of inspiration and beauty that Tyson wanted to capture. It is up to the player to determine ultimately which aspects of this piece should be altered to provide effect. Tempo varies as does the musicality of the piece. As the momentum of the phrases get more intense, the music expands and gets more emotional until it eventually revisits the beginning motifs and ends with beautiful and slow rolled chords. If anything, this piece is an emotional one. Its challenges come in aspects of keeping the musicality all while having a lot of "busy" notes. Yet the number of the notes provides more opportunity to express oneself with this beautiful piece.

Blake Tyson has written some of the most popular works in the percussion repertoire. In addition, he has been a featured artist at numerous Percussive Arts Society International Conventions. Tyson received his Bachelor of Music in Performance from the University of Alabama, Master of Music degree from Kent State University and a DMA from the Eastman School of Music, where he was also awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate. As an instructor, he has served on the faculties of New Mexico State University and the University of Alabama. Since 2001, Tyson has been a member of the faculty of the University of Central Arkansas

### **Piano Randomness**

Piano Randomness is literally as it says, completely random. This originally was how I got better at teaching myself how to compose. As I was learning what sounded good and later on getting more educated in music theory, I essentially created a game for myself, which is exactly what Piano Randomness is. By no means am I a very serious pianist but through the years of doing this, my piano chops have improved as well as my ear. This is how it works; I look up a number generator and flip through numbers 1-12, which determines my key. This ultimately, is one-hundred percent improvisational. There is minimal preparation for such a piece that a generator determines what you play. After I get my key, another random number is generated. If it is an odd number, my key will be major and if it is even, it will be minor. Now it is all set! Really, there is not much else to it. I purposefully included this in such an informal way because that is how it is best played, much less like a performance and more like a demonstration of a good ear.