

Student Recital

Jacob Morgan, *percussion*

Saturday, April 22, 2023

1:30 PM

The Purple Masque Theatre, Kansas State University

PROGRAM

Time for Marimba (1968)..... Minoru Miki (1930-2011)

Gender of Metal (2017)..... Casey Cangelosi (b. 1982)

- I. Old Hands
- II. Young Hands
- III. Bones In the Heart
- IV. Creator Creator

See Ya' Thursday (1999)..... Steven Mackey (b. 1956)

fAnaTiC (2016)..... Casey Cangelosi (b. 1982)

From My Little Island (1990)..... Robert Livingston Aldridge (b. 1954)

- I. Theme
- II. Tango
- V. Hymn
- III. Dance of Passion
- VII. Folk Song

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Music,
Theatre, and Dance

Program Notes

Time for Marimba

Minoru Miki composed this piece during the summer of 1968 for Ms. Keiko Abe's first marimba recital. Before that year, Miki had listened to many marimba performances, but many of the pieces which he heard were arrangements of famous Western instrumental pieces. He also found that tremolo was used too often. When he agreed to compose this piece, therefore, he was determined to avoid the use of tremolo except in very limited cases. From an early age, Miki loved the special feeling of Indonesian Gamelan ensemble music. There are very different mechanisms at work in the Gamelan and marimba. For example, the marimba has fixed well-tempered pitches while Gamelan scales are very special in comparison. Regardless of these differences, he wanted to create unique, fantastic music using just one marimba.

A six-tone series consisting of "C, B, Eb, G, E, Ab", along with variable quintuplet rhythm constructions are very important for this purpose. However, the general atmosphere through the work should be very free, almost like an improvisation. Many years later, Miki was surprised when he read a doctoral dissertation written by a Japanese marimba player. This dissertation, an analysis of "Time for Marimba", discussed the composer's careful mathematical plan in realizing the form of this work. The composer was very moved by this analysis, but in fact, the piece was through-composed during a brief one-week period during the hot summer.

Born in Tokushima City, Minoru Miki graduated from the composition department of the Tokyo University of the Arts. Many of his chamber and solo pieces, such as Marimba Spiritual, String Quartet, and Arc of the East, which have been performed several thousand times, were commissioned from overseas and have become part of the international repertoire. Miki also founded Nihon Music Group, Miki Opera House (former Kaza), Yui Ensemble, Orchestra Asia, Aura J, Asia Ensemble, Yatsugatake "Hokuto International Music Festival", and many more internationally influential ensembles. He has served as the composer and artistic director for each performance group and music festival, and has developed unprecedented creative activities internationally.

Gender of Metal

Gender of Metal explores a variety of sounds not often heard in contemporary performances. From the eerie pitch-bent children's music heard in "Old Hands" to the explosive, violent timpani passages in "Creator Creator," Cangelosi tells a vivid story. In his typical secretive fashion, he has not spoken about the meaning behind the story, but I personally believe it speaks to the hand-off of society from generation to generation. Each movement tells the story of an individual's experience at that very moment. "Old hands" tells the story of an old generation, fading away. The music boxes represent memories lost and warped by time, which we cling to desperately. "New hands" shows us the perspective of those who are just maturing into this world. With bright, rhythmically challenging variations, it tells of the youth coming into their own. "Bones in the Heart" speaks for the middle-aged generation. As the music becomes increasingly manic, it speaks to the ever-increasing stresses of responsibility. The final movement, "Creator Creator" is cryptic in meaning. I believe it shows us the perspective of an omnipotent being, observing the first three movements. As it develops, and as its rhythmic variations become exponentially complex and more violent, it tells us of the never-ending stresses (and in turn, beauty) of our increasingly complex lives.

Percussionist & Composer, Casey Cangelosi is the Director of Percussion Studies at James Madison University. As a visiting guest-artist, he is commonly hosted world-wide by educational institutions, music festivals, and educational music seminars. Since 2011, Casey has performed solo recitals in Italy, Germany, Costa Rica, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, Croatia, Sweden, Taiwan, Portugal, and widely across the U.S. at events including: The Midwest Clinic, several Percussive Arts Society International Conference (PASIC) Showcase Concerts, and over 40 universities. Casey adjudicates percussion performance and composition competitions, and is regularly commissioned for new works.

See Ya' Thursday

I love to listen to stories. If the storyteller is good, it doesn't really matter what the story is; it could be an emotionally neutral personal anecdote. Yet, something about the storyteller's inflection, tone, rhythm, techniques for changing venue, techniques for quoting characters, accents, dialects, etc. - the music of the telling - makes it an experience.

I also love to listen to Thelonious Monk- what a storyteller he is! Any piece he plays is more about his playing than it is about the piece. He stumbles up and down the keyboard with a kid of intelligent incompetence that reminds me a little of the way the 70's comedian Norm Crosby stumbled through the English language. Or is that a "Fig Newton" of my imagination?

Believe it or not, I think that knowing those things about me will help prepare you to appreciate See Ya' Thursday. Another thing to keep in mind is that See Ya' Thursday is written for a five-octave marimba. Just think, the lowest note is a piece of wood that makes the same pitch as the lowest note of the 'cello! The size of the instrument means that negotiating the contours of See Ya Thursday requires some subtle and moderately entertaining choreography from the marimbist.

You may be curious about the title. There is an anecdote that I tell (and listen to) frequently which has the phrase "see ya' Thursday" as a sort of *idée fixe*. I didn't set out to chronicle the week (Thursday to Thursday) that is celebrated in the anecdote. It is more my intention to reflect the informal charm of the telling and listening. Bright in coloring, ecstatic in inventiveness, lively and profound, Steven Mackey's music spins the tendrils of his improvisatory riffs into large-scale works of grooving, dramatic coherence.

As a teenager growing up in Northern California obsessed with blues-rock guitar, Mackey was in search of the "right wrong notes," those heart-wrenching moments that imbue the music with new, unexpected momentum. Today, his pieces play with that tension of being inside or outside of the harmony and flow forward shimmering with prismatic detail.

Today, Steven Mackey writes for chamber ensemble, orchestra, dance, and opera—commissioned by the greatest orchestras around the world. He has served as professor of music at Princeton University for the past 35 years, and in fall 2022, will also join the composition faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music. He has won several awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award. He continues to explore an ever-widening world of timbres befitting a complex, 21st-century culture, while always striving to make music that unites the head and heart, that is visceral, that gets us moving.

fAnaTiC

Cangelosi's unique, paradigm-challenging work, fAnaTiC is an emotional, energetic, and wild ride from beginning to end. The piece includes several audio clips taken from enraged outbursts on live television or online, which serve to paint an elegant, yet disturbing picture. While these profane outbursts could be seen as cheap grabs for shock value, I believe the composer has painstakingly arranged them in a mocking fashion. Cangelosi aims to paint an image of the world as he sees it: angry, tearing itself apart, and constantly chasing its own vices. This is how fAnaTiC begins. As the music develops, with metric variations and tonal shifts of the original ostinato, we zoom in on the world, ultimately viewing what Cangelosi calls "The Happy Man." The concept of "The Happy Man" is portrayed through simple improvised melodies and echoing guitar structures that pull at the heartstrings. We don't have long to reflect on this however, as we are quickly jerked back to the wider world view, as we see the piece sprint towards its tense, climactic ending.

For a biography of Cangelosi, see *Gender of Metal*

From My Little Island

Robert Aldridge's one-of-a-kind perpetual-motion solo marimba exploration *From My Little Island* evolved over many years. Aldridge and I met in the early 1980's when I was setting out with the somewhat odd dream of establishing myself as a marimba specialist. Besides the fact of the instrument being unusual, my larger obstacle was the marimba's extremely meager repertoire. Aldridge soon brought me into his circle of friends, the Composers in Red Sneakers: a Boston-based consortium of mostly recent New England Conservatory graduates who presented an enormously successful concert series. He composed many chamber works including marimba, as did his friends, and so I found myself - and they found a marimba - a fairly regular fixture on their concert series.

People have asked me what "island" the title refers to. It's nowhere tropical or otherwise but refers to the marimba as an island unto itself: complete and self-sustaining. The work's predominant texture is characterized by many fast notes. They are presented in a variety of ways, and present a variety of musical material. Some of the piece focuses on hand-to-hand alternations which lie extremely comfortably ("Folk Song"), while other sections present intricate technical patterns which are challenging yet very clever ("Dance of Passion").

The sweet, simple melody of the theme is treated somewhat freely throughout, yet provides a clear thread. Aldridge feels foremost that the work is "about melody." He frequently uses the device of a repeated melody note within a rhythmic pattern to provide the illusion that a melody note is sustained. He also adds many phrasing indications to emphasize the melodic lines. Amid so many notes, the musical challenge is for the performer to create richly melodic, singing lines (often achieved through rhythmic groupings (in the "Theme," "Tango," the development section of "Dance of Passion") alternately provide various "dance" qualities and a general sense of the music's direction by implying urgency or repose.

-Notes on *From My Little Island* by Nancy Zeltsman

Robert Aldridge (born: 1954, Richmond, VA) has written over sixty works for orchestra, opera, music theater, dance, string quartet, solo instruments, and chamber ensembles. His music has been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. He has received numerous fellowships and awards for his music from the Guggenheim Foundation (2002), the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2000), National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Massachusetts Artist's Foundation, the Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Fund, Meet the Composer, The American Symphony Orchestra League, the Oregon Arts Commission and the Portland Arts Council. In 1989, he was chosen to represent the New York Foundation for the Arts in a solo concert of his music at Lincoln Center. He was a founder of the Composers in Red Sneakers, a composer consortium which achieved international recognition in the 1980s. He received a Doctorate in Composition from the Yale School of Music, a Master's Degree in Composition from the New England Conservatory of Music, and a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin/Madison. He is Associate Professor of Music at Montclair State University where he teaches music composition and theory and is Chairman of the Music Department.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Music,
Theatre, and Dance