

G. Fluke Student Recital

Friday, April 25, 2025

7:00 PM

Kirmser Hall (McCain 204), Kansas State University

PROGRAM

Until Flesh is Torn from Bone (2023)..... Brant Blackard (b. 1990)

Jasper Vallad, *cajon*
Houston Fleischmann, *djembe*

Side by Side (2009)..... Michio Kitazume (b. 1948)

Concerto for Marimba and Strings (2005)..... Emmanuel Sejourne (b. 1961)

II. Adagio

Connor Jones, *piano*

Increasing Frustrations (2024)..... G. Fluke (b. 2001)

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Music,
Theatre, and Dance

Program Notes

Until Flesh is Torn from Bone

Until Flesh is Torn From Bone is a very recently composed percussion trio composed by Brant Blackard. This piece which has a unique instrumentation of drumset, cajon, and djembe is inspired by death metal music. As Blackard states about this piece, "I've always been attracted by the contradiction of a bunch of sweaty dudes screaming about death who are also some of the most technically accomplished musicians I've ever heard". The opening section is loud and intense with interjections from the players along with the imitation of double bass drum rhythms and fast moving hands. The piece weaves in and out of different meters and tempo shifts with constant intensity even in the quieter moments. Nearing the end is when Blackard includes probably one of the most recognizable beats in drumset playing: the blast beat. Alternating between vocals and bars of fill, the piece ends loud and boisterous just as it began, even faster than before.

Brant Blackard is an active performer, educator, composer, and arranger currently pursuing his Doctorate in Performance and Literature at Eastman School of Music. He received his Master's Degree from Eastman as well as getting his Bachelor's Degree in Percussion Performance and Literature from the University of Central Arkansas. His arrangements for mixed percussion ensembles have been performed at various establishments such as the University of Michigan, and Eastman School of Music. Many of his original compositions have been premiered recently at Missouri University, Virginia Tech University, and the University of North Florida.

Side by Side

Side by Side is a multi-percussion solo that gives the performer some liberty with the piece by having some flex in repetitions of motifs throughout the work. The original instrumentation calls for bongos, two congas, two toms, and kick drum. Although the program notes specify that substitutions are allowed, I stuck with the original suggestion. This piece is repetitive, yet certain "fills" pop in and provide contrast within the repeated grooves. As the piece gains momentum and becomes more involved, the main shifts in character reside in the dynamic shifts and the sudden drops from the loud dynamic to a whisper. Overall, the piece is unique in the way that certain passages get repeated several times, but each performance is never repeated twice because of the freedom the performer gets with the amount of repetition that occurs.

Michio Kitazume is a Japanese composer who studied at Tokyo University of Arts. He studied composition under the instruction of Tomojiro Ikenouchi, Akio Yashiro, Teizo Matsumura. His music has been performed at several international festivals in various countries such as the US, Finland, and France. In 1977, Kitazume joined "Ensemble Vent d'Orient", an award winning collaboration group of players and composers. From 1979, he studied in Paris for one year. Some of his works include orchestral works, piano solos, multi-instrument ensembles, and wind ensemble works. Most of his orchestral works have been performed by NHK Symphony Orchestra and many other prestigious orchestras in Japan and other countries as well. In 2004, he won the 22nd Nakajima Kenzo Music Prize for his distinguished achievement in music composition. Currently, Kitazume is a director of Japan Society for Contemporary Music, and guest professor of Tokyo College of Music, and emeritus professor of AichiPrefectural University of Fine Arts and Music.

Concerto for Marimba and Strings

The Emmanuel Sejourne concerto for Marimba and string orchestra was commissioned by Bogdan Bacanu, who is a prestigious international marimba soloist and professor of marimba at Bruckner University in Linz, Austria. Originally, the piece only had two movements. However, Bacanu requested another movement to open the work. Sejourne then revised the work in 2015, adding an opening section. Since its composition, the work has been performed over 500 times by several accomplished marimbists and orchestras across the world.

Movement II was originally supposed to be the opening movement of the 2005 version of the concerto. This piece opens with the orchestra/piano, and the marimba does not come in for some time, but when it does, it is with a heavy and dark sounding introduction in a cadenza. As the piece develops, there's an abundance of high energy points before it builds to a "false climax". The movement ends in a stark contrast to when the marimba first enters. Rather than a loud, boisterous ending, the piece ends quietly, and very fragile.

Emmanuel Sejourne is a French composer, percussionist, and educator. He studied at Strasbourg Conservatory, taking his first percussion class in 1976. He studied under Jean Batigne, who was the director of the well known percussion ensemble, Les Percussions de Strasbourg. Sejourne has won many achievements as a performer and composer. In 1980, he was given his first award for mallet percussion playing. In 1984, He became a professor of mallet percussion at the Strasbourg Conservatory. Then, not too shortly after, he became head of the percussion department and was appointed as an academic advisor to the French Ministry of Culture. As a performer, Sejourne helped co-found the group Noco Music with saxophonist Philippe Geiss. Alongside his duo and ensemble, he regularly performs ensemble works and solos. Sejourne began composing when he gained a job at the conservatory. He composes not only just for percussion, but for various other groups such as orchestra, chamber ensembles, and genres like film music, and musicals. His two most famous works, concertos for marimba and vibraphone, show off the technical and lyrical abilities of mallet percussion. Currently, Sejourne continues to teach at the conservatory and travel to perform.

Increasing Frustrations

Increasing Frustrations is inspired from the real life tragedy of collegiate apartment living. This past year, I have had constant water trouble with my apartment complex, all issues with our water heater that included black mold, lots of flooding, and replacement of parts. In spite (and yes, I mean spite) of these events, I decided to use this as a compositional moment. At first, I dabbled with metallic instruments and water interactions. I knew I wanted something that could be reflective of machinery, however, the idea of the piece incorporating water seemed almost limiting in the full understanding of the piece; that ultimately machines can break and be frustrating to constantly need maintenance. Ultimately, I made this a prepared vibraphone solo with a track because it can portray those intimate feelings of peace and serenity and then the depth of the pure rage and frustration I felt during this year with my apartment's management.

The piece is a non-traditional written out work. The performer has a "collection" of the notes that should be played and a duration on how long to play them. Accompanied by that range, is a track to help the performer gauge the dynamic and touch. Rather than a strict amount of measures, the performer sees time ranges as the piece moves forward in motion and increases in chromaticism or in other words, as more notes are added into the collections. The end goal is to tell a story about an aggravating experience. The audience should feel the shift in characteristic from an everyday experience to a suddenly complicated and frustrating one, ending unresolved because we never know when machinery will falter again.