CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN WITH PERCUSSION ORCHESTRA

American Composer, Lou Harrison, first leapt to prominence in the early 1950s when he received glowing praise from Stravinsky for his vocal work, Rapunzel. His early music, much influenced by his studies with Schoenberg and Cowell, was noteworthy for its keen exploration of percussion, and in this context he shared interest with John Cage.

During the 60s, his growing interest to the causes of human rights and personal freedoms, and his general dissatisfaction with the state of American society, led him to make systematic studies of the music of a number of non-Western cultures: Korean court music, Chinese classical music, and Indonesian gamelan music. The "Concerto for Violin and Percussion Orchestra" dates from 1961 and represents a fusion of both the traditional Concerto form with the company of a percussion orchestra of remarkably diverse instruments: clock coils, wash tubs, automobile brake drums to name but a few. This deliberately outré orchestration reflects Harrison's adherence to the Cagean aesthetic of utility music. In addition to exploiting a fascinating palette of percussion sounds the work makes use of a highly complex multi-metrical patterns which place virtuosic demands on the players.

As one of the first extended essays in percussion music, the Concerto enjoys the status of a classic, in its successful combination of an arch lyrical solo instrument, the violin, with a purely percussion orchestra. It has spawned imitations but few rivals.


* TINTINNABULATION, 2008 FOR PERCUSSION SEXTET

"...exudes Carter's brand of immaculately choreographed rhythmic chaos, like an explosion in a clock factory. ..." Carter had never written for solo percussion ensemble before but that clearly did not deter him from bending this configuration to his own compositional aims with extraordinary precision. 'Tintinnabulation' covers an enormous range of sonorities, partly through Carter's choice of instruments (a Chinese opera gong and five types of naijje gongs are among the mix) but also through his meticulous instructions of where to strike each instrument and what kind of stick to use, be it a mallet, a brush, a birch dowel, or even a knitting needle. "

The Boston Globe

THE ANU PERCUSSION GROUP

THE DRUMatiX PERCUSSION GROUP is the resident percussion ensemble at the Australian National University School of Music. Operating under their present name since the beginning of 2003, they are comprised of percussion students studying at the ANU. An ensemble dedicated to presenting the rich and diverse repertory written exclusively for percussion. The DRUMatiX have won numerous national prizes for their presentation of percussion music across all genres including a Canberra Critics Circle Award in 2004. Under the direction of Gary France the ANU Percussion program has hosted and convened numerous international symposiums, master schools and conferences.

WVould you like to be on our mailing list?

Send mail to: Dr guts@garyfrance.com

We would like to thank and acknowledge the support of:
The ANU Team  Professor Adrian Walter , Anne-Maree O'Brien, Julie Cassidy
Concerts: Belinda Kelly, Benjamin Backhouse
Development, Adrian Kemna, Kirsty Gaster
Venue Operations, Erika Zywczk, Josh Chaffey

NOTES CONTINUED

THE DRUMatiX PERCUSSION GROUP

DIRECTED BY GARY FRANCE

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER, 7:30PM
SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER, 1:00PM
ANU ARTS CENTRE

ANU School of Music is part of the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences.
PROGRAM

Gary France - artistic Director
namhoon Kim, Charles Martin
veronica Walshaw, lisa lai, Jacinta Dunlop, Michael Stevens, Charles Martin
Izac Sadler, Yvonne lam, Christina Hopgood, lucas edmonds,
the 2009 DruMatiX Percussion Group

The 2009 DRUMatix Percussion Group
Izac Sadler, Yvonne Lam, Christina Hopgood, Lucas Edmonds,
Namhoo Kim, Charles Martin
Gary France - Artistic Director

The DRUMatix Alumni Ensemble
Veronica Walshaw, Lisa Lai, Jacinta Dunlop, Michael Stevens, Charles Martin

The DRUMatix Pre Tertiary Ensemble
Jeremy Gallant, Katrina Leske, Chloe Natterer, Dimitry Dimand, Cary Finlay

NOTES

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feelings about the war, but Cage himself has ever since thought that it is intended to express something of his
Imaginary Landscape no. 2, composed in 1942 during
- John Cage

conjunctural elements requiring six separate groups of percussion instruments was performed in Havana in 1928.
Ritmaca Nos. 1 – 4 were composed in 1928 for wind quintet and piano. Ritmaca No. 5 & 6 were composed in 1930 and are believed to be among the first western works for percussion ensemble. Pre-dating Varese’s Ionization by one year there are striking similarities in the composers use of densities and aggregates of sounds; however, the most striking difference is Roldán’s use and reverence of the folkloric traditions of the music of Cuba and Africa. This Afro-Cuban tradition manifests itself in the “son clavé”, Ritmaca No. 5, and the “umba clavé”, Ritmaca No. 6. Like Ionization, Ritmaca No. 6 is a highly multi-metric work rich in polyrhythms.
- Gary France

IMAGINARY LANDSCAPE no. 2 | 1942

“The writing of music is an affirmation of life, not an attempt to bring order out of chaos, nor to suggest improvement in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living, which is so excellent once one gets one’s desire out of the way, and lets it act of its own accord.”
- John Cage

Imaginary Landscape No. 2 (March) [1942] has a rhythmic structure of 3, 4, 2, 3, 5. The percussion instruments (tin cans, conch shell, tibicen, bass drum, buzzers, water gong, metal wastebasket, fork’s nail) are combined with an amplified coil of wire.
- John Cage

Imaginary Landscape No. 2, composed in 1942 during World War II. It is a naming, aggregative piece. There is some thought that it is intended to express something of his feelings about the war, but Cage himself has ever since that time been reticent to attribute specific programmatic, “intentional” elements to his music. There are all manner of sounds in the piece, though primarily metallic, including collections of “found objects,” such as tin cans, odd pieces of metal, and an amplified metal coil. The scene is notated in precise detail; the composer was still concerned with rhythmic structures that would be reflected on the larger-scale formal organization. There is, considering the instrumentation, no concern with pitch, although the composer, in organizing the work’s texture, pays considerable attention to timbre, register, dynamics, and so forth. The rhythmic patterns tend to create dense, irregular constellations; repetition is more global on the level of texture and density. The most dramatic moment comes near the end of this six-minute piece, with the deep, resonant call of a conch shell, an instrument from the South Pacific. One should not read too much into this, but considering that world music as a genre had not yet come to be, and that the United States was heavily implicated in the war in that region, one would not be blamed for hearing political resonances in the music. The subtitle, “March No. 1” (this is definitely not music one would march to), may support this interpretation. - All Music Guide