UW Percussion Ensemble
and
UW Steelband

Bonnie Whiting and Shannon Dudley, directors

7:30 PM
May 23, 2017
Meany Studio Theatre

UW MUSIC
2016-17 SEASON
The first half of the program will run for one hour with no pauses. Please hold your applause until intermission.

1. Greeting Meditation (1972) and Single Stroke Roll Meditation (1973) .................................................. 18:54 .................................................. Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)
5. Amores (1936) .................................................................................................................. 9:03 .................................................. John Cage
   I. Solo (prepared piano)
   II. Trio (9 tom-toms, pod rattle)
   III. Trio (7 woodblocks, not Chinese)
   IV. Solo (prepared piano)
      Zack Meyer, prepared piano
6. Suite for Percussion, II (1933) ............................................................................................. 2:12 .................................................. J. M. Beyer
      David Gaskey, xylophone
7. Zyklus No. 9 (1959) ........................................................................................................ 16:05 .................................................. Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007)
      Aidan Gold, percussion
8. La Fabbrica del Duomo (2014) .......................................................................................... 5:45 .................................................. Jeffrey Treviño (b. 1983)
9. Urban Hymn No. 2 ........................................................................................................... 5:27 .................................................. B. W. Dietz
10. whatever was lost never thenceforth mattered (2016) .................................................. 6:12 .................................................. Daniel Webbon (b. 1987)
We open tonight's performance with two Sonic Meditations by PAULINE OLIVEROS (1932-2016.) These realizations were collaboratively constructed for the University of Washington Percussion Ensemble's performance at the inaugural NUMUS Northwest conference at Cornish College of the Arts. However uncomplicated they may seem, little is simple in these pieces. Both begin with the sounds of our imagination: willful images of our own ideal sound. GREETING MEDITATION (1974) asks each performer to “…concentrate on the sound that they want to make when an audience member crosses the threshold into the performance space and play the sound at that moment.” SINGLE STROKE ROLL MEDITATION (1973) asks performers to prepare by imagining all the possible sounds that could be made by one continuous single stroke roll. Then, she writes:

To begin the roll imagine one of the sounds. Keep the sound in mind. Imagine the physical movements that are necessary to make this sound. Imagine the rate and the intensity of the alternating strokes.

Allow the roll to begin involuntarily as a result of the strength of your imagination. Try to continue imagining the roll as the involuntary realization of the roll continues. Allow the roll to seek out new sounds involuntarily as you imagine the sound, its tempo and the corresponding physical movements necessary to make the sound. The performance is over if your mind wanders.

If you are successful in this meditation your physical movements will follow your imagination. You will be aware of the sounds you are performing only slightly (milliseconds) after they are performed and your imagination will be stimulated by the feedback of your involuntary performance.

The resulting piece will feature organic shifts in tempo and gradual timbral transformations from rolling on different parts of the drum and from the accumulation of standing waves depending on the acoustics of the performance space.

Ours is a seamless version of these two meditations. Gradually, as their bodies and imaginations lead them, musicians will transition from one piece to another. Changes and shifts should be involuntary on the part of performers but these will be perceptible for audience members who choose to engage in meditation with us.

German-born American musician JOHANNA MAGDALENA BEYER (1889-1944) was a prolific composer of early percussion ensemble music. Until a recent publication and editing project by Frog Peak Music, most of her works were neglected, preserved only in difficult to read manuscript form. Her mentors, teachers, and champions were the circle of so-called ultramodernists --Ruth Crawford Seeger, Dane Rudhyar, and Henry Cowell-- musicians fascinated by dissonance, clusters, and disjunct sound.

The majority of Beyer's few public performances came at Composers' Forums sponsored by the New Deal's Works Progress Administration. The weekly concerts included question-and-answer
sessions – discussions that were, to Beyer and other female modernists, condescending and
dismissive. Beyer, faced unusually harsh criticism. She responded with a choral salute to the
Composers’ Forum, serrated counterpoint over an incessantly repeated three-bar piano vamp: “you
are being criticized on the spot whether you like it or not,” the voices sing. That wry resilience fuels
much of her work.

“IV” (1935) was the only piece of Beyer’s published in her lifetime, appearing in an issue of
Cowell’s “New Music” journal. The open instrumentation – nine unspecified percussion
instruments (we will perform the piece twice, with two different batteries) – was radical. So was the
rhetoric: layered, deceptively simple seven-to-the-bar patterns, volume and speed continually
waxing and waning.

Beyer’s music anticipates so many qualities of the later, outwardly divergent but similarly
process-driven schools of modernism and minimalism: confrontational, cleansing sounds;
ritualistic rigor and austerity that shades into deadpan wit. This latter quality persists in “II” (1933)
from the SUITE FOR PERCUSSION. Here, her rational procedures augment the xylophone melody
and channel the emotional heft of an obsessive quest.

JOHN CAGE (1912-1992) and LOU HARRISON (1917-2003) worked independently to compose
DOUBLE MUSIC (1941). Cage composed parts 1 and 3 (soprano and tenor), Harrison parts 2 and 4
(alto and bass). Dynamics are scarcely indicated, but the instrumentation is specific (although
substitutions are allowed). Both composers agreed to compose 200 measures each, and the result
is a surprisingly unified, festive whole. Cage’s AMORES (1936) is more introspective, featuring
delicate woodblocks, Chinese tom toms played with fingers, and his signature prepared piano.

The score to ZYKLUS NO. 9 by KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN may be read upside down or right side
up and the performer may progress through the score at any rate of constant speed from left-to-
right or right-to-left, moving clockwise or counter-clockwise through an imposing circle of
instruments. However, no moment is improvised. Each sound corresponds to a glyph on
Stockhausen’s fabulously intricate graphic score, and this requires an intense process of advance
study and realization on the part of the performer. Tonight’s version is presented by percussionist
and composer Aidan Gold.

We close our program with music by three emerging American composers. BRETT DIETZ’s URBAN
HYMNS (2012), like Beyer’s IV, are written for any number of percussionists playing unspecified
instruments. The trick here is that the whole work is in unison.
LA FABBRICA DEL DUOMO (2014) refers to Milan’s expression for anything that takes forever, "the construction of the duomo." The main cathedral in Milan took about 420 years to complete. Like the construction of the cathedral, the piece starts with a carefully described, prescriptive blueprint for each player, but in the middle turns into the sum of individual contributions (individual realizations of what each player hears in the recording.) This is what seems to happen to cathedrals over huge amounts of construction time: there's a grand vision at the beginning, and adherence to that in a fearful and rigorous way, but then it turns into an aggregation of many architects’ visions until completed. This process inspires a musical form with a composed introduction that leads to the simultaneous performance of individual ensemble members’ listening transcriptions. The field recording was made in the Duomo itself in Spring of 2010.

JEFFREY TREVIÑO

The title of this piece comes from a short story by the late David Foster Wallace. In the story, a child suffers a terrible accident that maims them for life. But Wallace comments on the peculiar notion of losing something so early in life that one would have no real reference point by which to base having and not having the lost thing. He bridges the past and present in the story with the line, "AND WHATEVER WAS LOST NEVER THEREAFTER MATTERED." (2016) But of course one does feel the loss, but in an undefinable, forever under the surface way. This piece explores that idea of a terrible accident that has lifelong repercussions. There is a very literal explosion of sound at the start of the piece that keeps interrupting the otherwise motivic and rhythmic material. Try as the players might, they can’t seem to escape that initial destructive event and it eventually takes over the whole work.

DANIEL WEBBON

Daniel Webbon is a pre-doctoral teaching fellow in composition at the University of Washington.

UW Percussion Ensemble:
Dr. Bonnie Whiting, director
  Evan Berge
  Courtney James
  David Gaskey
  Aidan Gold
  Isaac McDonald
  David Norgaard
  Andy Varness
  Emerson Wahl
UW Steelband:

Shannon Dudley, director & arranger
David Aarons
Thomas Campbell
Leia Fectau
Emily Iversen
Aidan Jackson
Janella Kang
Craig Kovatch
Anita Kumar
Cecilia Nguyen
T. J. Orgovan
Kamaka Pahinui
Colton Rothaus