



The University of Vermont
Department of Music

Thursday, November 19, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Southwick Ballroom

UVM Percussion Ensemble
D. Thomas Toner, *conductor*

Fall Concert

Program

Introduction and March (1976)	Garwood Whaley
African Sketches (1968) Stephanie Aurenz Shannon Callaghan Ethan Carnesale	J. Kent Williams Cassie Heleba
Bayport Sketch (1975)	Jared Spears
New Hampshire Nightscape (2005)	D. Thomas Toner
Implosion (1981) Chris Burgess Luke Nawrocki Haywood Schwartz	Mantle Hood Jake Ten Eyck
Machacar (1999)	Toner
Allegro for Percussion (1995)	James Rago

Notes

Percussion Ensemble in the time of COVID hasn't been as different from the "normal" experience as ensembles with wind players. Granted, players had to be a minimum of six feet apart and wear masks, and we also decided to wear gloves to minimize the amount of time we have to clean surfaces at the beginning and end of rehearsals. We had one student joining us remotely for rehearsals and are sad that she can't be with us in-person. But given all that, the semester has actually gone fairly smoothly.

Introduction and March, as its title implies, begins with a slow introduction in which the timpani, snare drum and tom toms play active rhythms and the bass drum, gong, cymbals, and chimes are mainly accompaniment. The march begins with non-pitched percussion, but eventually an upbeat melody is added in the mallets. A somewhat raucous transition leads to a contrastingly subdued melodic section. The piece ends with a return to the original melody. Garwood Whaley is the author of some of the most popular method books for percussion of all time.

African Sketches is one of the earliest works for percussion ensemble that explores African rhythms and instruments in an authentic manner. J. Kent Williams was on the faculty of the University of North Carolina – Greensboro, where he was Professor of Percussion, and later, Professor of Music Theory.

Bayport Sketch was written by American percussionist and composer Jared Spears. After an introduction that gradually builds, the long-note melody is heard in the bells, chimes, and vibes, with the xylophone and marimbas playing a rhythmic ostinato that supports the snare drum, tom-toms, and timpani. A second iteration of the melody introduces quartal harmony - the "harmony" notes are a 4th below the melody rather than the more traditional 3rd or 5th. The contrasting middle section has the marimba playing a variation of the original melody while the bells, chimes, and vibes (now joined by the metal sounds of triangle and suspended cymbal) playing accompaniment parts in quartal harmony. A quick transition leads to a repeat of the original melody along with a second version with quartal harmony. A short coda ends the piece.

New Hampshire Nightscape is the third in an unanticipated series of sound sculptures. Each contains a large element of controlled improvisation, so that each performance is unique and cannot be exactly replicated. The piece contains nine sound events, each represented by a cell in the score (which looks a bit like a spreadsheet). Each cell contains a number comprised of up to seven digits – the player interprets each digit as the number of sounds produced during that event. Players should pause between each digit of a multiple-digit number (thus, "1788" should be interpreted as 1 sound, pause, 7 sounds, pause, etc., not 1,788 sounds!). The numbers upon which the piece is based are important numbers in the history and culture of New

Hampshire: the area code (603), the date the state was admitted to the Union (June 21, 1788, written as "6211788), and the height of Mt. Washington (6,288 feet and 1,917 meters). The speed of the gestures is largely up to the performer, as is the length of any pauses. Unlike standard conducted music, the beginning of a new event is an invitation to move to that event, rather than a coordinated downbeat. All instruments are made of metal, so they innately ring, though the performer can alter the length of any note. The nine events are groups in three sets of three, each with different general directions – the first three are randomly spaced notes that are soft but gradually get louder, the middle quick bursts of notes up to medium loud, and the last are slow and evenly spaced notes the fade away. The piece was written for the 2005 New Hampshire All-State Percussion Ensemble, and was slightly revised for both the 2010 and 2020 ensembles.

Implosion, for mallet percussion quartet, is based on the principles of gamelan music of Bali, Indonesia. The two xylophones play parts that interlock and create a composite melody faster than that which could be played by a single person ("kotekan" in Balinese). The marimba binds these parts together. The vibraphone is considered the melody, despite its slow note values (this is a basic premise of gamelan music). The piece is constructed in seven parts, each with their own five-note tone row. The notes of some of the rows are nearly equidistant, while others use notes in close proximity. Mantle Hood was a long-time professor of ethnomusicology at UCLA, where he founded the Institute of Ethnomusicology after spending years living in Indonesia and studying the music of Bali and Java in particular.

I wrote **Machacar** for a combined concert of the UVM and Burlington High School Percussion Ensembles, both of which I directed at the time. The piece is based on the semi-improvisational style of percussion music from Latin America. In *Machacar*, the players improvise a two-measure repeated rhythm, the entrances of which are staggered. A group crescendo and diminuendo, followed by four measures of interlocking rhythms, leads to a second section in which players may take solos. The return of the crescendo diminuendo signals a further return of the opening material. The name of the piece comes from a Spanish word meaning "to strike."

Allegro for Percussion is scored for a fairly traditional ensemble of drums, timpani, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, and mallet percussion. The piece is based on the interval of a perfect fourth and its inversion, the perfect fifth, that are primarily heard in the timpani. In that way, the timpani plays much more of a melodic role in the piece than the mallets, which tend to play only octaves and arpeggios of perfect fifths and fourths. Mr. Rago is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music and has been timpanist of the Louisville Orchestra since 1967.

Personnel

Stephanie Aurenz, '21, *Nashua, NH*

Chris Burgess, '21, *Kingston, MA*

Shannon Callaghan, '24, *Wakefield, MA*

Ethan Carnesale, '24, *Colchester*

Cassie Heleba, '22, *Rutland*

Jordan Meeker, '21, *Rochester, NY*

Luke Nawrocki, '21, *Andover, MA*

Haywood Schwartz, '21, *Andover, MA*

Jake Ten Eyck, '22, *Mansfield, MA*

D. Thomas Toner is a Professor in the Department of Music at the University of Vermont, where he teaches percussion and conducts the Concert Band, Percussion Ensemble, and Vermont Wind Ensemble. Dr. Toner was awarded both the Doctor of Musical Arts degree and the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music, a Master of Music degree and Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music, and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. An active guest conductor, he has conducted wind groups at the District level throughout Vermont (he is one of the few people to have conducted the Wind Ensemble in each of Vermont's six District Music Festivals), New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, as well as the Vermont All-State Band, Vermont All-State Orchestra, and the New Hampshire All-State Percussion Ensemble (three times). He has appeared as guest conductor of the Yale Concert Band, the SUNY-Fredonia Percussion Ensemble, and the Green Mountain Mahler Festival Orchestra. As a percussionist, Dr. Toner's eclectic career has included performances with the Clifford Ball Orchestra (for the rock band Phish), before Princess Grace and Princess Caroline of Monaco, at a world music festival in Bali, Indonesia, and with a native troupe in a torrential lightning storm in Ghana, West Africa. Dr. Toner joined the Vermont Symphony Orchestra at the age of 18, and became Principal Percussionist a few years later. In addition to appearing as a soloist with the VSO, he has traveled to China three times, presenting recitals and masterclasses at the Inner Mongolian Arts College in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. He is a featured percussionist on numerous recordings by the vocal group Counterpoint, conducted by the late Robert DeCormier. Dr. Toner is an endorser of Grover Pro Percussion, Sabian cymbals, and Vic Firth.