



The University of Vermont
Department of Music

Thursday, April 29, 2021, 7:30 p.m.
Southwick Ballroom

UVM Percussion Ensemble
D. Thomas Toner, *conductor*

Spring Concert

Program

Piece for Ten Players (1981)

William Schinstine

Mosaics (1975)

Shannon Callaghan
Breydan Medbury

Ethan Carnesale
Jason Pieroni

Cassie Heleba
Keith Prescott

Jared Spears

Metrechronosity (2001)

Greg Brayman

Orientale (1980)

Thomas O'Connor

TetraCurrent (2015)

Chris Burgess Luke Nawrocki Haywood Schwartz Jake Ten Eyck

Chad Floyd

Highlife (1984)

Phil Faini

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 student joining us remotely for rehearsals from time to time, but the semester has actually gone fairly smoothly.

Piece for Ten Players is a rather typical, drum-oriented percussion ensemble piece. The vibraphone add a melodic layer to this A-B-A form work. The A section is in 4/4 time, while the contrasting B section is in 3/4. William Schinstine (1922-1986), a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, was a well-known percussion pedagogue and composer in the 1960's and 70's, writing over 300 method books, solos, and ensembles.

Mosaics is scored for a sextet of fairly traditional instruments: timpani, snare drum, tom-toms, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, and woodblock. After a short introduction, the theme is heard first in the woodblock, then tom-toms. That leads to a one-measure second theme stated loudly by the drums with alternating soft responses from the other instruments. The remainder of the piece explores these two themes, often in a fugal manner. Jared Spears is a prolific composer of many works for concert band, choir, orchestra, and percussion ensemble. He is a Professor Emeritus of Arkansas State University.

I wrote **Metrechronosity** in the spring of this 2001 (the first performance was 20 years ago last week! – TT). Having played with the Percussion Ensemble for the previous 8 semesters, the inspiration for this piece came from music we have played. The piece is comprised of one measure patterns that are repeated an indeterminate number of times. The patterns fall into three large sections. Each of the patterns is derived from parts of different pieces that I have played with the Percussion Ensemble. I tried to put **Metrechronosity** together in such a way that it is accessible to both the listener and the performers. **Metrechronosity** is dedicated to Dr. D. Thomas Toner and the University of Vermont Percussion Ensemble. - Greg Brayman

Oriente is in A-B-A form, with the A section featuring a pentatonic melody over steady rhythmic accompaniment and the B section using arpeggios of intervals of a fourth or a fifth with rhythmic interjections. In an interesting coincidence, composer Thomas O'Connor currently teaches theory and composition at Arkansas State University, where he was a student of Jared Spears, the composer of the second piece on the program tonight!

Originally titled "First Four," the inspiration for **TetraCurrent** stems from an ad lib session during a break in a recording session. The first idea the composer explored for this piece was the use of the tone clusters as a recurring accompanying rhythmic figure. The melodic ideas were then constructed over this idea and developed from there. Chad Floyd is Associate Professor of Percussion at Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Kentucky where he teaches applied percussion and directs the percussion ensemble, steel band, and drumline. His varied performance background includes international tours as drummer for the Brazilian-based group Almedia Duo and the Grammy-nominated members of Sojourn Fare as well as performances with the Birdsong Steel Orchestra at Panorama in Trinidad, the Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Kentucky, Sacred Winds Ensemble, and the Bowling Green Chamber Orchestra.

Highlife was written by Phil Faini, former Professor of Percussion at West Virginia University. Faini was one of the first percussion teachers in this country to seriously study the music of Africa. The title comes from a musical genre, also called Highlife, that is an urban dance music in West Africa that melds elements of traditional West African music with western instruments such as the electric guitar and drumset. The composer uses a Ghanaian melody written for the pentatonic xylophone of Ghana, the *gyil*. The drum and percussion parts are written in a pan-African style, employing elements of recreational music such as *Sikiyi* and *Kpanlogo*, as well as rhythms from music of the Yoruba people. The piece opens with an introduction in 4/4 meter that establishes the mood of the piece. Ironically, the first "melodic" motive is then presented by the four tom-tom parts. After the marimbas and xylophone play a five-note, pitched version of the motive, the piece shifts to 12/8 meter (the same number of beats per measure, but with each beat divided into three parts instead of just two). This contrasting middle section features call and response exchanges among the drums in which rhythms are rapidly thrown back and forth. Just as it did into the 12/8 meter, the timpani lead the way back to 4/4 meter and the music of the opening section.

Tonight marks the final Percussion Ensemble concert for two seniors who will graduate in May:

Chris Burgess is a Music Technology major with minors in both Economics and Computer Science.

Jason Pieroni is a Psychological Science major with a minor in Music who has been an active member of the UVM Top Cats.

Personnel

Chris Burgess, '21, *Kingston, MA*

Shannon Callaghan, '24, *Wakefield, MA*

Ethan Carnesale, '24, *Colchester*

Cassie Heleba, '22, *Rutland*

Breydan Medbury, '23, *Old Saybrook, CT*

Luke Nawrocki, '22, *Andover, MA*

Jason Pieroni, '21, *East Greenwich, RI*

Keith Prescott, '22, *Middlebury*

Haywood Schwartz, '24, *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.