



The University of Vermont  
Department of Music

Thursday, December 2, 2021, 7:30 p.m.  
Southwick Ballroom

**UVM Percussion Ensemble**  
D. Thomas Toner, *conductor*

# *Fall Concert*

## Program

Lost Souls (2002)	Nathan Daughtrey
Bawa	arr. Sowah Mensah
Passport (2020)	Josh Turner
Rainfall (2011)	Adam Miller
Zoku (1989)	Leonard Eto
Disguised (2020)	Clif Walker
Regalito de Amor	José Alejandro de León

## Notes

**Lost Souls** was written as a requirement for the composer's doctoral degree: the requirement was to write a high-quality but relatively short percussion ensemble piece using only percussion instruments commonly found in high school and college music programs. The short theme of the piece is varied and altered through transitions of tempo (though always either half- or double-time) and time signature.

**Bawa** is a harvest dance of the Dagara people of northern Ghana, performed on a Ghanaian xylophone called the gyil, the national instrument of the Dagara. The gyil is tuned to a pentatonic (five-note) scale and uses gourd resonators. Each gourd traditionally has a hole in them that is covered by a spider's membrane to give the instrument its distinct nasal, buzzing quality. **Bawa** is arranged by Sowah Mensah, a Master Drummer of Ghana and one of the first UVM Marsh Professors. As part of the Marsh program, Sowah came to UVM nearly every semester during the six-year length of the visiting professor program, teaching classes, performing with UVM ensembles, and creating a legacy that endures to this day. - DTT

While reviewing scales with one of my percussion classes, I pointed out a feature of the E-flat scale's layout on the keyboard. A set of notes quickly jumped out, as well as the number sequence 1-2-2-2-1. The set of notes, which make up an Fm7 chord, became the first and last section of **Passport**. In fact, minus the occasional B-flat, the only notes all mallet players use in those sections are E-flat, F, A-flat, or C. There is a slight tonal shift in the middle section, during which the number sequence 1-2-2-2-1 inspires several rhythms used around the ensemble.

Because a small, fixed set of notes is used for much of the piece, the overall mood is reminiscent of various folk music traditions from around the world. Without a specific culture in mind, I hope that **Passport** can simply be a means for an enjoyable musical journey. - Josh Turner

**Rainfall** is designed to simulate a rainstorm, with the performers using a variety of nontraditional techniques to reproduce the sounds of rain through gentle finger snaps and/or tapping on their legs. The sound of thunder is also recreated using both traditional (bass drum) and unusual (thunder drum) sources. The audience is encouraged to participate in the rain simulation to help magnify the effect!

Taiko drumming is a blending of the percussion traditions of the ancient Japanese Imperial court music known as Gagaku (the oldest continuing orchestral music in the world) and the folk music of the Shinto festival known as *matsuri*. The most famous taiko group is Kodo (meaning "heartbeat") which was formed in 1981 on Sado Island in the Sea of Japan. The composer of **Zoku**, Leonard Eto, was a member of Kodo from 1984 to 1992, when he left to pursue a solo career that has seen him perform with Bob Dylan, Bon Jovi, the Chieftains, and many others. The version of **Zoku** that we will perform tonight is inspired by Kodo's performances of the piece. Since we do not have access to authentic taiko drums, it seemed best to infuse our performance with the spirit of many different cultures, including Ghana (using the *kidi*, *sogo*, and *kroboto* drums of the Ewe people of Ghana), Latin America (bongos), China (the *BianGu* and Red Flower Drum that are used as the lead voice) and Brazil (the *surdo*: a bass drum used in samba).

The goal of Clif Walker's **Disguised** is to manipulate the perception of both time and timbre. The meter of the piece is disguised through the displacement of downbeats. Because our ears are oriented to hearing emphasized notes on beat one, when we hear an apparent downbeat on a different beat we automatically "recalibrate" our orientation to the time signature. This "recalibration" gives the impression of changing meters despite the piece being in 4/4 time throughout. In terms of instrument timbre, Walker disguises the sound of certain instruments by making them sound like something else. For example, at times the timpanist strikes the drum with drum set brushes, making the timpani sound more like a large snare drum. In another section, the bells and vibraphones are struck with finger cymbals to make them sound like crotales (spun brass discs). The most prominent disguised sound occurs when the marimba players deaden the bars of the instruments with mutes, producing a sound similar to electronic samples.

The marimba ensemble was introduced to the United States in the early part of the twentieth century by touring "Marimba Bands" from Latin American countries such as Guatemala (where the marimba is the national instrument). These ensembles became very popular in the 1920s and 1930s, making frequent appearances on radio broadcasts and in vaudeville shows. **Reaglito de Amor** is a song by José Alejandro de León (1912-1978), one of Guatemala's most famous composers of song. This particular love song has been recorded by numerous Guatemalan marimba ensembles and is commonly heard on their concerts.

- DTT

## Personnel

Ryan Estes, G, *Portland, OR*

Cassie Heleba, '22, *Rutland*

Kidron Kollin, '23, *Union, NJ*

Michael O'Leary, '23, *Medfield, MA*

Josh Overton, '23, *Derry, NH*

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.