

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

The Department of Music presents

Percussion Ensemble

Rick Dior, director

Equal Fire

Paul Bissell

Marimba Spiritual

Minoru Miki

Tripp Haynes, solo marimba

Slopes

Paul Rennick

Ryan Comley, solo snare drum

2300 Degrees

Ivan Trevino

Ryan Comley and Tripp Haynes, marimbas

Concerto for Timpani and Percussion Ensemble

John H. Beck

Alex Johnson, solo timpani

Septet

Daniel Levitan

Anne R. Belk Theater
Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts
Monday, May 1, 2023 | 7:30 pm
coaa.charlotte.edu

Program Notes

Equal Fire was the first of a series of “pure energy” percussion ensembles I wrote in the early 1990’s. The piece is a reflection of the belief that all rhythms and rhythmic pulses exist at any time. Musicians who acknowledge and understand their presence can tap into these “streams” and use them much as a high-flying plane can use the jet stream. *Equal Fire* begins rooted in the 16th note stream and uses the whip and woodblock in the beginning as a disrupter to force the performers into a separate stream (usually the quarter note triplet). Sometimes the disrupter causes a pattern played between two players to reverse itself. Sometimes, the hole into the new stream only lasts a few seconds before fading, other times it stays open and adds fuel to a different rhythmic stream. It is this alternation of streams which equal fire exploits.

- Program Note by the Composer

Marimba Spiritual by Minoru Miki was written in 1983-84 and is dedicated to Japanese marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe. According to the composer, the piece is composed in an organic fashion, with the first half of the piece as a static requiem and the last part a lively resurrection. The first section begins with marimba solo then adds in ethereal metallic percussion sounds, followed by wooden percussion sounds. These all build in to the second half of the piece with the 3 percussionists switching to drums and the tempo increasing significantly. The piece was commissioned by NHK, but marimba player Keiko Abe requested the particular arrangement for marimba. The first performance was on March 18, 1984 in Amsterdam with Ms. Abe and the Nieuwe Slagwek Groep Amsterdam.

The rhythm and note patterns are strictly notated throughout the piece, but for the three percussion parts, only the relative pitches and tone qualities (for the first part, metal and wood percussion instruments; for the second part, skin drums) are notated. There is freedom, but the performers should pay much attention to balance in each section. The rhythm patterns for the second part are taken from the festival drumming of the Chichibu area north-west of Tokyo. The score is set up so the piece can be played as marimba solo as well.

Paul Rennick's ***Slopes*** was originally commissioned by John Roberts in 2005 at The University of North Texas. It was conceived by reflecting on a lecture given in Aspen, Colorado by a physics professor from the University of Chicago. The topic was fractal geometry in nature and avalanche theory. The musical material captures the characteristics of these subjects, with a falling direction and downward sloping motifs. *Slopes* is a work for solo snare drum with percussion trio accompaniment. Combining rudimental and concert snare drum techniques, Paul Rennick has created a piece that is technically exciting and musically interesting.

2300 Degrees is a marimba duo commissioned by Annie Stevens and Andrea Venet of Escape Ten percussion duo. The piece is scored for two 5.0 octave marimbas and two sets of shared crotales.

In the glassblowing art world, 2300 degrees is the temperature at which glass gets interesting. I learned this at Corning Museum of Glass, where I participated in a music + glass event. My band, Break of Reality, performed while Lino Tagliapietra and his team created glass art. Lino is one of the world's leading glass artists, and getting to work with him was truly special.

Watching a glassblowing team work together to shape glass into art is beautiful, but for me, the large scale feeling of tension and release is by far the most exhilarating part. Forming and manipulating molten glass is a high-pressure situation that can be dangerous for the artist and their team, and one mistake can completely alter or ruin the art piece. When you add a live audience, the level of drama is amplified even further. When an art piece is completed, it is a joyous moment, a true release of tension for both the team and the audience watching.

With *2300 Degrees*, I wanted to recreate this same feeling through music, one that would put both performers and audiences on edge. The piece features a stream of constant rhythms weaved together via poly-metric ideas. In addition, there are moments where performers simultaneously share each other's instruments, or perform on a marimba while also playing crotales.

- Program Note by the Composer

John Beck's ***Concerto for Timpani and Percussion*** starts with a slow introduction followed by an acceleration into a brief ad-lib cadenza. Following are two sections using the same melodic material, yet they are quite different from each other. The middle section of the work is done in a *senza misura* style with spatial notation for the timpanist. A harmonic modulation follows this section and the melodic content of the last section is taken through several rhythmic changes. The composition ends in an exciting manner, giving the timpanist a final brief cadenza. The concerto displays all of the capabilities of the modern timpani as the performer is called on to execute fast tuning changes, play with a variety of mallets (and bare hands) as well as extended effects such as glissandi.

Written in 1981, ***Septet*** is a rhythmically infectious composition that acts as a solo setting for bongos and timbales. These instruments are accompanied by roto-tom, cabasa, suspended cymbal, cowbells and drum set. The opening 16 bar theme recurs, in various orchestrations throughout the piece as each section features different performers. Please feel free to get up and dance.

Percussion Ensemble Personnel

Jack Applegate
Brady Bittner
Ryan Comley
Jack Comley
Tim Gawert
Tripp Hayes
Alex Johnson

About the Director

Rick Dior is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music where he studied with renowned timpanist Fred Hinger and jazz composer Bob Mintzer. He also studied extensively with famed jazz drummer Joe Morello. Rick has performed as a percussionist and drummer with some of the greatest artists in the music industry including James Taylor, Aretha Franklin, Roberta Flack, Ray Charles, Bobby McFerrin, Al Jarreau, Marvin Hamlisch, BeBe Winans and Martina McBride. He has added his jazz drum set talents to performances with many great jazz artists including Marvin Stamm, Bill Watrous, Clark Terry, Red Rodney, Chris Potter, Russell Malone and Lionel Hampton. Some of these performances have taken place with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, which he has performed with since 1990 as principal percussionist, section percussionist and timpanist. Rick's recording credits are extensive and include movie soundtracks, CD releases and commercial radio and television spots. As a first call percussionist in Charlotte, Rick has performed in dozens of Broadway show tours. Some of the most recent are *Beautiful*, *Wicked*, *The Producers*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Spamalot*, *Hairspray*, *South Pacific*, *West Side Story* and *Mary Poppins*.

Rick has served as the Professor of Percussion at UNC Charlotte since 2001. He also maintains an active private teaching studio. His private students have gone on to attend UNC Charlotte as well as many other prestigious music institutions such as The Julliard School of Music, The Manhattan School of Music, The Eastman School of Music, North Texas State University, the Oberlin School of Music and The University of Miami. Many of these students are active as professional musicians and educators.

As a composer Rick has written many compositions and arrangements for Classical, Jazz and Latin ensembles. In 2018 Rick was commissioned to orchestrate his composition *Science Fiction* for a European tour of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, widely considered to be the finest youth orchestra in the world. He is the author of several percussion books including the acclaimed *Advanced Coordination for Drum Set and Hand Percussion*. Rick's books and compositions are published by Tap Space. He is also an artist for Vic Firth Drumsticks, Mike Balter Mallets, Paiste Cymbals, and Doc Sweeney Drums.

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MAY

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Tue May 2 | 7:30 pm (W) & 8:30 pm (M)

Anne R. Belk Theater