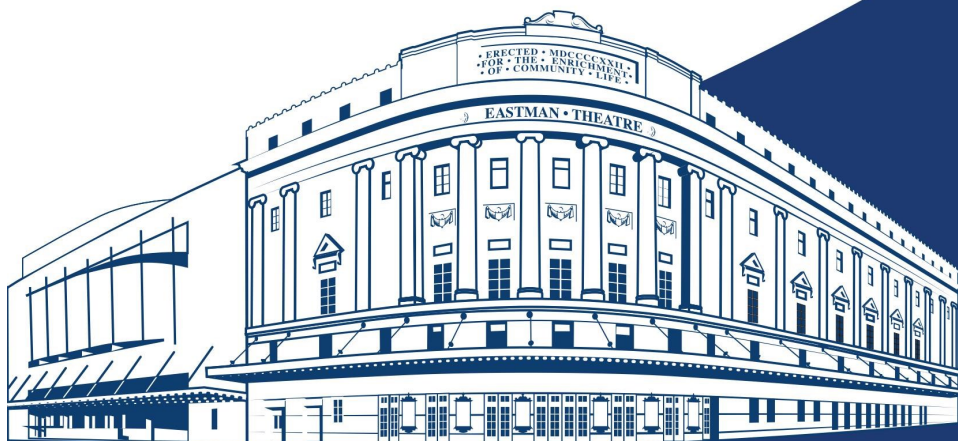


EASTMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Tuesday, November 7, 2023
Kilbourn Hall
7:30 PM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

PROGRAM

Little One (2023)

J. Matthew Curlee
(b. 1976)

World Premiere

Tuscany (2023)

Michael Burritt
(b. 1962)

Austin Keck & Michael Smith, marimba

Cloud Folk (2017)

John Psathas
(b. 1966)

INTERMISSION

Le Livre des Claviers (1987)

6 Gongs, 2 Marimbas
Duo des Marimbas
Sextour de Sixxens
Solo de Vibraphone
6 Gongs, 2 Marimbas
Sextour de Sixxens

Philippe Manoury
(b. 1952)

John Dawson and Andrew Lauler, solo marimba
Remy Thomas, solo vibraphone

PROGRAM NOTES

Little One (2023)

J. Matthew Curlee

After the kind of personal cataclysm that splits time in two, questions of inevitability can consume us; when we were small and carefree, did this already loom on the horizon? Could we have configured things in some way that would have bypassed this threshold, or was there no choice but to walk across it? The etiologies of disaster can be tiny, almost trivial – a brief electrical misfire, or the aberrant division of a cell – but the implications existential. That incongruity is both terrifying and beautiful, holding within it the paradox of simultaneous fragility and tenacity that is at the core of life.

A meditation on this paradox, *Little One* is based on the cyclic number 142857. Multiplying by a whole number less than the count of its digits (1-5) gives a product that is a permutation of the original digits: $x2=285714$, $x3=428571$, $x4=571428$, and so forth, which are encoded in both pitch and time dimensions of the piece. The pattern is interrupted – somewhat shockingly - when multiplying by the number of digits in the original number: $142857 \times 6 = 999999$.

This structure (which does repeat beyond 6, but requires some mathematical reduction to see) reminds me of how we ruminate on unknowable things - on the path that led us to the present moment, for instance, and the threads of both inevitability and tenuous chance that echo through it. We may endlessly rearrange the components but always come up with the same circumscribed results, most of which are permutations of one another (and a few unthinkably scary). But these limits can sometimes be superseded by transformations that extend into a previously unconsidered dimension. In the empty space after a catastrophe, a sliver of light may leak through from an unseen intersecting plane, and a new degree of freedom is found.

For Anu, for Mari and Elba, and for Betty Robinson

—Matt Curlee

PROGRAM NOTES

Tuscany (2023)

Michael Burritt

Tuscany was commissioned by Pax Duo with support from Middleton High School in Madison Wisconsin. Tuscany is first a marimba duo with optional percussion sextet orchestration. The work is inspired from my recent trip to the quaint and charming town of Cortona, in Tuscany Italy. Cortona is a place seemingly untouched by time, with magnificent views of the Tuscan vistas and an architecture that takes one back to 8th century BC. While the work does not reflect Tuscany in any direct programmatic way, it's textural landscapes and bright harmonic language reflect the sweeping beauty and grandeur of this extraordinary place in the world.

— *Michael Burritt*

Cloud Folk (2017)

John Psathas

Cloud Folk was written at the invitation of Michael Burritt for the Eastman Percussion Ensemble. It was the recipient of the 2017 John Beck Composition Prize with the generous support of Ann Carol and Paul S. Goldberg, The Eastman School of Music Percussion Department, Michael Burritt, Kathleen Holt and Stephen Lurie, Ruth and Bill Cahn. The Cloud Folk are (imaginary) visitors to earth, invisibly parked in our upper atmosphere, observing 21st century human behavior. I'd imagined an arrival driven by optimism, intense curiosity, and excitement; followed quickly by incomprehension, shock, and the hastiest possible departure (back into a wondrous universe teeming with life). With no contact made, in fact avoided at all costs, we were never aware we'd been visited. The music loosely follows this narrative.

— *John Psathas*

PROGRAM NOTES

Le Livre des Claviers (1987)

Philippe Manoury

Manoury's work is aligned with the modernist French tradition as articulated by Pierre Boulez; his music is imbued with values shared with the world of research and marked by ambitious instrumental challenges. His works have been particularly informed by his expertise in electro-acoustic composition and real-time interaction between acoustic instruments and computer generated sounds. In *Le Livre des Claviers*, Manoury explores the rich world of tuned keyboard percussion instruments, a category he broadens to include low pitched Thai gongs and a fascinating set of six homemade instruments called sixxen, originally imagined by pioneer Iannis Xenakis. Xenakis specified some sonic parameters for sixxen, but gave no specific instrument designs. Notably, pitch is not a fixed parameter in the design specifications for sixxen, so it is up to the performers to build instruments that create an engaging pitch landscape.

The sixxen works, therefore, are shaped by Manoury's compelling rhythmic writing and elegant sense of contour, and a listener might be tempted to muse on ways the piece would sound different, or the same, with another set of sixxen. While Xenakis' use of these instruments was somewhat brutal, in Manoury's hands, they also display a ritualistic, ethereal side, sounding occasionally like clanging church bells from the worship house of an exotic theology. Two movements for thai gongs and marimbas, a marimba duo, and a vibraphone solo represent the rest of *Le Livre des Claviers*, containing precise, demanding music that nevertheless avoids the kind of dramatic resistance often associated with writing of this complexity. The dynamic between the rigors of the mallet percussion movements of *Le Livre des Claviers* and the sixxen movements amounts to a kind of refraction of Manoury's vision through a distorting lens, particularly as it pertains to pitch. Present throughout all of these movements and in *Metal* is a natural, unencumbered flow underlying Manoury's phrases, even in the most virtuosic passages. This is, of course, a testament to Third Coast's well documented expertise, but also suggests that an affect of detached effortlessness may be shared with or influenced by his work in the realm of computer music. Perhaps it is consistent with Manoury's role as a researcher - a detached observer nevertheless infused with a sense of wonder.

PERSONNEL

EASTMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Michael Burritt, director

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Olly Bangia | Austin Keck |
| Daniel Davis | Brandon Berlanga |
| Fletcher Leonard | John Dawson |
| Casandra Lo | Sammy DeAngelis |
| Seth Tupy | Andrew Lauler |
| Ruyi Yuan | Sean McWilliams |
| Ben Blaesing | Michael Smith |
| Remy Thomas | Anders Wong |
| Kaiwen Luo | |

Pei Zhang Wu, piano

Special thanks to Brian Stotz, our fabulous Percussion Tech!

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

UPCOMING EASTMAN SERIES CONCERTS

Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at EastmanTheatre.org

KILBOURN CONCERT SERIES

Vijay Iyer Trio feat. Linda May Han Oh, bass and Jeremy Dutton, drums

Kilbourn Hall

Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 7:30 PM

Described by The New York Times as a “social conscience, multimedia collaborator, system builder, rhapsodist, historical thinker and multicultural gateway,” Vijay Iyer has carved out a unique path as an influential, prolific, shape-shifting presence in twenty-first-century music. A composer and pianist active across multiple musical communities, Iyer has created a consistently innovative, emotionally resonant body of work over the last twenty-five years, earning him a place as one of the leading music-makers of his generation.

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

Collaborative Piano Faculty

Kilbourn Hall

Saturday, November 11, 2023 at 2:30 PM

UPCOMING STUDENT ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

Composers Sinfonietta

Kilbourn Hall

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 7:30 PM

Eastman Wind Orchestra

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 7:30 PM

Music of Augusta Read Thomas, David Maslanka, and Ryan Lindviet

Horn Choir

Kilbourn Hall

Friday, November 10, 2023 at 7:30 PM



For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.



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