

11-6-2011

## Student Ensemble: Percussion Ensemble

Ben Stiers, Director

Derek Boughey, Director

Jeremy Johnson, Assistant Director

Matt Boze, Assistant Director

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**Gandrung** – One of the most interesting, if currently rare, ensembles from Bali in Indonesia is the gamelan gandrung. While it is one of several types of gamelan (traditional instrumental ensembles) on this musically rich island that is made from bamboo, its instruments are made of wooden slabs somewhat like Western xylophones rather than the tubes used in the larger and more recent gamelan jegog and gamelan joged. Also unlike those gamelan, its five-tone scale derives from the pelog tuning system which has a contrast of large and small step sizes. Gandrung is also known for accompanying a vivacious, flirtatious dance of the same name. Though in the nineteenth century it enjoyed royal patronage, as the court music became more refined gandrung's dynamism and erotic associations soon relegated it to the village street. Gandrung is also known for its particularly intricate interlocking patterns, known as kotekan, which are sometimes borrowed for new compositions for the more famous and common gamelan kebyar, an ensemble of bronze instruments. Kotekan is a distinctively Balinese playing technique requiring intense precision and, as in Balinese society, a selfless cooperation. While this piece includes kebyar-like explosions of activity and complex interlocking patterns as in gandrung, none of the music is borrowed literally from those traditions. Instead I have tried to freely evoke their exuberant spirit and challenging musicianship. (BA)

**Ionisation** is scored for some three dozen percussion instruments, of which only three--chimes, celesta, and piano--are capable of playing notes in the equal-tempered scale. Composition based on the preeminence of pitch here gives way to a music of timbres and rhythms. As the first of many all-percussion scores written in the twentieth century, *Ionisation* is remarkably subtle in its use of those instruments. The form is articulated by changing sonorities--a passage scored only for metal instruments; a fleeting duet for drums and maracas; a hair-raising moment (the first sustained loud point in the score) when several players have the same triplet figure (a *rhythmic* unison); the first high, Morse-code clanging of the anvils, more than midway through. The grand and sonorous coda is marked by the entrance of the piano, celesta, and chimes--the three instruments of definite pitch. Varèse once defined his mission as the "liberation of sound" (just as Schoenberg promised the "emancipation of dissonance.") *Ionisation* is the purest demonstration of his success, and of his eventual influence. It is the work of both a pioneer and a master. (Phillip Huscher)

### Percussion Ensemble

Brad Bauman - Dan Benson - Bobby Botwinski - Matt Boze \*- Dan Bretz - Matt Brusca\* - Ed Campbell - Deborah Carpi\* - Jorge Colon - Tom Ford - Kevin Greene - Scott Grigoletto - Jeremy Johnston\* - Mallory Konstans - Alec Levy - Kyle Singer - Charlie Stonehill - Paula Tuttle

\*MM Candidate

**Illinois State University  
College of Fine Arts  
School of Music**

## Illinois State University Percussion Ensemble

Ben Stiers and Derek Boughey, *Directors*

Jeremy Johnston and Matt Boze, *Assistant Directors*

**Kemp Recital Hall  
November 6, 2011  
Sunday Evening  
7 p.m.**

**This is the fifty-fifth program of the 2010-2011 season.**

## Program

Please turn off cell phones and pagers for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Sharps (2010)	Brian Nozny (born 1977)
	Matt Boze, <i>conductor</i>
Streams (1968)	Warren Benson (1924-2005)
The Ragtime Robin (1925)	George Hamilton Green (1893-1970) arranged by Bob Becker
	Jeremy Johnston, <i>soloist</i>
The Gilded Cage (1998)	Susan Powell (born 1971)
	Derek Boughey, <i>coach</i>
the day after (2008)	David Crowell (born 1980)
Omphalo Centric Lecture (1984)	Nigel Westlake (born 1958) arranged by Michael Askill
Gandrung (2002)	Bill Alves (born 1964)
Ionisation (1931)	Edgard Varèse (1883-1965)

## Program Notes

The idea behind *Sharps* is a very simple one...Can I musically tattoo an audience? Can I write a piece that is so accessible and unwavering, so blatant and incessant in its point that the theme basically brands itself into the minds of the audience? That is the idea behind *Sharps*. It was written at a rather brisk pace between December of 2009 and February 2010 for my friends in the Denkyem Percussion Group. *Sharps* was commissioned by them through the efforts of Megan Arns in the beginning of November 2009 for their performance at the "Promising Artists of the 21st Century" festival hosted by the North American Cultural Center, Costa Rica in March of 2010. The U.S. Premier occurred a few weeks later at Florida State University where the group resides. My sincere thanks to all of the members of the Denkyem Percussion Group (Justin Alexander, Megan Arns, Brian Baldauff, Adam Groh, Daniel Lyons, and Luis Rivera) for the opportunity to write for such an amazing

group of performers. Thanks also goes to Dr. John Parks at Florida State University for his help and encouragement throughout the composition of *Sharps*. (BN)

*Streams* was composed for the Ithaca College Percussion Ensemble, directed by Terry Hulick. The work is a study in two performance techniques that present a challenge to the percussionist: playing slowly and playing quietly. The numerous sound colors used by the ensemble blend together to create an atmosphere of tranquility.

*The Ragtime Robin* was originally published by George Hamilton Green as a xylophone solo with piano accompaniment in 1924. Xylophone solos such as these were typical of the playing style in vogue during the 1920s and 1930s. In the early days of broadcasting, the xylophone proved to be one of the most popular instruments on the radio. The crisp, brilliant sound of the wooden bars came through the earphones and primitive speakers with a clarity that other instruments lacked. For program material, most xylophonists preferred up-tempo solos with fast variations and numerous embellishments. This adaptation of the xylophone rag was arranged for the percussion group NEXUS, with the goal of providing a clear and faithful translation of the piano accompaniment in the four marimba parts. Listen for the robin's call throughout the rag.

*The Gilded Cage* was written in 1998 for the Northwestern Doctoral Percussion Quartet's European appearances in Wartzburg, Germany and at the *Rhythmsticks Percussion Festival* in London, England. The title is a combination of two separate sources; the 19th century popular song "The Girl in the Gilded Cage," and the 20th century percussion ensemble work *Third Construction* by John Cage. There are numerous influences from Cage's notable piece, including an early quote of the opening theme, here divided between the four performers and played on tom-toms. The "cage" theme is further exhibited in the way the performers create a constantly evolving visual cage with their sticks. (SKP)

*the day after* is dedicated to a close friend currently caught up in an extremely stressful and ongoing situation. The title of the piece refers to the day after resolution of conflict--the piece explores how a person might recover from extreme emotional stress. As the composer, my thoughts in writing the piece were with my friend--and my sincerest wishes that she find peace and happiness. (DC)

*Omphalo Centric Lecture* - The title comes from a painting by Paul Klee, the direct and centered simplicity of which was an inspiration to me during the writing of this piece. The piece also owes much to African Balofon (or xylophone) music, with its persistent ostinati, cross - rhythms and variations on simple melodic fragments. Like African music it seeks to celebrate life through rhythm, energy and movement. It was originally composed for the Sydney based percussion quartet Synergy. *Omphalo Centric Lecture* has recently been revised for 2 marimbas (4 players), log drum, shaker & splash cymbal in a new 2007 edition, edited by percussion legend Michael Askill. (NW)