

KSU PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE SPRING CONCERT

John Lawless, *conductor*
Michael Stubbart, *xylophone soloist*



Monday, May 3, 2021 | 7:30 PM

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**KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY**
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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2020-2021

Welcome to the Dr. Bobbie Bailey School of Music at Kennesaw State University

We offer a world class undergraduate education...training future performers, music educators, and leaders in the field of music. More than 285 majors and minors pursue degrees in performance, music education, composition, applied studies, theory, musicology, and ethnomusicology. Our programs and students stand out as the forerunners for the next generation of inspired musical scholars.

We pride ourselves on our students' accomplishments from successfully acing their first theory exams, perfecting their collective sounds in performances, to signing contracts for their first real jobs!

KSU Bailey School of Music has a long-standing tradition of student ensemble performances at state, regional, and national music conferences. Our student ensembles are regularly featured at prestigious conferences throughout the country, including the Georgia Music Educators, National Collegiate Choral Organization, National Band Association, Southern Division College Band Directors National Association, and the American Choral Directors Association Southern Division and National Conferences.

Our faculty are dynamic artists-performers-scholars who are conductors, teachers, composers, researchers, and artists who regularly perform with the Georgia Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera, Atlanta Chamber Players, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, to highlight just a few. KSU Bailey School of Music is a leader in music training regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Start your journey ... where talent is cultivated, creativity is nurtured, performers are inspired, and where passion is heard.

Leslie J. Blackwell, DMA
Interim Director, Bailey School of Music



Horizon's Edge

Riley Hodges (b. 2001)

Glimmer

Colin Gregoire, cello

Ivan Trevino (b. 1983)

Valse Brillante

Michael Stubbart, xylophone soloist

George Hamilton Green (1893-1970)

Edited by Bob Becker

Guaguanco

Traditional Cuban

The Feeling of Coming Home

Victor LaBozzetta III (b. 1997)

2300 Degrees

Christian Kilgore & Nicholas Bryant, marimba duet

Ivan Trevino (b. 1983)

Firefly

Nathan Daughtrey (b. 1975)



PROGRAM NOTES

Horizon's Edge

Percussionists have the innate ability to play almost any rhythm you give them. When composing *Horizon's Edge*, I sought to take advantage of this ability and write some very complex meters and rhythms, while still maintaining the fun and groovy nature of the piece. The music captures the idea of finally reaching a goal or destination that was previously thought to be unachievable: the *Horizon's Edge*. –Riley Hodges

Glimmer

Written in 2012, *Glimmer* was commissioned by Kathleen Kemp, a cellist in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and a dear friend of mine. The piece is scored for cello, piano, and two percussionists. She asked me to compose a piece to perform with friends and family, including her son Michael Kemp, a professional orchestral percussionist. *Glimmer* was premiered in January 2012 in Kilbourn Hall at Eastman School of Music, performed by Kathleen, Michael, along with percussionists Em Feeny and Damon Martinez.

Sometimes, life gets crazy, especially as a full-time musician. In between the hustle and bustle of touring, teaching and bigger life events like getting married and buying a home, I needed an outlet to take a breath and RELAX. *Glimmer* speaks to the meditative part of life that we sometimes need to visit. –Ivan Trevino

Valse Brillante

Considered one of history's greatest xylophone players, George Hamilton Green started playing at age 11, and at 13 was performing solos with his father's band. At 19, he entered vaudeville and in one year was proclaimed "the fastest, most artistic, and wonderful xylophone soloist in this country or abroad." He was one of the most popular artists in recorded history, acting as soloist, composer, arranger, and as part of various groups including All Star Trio, Green Brothers' Xylophone Orchestra, and Green Brothers Novelty Band. Green was a fine teacher and author of pedagogical materials, his course of 50 lessons retaining importance today. Upon his retirement from music in 1946, Green pursued a successful career as an artist, illustrator and cartoonist. In 1936, Carl Fisher Music INC. published a series of eight xylophone solos with piano accompaniment by George Hamilton Green. *Valse Brillante* was part of this original collection of xylophone rags. This Bob Becker arrangement is for xylophone soloist and four percussionists. –Carl Fisher Music

[Program Notes, continued]

Guaguanco

One of the most popular styles of rumba, the Guaguanco, developed among different African ethnic groups, primarily from Central and West Africa, who were brought to Cuba as slaves. Like other rumba styles such as yambu and coumbai, the Guaguanco developed in the middle 1800's. The predominant percussion instruments are: clave, bell, shakere, gua gua, cajons, and congas. – John Lawless

The Feeling of Coming Home

This is a percussion octet written in the summer of 2017. The piece can be described as the harmonic equivalent of dipping one's fingers into cans of paint and smearing all of the colors onto an empty easel. By setting this color palette with a metric grid that slowly becomes transparent over several repetitions of an eight-bar melody, the piece intends to match the feeling one may find upon a long-awaited return to the place they call home.

–Victor LaBozzetta III

I would like to send a very special THANK YOU to Michael Cebulski for letting us borrow his amazing 1908 Deagan songbells for this performance. –John Lawless

2300 Degrees

2300 Degrees is a marimba duo commissioned by Annie Stevens and Andrea Venet of Escape Ten percussion duo. They premiered the piece at Spivey Hall at Clayton State University and featured it at their PASIC 2016 showcase concert. 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 and 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.

The end result is the most relentless, technically challenging duo I've ever written.

–Ivan Trevino

Firefly

Firefly was commissioned by the Texas Christian University Percussion Orchestra, Brian A. West, conductor. The work centers on the belief that the two species of fireflies in Japan - Genji-hotaru and Heike-hotaru - are the ghosts of fallen warriors from the terrible struggle between two clans in the 12th century. Once a year, on the night of the 20th day of the fourth month, the fireflies re-enact the great battle on the Uji River. On that night, all caged fireflies should be set free so they may take part.

The piece follows the arc of the story *Tale of the Heike*, which divides into three large sections, each centering on a different leader and their individual personality traits and leadership prowess. The opening passage from the tale introduces the Buddhist law of impermanence, especially as it relates to good fortune.

Introduction from *The Tale of the Heike*:

The sound of the Gian Shōja bells echoes the impermanence of all things;
the colors of the sāla flowers reveals the truth that the prosperous must decline.
The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night;
the mighty fall at last, they are as dust before the wind.

The pitch material and thematic ideas for *Firefly* came from two sources. The first involved transforming the word "Hotaru" (Japanese for "firefly") into a set of chromatic pitches using a serial alphabet—one that assigns numbers (0 through 11 for each of the 12 chromatic pitches), restarting each time it cycles through the numbers:

H O T A R U becomes 7 2 7 0 5 8 becomes C G C F B-flat D-flat

Serendipitously, this pitch set spells out the Japanese pentatonic Insen scale (C, D-flat, F, G, B-flat). This became the primary pitch material for the entire work, straying here and there to satisfy my own wanderings. The serial firefly can be found throughout all of the keyboard parts in many different forms - from texture to accompaniment to melody and back again.

The primary source for melody came from the traditional Japanese song "Hotaru no Hikari" (or "Glow of the Firefly"). This song is typically sung at graduation-type ceremonies (again emphasizing the idea of impermanence) and uses the tune to *Auld Lang Syne*. At its simplest, the song is based around the major pentatonic scale. To mask the original theme, I instead applied the Insen scale, thus giving it a completely different character. The HOTARU serial collection also helped to organize the meters in the wooden section of the piece at m. 90. —Nathan Daughtrey



PERCUSSION PERSONNEL

Anna Abdala
Matt Andrews
JT Battles-Garrett
Ben Bouland
Samuel Brook
Nicholas Bryant
Jordan Croteau
Jason Frey
Anna Gugel
Riley Hodges
Mack Jefferson
Dylan Johnson
Christian Kilgore
Elizabeth Lawrence
Vincent Nguyen
Jake Norwood
Matt Pate
Brandon Portalatin
Olivia Reeves
Arsalaan Sayani
Tyrell Smith
Alex Sotka
Malloy Sparling
Alec Yeung
Andrew Yi



BIOGRAPHIES

John Lawless

John Lawless, Senior Lecturer, joined the music faculty of Kennesaw State University in 1998 and became the Director of Percussion Studies in 2004. Principal Timpanist of the Atlanta Opera orchestra since 1979, John held the same position with the Chattanooga Symphony for 21 years. Since 1978, Mr. Lawless has performed, toured and recorded with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra while maintaining a thriving freelance career as a studio and pit percussionist.

A founding member of the Atlanta Percussion Trio, Mr. Lawless performs hundreds of school concerts a year for thousands of children throughout the Southeastern United States. Along with Scott Douglas and Karen Hunt, the trio has been a performing group for 32 years, bringing educational programs to children of all ages.

As a soloist, Mr. Lawless played several concertos with the Chattanooga Symphony, including: *The Olympian for 8 Timpani and Orchestra* as well as *The Messenger for Multiple Percussion and Orchestra*, both written by James Oliverio. In 2009, Mr. Lawless performed Joseph Schwantner's *Concerto for Percussion* with the Cobb Symphony Orchestra. In 2014, he performed the Southeastern premier of Christopher Theofinidis' *Marimba Concerto* with the KSU Wind Ensemble for the Festival of New Music.

A graduate of Georgia State University, Mr. Lawless' teachers include Tom Float, Jack Bell, Cloyd Duff, Paul Yancich, Bill Wilder and Mark Yancich. Previous faculty appointments include those at Georgia State University, Clark Atlanta University and West Georgia State University.

[Biographies, continued]

Michael Stubbart

Michael Stubbart has served as section percussion with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra since the 2017-2018 season and Assistant Principle Timpani since 2019. Before coming to Atlanta, Michael was Acting Principal Percussion with the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra in Honolulu for two years. He has been teaching at Kennesaw State University since the fall of 2019.

Stubbart is a native of the metro Atlanta area and holds a bachelors degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and a masters degree from Rice University.

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