

Program Notes

Brady Harrison, Percussion Chamber Music Recital

5:00 PM

October 27, 2018

Singletary Center for the Arts, Recital Hall

21 by Andy Akiho

21, originally written for cello, electronics, and steel pan, also requires the performers to use a variety of other percussion sounds, including bass drum, tambourine, hand claps, and striking nontraditional parts of the marimba, such as the resonators. This is a marimba adaptation of the original work, and for the performance today I have chosen to play some of the open choice sounds on metal instruments including a long black iron pipe, a cowbell, and a brake drum. To execute the loops, we are using Ableton Live, as triggered from a foot pedal that we are using on stage. Of the work, the composer states:

“21” was written for Mariel Roberts in October 2008. After meeting Mariel at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, I was impressed with her effortless sense of rhythm and musicality on the cello. I first realized her talent when we performed “*I falleN TwO*” for string quartet and steel pans. Amazed by her technical virtuosity and vivid musical interpretation of the piece, I was inspired to write a new duet for cello and steel pan. The cello part requires the performer to play a kick drum and operate a loop pedal while simultaneously playing the cello. The pan part requires the performer to play one regular tenor pan, an option prepared bore pan with rubber bands (mimicking Bartók/snap pizzicatos), and a tambourine with the foot. The title “21” refers to the twenty-first measure of the Fugue movement in J.S. Bach’s *Violin Sonata #1 in G minor*. The harmonic chords of this measure are the inspiration of the sequence of notes for “21.” Coincidentally, Mariel Roberts was 21 years old when the piece was written and premiered.¹

¹ Andy Akiho, “21”, *Andy Akiho Music*, accessed October 8, 2018, <https://www.andyakiho.com/store/p18/21.html>.

Andy Akiho, born 1979, is one of the young composition visionaries of our time. Growing up in Columbia, South Carolina, he attending school at USC, Manhattan School of Music, Yale, and Princeton. His early professional work is as a percussionist whose primary instrument is steel pan, although his work as a composer has become a focal point of his output. He has scores of compositions to his name for mixed ensembles and holds a dizzying array of accolades for his work, including the prestigious Luciano Berio Rome Prize, the Lili Boulanger Fund, and the Horatio Parker Award, among others. Andy currently resides in New York city and remains active in new composition projects as well as performance.

***Things We Dream About* by Ivan Trevino**

Things We Dream About, by Ivan Trevino, is a four-movement work for flute, percussion, and electronics. Each of the short movements is built on and characterized by a specific theme related to dreams, and the composer sometimes calls for electronic effects to be applied to the live flute performance to enhance some of the dream-like qualities of the piece. The composer offers the following program notes:

"In dreams, emotions are overwhelming."

- From Michael Gandry's film *The Science of Sleep*

Dreams are both bizarre and beautiful, and I'm reminded of this each time I see Gandry's film, (and each time I wake from a weird-ass dream!) Dreams often times exaggerate our emotions and sometimes help us experience things we cannot experience in real life.

Love, success, clairvoyance, and happyness [sic] are four things we all dream about, and four sources of inspiration for this piece.

I. Love

We all long for it. Sometimes we find it. Sometimes we loose [sic] it. We never forget the first time we fall in love, or the last time we fall in love.

II. Being a Rock Star

Growing up as a young classical percussionist, I often hoped and dreamed that Radiohead had a "marimba" vacancy. It never happened, but that didn't stop me from dreaming about it.

III. Ghosts

Inspired by the opening scene of Gandry's film. I often dream about dead relatives and loved ones. Talking to them, embracing them, wishing they were still here.

IV. Fun!

Ever wake up from a dream, smiling and laughing? Those are the best! This is a pop tune inspired by Matt & Kim, a keyboard and drum duo I like from Brooklyn.

Things We Dream About was commissioned by A/B Duo in 2013. It's a duo for a flutist and percussionist, and is scored for amplified C-flute, bass flute, vibraphone, and drum set.

- Ivan Trevino, July 2013²

Ivan Trevino (b.1983) is a Mexican-American composer and percussionist who has become a recognizable voice in the percussion community. His honest blend of contemporary, percussive and indie-rock compositions has become standard repertoire in the field of percussion and are regularly performed around the world. He is a multi-award-winning recipient of the Percussive Arts Society's International Composition Contest and has over seventy compositions and songs to his name, many of which were commissioned by leading performers and institutions in the field.³

***Once Removed* by John Fitz Rogers**

Once Removed, by John Fitz Rogers, is a unique work for two marimbas written in 2003. The overriding musical premise of the work is that the two instruments play exactly offset from one another by one sixteenth note for the entire piece, thus creating a ten-minute hocket that requires a click track for proper coordination. The title refers to the aspect of having to be removed from the

² Ivan Trevino, *Things We Dream About* (Ivan Trevino, IvanDrums.com, 2013), 1. All Rights Reserved.

³ Ivan Trevino, "Bio", *Ivan Trevino*, accessed October 8, 2018, <https://ivandrums.com/biography/>.

typical listening relationship when playing a duet with another instrument, instead, focusing on the click track (rather than the actual performer) in order to play with the duet partner. Of *Once Removed*, the composer says:

"Once Removed" is based on a simple premise: two marimbists play the same or related music at a fairly fast tempo, but they almost never play together. Individually, each performer must execute fairly simple patterns with great rhythmic precision, and to help, each listens to a click track over headphones supplied by an audio CD. However, what is recorded on the CD are two different click tracks on the separate left and right stereo channels (one performer listens to the left channel, the other to the right channel). Though both click tracks proceed at the same tempo, one track stays at a fixed distance behind the other, which mean that one performer is always slightly "behind" the other performer. When their individually simple patterns are combined in performance, the resulting mosaic is both very fast and quite complex—something that sounds more like one "super marimba" than two individual lines. Of course, the conceptual challenge for the performers is difficult, even though the patterns themselves are not overly virtuosic. Musicians are trained to communicate and to play together, yet in some ways this work entails not listening to each other. Though the technology of multiple click tracks creates new possibilities of texture and ensemble precision, the trade-off in "Once Removed" is that each player remains somewhat isolated from the instrument he or she plays, and more importantly, musically separated from the other performer, like two people trying to reach one another from opposite sides of a thin glass pane.⁴

Composer John Fitz Rogers's music has been performed by ensembles, festivals, and venues such as Carnegie Hall, Bang on a Can Marathon, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, National Cathedral, the Albany, Louisville, Charleston, and Tulsa Symphony Orchestras, New York Youth Symphony, Eastman Wind Ensemble, the MATA, Rockport, Bumbershoot, Bowling Green, and Keys To The Future festivals, Festival of New American Music, Phillips Collection Concert Series, and the College Band Directors National Association national conference, as well as by individuals and chamber ensembles such as Antares, New Century Saxophone Quartet, Capitol Quartet, Lionheart, Composers, Inc., Opus Two, Meehan/Perkins Duo,

⁴ John Fitz Rogers, *Once Removed* (Columbia, SC: Base Two Music Publishing, 2003), 2.

Bent Frequency, Ambassador Duo, guitarist Michael Nicolella, pianist Marina Lomazov, and bassoonist Peter Kolkay.

A dedicated advocate for contemporary music, Rogers founded and directed the Southern Exposure New Music Series, which received the 2005-06 Chamber Music America / ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. He holds degrees in music from Cornell University, the Yale School of Music, and Oberlin College, where he studied composition, piano, and conducting; his composition teachers included Steven Stucky, Roberto Sierra, Martin Bresnick, and Jacob Druckman. Rogers has served on the faculties of Cornell University and the Longy School of Music, as composer-in-residence for the Chamber Music Conference and Composers Forum of the East, Conductor's Institute of South Carolina, and the Southeastern Piano Festival, and as visiting faculty for the Composition Intensive Program at the Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival. Rogers is currently Professor of Composition at the University of South Carolina School of Music and visiting faculty at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. His work is published by Base Two Music Publishing.⁵

Movement 1: “Mom’s Wisdom”, from *Hair, Cloth, and Thread* by Valerie Coleman

Hair, Cloth, and Thread is a 6-movement work for percussion and flute that Heather and I were part of a commission consortium for in 2016. Because of the extended length of the entire set, we are only performing the first movement today, and will segue without pause, into the following piece, *Flute and Bongos 1*, by Alec Wilder. The first movement of Coleman’s work, titled, *Mom’s Wisdom*, paints an almost mystical image using bowed vibraphone, rattles, and a very lyrical and exotic flute part that offers options for bass, contrabass, alto, or C flute. The work has accompanying images to frame the inspiration of each movement. Of the work, the composer

⁵ “Bio”, *John Fitz Rogers*, accessed October 9, 2018, <http://www.johnfitzrogers.com/bio.html>.

states:

Hair, Cloth, and Thread is a 6-movement suite with multi-disciplinary option that merges the works of visual artist Sonya Clark with a tapestry of sounds and colors made possible through various instruments from the flute family and percussion duo. The piece honors hair styles as a veritable art that challenges conventional usage of textiles for installation pieces. Like Clark's collection, the soundscape expresses the complicated history of textile production in the United States from slavery to the modern era and translates the discussion of race into an earthy, vivid edgy musical palette of orchestral colors and rhythm. Percussion instruments include: Marimba, Vibraphone, Congas, Bongos, Drum Kit, Crotales and a variety of hand held percussion. The work will be performed starting in 2016 through a consortium led by the Aark Duo: Virginia Commonwealth Faculty members Tabitha Peters and Justin Alexander.⁶

Described as one of the "Top 35 Female Composers in Classical Music" by critic Anne Midgette of the Washington Post, Valerie Coleman (B. 1970) is among the world's most played composers living today. Whether it be live or via radio, her compositions are easily recognizable for their inspired style and can be throughout venues, institutions and competitions globally. The Boston Globe describes Coleman as a having a "talent for delineating form and emotion with shifts between ingeniously varied instrumental combinations" and The New York Times observes her compositions as "skillfully wrought, buoyant music". With works that range from flute sonatas that recount the stories of trafficked humans during Middle Passage and orchestral and chamber works based on nomadic Roma tribes, to scherzos about moonshine in the Mississippi Delta region and motifs based from Morse Code, her body of works have been highly regarded as a deeply relevant contribution to modern music.⁷

⁶ "Projects," *Valerie Coleman Flutist and Composer*, accessed October 9, 2018, <https://www.vcolemanmusic.com/projects.html>.

⁷ "Biography," *Valerie Coleman Flutist and Composer*, accessed October 9, 2018, <https://www.vcolemanmusic.com/about.html>.

***Flute and Bongos No.1* by Alec Wilder**

Like several of the works that Alec Wilder (1907-1980) wrote for wind instruments and percussion accompaniment, *Flute and Bongos No. 1* (originally written in 1958, published in 1976) requires the percussionist to improvise on an instrument of their choice, as there is no written percussion part. This fact makes each performance of the work highly customizable, and for today's performance, I will be playing on an amplified Udu drum that is being run through an effects processor. The wispy quality of the opening, leading to a more driven, groove oriented body, make this an effective pairing with Valerie Coleman's *Mom's Wisdom*, and as such we will be performing these two works today as part of a set, without break.

***Garage Drummer* by James Campbell**

Garage Drummer was originally composed as a multiple percussion solo with soundscape accompaniment. The version that we are playing today was rescored in xcv for percussion ensemble and percussion soloist, where the prerecorded parts from the original version have been scored onto the percussion ensemble of six players. The ensemble members perform on a variety of instruments, including mallets instruments, auxiliary percussion, drum set, and timpani. Of the work, James Campbell states:

Garage Drummer was inspired by my memories of rock band jam sessions (commonly known as garage bands) held in various household basements and garages. The occupants of the host household, at first, notice little more than random noises and feedback seeping through the walls of their living room. As the jam session unfolds, the drummer's experiments with sounds, grooves, and fills increase with confidence and join a cacophony of wild guitar, bass, and keyboard riffs. As usual, the drummer not only ends up driving the band, but also drives the occupants out of the house! I have to say that I've served on both ends of the experience as a drummer and a parent.

Garage Drummer won first place in the 2005 PAS Composition Contest and was premiered by Rob Parks.⁸

⁸ James Campbell, *Garage Drummer* (Innovative Percussion, 2006, rev. 2011), 1. All Rights Reserved.

James Campbell has received worldwide recognition as a performer, pedagogue and author, and is a figure in the development of the contemporary percussion ensemble. He has toured extensively throughout The Americas, Europe, and Asia. Currently Provost's Distinguished Service Professor of Music and Director of Percussion Studies at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, he also holds the positions of Principal Percussionist with the Lexington Philharmonic, drummer with the Kentucky Jazz Repertory Orchestra, and Past President of the Percussive Arts Society. He has numerous accolades for both his performing and his teaching, and among his award-winning works for percussion, Jim has published with Meredith Music, C. Alan Publications, Innovative Percussion, Row-Loff Productions, Bachovich Music Publications, Alfred Publications., and TapSPACE Publications. Jim is an artist and endorsee for Innovative Percussion, Evans Drumheads, Meinl Percussion, and a member of the Black Swamp Percussion Educator Network. He is an Artist and Educator for the Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company and a Performing Artist for Yamaha Corporation of America, Band & Orchestra Division, who recently presented him with their Legacy Award.⁹

⁹ "James Campbell," *Innovative Percussion*, accessed October 9, 2018, http://www.innovativepercussion.com/artists/james_campbell).