



Optimum
Musical Resources

Proudly presents

**Leigh
Howard
Stevens**

**Saturday
21st April 2001
8.00 pm**

Also featuring the

**Australian
Marimba
Orchestra**



Hosted by the

Canberra School of Music
National Institute of the Arts
at the Australian National University

**conducted by
Gary France**

We are proud to present Leigh Howard Stevens for the first time in Australia. Leigh is renowned as the worlds foremost teacher and virtuoso of the marimba. He has revolutionized performance practices and his teaching has inspired students throughout the world.

Leigh has been in Canberra this last week working with some of Australia's finest marimbists from NSW, ACT, SA, QLD, NT and VIC with exciting results.

We welcome you tonight to the Canberra School of Music to experience this unique event- Leigh Howard Stevens in concert and the Australian Marimba Orchestra conducted by Mr. Gary France. The marimba orchestra is the largest ever assembled in Australia.

This evenings concert would not be possible without the generous support of the Canberra School of Music. Special thanks to Pamela McKay, Katie Woods and Professor Nicolette Fraillon.

Allan Watson

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Leigh Howard Stevens

Great Wall

L. H. Stevens (b. 1953)

Selections from the Great Albums for the Young

Sweet Dreams

P. I Tchaikowsky (1840—1893)

Serenade for the Doll

Claude Debussy (1862—1918)

May, Sweet May

Robert Schumann (1810—1856)

Ivan is Very Busy

Aram Khachaturian (1903—1978)

Song of the Lark

P. I Tchaikowsky (1840—1893)

Preludes for the Marimba

No 2, 5 & 9

Raymond Helble (b 1949)

Andante

(from the Violin Sonata in A min)

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Rhythmic Caprice

L.H. Stevens

Mr. Stevens performs on an Imperial Grand Malletech 5 octave marimba of his own design and uses Malletech mallets exclusively.

Please note that use of photographic and sound recording devices is prohibited

Australian Marimba Orchestra

Conducted by Gary France

Danse Rituelle du Feu "Ritual Fire Dance"

Manuel de Falla

Arr. by Mitchell Peters Ed by Gordon Peters

Prelude and Dance

Ronald Io Presti

Prelude and Fugue *

for Cymbals and Marimbas

Jonathan Powles

Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

From Pictures at an Exhibition

Moussorgsky

Arr. For Marimba ensemble by Gordon Peters

Scherzo from Symphony No 4

Tchaikowsky

Arr. For Marimba Ensemble by Gordon Peters

Adagio from Symphony No 3

Camille Saint-Saens

Arr by Richard Gipson

Sabre Dance from Gayne Ballet

Aram Khachaturian

Arr. Bay Mitchell Peters Ed by Gordon Peters

* World Premier

Leigh Howard Stevens.

Hailed by Time magazine as
"the world's greatest classical marimbist",

Leigh Howard Stevens' repertoire ranges from Renaissance music and the Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach, to original marimba works written by contemporary composers expressly for him. Much of this unaccompanied literature was considered technically and musically impossible by one player until the development of Mr. Stevens' new system of four-mallet technique. His "one-handed rolls," his complete mastery of mallet independence, his numerous textural sustaining techniques and his use of birch-handle mallets have now become synonymous with contemporary marimba playing, and his revolutionary approach has been adopted by percussionists and marimbists world-wide. His book on the subject of four-mallet marimba technique, Method of Movement, has been translated into four languages.

This fresh approach to music making on the marimba has greatly expanded the instrument's compositional possibilities, stimulated composer enthusiasm for the marimba's use in solo and chamber music and ultimately led to a series of more than twenty-five world premiere performances by Mr. Stevens. The first performance of Raymond Helble's Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra by Leigh Howard Stevens and the

Denver Symphony was a milestone in the development of marimba literature. His digitally recorded all-Bach album has been greeted with rave reviews for its artistry by magazines as diverse as *Stereophile* and *Billboard*.

Devoted marimba lovers have sprung up all over the world, converted by Leigh Howard Stevens' public solo recitals, hundreds of college campus appearances, performances with symphony orchestra, European concert tours, masterclasses and radio and television appearances both in the United States and abroad. He has been featured in *Time Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and appeared on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, and *Voice of America's* internationally broadcast, *New York, New York*. His celebrated musicianship, imaginative programming and exciting visual performances have inspired critical acclaim and standing ovations in forty-eight of the United States and 16 other countries. Mr. Stevens introduced the marimba to The People's Republic of China in a televised performance that reached an estimated audience of 800 million viewers.

In addition to performing exclusively on an extended-range Malletech Marimba of his own design, he serves as a consultant and conducts educational masterclasses for Malletech. Mr. Stevens is a member of the faculty of the Royal Academy of Music, London. He has been awarded three U. S. Patents for marimba design.

About The Marimba

The marimba is at once one of the oldest and one of the newest musical instruments. While the first concerto for marimba and orchestra wasn't composed until 1935 (by American Paul Creston), the marimba dates back thousands of years and may actually be the oldest musical instrument known to man.

A seven note lithophone, or "stone marimba" was discovered in Vietnam in 1949 by French pre-historian Georges Condominas. It is estimated to be 5,000 years old, which makes it the oldest known musical instrument specimen in the world. The bars of this marimba-like instrument, which range from 40 to 26 inches in length, were perfectly tuned to a Javanese pentatonic scale by the deliberate chipping and flaking of some ancient instrument maker. Similar instruments have also been found in the burial chambers of Egypt, and in other parts of Africa.

The wooden variety of this family of instruments appears to be indigenous to many primitive cultures in Asia and Africa. The marimba is differentiated from the xylophone-like instruments by the addition of a separate acoustic amplifier for each note. The idea of adding an identically tuned hollowed out gourd or other vessel to amplify and enrich each tone bar of the instrument was a stroke of genius of some unidentified primitive mind.

It appears that the marimba came to Central and South America with slave trade, bypassing Europe until North Americans brought the instrument to the Continent sometime in the second decade of this century. For this reason, the great European master composers were unaware of the marimba. The xylophone had a separate development in Europe, being played by roving gypsy musicians and eventually making its orchestral music debut in 1874 in Saint-Saens' *Danse Macabre*. The evolution of the marimba from a lap-held, crudely tuned instrument of a few notes to today's "Grand Soloist Marimba" came about strictly in the Americas. The change from one diatonic to two chromatic rows of tone-bars, arranged like a piano, was the contribution of Sebastian Hurtado, a Guatemalan, in about 1880. The perfection of the tuning of the bars, the addition of metal tubular resonators for greater volume, and the concept of tunable resonators for weather compensation was all accomplished in North America.

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Australian Marimba Orchestra

Conducted by Mr Gary France

Head of Percussion and Brass
Canberra School of Music

Mikhaela Adam, Mark Ashton,
Mary Broughton, Sean Cadogan,
Neil Curry, Jacinta Dunlop,
Lucas Edmonds, Steve Falk,
Joel Farland, Jocelyn Fegent,
Tim Hauptman, Joshua Hill,
James Hull, Adam Jeffrey,
Kerryn Joyce, Chi-Hsia Lai,
Merrilee McNaught, Kevin Man,
Justin Marshall, Sok Wah Ng,
Mark Robinson, Kevin Tuck,
Melanie Twidale, Veronica Walshaw,
Bernard Winetroube. Allan Watson,
Richard Gleeson.

Gary France.

Gary is a native of Syracuse, New York, U.S.A. Mr France, now living in Canberra, Australia, performs in both the classical and contemporary genres. He received his Bachelor of Music degree, Music Education, in 1979, from the State University of New York's Crane School of Music, being awarded the coveted Crane Performers Certificate. He completed his Master of Music degree, Orchestral Performance, in 1988 at the University of North Texas. While at UNT Gary became the first drummer to direct one of the prestigious Jazz Lab Bands. Since settling in Australia in 1987, as the inaugural lecturer in Percussion at the W.A. Conservatorium of Music, Gary France has achieved much, through his dedicated teaching and performing on a wide range of percussion instruments, to significantly raise the profile of percussion playing in Australia. Mr France is currently Senior Lecture, Head of Percussion and Brass at the internationally acclaimed Canberra School of Music.

Gary's list of musical credits include: James Morrison, Richie Cole, Ricky May, George Golla, Nat Adderley, Helen Matthews, Jim McNeeley, Urbie Green, Charlie Gabriel, John Clayton, Holly Hoffman, Peter Leutch, Phil Wilson, and Clifford Jardon and numerous others. Gary is also well known as the founder and artistic director of the Perth Jazz Orchestra as well as drummer with the nationally acclaimed swing group Dude Ranch. As a classical musician he has performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Nova Ensemble, the West Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestras, the Dallas Brass, the Doddworth Saxhorn Ensemble and is currently principal timpanist of the Canberra Symphony. He has performed in numerous musicals and has many recordings to credit. As a clinician for Yamaha Musical Products U.S.A. and the Sabian Cymbal Company, he has toured internationally throughout the U.S., India, Africa, China, Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia.

Gary's recent recordings include Gary France, Works for Percussion, (Sunset Music Australia, SSCDB) The Perth Jazz Orchestra, (Sunset Music Australia, SSCD12), Helen Matthews, Along Time Coming, (SSCD5) Hagoromo and Other Orchestral Works by David Lumsdaine with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, (ABC Classics, ABC424-994-2) and Dude Ranch, Darling Rangers 001 described as

"...one of the most accomplished country albums ever released in Australia" (Bruce Elder, Rolling Stone Magazine.)

Milestones in the recent history of the marimba:

1901 The marimba is scheduled for its North American debut in Buffalo at the Pan-American Exposition. Cancelled due to the assassination of President McKinley in that city.

1903 John Calhoun Deagan in Chicago begins to make xylophones and orchestra bells with chromatic keyboards and resonators.

1908 The Hurtado Brothers tour North America with their chromatic marimba with wooden box-resonators.

1910 The J. C. Deagan Company begins manufacturing of chromatic marimbas.

1933 Clair Omar Musser conducts 100 marimbas at the Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago. They perform arrangements of Wagner's *Pilgrims' Chorus*, Chopin, Eigar and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.

1935 The 100 member International Marimba Symphony Orchestra performs to startled reviews in Europe and at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

1940's Brass resonators on marimbas are replaced by cardboard tubes due to rationing of metals for war effort. Marimba range begins to shrink from five octaves to three and a half octaves in response to desire for portability.

1937 Leopold Stokowski toys with idea of adding bass marimba to the string bass section of the orchestra because of its full bass tone. After borrowing one from Clair Omar Musser, wisely decides against it.

1940's Clair Omar Musser breaks away from J. C. Deagan Company over issue of rehiring WWII veterans and founds Musser Marimba Company.

1950's Vida Chenoweth performs first solo marimba recital of all original marimba compositions. Commissions and performs Robert Kurkas Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra at Camegie Hall.

1960's Popularity of marimba increases as college music departments develop percussion programs, marimba ensembles and percussion ensembles.

1970's and 80's Introduction of one-handed rolls and other new techniques spur composer interest in marimba as solo instrument.

1980's and 90's Marimba range begins to expand again to size that was common in 1920's (4 1/2 to 5 octaves). Major composers begin to write for marimba: Druckman, Miki, Reich, Schwantner, Berio, Henze.

1998: Revival of the marimba orchestra, organized and promoted by Dana Kimble, culminates in a performance at West Point, New York on March 28, 1998 with 134 marimbas on stage being simultaneously played upon by 184 marimbists, conducted by Frederick Fennell.