

SCHOOL OF MUSIC



GARY FRANCE & THE DRUMATIX 2007 NSW SOUTHWEST COAST TOUR

Saturday May 19, 2007
Music Auditorium, Narooma Golf Club

Sunday, May 20, 2007
Wolumla Hall, Merimbula

ANU COLLEGE OF ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



PROGRAM

Music for Pieces of Wood

Steve Reich

The DRUMatiX Percussion Group

Etude No. 3

Paul Smadbeck

Richard Spong, Marimba

Etude in Ab, Opus 6, No. 2

Clair Omar Musser

Christina Hopgood Marimba - Jacinta Dunlop Piano

Electric Counterpoint

Steve Reich

Charles Martin - Marimba

INTERVAL

Djille

Peter Sculthorpe

The DRUMatiX Percussion Group

Dream of the Cherry Blossoms

Keiko Abe / Gary France

Jacinta Dunlop Marimba / Gary France Percussion

Northern Lights

Eric Ewazen

Veronica Walshaw

Fluffy Ruffles

George Hamilton Green

The DRUMatiX Percussion Group



PROGRAM NOTES

Music for Pieces of Wood by Steve Reich

Minimalism in music has received increased attention since its introduction to music in the late 1960s by composers such as Reich and Riley. Its style has provided a fresh compositional alternative to atonality and serialism in the twentieth century. Steve Reich's *Music for Pieces of Wood* received its premiere performance in 1973. I first performed *Music for Pieces of Wood* in 1979 with the Abraxas Percussion Group for the Music Educators National Conference in Atlantic City USA under the supervision of the composer. *Music for Pieces of Wood* requires African Claves specially tuned to D#, B, A, C#, D# 8va. As these instruments are not available commercially I commissioned Chris Murdock, instrument maker and artist, better known for his audio work at the W.A. Academy of Performing Arts, to reproduce the instruments specified by Reich. - Gary France

Etude No. 3 by Paul Smadbeck

Etude No. 3 is one of the works written by Paul Smadbeck in the early 1980's. Smadbeck's career as a composer at that time was short-lived. Only having created five works during this time, he is still regarded highly by percussionists; as his music has become standard repertoire. A short time after these five pieces were composed, Smadbeck gave up playing as well as composing (late 1980's) to become a Commercial Real-Estate Agent. In Paul Smadbeck's own words, "this etude was written particularly to aid in the development of the independent (one-handed) roll." In the opening section of the piece (a chorale) the first moment where an independent roll is absolutely necessary is the fermata on D and G# (left hand). Next Smadbeck challenges the player with an independent roll on one note (or one bar – note is in bar 6 on F# in the right hand). This requirement forces the player to contort his/her hand to an awkward playing position and awkward interval (of the mallets) to play the independent roll. In the next section, an Ostinato (continuous musical pattern) is played in the left hand while breaking down octave independent rolls to independent strokes giving the illusion of an independent roll. This is technically challenging in that the roll becomes measured and forces the player to control their roll-speed. Overall, Smadbeck's *Etude No. 3* is an engaging piece of musical literature which correctly enables and guides a player to learn (with musical application) the technique of the 'Independent Roll'. This is achieved by the means of allowing for a 'free' roll-speed and then demanding a metrically controlled roll-speed. - Richard Spong

Etude in Ab, Opus 6, No. 2 by Clair Omar Musser

Clair Omar Musser (1901 – 1998) had a great influence on percussion technique, repertoire, instruments, and performance. He designed many instruments, and there is an international company specialising in percussion instruments that bears his name. His innovative four-mallet grip revolutionised marimba technique and is now a favourite grip for many performers. His solo compositions and transcriptions and his ensemble arrangements have enjoyed great popularity. This two-mallet etude can be performed with an optional piano accompaniment. There are four sections of the piece: the beginning section, in 9/8 time, introduces the style of the piece; the middle two sections, in 12/8 time, develop the piece further and consist of numerous arpeggiated passages; and the final section re-states the beginning themes and finishes the piece with a flourish. For me, the main challenge in performing this etude is the virtuosic tempo that Musser indicates. - Christina Hopgood

Electric Counterpoint by Steve Reich

Electric Counterpoint is one of a series of three 'Counterpoint' pieces, each written for one instrument accompanied by pre-recorded tape of the same or very similar instruments. Reich creates structures of repetitions of patterns; one phrase enters and establishes itself, then another enters, but offset by 2 beats, and another, this time offset by 3 and a half beats from the original. In this way, Reich explores the relationships of the notes within the one pattern, not only rhythmically but also harmonically by adding patterns in the same rhythm but transposed in pitch. This piece was originally written for guitar (with electric bass) and first recorded by Pat Metheny in 1987 with consultation from Reich, most performances use Metheny's tape part or are by an ensemble. My version required no transcription since the guitar and bass parts

fit within the concert marimba's range. I recorded the tape part in sections over a period of about 5 weeks and was assisted in post-production and the live sound by Niven Stines. The impression I want to convey with this piece is of an all encompassing beautiful sound, contrasted with incessant, confusing rhythm that assaults conventional musical sensibilities. The use of marimba is perfect in this context. The deep bass affects not just the ears but the whole body and the high register brings out the clean precise melodies. This juxtaposition conveys the theme of the piece – counterpoint – but it is also expressed in other ways. The grandest is the relationship between the three sections, labelled fast, slow, and fast, one of the smallest is the ambiguity of the time signature towards the end of the work. I feel that *Electric Counterpoint* like many other minimalistic pieces is about creating a visceral experience from an almost scientific structure. When listening to it, I find the repeating phrases hypnotic and calming. I recede into thought only to be woken with surprise to find that the structure has changed or that the piece is actually over! I hope that you can have an equally rewarding experience. Steve Reich (born 1936) is an acclaimed American composer, famous as a pioneer of minimalism. One of his early experimental techniques was the manipulation of tape loops and the phasing effect by playing two copies of a loop at slightly different speeds. This concept developed into the idea of repeating phrases that are displaced by a certain duration, as can be heard in *Electric Counterpoint*. - Charles Martin

Djilile by Peter Sculthorpe

Djilile, for percussion quartet, is based on an adaptation, with additional material, of the Aboriginal melody "Whistling duck on a Billabong". It was collected in northern Australia in the late 1950s by A.P. Elkin and Trevor Jones. *Djilile* was first performed by the Sydney - based percussion ensemble Synergy on 7th March 1990 at the Adelaide Festival of the Arts. - Peter Sculthorpe

Dream of the Cherry Blossoms by Keiko Abe

Japanese composer and marimba virtuoso, Keiko Abe was born into a family of doctors and businessmen. She studied piano and xylophone as a child and although pressured by her family to study medicine, Abe gained qualifications in music performance, composition and education. In 1963, the Yamaha Corporation chose Abe to be the marimba consultant to aid in the development of the marimba design which would allow for its expansion and use as a solo instrument. Abe says of the instrument, "The marimba is very special for me. I listen carefully to understand its many possibilities. I have great respect for the marimba. When I play, I have a great desire to find its expressive possibilities - knowing that at one time this most beautiful wood came from a living tree with its own history and experience. It is as if the marimba bar breathes like a living tree, and when I make music I want to breathe with it." Abe has transformed the marimba into a solo concert instrument. Abe's music is unique in style and she continues to explore new territory for the marimba. Improvisation is central to her compositional technique. *Dream of the Cherry Blossoms* is based on an improvisation on the traditional Japanese folksong "Sakura, Sakura", which is heard during the Cherry Blossom Festival in Japan. The theme of the folksong is treated more or less in fragments and it represents the "dream" or "fantasy" world. The tone E is central to the piece and the repetitiveness of it is representative of continuously falling cherry blossoms. This piece uses the full range of the five-octave marimba and requires strong dynamic contrasts. It encompasses a range of techniques on the marimba and the performer and listener alike are taken on an expressive musical journey. - Jacinta Dunlop

Northern Lights by Eric Ewazen

Eric Ewazen teaches theory and composition at the Juilliard School of Music in New York. *Northern Lights* is a technically very demanding piece, its beautiful tonalities and general sound make it well worth learning though. It is a piece that is in any advanced marimbist's repertoire. - Veronica Walshaw

Fluffy Ruffles by George Hamilton Green

George Hamilton Green (1893 - 1970) was born into a musical family. He was a piano prodigy by age four, and by the time he was eleven he was already being called "the greatest xylophone player in the world"! He recorded hundreds of solos, and played with many bands. In 1928, George and his brothers Joseph and Lew were the original sound crew for Walt Disney animations, and played on the soundtrack for the first ever Disney cartoon – Steamboat Willie. In the 1920s, George Hamilton Green wrote a series of 50 lessons for xylophone and sold them for \$1 each. Each lesson was crafted to develop and refine a particular xylophone skill or technique, while teaching the player all of the 12 keys. This book is still universally used by percussionists at all stages in their development, and is generally thought of as an essential instruction course for xylophone. *Fluffy Ruffles* is a ragtime piece that was composed in 1919 by Green, and in today's performance was arranged in 1986 by William Kahn (Nexus Percussion) for solo xylophone and marimba band. Ragtime is an American style of music that preceded jazz from the late 1800s until about 1920. It is characterized by accents on unusual parts of the beat, which gives a syncopated style. Xylophone rags are characterized by fast, virtuosic solo parts, as can be heard in this piece. – *Christina Hoggood*

BIOGRAPHIES

Gary France loves to play music, all kinds! You will find him at home in the orchestra pit, a circus band, the concert stage, a jazz club, a Western Swing Band, folk festivals, Greek weddings, techno raves or in Canberra, Australia making music with his percussion students at the Australian National University. Past performances and teaching have taken him to India, Africa, Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, New Zealand and all parts of North America. Gary has been an ANU School of Music faculty member since 1998, and is director of the ANU ensemble DRUMatiX. Gary's leadership activities include former Head of the West Australian Conservatorium and the ANU School of Music, as well as Convener/Artistic Director of numerous major events such as Heartbeat International World Music Festival (1995), the Australian National Marimba Festival (2001) the Rhythms of Life Percussion Festival (2002), the Australian National Percussion Symposium (2003), and the Australian Music Educators National Conference (2005). Gary is also the Lead Principal Investigator in the ANU New Media Laboratory (NML), a research team that explores the multifaceted relationships between acoustic instruments. His most recent projects have included producing the sound design and music for the Australian premiere production by The Street Theatre of the play QED by Peter Parnell (West Wing); Video Phase by Steve Reich with performances at the Taiwan-Australia New Media Art Symposium (AUS) and KOSA International Percussion Festival (USA); collaborative composition and performance for the Southeast Asian segment of the Opening Ceremonies (15th Asian Games DOHA 2006); and the New Directions Music Festival (Singapore).

Richard Spong: My musical career began with making music with my family playing and singing hymns in church and at home. Soon after, a move to America saw my ability to learn percussion performing with American Concert Bands and Marching Bands. In the marching bands I began to develop technically as a player, and only then did I really begin to play basic melodies on the "quints" (5 tenor drums off a marchers shoulder usually tuned a 3rd apart). In May 2001, my family and I moved back to Australia where I pursued the study of drum kit and popular music. After high school, I auditioned for the then Canberra School of Music with Gary France. Since then I've learnt more about music than I could ever dream possible. The whole time I've been enjoying every last minute, of each struggle, victory, and musical experience.

Christina Hoggood played piano from a young age, and started playing percussion when she was 10. At age 12 started taking lessons at her school, Canberra Girls Grammar. She played percussion in the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Concert Bands, as well as the Big Band, Percussion Ensemble, and Symphonic Wind Band. In 2004 she received a Highly Commended in the Australian Percussion Eisteddfod in the 4-mallet section. Christina is now enjoying her second year of her Performance degree at the Australian National University.

Charles Martin started learning percussion in 2000. He is now in his final semester of a percussion performance major at ANU while continuing to study at honours level in mathematics. Over the last seven years he has played both drum set and percussion in local bands and orchestras in Canberra and tours nationally with his rock band Los Capitanes. In the future he would like to continue pursuing musical performance in both rock and classical settings with a particular focus on the fusion of percussion with electronic and computer music.

Veronica Walshaw started her musical studies learning piano, starting at the tender young age of four under Adrian Tien and Elizabeth Fyfe. She obtained her CMuSA in piano in 2001. Veronica started learning percussion at the age of thirteen with the MuST program, continuing with the Type II program at the ANU School of Music and is currently in the third year of her Bachelor of Music degree. Veronica's percussion teachers have been Bree van Reyk, Mary Broughton, Michael Askill and Gary France. Veronica has played in numerous concerts as a soloist, in ensembles, bands and orchestras. She has performed at the Sydney Opera House and the Royal Theatre in Dunedin, New Zealand. Veronica joined the James McCusker Orchestra in 2000 and is currently the principal percussionist of the Canberra Youth Orchestra. In 2006 she was the soloist with the orchestra, playing the Carl Vine concerto for Percussion. She is also the recipient of the 2006 Canberra Symphony Orchestra Scholarship. Veronica will be pursuing her musical studies abroad and is leaving for America in September, 2007.

Jacinta Dunlop is currently studying for her honours degree in percussion performance at the Canberra School of Music. After graduating with a Bachelor of Music (percussion) from the ANU in 2002, Jacinta completed a Graduate Diploma of Secondary Education (Music) and has been a classroom music teacher at St Clare's College, Canberra, for the past 2 years. She has also gained an Associate of Music in piano. She currently combines her study with conducting the St Edmund's and St Clare's Intermediate Band and Percussion Ensemble and teaching private percussion students. Musical highlights for Jacinta in recent years include the premier of her own composition for percussion and dance in 2004, performing as part of an International Youth Orchestra for the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002, being selected to take part in the Australian National Academy of Music program in Perth in 2002 and leading the percussion section in the Youth Orchestras Federation Conference in Tasmania, 2001. Jacinta has performed with a range of ensembles including the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, the ANU Virtuosi Orchestra, the ANU Choral Society and Canberra Youth Music.

THE DRUMatiX PERCUSSION GROUP is the resident percussion ensemble of the Australian National University School of Music. Operating under their present name since the beginning of 2003, they are comprised of percussion students and graduates of the ANU and are dedicated to presenting the rich and diverse repertoire written exclusively for percussion. Associate Professor Gary France has directed the percussion program at the ANU since his appointment in 1998. Major initiatives for the ANU Percussion program have included performing African Drumming for Nelson Mandela, 2000, hosting the inaugural Australian Marimba Conference, 2001, performing for the Australian National Academy of Music "Rhythms of Life" Percussion Festival, 2002, Perth W.A., hosting the inaugural Australian National Percussion Symposium and Eisteddfod, 2003 participating in the Melbourne Festival's International Youth Master class in Percussion, 2006.

The ANU DRUMatiX

Gary France – Artistic Director

Christina Hopgood, Richard Spong, Veronica Walshaw, Charles Martin, Jacinta Dunlop

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Send mail to: Gary@garyfrance.com

We would like to thank and acknowledge the support of:

The Sapphire Coast Music Society, The Montague Choristers, William and Elizabeth Hawkey, Geoff Broadfoot, Bobbie Thaxton, Rosemary Towers, Michael Stent, Olwen Morris, Clayton Fiander, The ANU Venue Operations Team, Catherine Bennetts, the SOM Executive.

UPCOMING CONCERTS

KIDDIECUSSION

31 May – 2 June 2007

Young Peoples Concerts *KIDDIECUSSION 2007*' A series of interactive concerts for young people.

<http://www.garyfrance.com/ypc.php>



Tuza Afutu

COMING TOGETHER

1 – 2 June 2007

DRUMatiX Gary France and the DRUMatiX Percussion Group with special Guest Tuza Afutu Master Drummer, Dancer and Percussionist from Ghana, West Africa. Percussionist Gary France and ANU DRUMatiX are an award winning combination any year – but particularly in 2007. Previously delighted audiences will a very special winter concert on June 1st and 2nd, 2006 at the ANU Arts Centre. This year's program celebrates Gary France's tenth year at the ANU (twentieth in Australia!) Come and hear Steve Reich's mesmerizing *Sextet*, Fredrick Rzewski's *Coming Together* a haunting tribute to the 1971 inmate uprising at the notorious Attica Prison uprising featuring international Jazz Artists Eric Ajaye and Miroslav Bukowsky, Erik Griswold's *Strings Attached* and the ANU World Music African Drum and Dance Ensemble with Master Drummer Tuza Afutu. May 30 and June 1 and 2 ANU Arts Centre Theatre Tickets are available through Canberra Ticketing in late February <http://www.anu.edu.au/music/events/concerts.php>



THE ANU SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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The 2007 Concert Program is a celebration of the School's long reputation in creativity and excellence in music making and performance. We celebrate our achievements and the significant contribution that the School, through its staff and students, has made and continues to make to the Australian cultural landscape.

We extend an invitation to our friends, supporters and the broader community to come and enjoy all the events and performances that the School has to offer.

For more information about the School of Music and its concert program please contact the School:

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And what is the purpose of writing music? One is, of course, not dealing with purposes but with sounds. Or the answer must take the form of a paradox: a purposeful purposelessness or a purposeless play. This play, however, is an affirmation of life—not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we're living, which is so excellent once one gets one's mind and one's desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord. John Cage