



ANU SCHOOL OF MUSIC PRESENTS

THE DRUMATIX PERCUSSION GROUP

TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2011

NSW Conservatorium High School
The Arts Unit, NSW Department of Education and Training

WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2011

Inaburra School & Kirrawee High School

Music for Pieces of Wood

STEVE REICH (1973)

Omphalo Centric Lecture

NIGEL WESTLAKE (1986)

The Crantock Gulls

ANDREW FORD (2004)

The Ragtime Music of G.H. Green

G.H. GREEN (1924)

The DRUMatIX Percussion Group

Yvonne Lam, Christina Hopgood, William Jackson, Jonathan Griffiths, *Charles Martin
Gary France - Artistic Director

* ANU Alumni guest artist

PROGRAM NOTES

Music for Pieces of Wood **STEVE REICH (1973)**

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

Omphalo Centric Lecture **NIGEL WESTLAKE (1986)**

"The title comes from the painting by Paul Klee, the direct and centred simplicity of which inspired the composer. The piece also owes much to the music of the African balofon (or xylophone), with its persistent ostinati, cross-rhythms and variations on simple melodic fragments. Like African music it seeks, in the words of the composer, "to celebrate life through rhythm, energy and movement"- *Omphalo Centric Lecture* was chosen to represent Australia at the 1986 Paris Rostrum of Composers. Originally written for Synergy, *Omphalo Centric Lecture* deals with the basic principles of repeated rhythmic melodic fragments and multi-metrics.

- Nigel Westlake

The Crantock Gulls **ANDREW FORD (2004)**

If there's ever been a critic who isn't afraid to publish his own composition and criticise it – it's Andrew Ford! Born English (Liverpool, 1957), he grew up listening to a mixture of the Beatles and disco music, later gaining a classier musical education studying composition at the University of Lancaster. Emigrating to Australia to take up a position at the University of Wollongong, he has since written music theatre, symphonies, and vocal chorales, but is most well known for hosting the Music Show on ABC radio and compeering Meet the Music concerts for hordes of school children in NSW. Ford's vast knowledge of music gives rise to an incredibly diverse musical vocabulary and an unpredictable style. His Composition in Blue, Grey and Pink received attention from two Australian percussion duos – Karak percussion and Match percussion who both arranged the piece. This prompted Ford to write another work for percussion duo, and during a trip to the small coastal town of Crantock (in Cornwall, England), he drew inspiration from the raucous squawking of seagulls, which he represents by controlled chaotic polymetres. Upon first listening and reading of this piece, I could not make head or tail of how to incorporate the idea of 'seagulls' into performance. I realised, however, that Ford had created an almost Xenakian work with the focus on rhythmic tension and release, and on the unforgiving nature of the metric (all tempo changes are metric modulations). The piece features complex polyrhythms: 12:7, 6:5, 5:4, 5:2 and 7:4. The main difference is then that this piece is not mathematically composed – one can hear the call and answer of individual voices, and the chaos of a horde of voices squawking independently before silence. Whether or not they are seagulls...well – you decide!

- William Jackson

The Ragtime Music of G.H. Green **G.H. GREEN (1924)**

Born in Omaha, Nebraska on May 23, 1893, George Hamilton Green, Jr. was a piano prodigy at the age of four. His grandfather, Joseph Green I, began as violinist and violin maker in New York City-later moved to Omaha to work as conductor and baritone horn soloist with the Seventh Ward Silver Cornet Band. In 1889 George Hamilton Green, Jr.'s father (George Hamilton Green, Sr.) followed his father's footsteps becoming cornet soloist, arranger, and conductor of the Seventh Ward Silver Cornet Band-playing weekly concerts to audiences of 7,000-10,000 in the 1890's. Coming from such a musical background, it is not too surprising that George Jr. was already being called "the world's greatest xylophonist" when he was only eleven years old! The next four decades of recording and composing provide documented evidence to justify the title. In 1915 a review in *The United Musician* states: "He has begun where every other xylophone player left off. His touch, his attack, his technique, and his powers of interpretation in the rendition of his solos being far different than other performers'. To say his work is marvelous and wonderful would not fully express it."

- Bob Becker

Spanish Waltz **GEORGE H. GREEN ARR. BECKER**

This piece by George Green is one of his “classical style” works and so it’s less jazzy and a little bit longer than the other works I’m playing today. The piece is in a waltz style (in 3/4 time) and this version was arranged by Bob Becker (Nexus Percussion) for solo Xylophone with marimba band accompaniment.

The Whistler, Triplets, Jovial Jasper **GEORGE H. GREEN**

These three pieces will be played with my duo partner Charles Martin. Charles will be accompanying me on the low marimba, while I will be playing both xylophone and marimba throughout the set. I will be playing the original George Green written solos with some of my own improvisations and variations, and Charles will be improvising an accompanying part using the chords.

The Whistler features a lot of trick rhythms and polyrhythms, which make the listener think that the piece is in a different time signature. Triplets, a quick fox trot, is named for the type of rhythm (triplet feel) used throughout. Jovial Jasper is a slow drag, a nice contrast from the hectic pace of the most of Green’s compositions!

- Christina Hopgood

ABOUT THE DRUMatiX PERCUSSION GROUP

THE DRUMatiX PERCUSSION GROUP is the resident percussion ensemble at the Australian National University School of Music. Operating under their present name since the beginning of 2003, they are comprised of percussion students studying at the ANU. An ensemble dedicated to presenting the rich and diverse repertoire written exclusively for percussion.

The DRUMatiX have won numerous national prizes for their presentation of percussion music across all genres including a Canberra Critics Circle Award in 2004. Under the direction of Gary France the ANU Percussion program has hosted and convened numerous international symposiums, master schools and conferences.

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