



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Sac State Percussion Ensemble

Vespertine Formations (2003)

Christopher Deane (1957-2021)

Chris Harris, Grant Johnson, Jonah Wagner, and Jordan Shippy, marimbas

Ziu (2013)

Daiki Kato (b. 1987)

Chris Harris, marimba

Gyro (2009)

Tomer Yariv (b. 1976)

Chris Harris, and Ismael Lopez, percussion

Variations on Japanese Children's Songs (1982)

Keiko Abe (b. 1937)

Jonah Wagner, marimba

How to Blank (2009)

Jason Treuting (b. 1977)

Kenya Abdallah, Ben Jilbert, Grant Johnson, Jonah Wagner, and Chris Harris, percussion

Psappa (1976)

Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001)

Grant Johnson, percussion

Omnes Trio (2019)

Andrea Venet (b. 1983)

Ben Jilbert, Matthew Amato, and Kenya Abdallah, percussion

All percussionists are students of Jordan Shippy.



TUESDAY, 7:00 P.M.
NOVEMBER 23, 2021
CAPISTRANO CONCERT HALL

PROGRAM NOTES

The concept for Christopher Deane's *Vespertine Formations* was to explore ways of creating a sense of sustain on four marimbas through extensive use of stretto and imitation. Rather than approaching an ensemble such as this in a traditional choral configuration of soprano, alto, tenor and bass, this piece focuses on keeping most of the musical activity within the same register. All four voices serve as equal members of one collective image. *Vespertine Formations* is dedicated to Harold Jones who was the professor of percussion at East Carolina University for many years. The motivation for this work comes from a phenomenon in nature. It is a common sight to see huge flocks of birds performing amazing aerial maneuvers in the evening sky over North Texas especially in the Autumn. The ornithological sky forms witnessed during one particular sunset in Fall of 2001 served as an undeniable point of inspiration during the compositional process for this piece. The wing motions of so many birds suggested the texture of constant sixteenth notes. As the brilliant orange sunset diminished to dusk, the birds settled into trees around the campus. The fantastic choreography created by this flock of birds and the natural chronology of events guided the structure and form of this piece.

Ziu was composed for Japanese percussionist Masayuki Nino's first solo recital in 2013. *Ziu* means "blessed rain" in Japanese and can also be translated into "the rain that comes after the drought."

The title *Gyro* is short for Gyroscope - a navigation device, mounted on a base so that its axis can rotate freely in different directions, while maintaining its orientation. Like the Gyroscope, many elements of martial arts are built on the same concept, as warriors must have both gyroscopic flexibility and stability, to enable them to move without body limitations. *Gyro* is based on the same idea - its goal is to combine the physics of the Gyroscope and the physiology of martial arts. Therefore, the piece requires the players to have dynamic stability as a steady axis, and move their upper body in a free manner, through constant awareness of completing each other. This piece was written by Tomer Yariv for his percussion duet - PercaDu.

Variations on Japanese Children's Songs was the third piece composed by Keiko Abe and it is an example of one of her early improvisational works. The composition came to be when recording the album, *Nostalgia*, her first album that had no accompanying orchestra or chamber ensemble. She then improvised variations of many Japanese folk songs on marimba which would eventually become *Variations on Japanese Children's Songs*.

How to Blank (also known as *How to Make Music from a Newspaper Headline*) asks the performers to follow specific instructions that result in pitches, rhythms, and noise being generated from a newspaper headline. Like all of Jason's music, this piece offers the performers a unique opportunity to express their own voice, and create a performance that is truly their own. *How to Blank* was written for the New York-based ensemble TRANSIT and was performed at the first So Percussion Summer Institute.

"*Psappha*" is an archaic form of "Sappho," a great Greek poetess from the Island of Lesbos, born in the 600's BC. Her style was sensual and melodic, and she was one of the first poets to write from the first person, describing love and loss as it affected her personally. This emotion and sentimentality does not seem to manifest in Xenakis' interpretation. Written for six groups of instruments, three of wood and skins and three of metal, *Psappha* is sharp, brittle, and even violent at times. This intensely aggressive work seems almost in contradiction to its title. The inspiration here, however, manifests not as aesthetic, but as structure. The work's rhythmic structures are derived from small rhythmic cells characteristic of Sappho's poetry. These rhythms pervade the entire work and make both local and large-scale appearances. Much of the specifics of instrument choice is left up to the performer: Xenakis writes, "timbre serves only to clarify the rhythmic structures," suggesting the "words" of this poem are only a secondary color to the structures that contain them.

In Latin, "omnes trio" literally translates to "trio for all." In her piece *Omnes Trio*, Andrea Venet expresses this notion of equality within the medium of percussion. She achieves this by scoring the work for a homogeneous set of instruments: a shared concert bass drum, a set of bongos for each player, and 2 opera gongs for each player. Similarly, a large portion of the musical material is homogeneous, where all three players are playing running 16th notes and splitting accents. This piece is dedicated to the University of North Florida percussion department class of 2021.