

Percussion Group

with special guest

Mayumi Hama, marimba

TUESDAY, 7:00 P.M.

NOVEMBER 26, 2019

CAPISTRANO CONCERT HALL

PROGRAM

Postludes 6 and 8	Elliot Cole
Kenya Abdullah, Nancy Hamaker, Chris Harris, Vince Hjerpe, Greg Lewis, Jessica Suase, Marcos Torres, Eric Wombaugh	
Breath of the Tree II	Keiko Abe
Mayumi Hama, Abigal Cohen	
Dos Marimbas	Pablo Ortiz
Mayumi Hama, Chris Froh	
Wind in the Bamboo Grove II	Keiko Abe
Mayumi Hama, Jonah Wagner	
Oblivion	Astor Piazzolla
arr. Te Jo	
Mayumi Hama, Nancy Hamaker, Ismael Lopez, Jonah Wagner	
Tango Suite, mvt. II	Astor Piazzolla,
arr. Kevin Super	
Mayumi Hama, Ismael Lopez	
Liber Tango	Astor Piazzolla
arr. Mayumi Hama	
Mayumi Hama, Kenya Abdullah, Chris Harris, Vince Hjerpe, Grant Johnson, Greg Lewis, Ismael Lopez, Jessica Suase, Eric Wombaugh	

INTERMISSION

Nehan-Jongara	Masaki Endoh
Mayumi Hama, marimba	
The Wave	Keiko Abe
Chris Froh, Grant Johnson, Ismael Lopez, Eric Wombaugh Mayumi Hama, marimba	

PROGRAM NOTES

The Wave

I was commissioned to compose a new piece for a concert commemorating 400 years of Japanese-Dutch Relations. The title, "The Wave," refers to physician Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold's introduction of Western medicine and European culture to Japan in the 19th century. It is my hope that the marimba will similarly cross oceans and spread like a wave.

The first section begins with musical energy featuring the rhythms and timbres of traditional Japanese drums. The unique sound of *kakegoe* (yells of encouragement) along with crisp and clear sounds of tapping sticks creates a unique texture of vitality.

In the middle part, I wanted to express my feeling of disappointment in the philosophical and environmental catastrophes that face our planet. This section is a prayer for human wisdom to assist our recovery from such pollution. I expressed these feelings through a slowly expanding melody over the lower register of the marimba and colorful percussion effects.

Before moving on to the energetic last part, I imagined children playing innocently whom we might entrust with our future. Joining the sounds of hands and feet with energetic percussion patterns referencing Japanese festival music, I wanted to express the power of joy to fuel human resilience. – K.A. (adapted by Chris Froh)

several parts; one of them called "Nehan-Jongara." Accompanied by the folk song "Tsugaru Jongara-bushi," the dancer, wearing only a loincloth, danced while playing a hand-made three-stringed lute, the "shamisen." I remember feeling moved by the deep sentiment and sadness in the music. A few years later, I was asked to compose a piece for Mr. Okachi, and I decided to create my own version of *Nehan-Jongara* in homage to Mr. Gilyak. To demonstrate the deep and strong sounds of Tsugaru-Shamisen, mainly middle-low sounds are used. Except for the middle, throughout the piece, the marimbist plays manlike and sometimes barbarously. (M.E.)

Keiko Abe has developed a position as world-class musician thanks to a rare combination of creative power, acute sensitivity, and virtuosic technique. She commands an overwhelming repertoire and appears throughout the world in performances of solo concertos, chamber music, and improvisations and is in demand as a guest lecturer and has given master-classes in leading music conservatories in North America, Central and South America, Europe, and Asia. She has recorded extensively on the Denon label and has received numerous awards, including induction into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame Award. Keiko Abe's compositions have become standards of marimba literature and can be heard in recitals by marimbists all over the world. Many modern composers have also dedicated new works to her; she has inspired and premiered countless new compositions. Pioneering new technical skills and expanding the literature, Keiko Abe has transformed what was once considered a primitive "folk" instrument into a full-fledged concert instrument welcome in any of the most prestigious concert halls. In addition to her work as professor of marimba at Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, Abe maintains a full schedule of composing and touring.

Wind in the Bamboo Grove II begins in the deepest register of the marimba then suggests a variety of wind and wood gestures through sometimes unconventional means. Striking the edge of the bars with the handles of the mallets evokes clacking branches or rustling leaves. A complex combination of repeated notes (an *ostinato*) provides a strong foundation for ever-rising melodic figures. This version for duo marimba was composed from the original solo piece and recorded by Mayumi Hama and Aerong Jang on their 2010 album of Keiko Abe duo pieces, *The Breath of the Tree*. – Chris Froh

Sac State Percussion Group

Chris Froh, director

Kenya Abdullah, Nancy Hamaker, Chris Harris, Vince Hjerpe,
Grant Johnson, Greg Lewis, Ismael Lopez, Jessica Suase,
Marcos Torres, Jonah Wagner, Eric Wombaugh

One of the foremost marimba players of Asia, Japan native **Mayumi Hama** is the leading disciple and proponent of the music of pioneer marimba composer Keiko Abe. Having begun her studies with Professor Abe at the age of six, Mayumi became her duo partner in 1996, traveling with her around the world to present definitive interpretations of existing repertoire as well as premiering new works for marimba duo. Over the course of her touring career, Mayumi has been awarded numerous international awards and has received critical acclaim for her performances. She has performed frequently as a soloist with major symphony orchestras and considers outreach an essential part of her mission as a performing artist.

Program Notes

Elliot Cole is a composer and "charismatic contemporary bard" (NY Times). He has performed his music with Grammy Winners Roomful of Teeth, Grammy Nominees A Far Cry and Metropolis Ensemble, as well as the Chicago Composers Orchestra, New Vintage Baroque, the Lucerne Festival Academy, and as a member of the book-club-band Oracle Hysterical. His percussion music has been performed by over 250 percussion ensembles all over the world. In 2017 he was invited by Talks at Google to share his unique approach to music through computer programming. He is on faculty at the The New School and Juilliard Evening Division, and is Program Director of Musicambia at Sing Sing, where he runs a music school for incarcerated men.

Postludes is a book of eight pieces for a familiar instrument played in a new way. Four players, with eight double-bass bows, play interlocking lines on a single vibraphone. The interplay of bows and hands tapping, muting and touching harmonics, weaves an intimate and intricate

counterpoint that is as beautiful to watch as it is to hear: fragile, tender and haunting. – E.C.

Pablo Ortiz is professor of composition at UC Davis. Prizes and commissions include those from the Fromm Music Foundation in 1992, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1993, and the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1996. Ortiz was commissioned in 1997–98 to write two chamber operas, *Parodia* and *Una voz en el viento*, by the Centro Experimental Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. He was commissioned the following year by the Koussevitzky Foundation to write a piece, *Raya en el mar*, for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. He received a grant in 2000 from Fideicomiso para la cultura Mexico-US to write children's songs. In 2004 the Gerbode Foundation commissioned *Oscuro*, for Chanticleer, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2008 he received an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Recent premieres include *Suomalainen tango*, for orchestra, by the Orquestra Nacional de Catalunya, *Trois tangos en marge* by the Kovacic, Dann, Karttunen trio at the Museo Nacional Reina Sofia in Madrid, and *Notker*, for choir and organ, by Paul Hillier and the Theatre of Voices in Copenhagen. He has worked with artist Eduardo Stupia on a multimedia oratorio for female voices, harp, and percussion, which premiered at the Centro Experimental Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, in August 2012.

Dos Marimbas

Many years ago, when Chris Froh was a very young man, I had the temerity to write an extraordinarily difficult piece for two marimbas and two drums, *Locas Tentaciones*. Luanne Warner and the young Mr. Froh took the time and the trouble to not only perform but record the piece. More recently, I wrote another piece for Chris Froh and Mayumi Hama, *They Danced the Famous Morango*, which is a quote from the lyrics of a well-known song by Steely Dan. Both pieces were somewhat long and not easy, and both were based on tango idioms. That gave me the idea that I could write short etudes, exploring some of the gestures in both pieces but in a more accessible package in terms of duration. The etudes have no glissandi and no trills, relying mostly on transparent harmonies. They are dedicated to Chris Froh, and it is for me a privilege to have them performed by Chris and Mayumi, simply the most awesome marimba players anywhere in the world.

Composer, bandleader, and *bandoneon* (button accordion) virtuoso, **Astor Piazzolla** reshaped the music of his native Argentina through what eventually became known as “nuevo tango.” Emigrating to New York in 1924, Piazzolla returned to Buenos Aires to study with Alberto Ginastera before moving to Paris to work with the legendary teacher, Nadia Boulanger. Rather than push Piazzolla toward European modernist aesthetics, Boulanger encouraged him to work within the tango traditions that anchored his musical vocabulary. While Piazzolla’s dramatic use of dissonance and other decidedly non-traditional approaches to the tango caused an angry backlash from practitioners and fans within Argentina, it was met with excitement from audiences and composers in Europe and the United States. As the popularity of tango declined in Argentina through the 1950s and 60s, Piazzolla’s reimagining of form and texture was later seen as a “savior” of the style. Now, his music features prominently among the repertoire of myriad classical and jazz performers.

These arrangements of ***Oblivion***, ***Tango Suite***, and ***Liber Tango*** match the unique timbre of the marimba and vibraphone with the rhythmically-charged and harmonically-dense language that Piazzolla championed through his work. The Percussion Studio would like to thank Mayumi Hama for bringing these arrangements to the United States and sharing her unique insights into interpreting Piazzolla with us all. – Chris Froh

Born in Sendai, Japan, composer **Masaki Endoh** attended the Toho Gakuen Conservatory of Music where he studied marimba with Keiko Abe, chamber music with Akira Miyoshi and Michio Mamiya, and composition with Ryuji Sasaki and Hiroshi Kanai. As a first-year student, he performed Miyoshi’s *Concertino for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra* with the Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1991, Endoh won third prize in the Tokyo Modern Music and Chamber Music International Competition. He is founder of the percussion group “Sufia” and an active composer, marimbist, and chamber musician. Endoh resides in his native Sendai.

Nehan-Jongara

When I was a high school student, I became acquainted with a dancer with whom I performed on several occasions. One day, he introduced me a dancer named Gilyak Amagasaki. When I saw him performing, I was astonished by his performance which showcased his dynamic body movements and lively expressions. The performance was composed of