



Third Year DMA Recital/Recital II

Randall Chaves Camacho, Percussion

May 26, 2023
7:30 pm | Walter Hall

PROGRAMME

Third Construction (1941)

John Cage
(1912-1992)

Hoi Tong Keung, Brayden Krueger, Bevis Ng, percussion

Code Switch (2023)

Randall Chaves Camacho
(b. 1991)

PAUSE

Hidden : for percussionist and grand piano (2009)

Anna Thorvaldsdottir
(b. 1977)

inwards
our
external
stay
together
rain
breathe
past and present

Double Happiness (2016)

Christopher Cerrone
(b. 1984)

Self Portrait, Part I
Interlude I
Self Portrait, Part II
Interlude II
New Year's Song (for Sarah)

Side by Side (1989)

Michio Kitazume
(b. 1948)

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

Randall Chaves Camacho is a student of Aiyun Huang and Charles Settle.

The life experiences of Costa Rican percussionist **Randall Chaves Camacho** in North and Central America inspired him, as a performer, to explore the diversity of genres and types of percussion playing, from experimental to popular music. Just as with his diverse interest in music, his work has as its core the inclusion and support of those who for historical and economic reasons have not been equally present in the music field. Aware of his Central American roots, he is researching the cultural history and education of percussion in Costa Rica, in order to bring more diversity to the table. Randall is a third-year DMA student. He holds a Bachelor of Music Performance and an Artist Diploma from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and a Masters in Music Performance from the Peabody Institute of Music

PROGRAM NOTES

Third Construction (1941) by John Cage

John Cage's *Third construction* is the last work in the set of percussion ensemble pieces known as the *Constructions* (1939-42). As a pioneer of percussion music, John Cage composed the *Constructions* in a period when professional percussion ensembles were not as common as they are today. For this reason, the premiere of the work was conducted by John Cage, and performed by a quartet of amateur percussionists: Doris Dennison (composer/Dalcroze eurhythmics teacher/dance accompanist), Margaret Jansen, Lou Harrison (composer), and Xenia Cage (surrealist sculptor and Cage's spouse at the time). Later, during the 1970s, as a result of the emergence of professional percussion ensembles such as Blackearth Percussion Group (United States) and NEXUS Percussion (Toronto), the *Third Construction* gained popularity and soon became a standard work in the percussion ensemble repertoire.

Today, John Cage's musical philosophy and interpretation of the work continues to be orally disseminated by the members of the early percussion groups who had the privilege of working with him. One memorable anecdote comes from Al Otte, original member of the Blackearth Percussion Group. According to Otte, John Cage was not interested in historically-accurate performances of the *Third Construction*; instead, Cage cared more about the work's overall sonic landscape. For this reason, rather than advocating for a replica of the first performance of the *Third Construction*, he encouraged new interpretations of the work that oftentimes would substitute the original instrumentation of the work. For this reason, in modern performances of the *Third Constructions*, the tom-toms or drums are often replaced. At the time when the piece was written, a chinese-style drum called paigu drum was very popular and often used in American drumsets from the 1920s-30s. Therefore, when John Cage calls for toms/drums in the score of *Third Construction*, he is referring to the paigu drums. Today, these drums are not as accessible as they were; for that reason, modern concert tom-toms often substitute the paigu drums. However, in our interpretation of *Third Construction*, we have decided to use a combination of bongos and congas played with our hands to simulate the sound of the paigu drums.

Code Switch (2023) by Randall Chaves Camacho

In linguistics, code switching refers to when an individual combines multiple languages in a single conversation. According to the research, individuals who speak two or more languages most often code switch

inadvertently, but it can also happen due to lexical needs, to fit into social groups, and to communicate privately. *Code Switch* was inspired by my experiences in North America as a bilingual individual (Spanish-English). In the piece, I aim to sonically represent that instance when, while comfortably speaking in one language, suddenly I enter a state of mental chaos as the right words to finish my thought come to mind in the other language I speak. In *Code Switch*, this calm-chaos mental state is sonically represented by the juxtaposition of calm and chaotic sounds. Furthermore, while the chaotic sections represent the internal struggles of individuals who code switch, the calm sections aim to musically represent different motives why individuals use code switching: for lexical need, to say something in secret, to quote someone, and to belong to a social group. Lastly, the sonic elements in *Code Switch* are accompanied by Tato Laviera's poem, *my graduation speech*, that controls the electronic component of the piece.

Text

my graduation speech by Tato Laviera

i think in spanish
i write in english

i want to go back to puerto rico,
but i wonder if my kink could live
in ponce, mayagüez and carolina

tengo las venas aculturadas
escribo en spanglish
abraham in español
abraham in english
tato in spanish
"taro" in english
tonto in both languages

how are you?
¿cómo estás?
i don't know if i'm coming
or si me fui ya

si me dicen barranquitas, yo reply,
"¿con qué se come eso?"
si me dicen caviar, i digo,
"a new pair of converse sneakers."

ahí supe que estoy jodío
ahí supe que estamos jodíos

english or spanish
spanish or english
spanenglish
now, dig this:

hablo lo inglés matao
hablo lo español matao
no sé leer ninguno bien

so it is, spanglish to matao
what i digo
¡ay, virgen, yo no sé hablar!

Hidden : for percussionist and grand piano (2009) by Anna Thorvaldsdottir

As exemplified in *Hidden: for percussionist and grand piano* (2009), Anna Thorvaldsdottir's unique compositional voice combines unfamiliar dark musical textures with familiar harmonious sonorities. Furthermore, Anna has an outstanding musical sensitivity that allows her to exploit the sonic capabilities of acoustic instruments through carefully paced and crafted musical compositions. In *Hidden*, she expands the traditional sonorities of the piano creating a new sonic landscape with the help of thimbles, paperclips, paper, mallets, sticks, hands, guitar picks, super ball mallets, and brushes. The percussionist uses these tools to rub, pluck, and strike the sustained strings of the piano. As a result, Anna Thorvaldsdottir creates a sonic world that juxtaposes a dark sonic foundation in the low register of the piano with pointillistic gestures and consonant harmonies (Perfect 5ths and 4ths) in the high and middle register.

In addition, the titles for the eight short movements assign a unique narrative to the sounds and textures produced with the piano. For instance, the movement *Rain* features glissandi and a sparse melodic line played with aluminum thimbles that resembles the random pattern of falling rain droplets. Also, in *Breathe*, the piano imitates the sounds of respiration when the performer slides a sheet of paper back and forth across the piano strings.

Double Happiness : version for piano and percussion (2016) by Christopher Cerrone

Originally composed for electric guitar, percussion, and electronics (2012), *Double Happiness* was inspired by Cerrone's trip to Umbria, Italy, in the summer of 2012. Cerrone recorded the sounds of the surrounding nature and the everyday life in the countryside landscape of Umbria. In this version for piano and percussion, Cerrone uses extended techniques on the piano, the vibraphone, and metallic pitched percussion instruments along with the processed samples to paint the "emotional narrative around the sounds [he] experienced."

The piece consists of 3 movements connected by 2 short interludes. While each movement is descriptive of separate scenes, the recorded sounds of the rainstorm can be heard throughout the piece, weaving the movements to create a "collage" of Cerrone's memories. For instance, both the first and third movements end rather abruptly, leaving just the sound of the rainstorm to resonate, symbolizing the quick end of summer in Umbria that Cerrone experienced firsthand.

Side by side (1989) by Michio Kitazume

Rather than being concerned with precise interpretations of the score, Michio Kitazume is concerned with good sound selection and the performer's interpretation of the score. For this reason, in *Side by Side*, despite being written for congas, bongos, concert tom-toms, and kick drum, the composer encourages

performers to explore different timbers created by instruments from the membranophone family (i.e., percussion instruments with a drumhead). Furthermore, Michio Kitazume leaves room for the performer to experiment with the pacing and development of the work. This is possible thanks to the compositional techniques used in *Side by Side* which consists of short small rhythmic cells repeated multiple times, one cell after the other. Despite indicating a set number of repetitions in the printed score, Kitazume encourages the performer to experiment with the amount of repetitions of each cell to alter the length of the work; as a result, each performance of *Side by Side* is unique. Lastly, according to Michio Kitazume, the title *Side by Side* derives from the interactions of multiple polyrhythms occurring simultaneously and adjacently throughout the piece.