



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

**Bevis Ng, percussion**

DMA Recital I: Transformation

**Hoi Tong Keung, percussion**

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.  
Bevis Ng is a student of Aiyun Huang and Beverley Johnston.

Friday, November 22, 2024 at 7:30 pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

**PROGRAMME**

Three Transformations (1998)

i. Lord Cavendish Strikes the Right Note

Andrew Thomas  
b. 1939

Omar (1985)

ii.

Franco Donatoni  
1927–2000

She Who Sleeps with a Small Blanket (1985)

Kevin Volans  
b.1949

Prelude and Fugue in F major, BWV 856 (1722)

ii. Fugue

J. S. Bach  
1685–1750

Three Transformations (1998)

ii. Pedro and Olga learn to Dance

Andrew Thomas  
b. 1939

**INTERMISSION**

---

*We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.*

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit [indigenous.utoronto.ca](http://indigenous.utoronto.ca) to learn more.

---

Amadinda (2016)	Adrien Trybucki b. 1993
from the moment of realization that i'm not myself (2024) (World Premiere)	Alice Yeung b. 1999
Torrent (2020, rev. 2024)	Fish Yu b. 1999
Three Transformations (1998) iii. Rhumbarubio	Andrew Thomas b. 1939

## BIOGRAPHY

Originally from Hong Kong, Bevis Ng is a Toronto-based percussionist, specializing in contemporary classical music. He is currently completing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Percussion Performance at the University of Toronto with the support of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship and the Terence Clarkson and Cornelis van de Graaff Graduate Scholarship. As a musician passionate about chamber music, his doctoral research focuses on rehearsal strategies for percussion chamber music.

Bevis founded two percussion groups since his arrival in 2021: KÖNG Duo, with fellow percussionist Hoi Tong Keung, and Kairos Percussion Quartet. The award-winning KÖNG Duo has performed extensively in Canada and abroad, including Portland, OR, and Eindhoven, Netherlands. KÖNG Duo is Marimba One's ensemble artist. The Kairos Percussion Quartet was formed in 2023. Members include Andrew Busch, Nikki Huang, and Thomas Li. The quartet has performed in various places across Canada, including the Aga Khan Museum, the Music Garden, McGill University, the University of Windsor, and Arcadia University. In 2024, They were featured as the solo quartet in Kevin Lau's Charon's Dance at UofT's Wind Symphony concert.

Bevis believes in the power of combining thoughtful programming, composer-collaboration, and recontextualization of existing repertoires in a contemporary music concert. He hopes to create a more inviting concert experience for the audience by making contemporary classical music more relevant and relatable through these tools. His co-curation in KÖNG Duo—*good morning, hong kong*—unfolds the duo's memories about a place they used to call home. Intertwining video projection, lighting, voice, and music, it explores the sensation of longing, nostalgia, and being lost in memories.

## PROGRAM NOTES

As the title of this recital suggests, this program centers on the idea of transformation. Through the repertoires I programmed, I will take you on a musical journey that displays different forms of transformation, whether big or small.

We will start the concert with *Three Transformations* (1998) for two marimbas by American composer Andrew Thomas. The piece's title inspires the concept behind this recital. Written for renowned marimbist Nancy Zeltman and her marimba duo partner, Janis Potter, this piece has another layer of meaning for me as I am playing with my duo partner, Hoi Tong Keung; we met each other the first time at the Zeltsman Marimba Festival, even though we are both from Hong Kong. It is fantastic to see how we both transformed throughout the journey.

As we celebrate our duo's friendship, we share a similar joyous feeling with the piece, which transforms the melodic and harmonic materials from three J. S. Bach's keyboard music into Latin dances. The first movement, *Lord Cavendish Strikes the Right Note*, transforms *Prelude in E flat Major* from Book Two of the *WTC* into samba. The second movement, *Pedro and Olga Learn to Dance*, transforms *Fugue in F Major* from Book One of the *WTC* into tango. The Third movement, *Rhumbarubio*, transforms *Gigue* from the *E minor English Suite* into Rumba. To showcase the transformation happening in Thomas's piece, I included one of the pieces by Bach in this program. I also programmed all three movements in a separate place so that it could act as an anchor point for the recital.

While the transformation is obvious in Thomas's piece, the remaining two present transformations more subtly. They also act as the source of the transformation in the latter half of the concert. The second movement from *Omar* (1985) for solo vibraphone by Italian composer Franco Donatoni explores the transformation of a set of pitches that mutates into different melodic and chordal gestures. The sound has a general trajectory, progressing from gentle to aggressive toward the end through changing hardness of the mallets. In contrast, *She Who Sleeps with a Small Blanket* (1985) for seven pitched drums and marimba by South African composer Kevin Volans progresses in the opposite trajectory, from intense drumming decays into a singular marimba note. Moreover, it explores the transformation of rhythmic patterns, creating a kaleidoscopic effect. To some extent, the drums are treated like a melodic instrument, in which some part of the music has a singing and speaking quality.

After intermission, I will play pieces that showcase transformation more explicitly. First, we have *Amadinda* (2016) for prepared vibraphone by French composer Adrien Trybucki. It shows us how we can transform a vibraphone into a Frankenstein. By putting daily objects such as metal chains, clothespins, aluminum foil, and ping pong balls on the vibraphone, sounds from the vibraphone become dampened and even produce additional unique noises; we now turn the vibraphone into a noise machine. Besides transforming the sounds of vibraphone, *Amadinda* challenges the performer's ability to sustain motoric patterns over time, play multiple lines that flow at different times, and express the playful character of the piece despite its difficulties.

In contrast with the burst of excitement from *Amadinda*, Bern-based Hong Kong-born composer Alice Yeung's *from the moment of realization that i'm not myself* (2024) explores the battle between long tones and fast notes. The fast notes interrupt the long tones and win eventually. I commissioned Yeung with two ideas in mind: I prompted her to use the instrumental setup (seven drums) from Kevin Volans' *She Who Sleeps in a Small Blanket* (1985) and to focus on the theme of "Transformation." A percussion setup is often only used in one piece; if I have to play multiple pieces for percussion setup, I will need plenty of time to build different setups for each piece. However, I want to minimize the time I spend on building setup and the logistics of moving gears in a performance. Reusing the same setup will be ideal for that. Since I have programmed Volan's piece in my recital, reusing the same percussion setup is my act of transforming.

As a response to the theme of this recital, Yeung wrote:

*I believe people are always on a run, the run of self-discovery. Me too; however, I've become (too) obsessed with it, and I've realized this is not me. Also, I don't think I will ever be able to be myself because I'm constantly "transforming?" So, I could perhaps say I'm myself, but also, I'm not.*<sup>1</sup>

Having a similar intention of reusing existing material, I collaborated with Toronto-based Hong Kong-born composer Fish Yu to arrange his earlier composition for flute and electronics, *Torrent* (2020), for vibraphone. Yu and I have been collaborating for years since I studied for my bachelor's degree in Hong Kong. We have worked together more closely after moving to Canada for graduate studies, where he wrote a solo and a duet for me and my duo. I am always fascinated by how he can blend electronic and acoustic sounds sophisticatedly and creatively. This piece depicts how an insignificant drizzle transforms into a storm that floods the land with water through a soundscape of vibraphone and live electroacoustic processed sound. In this vibraphone version, we attempt to use a diverse range of vibraphone timbres, with both live processing electronics and extended techniques, to illustrate the different forms of water. To some extent, this arrangement is also an act of transformation. We transformed an existing piece into something new.

---

<sup>1</sup> Alice Yeung, *from the moment of realization that i'm not myself* (2024), 4.