



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Jade A. Hails, Percussion

DMA Recital 1

Fish Yu, Technical Director

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.
Jade Hails is a student of Aiyun Huang.

Saturday, September 26, 2026 at 12:30 pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

The Fall of the Empire (2007)

Frederic Rzsewski (1938-2021)

*Movements are presented throughout the program

Prolog

Act 3. Three Sons

Act 1. Angel Shoot

Hard-Boiled Capitalism and the Day

Mr. Friedman Noticed Google is a Verb (2008)

Ben Wahlund (b. 1977)

Time and Money (2004)

Pierre Jodlowski (b. 1971)

*Act 2. Monsters

INTERMISSION WITH BACKGROUND NOISE FROM FLOOD THE ZONE (HAILS, 2025)

2The 0Sky is 20pening (2021)

Nolan Hildebrand (b. 1992)

*Act 4. Global Warming

*Act 5. The Ground

*Act 6. Sacrifice

*Act 7. Sabbath

PROGRAM NOTES

This concert program was partially inspired by the writings of Sir John Bagot Glubb's 1976 essay entitled *The Fate of Empires* wherein he argues that the lifespan of many of the empires within the history of the world follow a predictable lifespan that includes periods of pioneering, conquest, expansion, intellect and eventual decay all roughly within a 250-year cycle. This being the 250th year since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, I find myself reflecting on the state of the world particularly as it revolves around my home country of the United States of America. As the conventions and institutions of the past that made America great begin to crumble to corruption and greed, I'm left wondering what the reasons for this fall might be and what it would mean for the world if the backbone of the post-1945 world order was to finally fall apart. My only way to engage with these larger-than-life questions is through my art and my writings, and this concert program seeks to reflect and challenge the means and attitudes of decay within a large empire.

Throughout the program are small character episodes from Frederic Rzewski's *The Fall of the Empire* which serve as the backbone for exploring these themes of decay from various perspectives through spoken text and sound-paintings that act as a backdrop for the various characters within the larger work accompanied by a different instruments and collections of sound. Each character presents a new symptom of society that infects it from within. Whether it be apathy, neglect, disillusionment, or pride, the collective will of an empire's people is critical for its survival and when these weaknesses seep into the bones of the structures that support it, it collapses.

Ben Wahlund's *Hard Boiled Capitalism...* acts as one of the centerpieces for the program. As with America, the values and attitudes of capitalism are central to the behaviors of its government and its people. Wahlund states, "I aim to reflect the fervor so many Americans felt at the height of indulgence and the clean newness that a purging of outdated ideas has to offer the next generation of Americans." Echoing back to Grubb's essay, this age of indulgence is common in nearly all the mentioned empires; when a society and government has finished its conquest and seizing of commerce and is allowed a more liberal lifestyle of wealth and consumerism. The metallic sound of the vibraphone and the consistent staccato A-natural heard throughout can characterize the motor of production and the moving of capital and innovation around it.

The exchange of one's time and work for the money required to live a life within society is an understood reality of all who occupy it. Pierre Jodlowski seeks to evoke the feelings of oppression, repetition, hopelessness, and desire that revolve around this exchange in his piece, *Time and Money*. Split into two distinct parts, the first centers itself on an amplified cube where the performer interacts with not only the cube itself, but electronic playback accompanying gestures that evoke the flipping of a coin. The second section is played on a multiple percussion setup that has back and forth dialogue with the electronics and the accompanying video through to the end of the piece.

During intermission, I wanted to occupy the time and space with my sound collage ***Flood the Zone*** created during my residency at the Centre for the Study of Brain, Performance, and Music Creation at the end of 2025. As many of us do during periods of awkward spare time, this piece acts as a sonic representation for the sheer volume of content that the 24-hour news media can generate within only a few years, specifically 2016 to today. I have chosen some specific moments in the past decade and compared the clips from rival news broadcasts that tell the same story from different biases and angles. Further, the propaganda strategy of blasting out appalling and enraging news stories that are meant to draw attention and distract the populace is coined by Steve Bannon and gives the piece its name.

In the same vein as *Flood the Zone*, ***2The 0Sky is 20pening*** by UofT DMA composer Nolan Hildebrand captures another side of the news media. Focusing instead on the events and online environment of the 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ranging from the protests in Hong Kong, the Black Lives Matter marches, the riots of Portland and the climate crisis across the world all underpinned a year where nearly everyone was forced online where they had to come to terms with each other, paradoxically, even more than in our real daily lives.

As the 250th year of America's independence comes and goes, I look at the country from the perspective of someone that has spent five years thus far in Canada. I see a country that has achieved great things and helped build institutions for the world's benefit. At the same time, in my lifetime I have seen a changed country since the end of the Cold War. One that is currently doing everything in its power to isolate itself from the world and alienate its allies. As the world moves towards an undetermined future of Artificial Intelligence and socioeconomic turbulence, I hope that some of us can move past these symptoms of corruption and greed and look towards continuing the legacy of freedom, prosperity, and justice for all.

-Jade A. Hails

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 Wendat Nation, 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 to learn more
