SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Ahmad Elijah, Percussion

November 8, 2026 | 5:30 pm | Van Cliburn Hall at TCU

Program

CHOPin — Jesse Sieff (b.1990)

Doctor Gradus ad Parnassume — Claude Debussy (b.1862)

Change Your Mind — Larnell Lewis (b.1984)

Cascarones — Matthew Hroch (b.2005)

Jaden Gunito, Brandon Davidson, Matthew Bartley

Seven Pillars

Pillar III — Andy Akiho (b.1979)

Mattthew Bartley, Brandon Davdson, Jackson Perez

The Nearness of You — Hoagy Carmichale (b.1899)

Josiah Fuentes Piano, Grahm Parish Drums, Riley Feltch Tenor Sax, David Gutierrez Bass

A Nigh in Tunisia — Dizzy Gillespie (b.1917)

Josiah Fuentes Piano, Grahm Parish Drums, Riley Feltch Tenor Sax, David Gutierrez Bass

Pushback — Ty Ellender (b.1916)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a bachelor's in music education. Ahmad Elijah is a student of Dr. Brian West, Mr. Jeffrey Hodge, and Mr. Joey Carter.

The use of recording equipment or taking photographs is prohibited. Please Silence all electronic devices including watches, Pagers, and phones.

PROGRAM NOTES

CHOPin – Jessie Sieff

The entire piece was composed around flexible, creative "liberties" of a concert pianist, but uses flavors of modern/ancient rudimental, Swiss, Drum Corps, WGI, and orchestral styles of drumming. Percussionists with these backgrounds may recognize many of the quotes, licks, and "Easter eggs" I slipped into CHOPin. They come from some other pieces I've learned, organizations I have been a part of, and some I have not.

- Jessie Seiff

Doctor Gradus ad Parnassume – Claude Debussy

Doctor Gradus is the opening movement of Claude Debussy's six-part piano suite Children's Corner. The Title Doctor Gradus as Parnassum is a reference to a title used for instructional Books and music. The concept behind this music is depicting a reluctant child sitting down at the piano to play their scales. However, the child gets bored and begins to daydream. I personally resonate with this concept because my brain has always tended to wander when playing my instrument.

Change Your Mind - Larnell Lewis

Change your mind is a tack on Larnell Lewis's debut studio album In the Moment. A later altered version titled "Change Your Mind (RTM)" was released in 2020. This track features an outro drum solo over various rhythmic hits.

Cascarones – Matthew Hroch

Cascarones is an energetic marimba quartet inspired by other Latin percussion ensembles like *Losa* by Emmanuel Séjourné and *¡Higuita!* by Stephen Whibley. Cascarones (or confetti eggs) are brightly colored, hollowed-out eggshells filled with confetti, usually made for Easter celebrations. People take these eggs and crack them over the heads of their friends and family to shower them with confetti, all in good fun and celebration. I have many fond memories of Easter Sundays with my family playing with these, always being one of the highlights of the day. This fast-paced piece aims to

capture those chaotic moments and the colorful mess that is made with quick runs, interweaving lines, and lots of chromaticism scattered throughout the piece.

Seven Pillars (Pillars III) Andy Akiho

***Seven Pillars* by Andy Akiho** explores the free spaces created within an organized structure. This evening-length work, comprising seven quartets and four solos, began with its central movement, Pillar IV. Originally commissioned as a stand-alone work, this piece contained a rigorous structure and motivic content that Akiho felt compelled to expand beyond its 10-minute capsule. Pillar IV became the nucleus for Seven Pillars, containing the DNA from which the
other six quartets are built.

Pillar III from *Seven Pillars* by Andy Akiho brings us back to earth with its firm rhythmic underpinning. Interlocking figures dance around each other and then snap into unison. We are treated to Akiho's version of a backbeat—in 13 beats rather than in 4 — which is layered with complex variations that culminate into a fire-alarm of sound. As with Amethyst, this irreconcilable tumult collapses into a sedated coda, recuperating from the previous blows.
-Excerpt of notes from the commissioner, *Jonny Allen*

The Nearness of You – Hoagy Carmichale

The Nearness of You is a beloved jazz standard first introduced in 1940. Written by composer Hoagy Carmichael, with lyrics by Ned Washington, the song was originally featured in the Paramount film *Romance in the Dark*. The tune gained widespread popularity through big band conductor Glenn Miller and his orchestra, whose recording reached No. 5 on the charts. Since then, *The Nearness of You* has become a jazz standard, recorded and performed by countless artists across generations.

A Night In Tunisia – Dizzy Gillespe

A Night in Tunisia **is** a jazz standard composed by trumpeter and bandleader Dizzy Gillespie in 1942. Originally titled *Interlude*, the piece became one of Gillespie's most recognizable compositions and an important work in the development of bebop. Its

distinctive rhythmic patterns, Latin-inspired groove, and energetic melody helped establish the piece as a staple of the jazz repertoire. Over the years, *A Night in Tunisia* has been recorded and performed by countless jazz musicians, making it one of the enduring standards of the genre.

Pushback – Ty Ellender

Pushback is an advanced multi-percussion solo with tape accompaniment that is based on an actual phone call between a professor and student. The phrase "pushback" was repeated several times throughout the original conversation, and is the main thematic material of this piece. Pushback features a large setup consisting of several different timbres including hand drums, toms, and melodic percussion instruments. The piece contains repetitive grooves along with intense polyrhythmic phrases that require extended techniques and limb independence.

The piece begins with the ethereal sounds of singing bowls and bells from both the performer and the track. These distant metallic noises represent a corridor of large Tibetan prayer wheels striking small bells as they rotate. It is believed that these prayer wheels help accumulate good karma and purify negative energy. The main theme of Pushback is a quasi drum set groove in that is accompanied by the sounds of almglocken, chimes, and crotales playing the notes B and D. These notes are not only symbolic of the people involved in the original conflict, but also refer back to the idea of karma.

The piece continues to build intensity while exploring the idea of call and response, creating a musically argumentative relationship between the performer and recorded audio. The swing section at Letter S is certainly the emotional climax of the piece. During my final year as a DMA student, a professor decided to pull me out of the jazz ensemble to focus on my other studies. The swing section represents this struggle, and the opportunities that were taken away from me during my final year as a graduate student. The piece continues to revisit the main theme until ending with three final notes on the concert bass drum. These last three notes are not only a culmination of unfortunate events, but also offer a cathartic release and a sense of overcoming adversity. Pushback was written in 2023 and performed for my final doctoral recital. - Ty Ellender