



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Orion Wysocki

September 28, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Online Recital

Program

Selections from Tchaikovsky's *Album for the Young* (1993)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
trans. Leigh Howard Stevens (b. 1953)

- III. Hobby Horse
- XII. Sweet Dreams

Jazz Suite for Solo Vibraphone (2009)

Gary Gibson (b. 1960)

- I. Blues
- II. Valse
- III. Ragtime
- IV. Ballade
- V. Bebop

Blade (2010)

Benjamin Finley (b. 1975)

Two Movements for Marimba (1965)

Toshimitsu Tanaka (b. 1930)

Selections from Tchaikovsky's *Album for the Young* (1993)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
trans. Leigh Howard Stevens (b. 1953)

Leigh Howard Stevens is one of the most influential marimbaists alive. His development of the Musser-Stevens four mallet technique, as well as his widely used textbook "Method of Movement," revolutionized the capabilities of the marimba in the 1970s. Leigh was born in Orange, New Jersey in 1953 and began his career playing marimba at Eastman School of Music in 1971. He studied abroad with marimbaist, Vida Chenoweth in 1972, and considers her one of his greatest influences. Upon returning to the states, Leigh began performing and premiering original works for marimba. He also wrote and performed original transcriptions of great composers such as Bach and Schumann. Hailed by *Times Magazine* as the greatest classical marimbaist, Leigh Howard Stevens is known globally in the percussion community. He is the founder of Keyboard Percussion Publications, originally Marimba Productions, as well as Malletech. Stevens recorded two famous CDs of transcriptions entitled "Bach on Marimba" and "Marimba When...". The *Album for the Young* by Tchaikovsky is originally scored for piano and appeared on "Marimba When..."

Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) is a Russian born composer of the romantic era. His major ballets such as *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleepy Beauty*, as well as seven symphonies and eleven operas have cemented him as a monumental composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, influencing music to this day. The *Album for the Young* is a collection of twenty-four piano solos written specifically for children and young pianists. Tchaikovsky dedicated the *Album for the Young* to his "favorite nephew," Vladimir Davydov.

Jazz Suite for Solo Vibraphone (2009)

Gary Gibson (b. 1960)

Gary began his music career as a drummer, vibraphonist, and keyboardist, but soon found his passion in playing and composing for steelpan at Wichita State University. As a graduate student there, Gibson led his own pan group and recorded original works on an album entitled "Inland Evolution" in 1985. In 2004, Gibson traveled for two months in Trinidad, West Indies and observed the process of bringing one-hundred and twenty steelpan players together to win their second national title as Panorama champions. He also documented the process through an online journal, which can be accessed online for educational purposes. Since 2004, he has composed and orchestrated works for the National Sinfonia of Trinidad and National Steel Orchestra and is also a Resource Member of the Board of Trustees of the Music Literacy Trust in Trinidad. Gary Gibson's most recent work is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic titled *De Smile Behind de Mask* for steel band.

Jazz Suite for Solo Vibraphone is one of Gibson's few and most substantial solo vibraphone pieces. The five movements are meant to explore the different qualities of the vibraphone, using a variety of techniques and styles. Using the standard twelve-bar blues form, the first movement grinds along nicely, but is a challenge in creating that stable "groove" as a soloist. The second movement, "Valse" or "Waltz" is a smooth melodic piece in three and is organized in three parts

A, B, and A with a coda to finish. “Ragtime” is one of the older genres of jazz in this suite, but Gibson decided to take a modern interpretation. The slower tempo and lyrical lines go against the typical sixteenth note Scott Joplin rags. However, the syncopation, straight eighth notes, and off beat emphasis are right in line with the early twentieth century style. As the fourth movement’s title suggests, “Ballade” is slow, free of strict rhythms and time, and offers a nice change in mood. “Bebop” is the up-tempo, exciting final movement and is the most technically challenging of the suite. I have thoroughly enjoyed playing and studying vibraphone techniques and theory through this piece at TCU. This piece really drives my desire to further my development on this instrument.

Blade (2010)

Benjamin Finley (b. 1975)

Benjamin Finley is originally from Searcy, Arkansas and earned his Doctorate of Musical Arts in Percussion Performance from the University of Texas - Austin. During his time there, he studied with Thomas Burritt, Tony Edwards, and Brannen Temple. He also served as director of the marching percussion program. Benjamin Finley has worked with a consortium of percussionists to commission pieces by Charles Wuorinen, Halim El-Dabh, and Robert Morris, as well as compose several original works for marimba. Finley is currently the Assistant Director of Bands and Director of Percussion studies at East Central University in Oklahoma.

“*Blade*” is centered around an abbreviated drum set and is complemented by three semi resonant metallic materials. Compositionally, Finley uses a series of hemiola-driven rhythmic gestures to weave a seemingly complex tapestry of percussive sound and is underwritten by a common, recurring melodic theme, which travels freely among all voices. The title comes from two sources of inspiration; the antique lawn mower blades and other metal objects found in salvage yards, and the way in which each new rhythmic gesture seems to “slice” its way into what seems to be an established piece. *Blade* is dedicated to Blake Tyson.” - Program notes by Composer

Two Movements for Marimba (1965)

Toshimitsu Tanaka (b. 1930)

Toshimitsu Tanaka is one of the most prolific composers in Japan, having written over eighty compositions for a variety of media. Tanaka was born in Aomori, Japan in 1930. He graduated from the Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo with a composition degree in 1956 and a graduate degree in 1957. Tanaka was appointed lecturer at the Kunitachi College of Music in 1968, associate professor in 1974, and professor of composition in 1980. Tanaka is still the professor of composition at Kunitachi College of Music as well as the professor of composition at Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts in Kiev, Ukraine.

Two Movements for Marimba was composed in 1965 for marimbaist Yoshihisa Mizuno. The first movement was originally composed for two-mallets and was deemed too difficult and was not fully premiered. Keiko Abe (who attended Mizuno’s concert) suggested to Tanaka that he re-write the first movement for four-mallets and he agreed. Abe then premiered both movements at her monumental recital “An Evening of Marimba” in 1968. This recital set the stage for the

marimba to evolve and become a serious concert instrument as it is viewed today. The solo literature that she performed that night, *Two Movements for Marimba* (1965) by Toshimitsu Tanaka, *Time for Marimba* (1968) by Minoru Miki and, *Torse III* (1965) by Akira Miyoshi, are considered pillars in the solo marimba repertoire. *Two Movements for Marimba* won a prize at the 1968 National Arts Festival for the Centenary of the Meiji period and the Supreme Prize at the 1969 Japanese Arts Festival. (Holm)

The two movements are meant to be contrasting, and according to Matthew Holm, “Tanaka said he wrote *Two Movements for Marimba* as a ‘puzzle piece’...”. The first movement is written in three sections with the idea of developing rhythmic motifs. It mainly uses a single line texture and is constantly driving. In contrast, the second movement alternates between a mysterious four-voice choral style and a furious left-hand accompaniment and right-hand melody style. It is organized in two sections with a dramatic coda-like ending.