



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

Josh Villanueva, percussion

Friday, December 3rd, 2021

7:00 PM CST

MSC 124

Program

Sandu

Clifford Brown
(1930-1956)

Jeff Kean, saxophone | Sebastian Martin, trumpet
Alfredo Ortiz, piano | Blaine Bryan, bass

The Chicken

Pee Wee Ellis
(1941-2021)

Jeff Kean, saxophone | Sebastian Martin, trumpet
Alfredo Ortiz, piano | Blaine Bryan, bass

A Cool Gadget for Tambourine

Casey Cangelosi
(b. 1982)

One Study One Summary

Etude
Summary

John Psathas
(b. 1966)

An Economy of Means

Chorale

Robert Honstein
(b. 1980)

Mudra

Bob Becker
(b. 1947)

Eric Goodheer, marimba | Johnny Naw, vibraphone
Ivan Mendoza, vibraphone | Tanner Moseley, percussion

Sandu by Clifford Brown

Clifford Brown was an American jazz trumpeter, musician, and composer known for his contributions to bebop jazz. His musical influences include Fats Navarro, Charlie Parker, and Dizzy Gillespie. He is most infamous for forming the *Clifford Brown and Max Roach Quintet*, the leading bop group at the time. The jazz standard **Sandu**, a 12-bar blues tune, is from their album *Study in Brown*.

As someone who does not have much experience with jazz, I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to play in a jazz combo with such talented musicians. Their advice has helped me to become a better jazz drum set player. I chose this tune because I felt that it had the perfect difficulty level. With this experience, I am more prepared to perform in a jazz setting, and more importantly, teach my future students.

The Chicken by Pee Wee Ellis

Alfred James Ellis, or Pee Wee Ellis, was an American saxophonist, composer, and arranger. In the 60s, he was a member of James Brown's band and performed on many of his recordings. **The Chicken** was a funk tune featured on the B-side of Brown's 1969 single *The Popcorn*. Jazz bassist Jaco Pastorius helped propel this tune to its infamous status, effectively becoming a jazz standard today. Pay specific attention to the recurring theme of this tune from the band, soloist, and even the drums.

In addition to the last tune, I chose **The Chicken** to showcase my improvement as a drum set player. I vividly remember my first year of college when I only had basic coordination skills on the drums. I was not comfortable playing with other musicians, filling, or soloing. I am incredibly proud of my progress for the past four years and cannot wait to make music behind the kit!

A Cool Gadget for Tambourine by Casey Cangelosi

Casey Cangelosi is a composer, percussionist and currently teaches at James Madison University as an Associate Professor of Percussion. His quirky yet palatable writing style has made me an avid fan and honestly shaped my musical taste for percussion solo literature. He can make instruments that seem non-virtuosic to percussionists (e.g., tambourine) into a work of art (e.g., tambourine). Hence the deadpan title of the piece.

A Cool Gadget for Tambourine is a unique composition written for solo tambourine and electronic playback. This piece requires an orchestral tambourine, a synthetic or calf membrane stretched across a wooden frame with metal jingles called "zills." This membrane or head of the tambourine allows for extended techniques such as finger rolls in which the performer drags their

fingers across the head to produce a sustained buzz sound. Listeners should expect to see and hear this technique frequently in this performance.

One of the fascinating aspects of the orchestral tambourine is the various timbres one can produce. Another way to make a sustained sound is the shake roll in which one shakes the tambourine. For fast rhythmic passages, the player can use both hands, alternate using one hand and their knee (fist/knee technique), or alternate using the fingers and palm (pandeiro technique). Additionally, there are non-conventional techniques that this piece calls for, such as spinning the jingles for a faint, metallic sound and tilting the instrument horizontally for a sharp, crisp sound. With its various sound collections and eerie accompaniment track, this piece truly lives up to its name.

One Study One Summary

John Psathas is a contemporary composer based in New Zealand. Many critics describe his sound as akin to the "improvisational feel of jazz," rock music, and minimalism. I had the privilege of meeting Psathas in 2019 when the TCU Percussion Orchestra commissioned him to write *White Feather* for our PASIC exhibition performance. He was an incredibly kind and humble human being, and I am so lucky to have had the opportunity to work with him.

One Study One Summary is an insane beast to conquer. The piece is written for marimba, optional junk percussion, and electronic accompaniment and requires advanced four-mallet technique and stamina. For the junk percussion, I collected various "items" from the school's inventory, my own kitchenware appliances, and bought a wood board from Lowe's. The work consists of two distinct, unrelated movements: *Etude* and *Summary*.

Etude is a brisk, groovy tune that feels incredibly frantic and fast-paced. Psathas compares this movement to a test in school since there is not much leeway with variation in tempo and dynamics. I related this sentiment to the glaring, problematic methods of testing students in the American education system. To me, this movement encapsulates the feeling of taking a test quite well—you study to memorize irrelevant information only to forget days later rather than to learn. It embodies the perfectionist tendencies that many others and I had in high school (which I think American schools encourage and perpetuate). In essence, this movement (the test) tells the performer (the student) what to think.

Summary is an ethereal, ambient piece that contains fleeting moments of joy, bittersweet, and morbid curiosity. Psathas was originally going to title this movement *A Brief Summary of the Human Presence*, representing the beautiful insignificance of human civilization. It is crazy to

think that our impact seems impactful yet is frail compared to the existence and longevity of the earth. The electronic track has moments where you can hear humans: children playing, cars, cityscape, etc. In the end, you only hear nature. In Psathas' words: "what happens when we've gone and nature reasserts itself?"

An Economy of Means by Robert Honstein

Robert Honstein is a contemporary composer of orchestral, chamber, and vocal music based in New York. Many musical connoisseurs consider his compositions to be "waves of colorful sounds" and "smart, appealing works." Premier orchestras, chamber groups, and soloists have performed Honstein's works such as the Albany Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique du Mulhouse, Michael Burritt, Michael Compitello, and many others.

An Economy of Means is the antithesis of Honstein's other percussion work, *An Index of Possibilities*. Whereas the latter utilizes as many materials as possible, **An Economy of Means** uses only one instrument—the vibraphone—to explore as many sounds as possible with limited resources. The piece calls for prepared vibraphone in which the performer places specific objects on an instrument to produce a different timbre. In *Chorale*, the second movement, Honstein indicates to place aluminum foil on the lower register of the vibraphone.

I chose to perform only one movement of this piece because I wanted something vastly different—softer and more sentimental. Up until now, I performed repertoire that exhibited my virtuosity and musical chops. This piece contrasts the rest of my program with its delicate, soothing nature, long note rhythms, and a soft dynamic range. In addition to the foil, I use an upright bass bow to create a sustained, friction-like sound. Many of the bowed notes are underneath the foil, which produces a unique, calming sound reminiscent of ocean waves. As you are listening, I encourage you to think about a time in your life where you most felt at peace.

Mudra by Bob Becker

Bob Becker is a virtuosic percussionist, xylophonist, and composer. He studied at the Eastman School of Music under William G. Street and John H. Beck. He then underwent an intensive study of world music at Wesleyan University - including North and South Indian, African, and Indonesian music. He is infamous for being the founding member of the percussion ensemble *NEXUS*, where he combines his western orchestral background with his world music knowledge, creating multi-cultural experiences.

Combining western instruments with *raga*, **Mudra** is a staple of the percussion ensemble repertoire, written for solo and four percussionists. The piece calls for a solo drummer and crotales, glockenspiel and bass drum, marimba, vibraphone, and song bells. Since song bells are hard to find, many modern renditions opt to use another vibraphone. Becker provides an excellent note about **Mudra** below, explaining the nuances of raga and Indian classical music.

The musical language found in [my recent works] has been evolving in my music since as long ago as 1982 with *Palta*, a kind of concerto for the Indian tabla drums accompanied by traditional western percussion instruments. The approach became explicit in 1990 with the percussion quintet *Mudra*, where the idea was to extract a functional harmony from a purely melodic source: specific *ragas* of Hindustani classical music. (The term *rag* was once succinctly defined by the musicologist Harold S. Powers as 'a generalized scale, a particularized mode,' although Indian musicians usually give the word a more poetic meaning: 'that which colors the mind.'). Even though Indian music is generally characterized as being elaborately melodic with no harmony (by western European definitions) whatsoever, my personal experience has always been one of subliminally perceived harmonic movement, a sensation that is clearly related to my cultural background and musical training. This kind of cross-referencing is always experienced when one strong cultural expression encounters another and, in my opinion, this perceptual phenomenon will be the defining issue in all of the arts and politics of the 21st century.

(To read more, visit <https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/musicdb/pieces/2378/mudra>).

I find it fitting to conclude my recital with rudimental drumming since that was how many other of my colleagues and I started percussion, especially here in Texas. At the beginning of my percussive career, I spent most of my time learning and refining DCI drum techniques on a practice pad. As a musician with rudimental and orchestral backgrounds, my "drumming style" combines these two approaches. Generally, the rudimental style emphasizes fast velocity and control, whereas the orchestral style emphasizes a delicate touch and fine motor skills. Throughout this performance, you may see me switch between these two styles depending on what the music calls for, but I generally fall between the two. This final product is the culmination of 10 years of practice, love for music, education, and camaraderie. Perhaps the real rudimental drumming was the friends we made along the way.