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Senior Recital

Jordan Curcuruto
Chapman University

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“Trenchcoat Dances was originally conceived as a work for percussion and chamber ensemble. This manifestation of Trenchcoat replaces the ensemble with an electronic part that utilizes sounds highly reminiscent of the analog synthesizers of the 1960s and 70s, a combination that very effectively highlights my lifelong interest in rock music, cabaret and African rhythmic techniques, infused now and then with the language of contemporary chamber music.

Trenchcoat Dances can be viewed a percussion concerto - but with a difference – the percussionist, playing a large drumset is both the rhythmic foundation and the source of much foreground interest. This is a delicate balancing act for the performer – to be the rhythm section and the star all at once is not an easy task.

A few words about the individual movements:

Skin and Bone – A simple melody (the bare “bones”) decorated by increasingly elaborate percussion licks mainly on the toms (the “skin”).

Torched – A torch song from hell, with occasional key changes to a sleazy cocktail bar near you. (The drinks are cheap, but they’re not free.)

Trenchcoat Dance – the title track of the piece – A friend of mine once told me that she wanted to play my music wearing a trenchcoat. Here the music wears a trenchcoat and frequently flashes bits and pieces of the other movements at the audience.”

-Shaun Naidoo

Program Notes by Jordan Curcuruto

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This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music in Instrumental Performance degree. Jordan Curcuruto is a student of Nicholas Terry.

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music

presents a

Senior Recital

Jordan Curcuruto, percussion

March 1, 2014 ▪ 2:00 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

Program

Astral Dance

Gordon Stout
(b. 1952)

Astral Dance, written in, 1979, is an up-beat, jazzy, groove-based marimba solo where the performer gets to show her control in her rotational movement as well as with her lyrical interpretation. The piece is written in a theme and variations similar to Stout's famous marimba solo, *Two Mexican Dances*. Unlike his other works, he could not decide on a nationality for this piece, so he gave it the name "Astral" to encompass something greater than an ethnic group. Gordon Stout is a well-known performer and educator whose marimba solos have become a standard part of the repertoire. His pieces often have a pedagogical nature to them and as such are played by many students. He believes in creating many works for marimba to keep "the health of the marimba" (Stout, *Bio*).

Three Winter Carols

Stuart Saunders Smith
(b. 1948)

- I.
- II.
- III.

Three Winter Carols is one of a collection of pieces by Smith featuring glockenspiel and spoken text. The text is written by his wife, Sylvia Smith, whose poems have a commonality in their discussion of winter. The poems can be read as a reflection on the stasis we experience during winter and are full of analogies to death and other inescapable facts of life. As a favorite composer of an "ever-growing" group of percussionists and other performers, Smith writes pieces that often explore a balance among theater, percussion, and spoken word. In the journal, *Perspectives of New Music*, Smith discusses his pieces as "trying to make...music which refracts the outer world without being determined by it-a music which is not a conduit for nature." (Smith, 107) He continues on to say that, "language is a self-referential symbol system where each symbol is defined by other symbols of the same system." (Smith, 110) With this in mind, listen carefully to the words of the poem as each word's importance relies on the following word.

The text of piece is as follows:

The sun is rising out of the snow.
White lace swirls out the window.
Is this World too big for you?

So many of us have gone the way of winter.
Some longing to overcome time: to age and not to age.
The people of winter carry their heat with them.
The people of winter close their eyes and see white.
The Angels of winter come for us in the night.

There once was a man of 99 years. Tall and lean, head down, he went out for a long walk, snow falling. He walked so far he no longer knew where he was. But, he was not lost. Old and tired, he lay down by a stream and slept.

The arms of hemlock bent low, the snow became his blanket.
He slept. For a hundred years he slept.
Then, on the first warm day. A boy heard, singing coming from the woods.
Look! Fiddleheads!

She Who Sleeps with a Small Blanket

Keith Volans
(b. 1949)

Born in South Africa, Keith Volans is a well-known composer of solo, chamber, and orchestral music. From 1979 throughout the 80's, Volans compositions were directly based on African marimba and drumming music dance music. In his writing he explains that his music reflects many African dances including Pedi dinaka dance where a drum and pipe play repetitive patterns of interlocking notes. *She Who Sleeps with a Small Blanket* was written during this time and Volans states that besides the highly rhythmic drum part, the only overtly African influence of the piece is the title. *She Who Sleeps with a Small Blanket*, meaning "she who sleeps alone." The piece was written for Robyn Schulkowsky to be performed at Museum Carolino Augusteum, Slazburg Oct. 22, 1985 (Volans, *She Who Sleeps with a small blanket*).

Mudra

Bob Becker
(b. 1947)
Arr. Tony Nunez

As a founding member of the world-renowned percussion group, Nexus, Bob Becker is a well-known figure (both performer and composer) in the percussion community. Most of his post-graduate work was done in world music at Wesleyan University, studying North and South India, Africa, and Indonesia. These influences can be heard in many of his works and *Mudra* is no exception. *Mudra* is music originally meant to accompany a complex Hindu and Buddhist dance involving spiritual gestures mostly performed with the hands and fingers. (There are 108 mudras used in common Tantric rituals based on the traditional and modern issues in Indian society). The music of the piece is based on Hindustani scales called raga Chandrakauns, but most of the piece focuses on rhythmic cadences called ti hais (Becker, *Becker*). The piece was originally scored for marimba, vibraphone, songbells, glockenspiel, crotales, prepared drum, and bass drum, with the idea of using Western instruments to imitate an Indian "sound." I wanted to give the music a new sound and had it arranged for prepared drum and tape (electronics).

Trenchcoat Dances

Shaun Naidoo
(1962-2012)

I. Skin and Bones

IV. Torched

V. Trenchcoat Dances

In order to keep the integrity of the piece, I have included Dr. Naidoo's original program notes from 2006. Even if you never had the chance to meet this wonderful professor, you can get an idea of his subtle sarcasm, brilliant humor, and talent as a composer from his notes and the piece itself.