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The Chapman Percussion Ensemble

Chapman Percussion Ensemble

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Chapman Percussion Ensemble, "The Chapman Percussion Ensemble" (2009). *Printed Performance Programs (PDF Format)*. 1386.

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I really, really like miniatures. Two immediate reasons come to mind:

For the challenge they present in execution, I compare it to the Vault (gymnastic event), in which a gymnast must run at maximum speed for 25 meters, jump onto a springboard, land (inverted) on a vaulting 'horse', flip several times in the air, and land stoically upright (that is...hopefully). All of this takes about 5 seconds.

For the challenge they present in interpretation (both for the performer and audience), a parallel difficulty arises from experiencing intense musical activity without having the luxury of time in which to process the meaning of sounds/compositional intent. This can/will create some chaos due to our habitual/instinctual need to immediately assign meaning, value, and judgment to a musical experience. What I've often found is that miniatures can create delightful "I loved it"/"I hated it" after-concert discussions.

That John Bergamo's **5 Miniatures** use freely chosen (and noisy) percussion instruments, are freely tonal (via-a-vis freely atonal), and incorporate elements of improvisation, I hope that we all [performers, conductor, audience] will sit back and enjoy the ride with a certain amount of nervous expectation.

-Nick Terry

Piru Bol is a sectional composition based on a mixture of North & South Indian vocal rhythms. These short rhythmical phrases (called *bols*) are combined to form a theme that is heard at the very beginning of the composition, and returns at the end. Subsequent sections feature bols that are in "triplet" rhythms, and finally in "fast"/32nd note rhythms. Each section is linked by an open improvisation, in which the performers will spin variations on the previous rhythmical material. As the composer's score only provides the vocal bols (using traditional western notation on a neutral one-line staff), the performers are free to choose their assembly of instruments, as well as any sense of melodic contour & orchestration.

Trivia: "Piru" refers to the remote city of the same name, just northwest of Santa Clarita, where the composer lives and which his wife is the town's mayor.

-Nick Terry

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CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
PRESENTS...

THE CHAPMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

NICK TERRY, DIRECTOR

NOVEMBER 12, 2009
8 PM
CHAPMAN AUDITORIUM,
MEMORIAL HALL

PROGRAM

PERFORMED WITH NO INTERMISSION

TA & CLAP (2005)	NICO MUHLY (B. 1981)
NAGOYA MARIMBAS (1994)	STEVE REICH (B. 1936)
COLD PASTORAL (2004)	RYAN STREBER (B. 1979)
5 MINIATURES (1966)	JOHN BERGAMO (B. 1940)
PIRU BOL	JOHN BERGAMO

C P E
CHAPMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

KYLE ALANIS
SCOTT KAWAI
CRAIG SHIELDS
SAM PRICE-WALDMAN

Ode On a Grecian Urn (1820)
by John Keats

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

[cont.]

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ta-ing and Clapping is a method of teaching rhythms wherein all beats are accounted for, resulting in a fully-rendered moto perpetuo that only implies empty spaces naturally found in a rhythmic pattern. In *Ta & Clap*, scored for percussion quartet, I wrote dense marimba music and then subjected this music to several processes of subtraction, resulting in a rhythmic cycle that is sometimes presented in its entirety, sometimes filled with holes, and sometimes completely rendered out such that there are no holes at all. Although there is a lot of math at work, **Ta & Clap** is meant to be fun to play and challenging to learn. It is scored for 2 marimbas and any number of assorted percussion instruments at the discretion of the performers.

-Nico Muhly

Nagoya Marimbas (1994) is somewhat similar to my pieces from the 1960s and '70s in that there are repeating patterns played on both marimbas, one or more beats out of phase, creating a series of two part unison canons. However, these patterns are more melodically developed, change frequently and each is usually repeated no more than three times, similar to my more recent work. The piece is also considerably more difficult to play than my earlier ones and requires two virtuosic performers.

- Steve Reich

Cold Pastoral was composed in the winter and spring of 2004 and is scored for crotales, vibraphone, and a small battery of un-pitched instruments. The quartet is split into two duos, one sharing the set of crotales and one sharing the vibraphone. This arrangement created some very interesting compositional challenges, both technically and musically, and many aspects of the piece arose directly from these challenges. The title comes from John Keats' famous Ode on a Grecian Urn (see insert), although the piece doesn't really have much to do with the poem itself. Rather, I found the phrase to be beautifully ambiguous and suggestive when removed from the context of the poem, and I wanted to echo on a variety of levels and in a number of domains the diversity of feelings, atmospheres, and allusions that I read in this expression.

- Ryan Streber