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Illinois State University Percussion Ensemble

David Collier Director
Illinois State University

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Illinois State University
College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Illinois State University
Percussion Ensemble
David Collier, Director

Guest Artist
Jeffrey White, Marimba

Center for the Performing Arts
April 13, 2008
Sunday Evening
7:00 p.m.

This is the one hundred and sixty-fourth program of the 2007-2008 season.
Program

Please turn off cell phones and pagers for the duration of the concert. Thank You.

Battlestations (1982)
Rich Holl (born 1957)

Uneven Souls (1992)
Nebojša Živković (born 1962)

Arcadia II (1982)
David Maslanka (born 1943)

Percussion Ensemble
Ryan Borden
Doug Ford
Tom Ford
Damien Kaplan
Patrick Keelan
Michael Leitzke
Michael Malgoza
Zach Oostema
Lawrence Rogers

Program Notes

Uneven Souls (composed 1992, commissioned by "Kulturinitiative Stubaital" Austria) is a piece whose title reflects the character of the Slavic people from the Balkans and their "uneven" souls. Souls that are free from any "strict rules", any "ultimatums", or any "square, even" way of behaving. The rhythms in this piece are based mostly on uneven beats like 7/8, 9/9, 11/8, and especially 13/8 in the last section of the piece. It shows actually the "picture" of these Balkanian souls, their uneven, not "dogmatic" way of living. The composition consists of three parts, one fading into the other. Singing is also important part of this work, since singing at the work, or in fields, or at home, is important part of every day life in the most countries at the Balkans. It should be sung "full blast", with a natural "rough" voice, since this will give the right spirit to this unusually music.

From the dictionary, "Arcadia" means a pastoral district of ancient Greece, or any place of rural peace and simplicity. It refers as well the mythic land of human origin. The title "Arcadia II" has a double intent: it is the second piece of mine with the title "Arcadia", and it is a musical prayer for the well-being of Earth and for a return to ancient reverence for Earth.

The Concerto employs a traditional concerto form: faster outer movements surrounding a slow middle movement. The outer movements are both in sonata form (exposition of themes, development, recapitulation) and the middle movement has the feel of a through-composed song. The ensemble writing is intricate with the solo part woven into the texture. A high degree of ensemble awareness is demanded from the players.

The first movement arises from darkness. I have a specific memory of standing in a New Hampshire meadow on a summer evening. One by one the fireflies lit up until the darkening field was alive with their activity. The tiny opening bell sounds of this movement are the fireflies. Out of this grows a mournful bittersweet music, aware of death, which rises to a high intensity and then fades.

The second movement is a nature meditation. It comes directly from my walks in Inwood Hill Park in upper Manhattan. This hundred-acre wood is the last "wild" parkland in New York City. It contains original-growth trees - among them magnificent squirrels, raccoons, and a large variety of birds - pheasants, owls, cardinals, robins, doves, warblers, and woodpeckers to name a few. The occasional hawk passes through. Though faint and crowded on all sides by urban noise, the voices of nature can still be heard in these woods. They suggested a music in which the human presence (the solo marimba) communes with the sounds of wind, birds, the rustling of small things, the flow of water - all represented in the ensemble. The birdcalls played throughout the movement by the xylophone are from my favorite bird. With patience I was able to observe the elusive bird - smaller than a robin, light tan, sometimes a ground feeder - on half a dozen occasions, but I never learned its name. The third movement is infused with a spirit of playfulness, light, and simple joy in the glories of nature. There is an aggressive opening theme, a serene and pastoral second theme, an extended development which rises to moments of epiphany (wind and glittering sunlight in the rustling leaves), a cadenza, and a recapitulation with the second theme coming first. The highly charged ensemble passages in fast, flowing triplets are among the most difficult - and to me, attractive - in the whole piece. –David Maslanka
Jeffrey White graduated from Central Michigan University with his BME and MM in Percussion Performance where he studied percussion and timpani with the late Robert Hohner. He taught in the Percussion Studio of Robert Hohner at Central Michigan University from 1998-2001. His responsibilities included arranging and instructing the Marching Percussion Section, Percussion Techniques Class, Private Percussion Lessons, and Percussion Ensemble. In addition to Central Michigan University, Mr. White has taught at Alma College, Michigan State University and is currently Adjunct Instructor of Percussion and Facilities and Operations Manager at The Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University. He was an active member of the Robert Hohner Percussion Ensemble and appears on a number of internationally released recordings on the DMP and Troy/Albany record labels. He has had the privilege of working closely with and performing many works by composers such as David Gillingham, David Maslanka and Michael Daugherty. Mr. White has commissioned new works for percussion ensemble, percussion duo and solo percussion from Scott Harding, Mack Pittard, Stephen A. Martin, Kelly Cotter and David Gillingham. Current projects include performances and recording of percussion solo and duo literature as well as performances of Arcadia II: Concerto for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble by David Maslanka. His experiences with marching, concert and world percussion have made him a sought after instructor and adjudicator.

As a member of the Robert Hohner Percussion Ensemble, he has appeared as a featured artist with the Windsor Symphony and Midland Symphony Orchestra (MI). In the fall of 2006, he was featured with the Holland Symphony Orchestra. Mr. White has been active teaching percussion in many different public schools, including Petoskey, Michigan where he had a studio of 28 students and assisted the instruction of the 48 member award-winning drum line. He held the principal percussionist and assistant timpanist position with the Midland Symphony Orchestra (MI) from 2000-2006. Orchestral experiences include the West Shore Symphony Orchestra, Traverse City Symphony, Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra, Lansing Symphony Orchestra, Oklahoma City Philharmonic and the Grand Rapids Symphony. In the fall of 2004, he was one of thirty participants from twelve countries to participate in the Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic Marimba and Percussion Course held in Engers, Germany with concerts in Frankfurt, Germany. He has performed with world-renowned musicians such as Ken "Professor" Philmore, Andy Narell, Russ Miller, Ndugu Chancellor, David Friedman, David Samuels, Garrison Keillor and Dave Brubeck. Mr. White was the principal percussionist with the Stuttgart Ballet's performance of Romeo and Juliet (Prokofiev) while on tour in Michigan. His teachers have included Gwendolyn Burgett-Thrasher, David Hall, Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic and the late Robert Hohner. He is currently finishing final requirements for his Doctor of Musical Arts from Michigan State University where he will graduate this December. Mr. White is an endorser for Encore Mallets, a Performing Artist for Istanbul Mehmet Cymbals and is active as a National Yamaha Artist and Clinician.