



YST

Yong Siew Toh
Conservatory
of Music

Percussion Senior Recital

by

Adam Sharawi

Program Notes

1. Elyl & Tap
Emmanuel Séjourné

5. Triptych Boom
Chad Floyd

2. Goroka
James Larter

6. Electric Thoughts
Ivan Trevino

3. Planet Damnation
John Psathas

7. Heat Stroke
Ivan Trevino

4. Atalanta
John Psathas

8. Echoes
Fumihiko Ono

Tuesday, 3rd of December, 2024

7:45 pm

YST Concert Hall



1. *Elyl & Tap* (2023)
for Solo Marimba and Tape

“This work is a very modest tribute to pianist Lyle Mays (who passed away too soon) and guitarist Pat Metheny. Inseparable traveling companions, they have, since my adolescence, nourished my imagination and my writing. Their incredible precision and rhythmic complexity do not prevent superb lyrical flights, just as the complexity of some of their compositions in no way hinders their relaxation and the apparent ease of playing. I think that many “difficult contemporary” pieces should be played with this feeling.

I deliberately wrote fewer dynamics, leaving a certain freedom to the instrumentalist who must know how to melt or must know how to come out as a soloist at the right times, depending on the adjustment of the diffusion of the accompaniment.

A big thank you to Edition Svitzer for their trust and a big thank you to Adélaïde Ferrière who is the dedicated and who will not fail to play this work with her panache and her beautiful energy.”

- Emmanuel Séjourné



2. *Goroka* (2020)

for Solo Marimba, Multiple-Percussion and Tape

“Goroka is a town in Papua New Guinea; a place that is associated with its ancient rituals, verdant rainforests and colorful tribes untouched by Western civilization. The magic of this secluded island has always fascinated me. Their perceptions of the world compared to ours, their faiths, their deities and their future within our world. Can their traditions remain as they always used to? ‘Goroka’ is based on my observations of various tribes and landscapes of Papua New Guinea; its other-worldly and magical aura, the rhythms of secrets we may never understand. Written in 2020 and the first in my ‘Future Tribe’ series.”

- James Larter

3. *Planet Damnation* (2015)
for Solo Timpani and Tape

“I’ve always been drawn to the timpani because of their duality, they can be both powerfully percussive and melodically expressive. Having been an admirer of Larry’s playing for many years I was looking for an opportunity to create a work that featured the timpani (and in particular, Larry) in a solo role. A number of my recent concerti for other instruments (particularly the piano concerto “Three Psalms”, and the saxophone concerto “Zahara”) have had very important and active timpani parts. A composer usually has many goals when writing any work, some are general ongoing compositional motivations, others are specific to the work in hand. In *Planet Damnation*, I wanted very much to allow the timpani to sing – in their own unique way – and there are passages in the piece where the timpani really do find their melodic voice, playing lines that one could sing along to.

Writing for the timpani in a solo role made it possible to create a piece that was dynamic and full of powerful energy. After all, the timpani is one of the very few instruments which is not in danger of being drowned out by the orchestra. So, although the work is short, it is very intense much of the time. I was keen to create something that felt massive, and almost overwhelming. There is nothing in the repertoire for timpani that is as challenging for the performer as this work. The title refers to a chapter in Robert Fisk’s book ‘The Great War For Civilization’. There are plenty of obvious (and some not too obvious) references to martial music in this piece. It also has qualities of (and references to) action-movie or war-movie soundtracks.”

4. *Atalanta* (2020)
for Solo Vibraphone and Tape

“I’ve always been strongly influenced by the performers I write for. In the case of *Atalanta* I was affected by the knowledge that percussionist Fabian (Ziegler) and pianist Akvilė (Šileikaitė) were a couple and soon to be married. There is a sense of youthful love and warmth in the piece, and of two young spirits chasing each other at high speed.

The literal meaning of the word *Atalanta* (from Greek mythology) is ‘equal in weight’ – not a bad concept for the foundation of a marriage. *Atalanta* is also the name of a Greek heroine, a swift-footed virgin who eschewed men and devoted herself to the huntress Artemis.

She agreed to marry only if a suitor could outrun her in a footrace, which she knew was impossible. If the suitor was unsuccessful, he would be killed. Many suitors died in the attempt until Hippomenes prayed to the goddess Aphrodite for assistance and received three irresistible golden apples. During the race, *Atalanta* was diverted off the path as Hippomenes tossed an apple for her to retrieve; each time *Atalanta* caught up with Hippomenes, he would toss another apple, ultimately winning the race and *Atalanta* herself.

The backing track features a recording of *Taonga Puoro* performed by the recent Richard Nunns (if you listen closely, you can hear his voice sung through the body of a *Putorino*).”

- John Psathas

5. *Triptych Boom* (2014)
for Solo Snare Drum and Tape

"Triptych Boom was built primarily around the concept of utilizing groupings of three. The snare drum soloist presents this concept throughout the work by performing rhythmic patterns in groups of three successively and also by performing at multiple places on the drum (oftentimes being three different areas, such as the center, edge, and rim). The inspiration of the piece stems from the composer's exploration of the different ways in which the snare drum can be performed while conforming to a motivic device that identifies the work.

This is the "solo only" version that is included when the ensemble version is purchased. The "solo only" version includes an electro-acoustic audio backing track. Much of the snare part in this optional, slightly longer (6:05) version is the same; the audio accompaniment, however, varies greatly from the trio version.

The snare drummer is presented with an ever-changing combination of sticks, brushes, and hands while exploring a number of creative techniques in which the drum is played. The accompaniment parts are equally intriguing, as the percussionists are called on to manage multiple instruments, sticks, mallets, and hand techniques. The result is a blend of subtlety, groove, color, and all around originality."

- Chad Floyd



6. *Electric Thoughts* (2014)
for Solo Marimba and Tape

“Electronic pop music has had a lasting influence on my musical and compositional vocabulary. From Radiohead’s *Kid A* to Jon Hopkins’ *Insides*, I’ve been drawn to music that organically melds artificial instruments with real ones. Given our constant need for technology, the idea with *Electric Thoughts* is to find a balance, using the tape part to simply enhance, and not overtake, the live performer. I attempt to accomplish this by taking my favorite qualities of the marimba and enhancing them with electronic accompaniment; coupling rhythmic passages with unison drum beats and lyrical passages with electronically sustained sounds. This healthy balance reflects the role I’d like technology to play in my own life; a balanced accompaniment.”

- Ivan Trevino

7. *Heat Stroke* (2014)
for Solo Drum Set and Tape

“From Aaron: “I am very passionate about music for the drumset. I think there should be more of it. I have started a project to try to generate some more pieces for drummers to play that are not just “drum solos” in the traditional sense. I want there to be ‘art music’ for the drumset, for lack of a better term. My aim as a “drummer” who operates in both the jazz/improvised music world and in the classical world, is to expand the repertoire for “classical” drum-set. There are many solos written for the drumset in a jazz, rock or latin context; groove-oriented, stylized pieces that do not garner much respect in the ‘legit’ world. My informal research shows that there simply are not many pieces that fit into this other category. Classical percussionists are playing works for marimba, snare drum, timpani, multiple percussion setup and sometimes USING the drumset, but there are very few that are treating it with an equal focus. In real life, a large percentage of gigs require this skill, yet it is being ignored in many of our institutes of learning for percussionists. I think that we need pieces that will force them to consider the drumset equally.”

“Personally, Aaron and his wife Sarah are two of my best friends in the whole world. When my wife Amanda and I decided to move from Rochester, NY to Austin, TX, Aaron and Sarah made the 29 hour drive with us to see us off. Heat Stroke seemed like an appropriate title for Aaron's piece, as he never quite got used to the Texas heat while he was there, which was pretty hilarious. He's a Buffalo guy, after all. Thanks for your friendship and musical inspiration, Aaron. We miss you guys dearly.”

- Ivan Trevino

8. *Echoes* (2018)
for Marimba Duo and Tape

"World of Echoing Sounds", a constant creation of sound emerges from the single stroke of the marimba. The ensemble of each part of the marimba forms the core axis of this piece.

The composition explores the unique characteristics of persistent polyrhythms, reverberation effects created through different types of echoes (rhythmic echo, syncopated echo), the boundary between monotone and tremolo, and the freedom of beat and rhythm from traditional rules.

Through these diverse echoes, I have embodied the theme of a "world of echoing sounds."

- Fumihiko Ono

Biography.



Adam Sharawi is a Malaysian percussionist currently pursuing his bachelor's degree in music performance at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore. Adam began his musical journey in 2014 at the age of 16, when he discovered his passion for playing the drums. Encouraged, he continued playing rock music alongside school friends who shared his enthusiasm, covering songs from bands such as Muse, Linkin Park, My Chemical Romance, and many others. Growing up surrounded by rock music, he cherishes the idea of performing in this genre.

In 2016, Adam formally pursued his music studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), where he was first introduced to orchestral percussion under the guidance of Max Riefer, a renowned German percussionist. With this exposure, he discovered a new realm of passion in orchestral percussion. Inspired, Adam continues his studies at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under Singaporean percussionists Joachim Lim and Mario Choo, as well as Jonathan Fox for chamber percussion ensembles. Adam's goal is to become a versatile musician, excelling across various musical styles.