

4-25-2010

## Senior Recital: Ari Corson, percussion

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**

**Presents**

**Ari Corson**

*Senior Recital*

**Sunday, April 25, 2010  
2:00 p.m.**

**Camp Concert Hall  
Booker Hall of Music**





# Program

## Ari Corson, *percussion*

### Eight Pieces for Four Timpani

VIII. March

Elliott Carter

(b. 1908)

### Wind in the Bamboo Grove

Keiko Abe

(b. 1937)

### Vignettes

James Stephenson

1. Running with Lionel

(b. 1969)

3. Chuck's March

5. Waltz in Berlin

7. Max

8. Encore

Matt Jordan, *trumpet*

### Three Episodes for Timpani

John H. Beck

I

(b. 1933)

II

III

Intermission

### Ghanaia

Matthias Schmitt

(b. 1958)

### Dream

John Cage

(1912-1992)

Arr. Thad Anderson

### The Anvil Chorus

David Lang

(b. 1957)

# Program Notes

The general theme on which I based my repertoire for this recital was versatility amidst percussion. Percussion, unlike most music choices, is not one single instrument, but rather a whole category of instruments, and a good percussionist is expected to be able to play all of them with some degree of skill. Although most percussionists will choose one instrument type as their primary one, especially timpani, mallets, or snare drum, they should be able to switch instruments as is required by whatever piece they are playing—not all pieces will require every instrument. For that reason, each piece in my program demonstrates one facet of percussion playing. Each is difficult in its own way, but no two are difficult in the same way. I will be playing a variety of percussion instruments, including timpani, snare drum, marimba, vibraphone, as well as non-traditional percussion instruments.

The first piece, **MARCH**, is very standard among timpani players, and challenging in that it forces me to place mutes on the timpani heads, affectively changing the sound while I am still playing. This multi-tasking ability to play with one hand and move things around with the other is necessary not only for timpani, but for almost any other instrument as well. The piece also calls for me to flip my sticks while playing, a feat of control very popularly utilized in the rudimental snare drum playing of marching band drummers.

The second piece, **WIND IN THE BAMBOO GROVE**, is an excellent example of Japanese marimba music. Unlike its western counterpart, Japanese marimba music is less focused on chords and melody, and more focused on the individual notes and the different sounds producible on the instrument. The tempo is more fluid, and the techniques required to hit all the notes are what make this piece such a challenge to master, especially to a classically trained musician. The composer, Keiko Abe, is one of the most prominent composers for Japanese marimba music, many of her pieces being standard requirements on marimba auditions across the country, if not the world.

As percussionists, we very rarely get to be in the spotlight. Normally, we are accompanying other instrumentalists, who provide the melody and chords, while we provide the complex rhythms and a steady tempo for them. That being the case, a piece like **VIGNETTES** by James Stephenson was a natural choice for my program. Each movement stands out on its own, requiring the percussionist and trumpet player to change instruments and playing techniques when switching from movement to movement. The rhythms range from simple to complex, and many times the real music is only created by the counterpoint evident between the two instruments. The third and fifth movements also require that I play multiple types of instruments at the same time—the vibraphone with a tambourine, woodblock, and triangle in the fifth. This technique is very important whenever a percussionist is playing chamber music, or even parts from a wind ensemble, or an orchestra arrangement.

As I return to the timpani for the fourth piece, the audience will immediately note a style vastly different from my first. **THREE EPISODES FOR TIMPANI** was written by a percussionist, which means he knows very well everything that is possible to do on the timpani. In addition, the composer, John Beck, makes each movement unique by requiring slightly different instrumentation and techniques. The first movement requires that I play notes on a piano behind me without missing a beat on the timpani. The second movement showcases the important technique of changing pitches on pedal timpani by creating a slow, ballad-like movement in which the drum played by my right hand will change pitch with nearly every note. This is difficult to do on the timpani and still achieve accurate pitches without the natural glissando effect of changing pitches on the timpani, which is heard intentionally later in the movement as a way to differentiate how all the previous pitch changes should not sound like. The last movement returns to the fast-moving speed of my first piece, but puts an emphasis on accents and rhythms, challenging me to hit every drum in rapid succession without hitting the wrong part of the drum.

After a necessary intermission to change out my setup, I will return with **GHANAIA** by Matthias Schmitt. This is a rhythmically simple piece that I first learned during freshman year. It is simple in its technique and rhythms, but very challenging in the speed and length of time I have to play. If you look at my left hand, you will see it doing a very fast pattern constantly for almost the entire length of the seven-minute piece. Such endurance that is necessary makes it a challenge to reach the end without stopping or hitting wrong notes, as my hands quickly tire from the constant movements.

After putting the audience to sleep with the John-Cage piece, I will wake them up again with a composition by David Lang entitled **THE ANVIL CHORUS**. Not to be confused with an opera work of the same name, it is designed to depict a man walking down the street with blacksmiths hitting their anvils at different times. This piece is without a doubt the most challenging in my program, simultaneously utilizing a variety of metallic objects, woodblocks, and a kick drum. At times, my hands and feet are in constant motion and hitting in different rhythms. **THE ANVIL CHORUS** challenges me to find, create and play non-traditional percussion instruments in increasingly fast and challenging ways.

Ending my program will be a special encore. I will be playing a piece that is near and dear to me, and was the only real choice to end my senior recital. It is fast, fun, and exciting—usually an audience-pleaser, so I'm sure everyone will love it—and some may even recognize it.

—*Program notes by Ari Corson*





## In Appreciation

Getting to this recital has been a very long and difficult process, and it would not have been possible without the help of a few people.

To my mom and dad, thank you for not letting me give up on music when I almost did before high school and for not letting me forget about how much I enjoyed U of R. I literally would not be here if you had not convinced me not to give up on doing what I love so much.

To my brother and sister, thank you for being the bar I could never reach. I will never be as good of a snare drummer as you Leah, or as good of a drumset player as you Seth, but that only pushed me to be such a good marimba player that neither of you could hope to be as good as me (for once in my life).

To Greg, my first real percussion teacher, though you could not be here to see me finally perform my recital, it is thanks to you that I am here. I don't know if I will ever be as good of a percussionist as you are, but you showed me not only how to play, but how to be a percussionist.

To my percussion instructors at school, Mr. Keeton, Mr. Jones, Mr. Breakall, and Mr. Sanchez, you have all helped me develop my skills to the point they are at right now. Each one of you helped me in a different way, and I would not be able to make it through this performance without the guidance you all have given me over the past four years.

To Matthew Duvall, it is unfortunate that you will be unable to attend this recital, though I am happy at least that you will be able to help me prepare up through my dress rehearsal. There is so much I have learned from you, both about the music I play and the life of a professional musician. Thank you for helping me get to this point. I hope to be able to keep watching you perform any time you are in town.

To my friends from home, both those who were able to make it and those who were not, thank you for the memories of good times and musical moments. Just please don't start telling too many stories from when I was still learning to play. I don't need those or any of my many old nicknames traveling around as I'm graduating.

To my fraternity brothers, thank you for getting me out of my shell and giving me a venue to vent after the long hours of practicing and performing. These last 4 years would not have been the same or perhaps even bearable if I did not have you all.

To everyone else, my friends, my family, my professors, my admirers (I wish), thank you for everything and for joining me on this day to hear me perform. I hope you enjoy my music for this one final musical performance of my college career.

