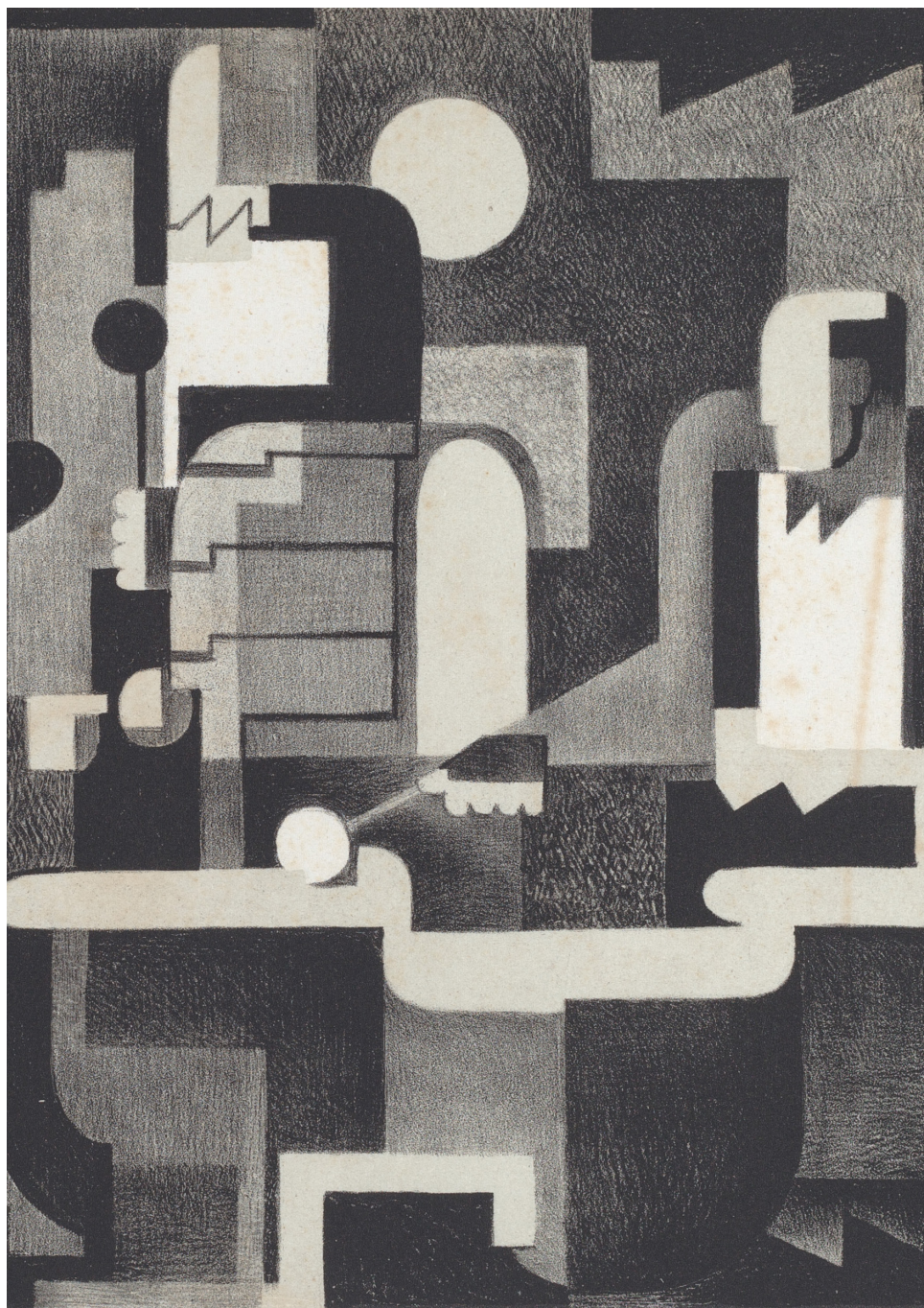


78TH SEASON OF

CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | FEBRUARY 23, 2020



PROGRAM

Third Coast Percussion

February 23, 2020 | 3:30 p.m.

West Building, West Garden Court

Devonté Hynes (b. 1985)
Perfectly Voiceless (2018)

Annika K. Socolofsky (b. 1990)
The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows: ambedo (2018)

Philip Glass (b. 1937)
Perpetuum (2018)

Intermission

Ryan Lott (b. 1979)
Quartered (2017)

David Skidmore (b. 1982)
Torched and Wrecked (2016)



Third Coast Percussion, photo by Saverio Truglia

THE MUSICIANS

Third Coast Percussion is a Grammy Award–winning, Chicago-based percussion quartet. For fifteen years, the ensemble has created exciting and unexpected performances that constantly redefine the classical music experience. The ensemble has been praised for “commandingly elegant” (*New York Times*) performances, the “rare power” (*Washington Post*) of their recordings, and “an inspirational sense of fun and curiosity” (*Star-Tribune*). Third Coast Percussion maintains a busy tour schedule throughout the United States, and international tour dates in Colombia, the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Taiwan, Germany, Italy, and Poland.

A direct connection with the audience is at the core of all of Third Coast Percussion’s work, whether the musicians are speaking from the stage about a new piece of music, inviting the audience to play along in a concert or educational performance, or inviting their fans around the world to create new music using one of their free mobile apps. The four members of Third Coast are also accomplished teachers and make active participation by all students the cornerstone of all their educational offerings.

The quartet’s curiosity and eclectic taste have led to a series of unlikely collaborations that have produced exciting new art. The ensemble has worked with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, dancers at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and musicians from traditions ranging from the mbira music of Zimbabwe’s Shona people, to indie rockers, to some of the world’s leading concert musicians. Third Coast Percussion served as ensemble-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center from 2013 to 2018.

A commission for a new work from composer Augusta Read Thomas in 2012 led to the realization that commissioning new musical works can be—and should be—as collaborative as any other artistic partnership. Through extensive workshopping and close contact with composers, Third Coast Percussion has commissioned and premiered new works by Philip Glass, Jlin, Tyondai Braxton, Augusta Read Thomas, Devonté Hynes, Georg Friedrich Haas, Donnacha Dennehy, Glenn Kotche, Christopher Cerrone, David T. Little, and today’s leading, up-and-coming composers through their Emerging Composers Partnership Program.

The four members of Third Coast Percussion—Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore—met while studying percussion music at Northwestern University with Michael Burritt and James Ross. Members of Third Coast also hold degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Rutgers University, the New England Conservatory, and the Yale School of Music.

PROGRAM NOTES

Perfectly Voiceless

Devonté Hynes is a British singer, songwriter, composer, producer, and author, now residing in New York City. He has released five studio albums under the name “Blood Orange,” and previously released two albums as “Lightspeed Champion.” He has produced for artists such as Solange Knowles, Sky Ferreira, and Carly Rae Jepsen, and has made his own solo appearances at the Pitchfork and Coachella Music Festivals. Hynes plays cello and piano, and recently performed some of Philip Glass’s études as part of an all-star lineup for Glass’s concerts at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. Hynes also has a background in dance and has worked with ballet dancer Maria Kochetkova and choreographer Emma Portner in his own music videos.

Hynes composed the music for an entire evening-length program featuring Third Coast Percussion and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, with new choreography created by Emma Portner, Jon Boogz, and Lil Buck, which premiered in Chicago in September 2018. To create this seventy-five-minute opus, Hynes composed music with synthesized and sampled sounds, which he then sent to Third Coast Percussion. The group experimented with instruments to create a live performance version of the music, which they then recorded and sent back to Hynes for feedback, and eventually shared with the choreographers to create the dance. Today’s program features a section of this program, *Perfectly Voiceless*, that served as a musical interlude between choreographed pieces.

The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows: ambedo

Annika Socolofsky is an American composer and avant-folk vocalist. Her music stems from the inflections, gesture, and resonance of the human voice and is communicated through mediums ranging from orchestral works to unaccompanied folk ballads. Socolofsky is a 2020 Gaudeamus Award Nominee and recipient of a Fromm Foundation Commission, The Cortona Prize, and a BMI Student Composer Award. She is a doctoral candidate and fellow in composition at Princeton University. Her research focuses on the music of Dolly Parton to create a pedagogical approach to composition that is inclusive of many vocal timbres, inflections, and techniques. Socolofsky says, “The concept for this piece comes from John Koenig’s blog *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, which presents words invented by John Koenig ‘to fill a hole in the [English] language—to give a name to emotions we all might experience but don’t yet have a word for.’ This piece was premiered by Liz Karney, McKayla Phillips, Nick Martinez, and Lauren Molloy at the 2018 Sō Percussion Summer Institute Princeton PhD Concert, and is dedicated to them.” Koenig’s *Dictionary* defines “ambedo” as:

ambedo, n. a kind of melancholic trance in which you become completely absorbed in vivid sensory details—raindrops skittering down a window, tall trees leaning in the wind, clouds of cream swirling in your coffee—which leads to a dawning awareness of the haunting fragility of life, a mood whose only known cure is the vuvuzela.

Perpetulum

Through his operas, his symphonies, his compositions for his own ensemble, and his many collaborations with artists ranging from Twyla Tharp to Allen Ginsberg, and Woody Allen to David Bowie, Philip Glass has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his times.

Although percussion instruments have played an important role in much of Glass's music, and a number of his works have been arranged for percussion by other musicians, Glass had never composed a work for percussion ensemble until Third Coast Percussion commissioned *Perpetulum*. Glass, who was eighty-one years old when he composed this work, harkened back to childhood memories of his first experience with percussion instruments. Though Glass's primary musical instrument was the flute, he had the opportunity to participate in a percussion class while a student at the Preparatory Division of the Peabody Conservatory in his hometown of Baltimore. *Perpetulum* blends an almost childlike exploration of the sounds of percussion with Glass's signature musical voice.

The work is in three sections, with a cadenza between the second and third sections. Glass proposes some general concepts and instruments for the cadenza but leaves it to the performers to compose this segment of the music themselves.

Quartered

Ryan Lott is a composer, producer, and founder of the innovative genre-defying trio Son Lux, whose fifth studio album, *Brighter Wounds*, was released in 2018. Outside of Son Lux, Lott composes music for film, theater, dance, and the concert hall. He has worked with choreographers Travis Wall, Stephen Petronio, and Gina Gibney, and created music for five major feature films, most notably *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby* (2014), *Paper Towns* (2015), and *Mean Dreams* (2017), the last of which premiered at Cannes and the Toronto Film Festivals 2016.

The performers of *Quartered* are separated by space and time. Each finds his own corner in the room, and obeys his own clock while maintaining an ear for the rest of the ensemble. The clocks rarely keep the same time, but they're always related to one another, creating moments of sudden synchronicity, gradual separation, and periodic alignment. Distinct clocks also allow for composite rhythms that are otherwise unachievable, and a periodicity that defies the sometimes irrational relationship between them.

Quartered can be performed in a traditional configuration from the stage, but is ideally presented quadraphonically, with the performers surrounding the audience. The listener's position in space is intended to inform his or her perception of the piece. For example, in the same moment, one may perceive a pulse that is dictated by the nearest performer. The ears of fellow listeners in other parts in the room may perceive the pulse in a different way, or even perceive no definite pulse at all.

The spatial separation of performers also allows for a musical phrase to appear as if it's in motion in space, sometimes darting back and forth, or spinning around the listener's head.

Torched and Wrecked

The compositions of Third Coast Percussion member David Skidmore are performed regularly in concert halls and universities across the country. In 2011, his multmovement work *Common Patterns in Uncommon Time* was commissioned by Frank Lloyd Wright scholar Sidney K. Robinson to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Taliesin, home of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

Torched and Wrecked comes from Skidmore's cycle of works entitled *Aliens with Extraordinary Abilities*, all of which explore the idea that the same piece of music can move at several different speeds at the same time. The movements of this cycle take their cryptic names from memorable Third Coast Percussion touring experiences. An electronic audio track—Skidmore's most intensive work with electronic composition to date—expands and reinforces the live percussion. Video artist Xuan was commissioned to create accompanying video for this and other movements in the cycle.

Program notes by Third Coast Percussion

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

Sound Sketch

Suspicious Cheeselords

From the Heavens

Music illuminating the Gallery's holdings of images of heavenly beings.

February 28, 12:10 p.m.

West Building Rotunda

McGill/McHale Trio

Music by Poulenc, Debussy, and contemporary composers Chris Rogerson, Valerie Coleman, Guillaume Connesson, and Paul Schoenfield.

March 1, 3:30 p.m.

Jennifer Johnson Cano, mezzo-soprano

A New Country

Together with a chamber ensemble consisting of piano, strings, and flute, Cano performs a program featuring American works.

March 8, 3:30 p.m.

Agora Dance

With Sound Impact

Backstage at the Opéra

Celebrating *Degas at the Opéra*

A contemporary approach to Degas and his relationship to the Paris Opéra.

March 15, 3:30 p.m.

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

—

Concerts are made possible in part through the generosity of donors to the National Gallery of Art through The Circle. Reserved seating is available in recognition of their support. Please contact the development office at (202) 842-6450 or circle@nga.gov for more information.

—

The department of music produced these program notes. Copyright © 2020 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington

cover Benton Murdoch Spruance, *Arrangement for Drums* (detail), 1941, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Reba and Dave Williams Collection, Florian Carr Fund and Gift of the Print Research Foundation, 2008.115.269

NGA.GOV/MUSIC