

University Percussion Ensemble

2011-12 Season

218th Concert

Thursday 1 December 2011

Dalton Center Recital Hall

6:00 p.m.

CAROLYN KOEBEL, Director

Will Alderman, Amber Feltrin, Savannah Hill,
Skye Hookham, Ryan Jonker, Sean Keck,
Kellen King, Justin Longroy, Anna Martuch,
Jen Pesch, Nathan Vleck

guest teaching artists

Esther Vandecar, Taiko Sensei

Olga Ehrlich, Taiko Artist

Nathaniel Waller, West African Master Teacher

Improvisation and Maksoum

Featuring the Middle Eastern tar/daff

Glen Velez
b. 1949

For Bes

Variations on the Arabic rhythm "maksoum" for mixed frame drum and riq ensemble.

Glen Velez

For Anubis

Traditional

West African Funerary Music

Soloists: Sean Keck and Justin Longroy

Nathaniel Waller/
Calvin Green

Dialolo

Traditional

Taiko Bayashi (Drum Tune)

featuring Brenna Halpin, Fue

Traditional/Shikoku
arr. M. Durham

Austin Renshu (Practice)

Leonard Eto/Sadogashima *Zoku (Family/Tribe)*

Traditional
arr. Daihachi Oguchi/
Osuwa Shrine/
Nagano Prefecture

Hiryu SanDan Gaishi (Three Dragon Wishes)

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PROGRAM NOTES

compiled by Carolyn Koebel

Tonight's concert explores three of the world's major drumming traditions: Japanese taiko drumming, Middle Eastern frame drumming, and West African djembe traditions. Each one is a deep subject unto itself and is typically studied according to oral tradition. Today's working percussionist, music therapist, and music educator is called upon to be knowledgeable and competent in a broad range of percussion techniques. In addition, successful musicians typically hone their skills in both music reading and improvisation. Through the study of these traditions, students were challenged to develop new playing techniques, learn by rote, improvise within structure, play within an ensemble, and even compose their own variations. All of these skills are essential for today's working musician.

Taiko is the Japanese word for "great drum." This ancient musical art-form originated centuries ago in Asia. The resounding beat of the massive drums, ranging from one foot to six feet in diameter, could be heard over great distances and historically was used as a means of communication.

Taiko could be used to signal distant villages, such as to warn of the approach of an advancing enemy or an impending disaster, or to signal troops on the battlefield. In shrines and temples throughout present-day Japan, taiko can still be heard, although today its purpose is more spiritual and celebratory, often occasioned by village festivals. Only since 1951 in Japan and 1980 in North America has taiko evolved, thanks to Oguchi, Daihachi, and Osuwa Daiko playing at the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

There are two major types of frame drum: those without jingles, which can be played with the hands or with

sticks, and those with jingles, which are played with the hands (tambourines). Frame drums are found in many cultures and have a long history. Examples of different types are depicted in pottery, reliefs, paintings, and folk art. The earliest depictions of frame drums appear in Mesopotamian art from the third millennium B.C. These frame drums are much larger than those used in popular music of the late twentieth century. Depictions of smaller frame drums similar to some still used can be found in the artwork of Greece, Egypt, Persia, and India. They mainly show women playing frame drums in rituals, but men often appear in Arabic examples when a frame drum is employed for martial arts purposes. The first appearance of a frame drum with jingles attached to the frame is found on the 90 A.D. Roman sarcophagus, *The Triumph of Bacchus*. Frame drums are alive and well throughout the Arabic world, North Africa, and the Mediterranean.

Drums and rhythms are central in West African music. The music of West Africa commonly relies on rhythmic figures called polyrhythms, rhythmic structures that are composed of multiple and sometimes opposing rhythmic patterns overlaid and played at the same time. Polyrhythms are often executed by multiple drummers playing separate parts that interlock and combine to create the larger rhythmic texture. West African drumming and rhythms are often closely linked to dancing and ceremony. Although the rhythmic vocabulary of West African drumming is much more syncopated than in Japanese taiko drumming, its cultural context and function in the society has many parallels. The ensemble featured here consists of the djembe drums and the family of bass drums known as the doundounba, sangban, and kenkeni.