

ASU Percussion Faculty Showcase

Faculty Recital Series

Evelyn Smith Music Theater | Wednesday, March 3, 2021 | 7:30 p.m.

Program

Alan's Allies

Dom Moio, Drumset

Allen Dawson (1929-1996)

The Martian Chronicles, for percussion trio (2017)

Shaun Tilburg (b 1981)

I. The 4th Expedition (landing)

II. Colonization

III. The Human Plague

IV. The Million-Year Picnic

Edouard Beyens, Kyle Ritenauer, Shaun Tilburg

Lute Suite in E Minor, BWV 996

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Allemande

Shaun Tilburg, marimba

LOY for percussion + electronics

Gabriel Bolaños (b. 1984)

Simone Mancuso, percussion

World Premiere

Blue Skin of the Sea, for marimba solo

Tonia Ko (b. 1988)

II.

Michael Compitello, marimba

Obbligato Snare Drum Music No. 1: The Power of Love

Thomas Kotcheff (b. 1988)

Michael Compitello, snare drum

World Premiere

CaDance for Two

Andy Pape (b. 1955)

Michael Compitello and Shaun Tilburg

Program Notes

The Martian Chronicles (2017)

A Programmatic Work in 4 Movements

I. The 4th Expedition (landing)

This music is loose and atmospheric: imagine flying through deep space for many months and finally arriving at a relatively unknown world. The metals represent the stars, while the vibraphone represents man and provides a foreboding glimpse of what lies ahead.

II. Colonization

The last remnants of humanity have landed on Mars and must now begin the work of building anew. These are the sounds of building, of trade, of industrialism and expansion. It should be mechanical and relentless.

III. The Human Plague

Humans have destroyed their home planet (and nearly destroyed themselves) and are now on the precipice of eradicating the indigenous Martians. This bombastic drumming represents both the nuclear fallout of Earth, and the impending doom of Mars. The incessant block motives, perhaps, represent the naïve and trusting nature of the Martians.

IV. The Million-Year Picnic

History has repeated itself and Man has destroyed both Earth and Mars. Earth has fallen into a full apocalyptic nuclear Armageddon, and the Martian race is completely extinct. The last two Earthling families escape to Mars. The end.

Influenced by Steve Reich and Toru Takemitsu, this programmatic work is a homage to the brilliant writings of Ray Bradbury. Like Bradbury's science fiction masterpiece, this percussion trio is mostly dark and ominous, sprinkled with a bit of the bombastic.

Blue Skin of the Sea (2014)

Blue Skin of the Sea is also the title of a book by Graham Salisbury, which is a series of coming-of-age stories set in Hawaii. In Salisbury's writing, the Pacific Ocean is embodied, almost to the point of being another character. Just like the skin on our bodies, the sea is flexible, wrinkles with time, and is protective of what it surrounds. I am reminded of this idea every time I return home to Honolulu and see the expansive deep blue waters from the plane window.

Looking closely at the "skin" of something is always a revelatory experience. Every type of surface, be it our skin, the ocean, or the wood of the marimba, contains intricate and unique patterns that tell a story. These wrinkles and patterns are actually imperfections that float on top of the object. The personality of these tiny gradations and how they can combine into larger textures is translated musically in my work. I also expressed this idea in a very literal sense; instead of maintaining a safe distance from the instrument with traditional mallet playing, I felt more compelled to explore physical and sonic breadth of individual marimba bars. Thus, all of the extended techniques that are used are simply an extension of the concept of horizontal, rather

than vertical movement. For much of the piece, the percussionist needs to be quite close to the instrument—to hear, touch and feel the marimba in a different way than perhaps one is used to.

More than any other instrument, the marimba's sound to me seems to palpably “float” several feet above the instrument. The distinctive way of how its sounds activate, suspend (sustain), and decay is manipulated in the large-scale structure of the work. Over the five movements, I chose particular mallets to create a timbral transformation from soft/ resonant to dry/ brittle and back again.

So, *Blue Skin of the Sea* is about “floating”— hands and mallets on wood, wood on water, sounds in the air.