UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas
College of Fine Arts
Department of Music

Presents

UNLV
Percussion Ensemble

Concert

Directed by

Dr. Dean Gronemeier
and
Dr. Timothy Jones

Tuesday, 8 April 2008
6:30 P.M.
Doc Rando Recital Hall
Beam Music Center
~ Program ~

Marimba Concerto No.2 (2001)  
Ney Rosauro  
(b.1952)

Canticle no. 1 (1939)  
Lou Harrison  
(1917-2003)

Undercurrents (1995)  
Mario Gaetano  
(1955)

Ionisation (1929-31)  
Edgard Varese  
(1883-1965)
Marimba Concerto No. 2 (2001) Ney Rosauro (b. 1952)
Dedicated to Keiko Abe

The Concerto No. 2 for Marimba was originally written for five octave marimba and full symphony orchestra. The work was composed during the summer of 2001 and was sponsored by a grant from the University of Miami. The concerto lasts approximately 24 minutes and is dedicated to the marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe. The concerto is written in three movements: I) Water Running in High Mountain has two contrasting themes and depicts the way water makes its path down rocky mountain slopes. II) Reflections and Dreams starts with a quote from J.S. Bach and develops into a romantic and somewhat mystical atmosphere. Later, a new theme in a lively and contrasting tempo is introduced, which serves as a motive for a fugato movement that is developed before the main themes return. III) Walking on Clouds has a lively tempo, but its soft melody and rhythmic structure in a 5/4 meter evokes an image of music coming from the clouds. The fugato idea that appears in the second movement returns in this movement before the solo cadenza. In the cadenza, the wooden sound played with the rattan handles of the sticks depicts an old tradition of African balaphones. A quote from a Keiko Abe theme follows, and excerpts of the main themes of the concerto reappear. After the re-exposition of the main themes, a coda using the same vigorous motive from the introduction concludes the work in an uplifting mood.

- Ney Rosauro

Canticle no. 1 (1939) Lou Harrison (1917-2003)

Lou Harrison's Canticle no. 1 was premiered in 1940 by John Cage's percussion ensemble at Mills College in Oakland, California. As is typical of many of the works performed by Cage's group during this time, the instrumentation consists mainly of "found" instruments, such as clay pots, glass bells, and automobile brake drums. When more standardized instruments are requested, the exact instrumentation is left purposely vague to allow for a wide range of interpretation. The work itself is in a rough ABA form, with the outside movements containing series of two-voice contrapuntal phrases, and the middle portion consisting of loud unison and tutti counterpoint. The work ends with a coda that fades slowly into silence.


Undercurrents consists of a series of canons related to one another melodically and/or rhythmically. The contrapuntal emphasis contributes to the development of "undercurrents" or background motivic material presented to the listener. Additionally, the work employs several cadenzas, solo sections, and ad lib sections. The piece develops into an intense swirl of noise that fades into a subdued cadence. — Lisa Rogers
Ionisation (1929-31) Edgard Varese (1883-1965)
Dedicated to Nicolas Slonimsky

Ionisation was premiered on March 6th, 1933—premiered at Carnegie Hall in NYC at a concert sponsored by the Pan-American Association of Composers, with Slonimsky conducting an ensemble that included composers and performers Carlos Salzedo, Henry Cowell, Paul Creston and William Schuman.

Edgard Varese's Ionisation is credited with being the first Western work for percussion alone. It is scored for 13 performers: crash cymbals, GC; gong, 2 tam-tams; 2 bongos, side drums; 2 GC laid flat; tambourine, side drum; high siren, string drum; low siren, slap stick, guiro; 3 Chinese blocks, claves, triangle; snare drum, maracas; tarole, snare drum, sustained cym; cym; sleighbells, tubular bells; guiro, cast, celesta; tambourine, anvil, grand tam-tam; slapstick, triangle, sleighbells, piano.

While thematic elements of rhythm and accent are certainly crucial to this work, the focus is upon the interplay of the sonorous aspects of percussion as structural elements. Vertical elements merge producing various densities of texture and timbre, while internal rhythmic and metric relationships as well as important changes in sonority articulate the form. Its own combination of instruments or range of sonority identifies each section. In addition to texture and timbre, dynamic considerations play an integral part of the piece corresponding to form. Structurally, Varese uses sound-mass and silence as well as rhythmic cells, which are alternated, overlapped and varied throughout the piece, providing a fluid continuity and unity while various resultant events provide contrast. Varese considers register, rhythm, instrumentation, deployment (linear or vertical) as well as the rate of change of events when using available musical space. As events are juxtaposed and amalgamated during an episodic process, new relationships are continually apparent, providing tension and release while maintaining a high level of interest and balance.

Slonimsky suggests a Classical Sonata form, with the “main subject suggesting a cosmic-ray bombardment introduced by an extra-terrestrial rhythmic figure on the tambour militaire while two sirens slide in contrary motion over the whole spectrum of audible frequencies... the second subject, of an ominously lyrical nature, reflecting in palpitating rhythms, the asymmetrical interference pattern of heterodyne frequencies, the development section being marked by the appearance of heavy nuclear particles in the metal group ( anvils, gongs...), as contrasted with the penetrating but light wood-and-membrane sonorities of the exposition...” After a brief recapitulation, the coda is marked by “...tubular chimes ringing as new atomic polymers are created and the residual thermal energy of vigorous cluster on the piano keyboard serving as a cadential ostinato.”

Conducted by: Dr. Timothy Jones, Peter Rice and Ben Stiers

UNLV Percussion Ensemble members:
Daniel Alameda, Deborah Carpi, Haley Etchison, Elyssia Gonzalez, Joey Hennigan, Anthony King, Melody Loveless, Tyler Lozier, Jeremy Meronuck, Corene Peltier, Austin Perry, Peter Rice, Melaney Scarberry, Paul Schmidt, Ryan Shaffer, Daniel Steffey, Ben Stiers and Adam Walton.