Persephassa
Iannis Xenakis
During his early life, Iannis Xenakis was involved in the EAM, the liberation front in Greece during the time of World War II. In 1944, Xenakis suffered from a bombshell wound to the face that nearly killed him. These events shaped his ideas of music in the years to come and *Persephassa* is an auditory account of these times. Each timbre is a symbol of the different sounds and events that surrounded him. Sirens resembling bombs being dropped, bass drums sounding as bombs in the distance, wood being the sounds of buildings being blown apart, and metal pipes sounding as bullet casings, are just to name a few. Although *Persephassa* may be a complex piece to absorb at times, Xenakis intended this audio exploration of the sounds of war to completely engulf the listener. To achieve this the audience is surrounded by the percussionists to experience the most realistic recreation of his memories.

*Persephassa* was originally written for the French group "Les Percussions de Strasbourg" with the premiere being held in the ancient ruins of Persepolis. The piece explores Xenakis' ideas on spatial concerns in composition. The six players are positioned in a hexagonal shape around the audience and this poses a very difficult performance situation as the members may be spaced a considerable distance apart. For the purposes of tempo synchronization, Xenakis requests the ensemble uses six different metronomes. However, these metronomes must be uniquely programmed for each part, because at many points during the piece, all six performers are playing in six different tempos. For example, the tempo markings at m. 222 are indicated 40, 42, 78, 38, 58, and 74 beats per minute simultaneously. We would like to thank Ryan Simms and Jeremy Meronuck for realizing these programmed tempo maps for tonight's performance.

The multiple tempi cause a complex arrangement of sonorities and rhythmic structures that Xenakis assigns to move throughout the ensemble. Utilizing his experience as an architect, engineer, and mathematician, Xenakis employs extensive use of mathematical formulae within his music. One example of this is seen in his use of the Fibonacci Sequence; 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, etc. (1+1=2, 1+2=3, 2+3=5, 3+5=8, etc.). At one point during the piece, he uses this sequence to determine note lengths in rhythms that are to be played. These sequences are offset among the players until they reach an eventual unison pattern of the recurring theme.

Xenakis also constructs rhythmic sieves based off of patterns of 1-2-3. For example, Sieve 1 is 1-1-2-2-1-3-2-1-2-2-... and so on. These sieves are utilized in the same fashion as the Fibonacci sequence in relation to note lengths. Altogether, five sieves are executed throughout the middle section of the piece, so essentially all of the players are playing the same rhythms at different points. However, because the ensemble is performing in six different tempo markings, the rhythms sound like a cluster among all of the players.

The final section of the piece begins at a very slow tempo of 30 BPM and over the next several minutes concludes at a tempo of 360 BPM. During this time, individual timbres are being rotated around the ensemble creating a collapsing effect. The first timbre introduced is the drum, then metal, cymbal, gong, wood, and finally tam-tam. Each of the sonorities continues the same rotating pattern in different directions around the group. This draws to a final conclusion of very rapidly moving sounds until a cloud of noise is reached for the remaining 15 seconds of the piece.

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**This performance uses strobe, haze and other lighting effects should anyone have a medical condition that may be affected by certain special effects.**
~ Program ~

Purge (1999)  
Anders Astrand

Daniel Alameda - Vibraphone

Samsara (2006)  
Brett William Dietz  
(b. 1972)

Frank Kumor - Marimba

Persephassa (1969)  
Iannis Xenakis  
(1922 - 2001)

Percussion Ensemble

Directed By:  
Dean Gronemeier, DMA, JD  
Timothy Jones, DMA

Daniel Alameda  
Deborah Carpi  
Stephen Ferradino  
Elyssia Gonzalez  
Charlie Gott  
Melody Loveless  
Tyler Lozier  
Jeremy Meronuck  
Austin Perry  
Melaney Scarberry  
Ryan Shaffer  
Ryan Simm  
Daniel Steffy  
Jack Steiner

Purge

Anders Astrand

Swedish composer Anders Astrand is a regular clinician and performer throughout the US and Europe, both as a soloist and together with his percussion ensemble Global Percussion Network for whom tonight's piece was composed.

Purge is a very balanced work for percussion ensemble; although this piece features a soloist there is an incredible amount of virtuosity required by each performer in order to execute the rhythmical and technical demands contained in the piece.

As in most of Astrand's music, improvisation is an important part of purge. In the closing stages of the piece the solo vibraphone improvises to an extended harmonic progression played by the mallet ensemble, placing an extra musical demand on the vibraphonist. Tonight's soloist is sophomore percussionist Daniel Alameda.

Samsara

Samsara was commissioned by Dr. Frank Kumor and the Kutztown University Percussion Ensemble in the Fall of 2006. Brett William Dietz's composition is based on the Sanskrit word meaning "life in repeated successions". Dietz composed this piece to reflect the different cycles of life, each movement containing elements that are similar to the previous yet altered as one would be altered, as they are re-born into their next life. Kumor and the Kutztown University Percussion Ensemble premiered the piece in Paris, France at the Conservatoire de Paris with Dietz at the helm.

This intense work for marimba solo and percussion choir melds the aural representation of the repeated cyclical successions of life, combined with the stage set-up, which shifts throughout the piece. The alternating movements of marimba solo, followed by percussion ensemble use varied meter changes and harsh dissonances that return in all six of the movements to reflect the "birth, life, death, rebirth" element that the piece was inspired from. The UNLV Percussion department would like to welcome Dr. Frank Kumor to our concert and thank him for contributing to our program.

Jack Steiner

Dr. Frank Kumor

Dr. Frank Kumor is currently on the music faculty at Kutztown University where he is the Assistant Director of Percussion Studies and conducts the world percussion ensemble. Dr. Kumor presents solo recitals and workshops as well as concerts with the Kutztown University Percussion Ensemble worldwide. As a soloist, Dr. Kumor has performed at the Patagonia International Percussion Festival, Rio Negro, Argentina, at the Polish International Percussion Festival, Wroclaw and Opole, Poland, and has served as Artist-In-Residence at University of Montevideo, Uruguay, University of Campinas, Brazil, Kenyatta University, Kenya and Conservatorio Municipal de Ribarcoja, Spain. Nationally, he has presented workshops at music educator association meetings in Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Texas and at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention. Dr. Kumor and the Kutztown University Percussion Ensemble have performed at the Puerto Rico Percussion Festival (2005), Paris International Percussion Festival (2006), College Music Society International Conference in Bangkok, Thailand (2007), and in March 2008, they will be serve a week residency at the American University in Athens, Greece. Dr. Kumor is a Performing Artist and Clinician for Paiste Cymbals, Yamaha Percussion, Remo Percussion, Mike Balter Mallets, Silver Fox Drumsticks and Alfred Publishing Company.