Kevin Capacica  
• percussion •

A Senior Recital in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Bachelor of Arts in Music

June 8, 2013

Saturday at 2 p.m.

Performing Arts Center

Pavilion

Sponsored by the Cal Poly Music Department and College of Liberal Arts
Program

Senior Recital
Kevin Capacia, percussion

Libertango ........................................................... Eric Sammut
(b. 1968)

Eight Pieces for Four Timpani .............................. Elliott Carter
Saeta (1908-2012)

Canned Heat ................................................... Eckhard Kopetski
(b. 1956)

Tambourin Chinois, Op. 3 .................................... Fritz Kreisler
(b. 1875-1962)

Alessandra Shanus, piano

– Intermission –

Ilijiaš .............................................................. Nebojša Živković
(b. 1962)

Douze Études pour Caisse-Claire ............................ Jacques Delécluse
No. 7 (b. 1933)

Trio per uno .................................................... Živković
Mvt. I

Trevor Carlson, percussion
Ryan Waczek, percussion

Marimba Spiritual ............................................. Minoru Miki
(b. 1930-2011)

Trevor Carlson, percussion
Tyler Miller, percussion
Ryan Waczek, percussion
**Libertango, Eric Sammut**

According to Eric Sammut, he never played the “drums,” viewing himself instead as a classical percussionist. Born in Toulouse, France, in 1968, Sammut began his musical studies at the age of eleven with Michael Ventula. In 1995, he won first prize in the Leigh Howard Stevens International Marimba Competition, which illustrates his ability in mallet percussion. He frequently gives recitals in Europe, Japan, and within the U.S. as a solo marimbist. Leigh Howard Stevens calls Sammut’s playing “unique. His touch, tone, and musicianship on marimba are captivating in a way that’s reminiscent of Glenn Gould.”

*Libertango*, by Sammut, showcases his musicianship. The solo requires a five-octave marimba, a range that has become a standard size for most recent marimba literature. *Libertango* is energetic and passionate, as expected in tango. The piece itself is a 1997 arrangement of Astor Piazzolla’s *Libertango*, which was in the popular “Nuevo Tango” style.

*Libertango* utilizes varied marimba techniques that portray both Cajón and African characteristics, displaying the versatility of the marimba. After a brief introduction, the piece is structured in ternary (ABA) form, with an opening that Sammut describes as a funky rhythm accompanying Piazzolla’s recognizable melody. This A section utilizes four-mallet “lateral motion” in the accompaniment to create the fluid rhythms. Sammut popularized the lateral motion technique, especially in his earlier composition *Four Rotations pour Marimba*. Lateral motion is a striking technique for four-mallet percussionists that is executed by performing adjacent rhythms with both mallets on one hand in a “roll-like” manner. The compositional inspiration for section B is derived from the timbre of the Cajón as well as African rhythms. Cajón, in Spanish, translates to “box” and the instrument is quite literally a wooden box used for drumming. The Cajón’s dry drum effect is performed by dampening one of the keys on the marimba, muting the note to create a dead sound, in contrast to the naturally warmer and more lyrical timbre that the marimba usually produces. This effect is coupled with the African-inspired aggressive triplet rhythms, very different from the previous A section’s smooth nature. Overall, the piece demonstrates the versatility of not only the marimba’s abilities, but Sammut’s compositional skills as well.

**Eight Pieces for Four Timpani “Saeta,” Elliott Carter**

Lyrical and melodic are not terms one would associate with a timpani work, yet Elliott Carter succeeds in writing lyrical melodies in “Saeta” from his *Eight Pieces for Four Timpani*. The pursuit of such a difficult compositional task reflects the search for novelty in twentieth-century Western art music, a trait that defined Carter. Elliott Carter was born on December 11, 1908, in New York and died last year, on November 5, 2012, at the remarkable age of 103. He earned his Master of Arts in music from Harvard in 1932. During his time at Harvard, Carter studied with notable composers such as Walter Piston and Gustav Holst. He also went to the École Normale de Musique in France from 1932-35, where he took lessons with Nadia Boulanger. Carter believed that his lessons with Boulanger filled in any “lack” of technique in his
composition. Carter once said, “As a young man, I harbored the populist idea of writing for the public. I learned that the public didn’t care. So I decided to write for myself. Since then, people have gotten interested.”

“Saeta” was composed at a time of experimentation and novelty. Most of the Eight Pieces were included in an earlier work called Six Pieces for Kettledrums, but Carter added two more to the set in 1966 and “Saeta” was one of the additions. The pieces are designed to experiment with the timbral qualities of the timpani as a solo instrument. These works have three purposes: to explore pitch possibilities (implying the need for pedaled timpani), to experiment with sound and timbre (by means of stick choice, placement of specific striking positions, and use of harmonics between the drums), and to utilize rhythmic modulation. Carter has influenced virtually everyone writing for solo timpani today.

Carter employs many unorthodox techniques to create the numerous timbral effects. To create different tones and sound among the four drums, he directs the performer to play both at the normal beating position (about halfway between the rim and the center of the drum) and also at the center of the head. The normal beating position produces the timpani’s typical resonant sound, while striking the center of the drum creates a dry and dead tone. At a certain point of the piece, Carter also specifies that the performer use the “butts” or back ends of the timpani mallets, in contrast with the regular felt beating heads. Moreover, Carter employs unusual pulse patterns such as 7/8 and 5/8. Carter will use a combination of steady eighth note beats or proportional new tempos to connect his many rhythmic ideas. The changing meters and pulse patterns create a challenge to fulfill the requirements of Carter’s piece and to let it flow for the audience’s sake.

Not all the components of “Saeta” are unconventional. The A section of the ternary form features a melody performed on the two middle drums using the normal position, while the two outside drums use the center of the head to produce accompaniment. The B section borrows the melody and a rhythmic motif from the A section and develops the ideas by changing pulse patterns, variating the rhythm, and changing tempos.

Canned Heat, Eckhard Kopetzki

It isn’t often that an empty soup can is called for in a musical composition. Nevertheless, Eckhard Kopetzki decided to require one in his multiple percussion work Canned Heat. Kopetzki is a modern German composer, and like many of his percussion colleagues, he has been an active member of the Percussion Arts Society (PAS). Kopetzki has earned prizes for several of his pieces; besides his 2002 prize for Canned Heat, he received awards in Three Movements for a Solo Dance and Exploration of Time. In addition to his awards, Kopetzki is known for his beginning pedagogical studies, his solo pieces, and other chamber works as well.

Canned Heat’s title implies an odd instrumentation and a comedic groove. The solo piece requires three toms, five bongos, a resonant metal piece, a tambourine, and a soup can. With these indefinite pitch instruments that, unlike like a marimba, cannot produce specific notes, the melodic focus shifts to the rhythmic and timbral diversity within the varying rhythms. The juxtaposition of slow and fast rhythms, coupled with the odd addition of the soup can, produces an element of humor. For a thicker texture,
Canned Heat employs two mallets in one hand, adding multiple striking techniques with different drums simultaneously.

**Tambourin Chinois, Fritz Kreisler**

George Hamilton Green believed violin pieces are best played on a xylophone. *Tambourin Chinois* originated as a virtuosic piece for violin but it is effective on xylophone as well. Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), the composer of the 1905 original violin solo, was a virtuoso in his own right. At the age of twelve he stopped taking violin lessons, as he had surpassed the need to be taught. His debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1899 marked the start of his international career. As a performer, he learned to intensify his use of vibrato to the point that he was able to apply the technique to not only sustained notes, but to fast and shorter note passages as well.

*Tambourin Chinois,* in Green's 1936 arrangement, has become a standard piece of literature for the xylophone, due to its difficult speed and technical nature. The arrangement was a fairly easy conversion, as Green had previous experience with the violin as a child. Green, in the percussion world, was a prolific composer and arranger for mallet percussion.

The light yet energetic character of *Tambourin Chinois* is designed to make the performance seem effortless. Green did not change the harmonic and melodic structure, so the arrangement utilizes the pentatonic (five-note) scales most closely associated with eastern Asian music [and hence the title “chinois” (Chinese)]. Green writes out specific notes on the xylophone to mimic Kreisler’s violin technique and timbres. The xylophone has a very strong attack but lacks the ability to sustain its initial resonance, unlike a violin, which has the bow to continue its sound. Green thus specifies that the xylophonist should roll on longer notes so that he can mimic the original violin version.

**Ilijiaš, Nebojša Živković**

Nebojša Živković is a representation of the modern-day Franz Liszt: he is the combination of composer and virtuoso. The only difference between Liszt and Živković is that Živković is a marimbist, not a pianist. After his birth in Serbia in 1962, Živković earned three master’s degrees in composition, percussion, and theory. As a soloist, he has performed with the Stuttgart Philharmonic, Munich Symphonic, Bochum Philharmonic, Austrian Chamber Symphony, Hanover Radio Symphony, and Bielefeld Philharmonic, playing his own marimba concertos. He is widely known for his works and influence on the marimba over the course of the last twenty years.

Živković’s heritage was a direct influence on *Ilijiaš.* The piece, written in 1996, is named after a small town in the Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia. The town was a victim of the Bosnian war and its survivors’ stories inspired Živković to write *Ilijiaš.* Živković utilizes folk melodies and rhythms to capture the atmosphere of the war-torn town of Ilijiaš. Within the ternary form, Živković begins with a virtuosic A section that is written to be “molto patetico” or “with much emotion.” The B section is nationalistic, as it presents different meters and pulse patterns, reflective of the folk music of eastern Europe. The simple harmonic progressions in the B section also maintain the folk-like feeling. The mixed meter and eastern European dance-like rhythm provides a steady accompaniment under the main melodic line.
Jacques Delécluse was once tasked during his musical career with the difficult decision to focus on either piano or percussion. Delécluse opted for percussion (which – ahem – was a great choice). Delécluse began his studies at the Paris Conservatory, where he won first prize as a solo pianist in 1950. He also won second prize as a percussionist that same year. The following year Delécluse won first prize in percussion, and from that point Delécluse concentrated on percussion, although he also studied harmony, theory, and counterpoint at the conservatory. One of his greatest compositional achievements is his collection of snare etudes for the orchestral snare player. Eric Sammut commented, “Delécluse's etudes are real concert etudes. One can often see people in tuxedos playing some of them on stage!”

With no French literature for the concert snare drum, Delécluse took it upon himself to write for the instrument, eventually creating *Douze Études pour Caisse-Claire* in 1964. These twelve etudes are designed to be musical and not some method book with “mindless technical patterns.” Delécluse wrote in the French style, which is to create a tone color, or a certain shade with rudiments, as opposed to the American style whose focus is on perfecting technical patterns. The French-styled etudes have become a standard study for the serious musician. Delécluse’s friend Frederic Macarez once said, “Delécluse did not merely revolution the pedagogical writing for percussion, he invented it!”

The seventh etude, like the other snare etudes of this series, focuses on refining and perfecting the skill of an already established concert percussionist. Delécluse stated, “These etudes are difficult only as far as the metronomic markings, the dynamics, accents, and 'connecting tissue' are strictly observed.” Since there is no pitched melody, the main motif is heard in the opening rhythmic sequence of the ternary form. The motif is a short note followed by a longer note to create an “off-beat” effect. The short-long motif is used as the driving theme for the etude, as it is stated and varied through the piece. The B section develops the motif with varying techniques.

**Trio per Uno Movement I, Nebojša Živković**

Živković has declared, “Trio per Uno is the world’s most performed classical percussion trio. Period.” Whether Živković is correct is uncertain, but *Trio Per Uno* certainly is a frequently played piece among percussion majors. *Trio per Uno*, written in 1995, was composed with the idea of “three bodies, one soul.” The compositional philosophy also pertains to the performers and how the music is approached. The three performers must be precise and accurate, but also intimately locked with each other to execute *Trio per Uno* effectively.

The piece is divided up into four distinct sections, each with new rhythmic ideas and contrasting energy. During the first section, each performer is displaced from the others so that when performed together, their blend creates one composite part. The second section consists primarily of unison passages, forcing the performers to stay engaged with each other to ensure precision and accuracy. The third section is a solo and improvisatory section, giving each performer an opportunity to display his abilities. The closing section blends the techniques of the first and second sections.
**Marimba Spiritual,Minoru Miki**
The only way to make a marimba solo better is to accompany it with three more percussionists playing an assortment of timbres in the background. Minoru Miki does just that in his piece *Marimba Spiritual*. Minoru Miki has also contributed to art music beyond writing pieces. In 1964, Miki founded the Pro Musica Nipponia and was the artistic director for twenty years. He won Japan’s 1970 Arts Festival Grand Prize for the four-album collection of his compositions, *The Music of Minoru Miki*. His relationship with marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe has brought more prominence to the marimba as a solo instrument. An interviewer, Brian Zator, wrote, “Miki is constantly on the cutting edge of instrument development and exposure.”

*Marimba Spiritual*, written between 1983-84, contains a fascinating history in its inspiration, development and influence. NHK (the Japan Broadcasting Corporation) commissioned the *Marimba Spiritual* as a response to the starvation and famine in Africa occurring at the time. The starvation problems in Africa reminded Miki of the tragedies that he and his country experienced in the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. *Marimba Spiritual* expresses Miki’s anger and condolences towards the starvation in Africa, and Miki believed that his dear friend Keiko Abe would be suited to perform this piece in its premiere. Abe actually requested the multiple percussionists to be her accompanists while Miki was writing the piece. *Marimba Spiritual* became so popular that it was adapted in the Broadway percussion show *Blast!* in 2001.

*Marimba Spiritual* captures both a feeling of spirit and contrasting rigidity and pain. The piece is a two-movement work. Miki wrote the first movement as a requiem to the victims in Africa, while the second movement was written to convey a lively resurrection. The first movement is atmospheric and is written in a way that allows improvisational room for the performers. The relationship between the soloist and accompanists produces a call-and-response effect. The mood of the first movement is a very “on-edge” feeling as it conveys a calm-before-the-storm effect, which is created by harmonic tension in the dissonant intervals in the marimba. The notes create an idea of uncertainty. The pedal tones on the low A on the marimba mimic faint bell and gong tones, which one would hear when entering a temple.

The second movement is driving and energetic, a complete contrast to the first movement. The use of pentatonic scales characterizes the Japanese compositional style of Miki. The frequent use of open intervals, coupled with the melody, also supports the traditional Asian sound. The rhythmic background, which the accompanists play, is based on the Chichibu Yatai Bayashi Traditional Music Festival. The event is an annual festival on the second and third of December that honors the Chichibu shrine in the city of Chichibu. The festival musicians perform with Taiko drums, gongs, and flute. The juxtaposition of the atmospheric nature of the slow first movement and the metrical organization of the second fast movement provides the audience a broad spectrum of rhythmic diversity within *Marimba Spiritual*. 
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