

SPRING CONCERT

*Percussion Ensemble*

JOHN LAWLESS, Conductor

MARJA KERNEY, Guest Conductor

JUSTIN CHESAREK, Drum Set



Monday, April 29, 2019 at 8 pm

Dr. Bobbie Bailey & Family Performance Center, Morgan Hall

Eighty-sixth Concert of the 2018-19 Concert Season



TRADITIONAL

arr. John Lawless

***Samba***

JOE W. MOORE III

***Above the Clouds***

ANDREW CREECH

***...from nothing...to nothing...***

Samuel Boeger, bass trombone

CHRISTOPHER ROUSE

***Bonham***

Justin Chesarek, drum set

Marja Kerney, conductor

ELLIOT COLE

***Postludes 1***

ADI MORAG

***Octabones***

Andrew Creech and Michael Makrides, marimba

BRIAN S. MASON

***Roswell, 1947***

JESSE W. D. JAMES

***Wyldenrai***

# Program Notes

## **Samba** | arr. John Lawless

Samba is recognized around the world as a symbol of Brazil and the Brazilian Carnival. Considered one of the most popular Brazilian cultural expressions, samba has become an icon of Brazilian national identity.

– Wikipedia

The KSU Percussion Ensemble had the wonderful pleasure of performing this *Samba* along with the KSU Dance studio on April 11, for the opening of NCUR (the National Conference on Undergraduate Research). We thought that this would be a wonderful way to start tonight's concert.

– John Lawless

## **Above The Clouds** | Joe W. Moore III

I began writing *Above the Clouds* after my flight to Ithica, NY, for my graduate school audition at Ithica College. The piece is essentially to aid in my own fear of flying by putting more of a focus on the part of flying that is most enjoyable, which is being above the clouds. Looking out of the window once the plane has broken through the clouds gives me instant peace because it is such a beautiful sight - almost indescribable. Each section of this work is labeled according to the part of flying being portrayed: take off, above the clouds, turbulence...

– Joe W. Moore III

## **Bonham** | Christopher Rouse

Scored for a percussion ensemble of eight players, *Bonham* is an ode to rock drumming and drummers, most particularly Led Zeppelin's legendary drummer, the late John ("Bonzo") Bonham. The core ostinato of the score, played by the drum set, is reminiscent of Led Zeppelin's "When the Levee Breaks," although there are references to other Led Zeppelin songs as well, such as "Custard Pie" and "Royal Orleans." In addition, two other scores are cited: The Butterfield Blues Band (*Get Yourself Together*) and Bo Diddley, whose adoption of the traditional "hambone" rhythm added so much to the distinctive style of his material.

Completed in Fairport, New York, on November 13, 1988, *Bonham* was commissioned by the New England Conservatory of Music through funds

provided by the Massachusetts Arts Council. It was first performed in April of 1989, at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston by the Conservatory Percussion Ensemble conducted by its Music Director, Frank Epstein, to whom the work is dedicated.

– *Christopher Rouse*

### **Postludes 1** | Elliot Cole

*Postludes* is a book of eight pieces for a familiar instrument played in a new way. Four players, with eight double-bass bows, play interlocking lines on a single vibraphone. The interplay of bows and hands tapping, muting and touching harmonics, weaves an intimate and intricate counterpoint that is as beautiful to watch as it is to hear: fragile, tender and haunting.

– *Elliot Cole*

### **Octabones** | Adi Morag

Israeli percussionist, composer and teacher Adi Morag wrote the piece *Octabones* for his percussion duo, PercaDu. The piece won the Percussive Arts Society Composition Competition in 1999, and is now considered a standard repertoire for marimba duo. The name *Octabones* is an intentional misspelling of the word octatones, which make up the octatonic scale that the piece is based on.

"*Octabones* requires two highly skilled marimbists. The marimbas are set up facing one another so that each player can reach over and play certain figures on the other player's instrument. The piece is constructed in four distinct sections. The first section is an exciting allegro full of block chords and fast melodic passages; the second section is slower and legato; the third section returns to tempo primo, but the material is played with the mallet handles; the final section returns to the opening material, bringing the work to an exciting conclusion."

– *Mario Gaetano* (from a review in *Percussive Notes*)

### **Roswell, 1947** | Brian S. Mason

During the summer of 1947, a "weather balloon" crashed on the Foster ranch outside Corona, New Mexico. The events surrounding its recovery sparked one of the greatest conspiracy theories in US history. The story of the Roswell Incident contains all the ingredients of a full blown government conspiracy – flying disks, a secret government committee (the Majestic 12), alien bodies, midnight autopsies, cover-ups, even a missing base hospital

nurse, in addition to many other questionable events. Was it an alien flying saucer that crashed into the New Mexico desert during a storm on that summer night? Had the Air Force been tracking an unidentified flying object for several days prior to the event? Were alien bodies recovered? The official government statement reported that the wreckage was from a downed high altitude weather balloon involved in a top-secret project called Operation Mogul. What is the truth? You be the judge.

*Roswell, 1947* is a programmatic work inspired by the events and activities surrounding the Roswell Incident. This through-composed work follows the progression of those events: the desert night; the stormy crash; discovering the wreckage; controversy and conflict of viewpoints; are they out there? Other programmatic elements include the use of Morse code (spelling the word A-L-I-E-N-S), as well as the use of pitch organization based on the numbers 1-9-4-7 (root, M9, P4, M7, and their inversions). To link the intrigue of the conspiracy to the overall mood of the work, *Roswell, 1947* seeks to elicit curiosity and mystery in the mind of the listener.

– Brian S. Mason

### ***Wyldenrai*** | Jesse W. D. James

*Wyldenrai* is his second large ensemble concert work for percussion, following its predecessor *Harfall* which was commissioned by Furman University in 2015.

"*Wyldenrai* represents everything I've learned over the past four years in Atlanta - musically, professionally, and personally. These have been some of the most exciting and trying years of my life, and *Wyldenrai* feels like the inevitable result of my chaotic journey so far. It's polyrhythmic, massive, aggressive, atmospheric, deeply personal to me, and reflects the joy I've experienced working with John and KSU's students over the past few months."

– Jesse W. D. James

A very special "thank you" to Daniel Pattillo for building our custom Mahler hammer and resonant box for *Bonham*.



## Percussion Ensemble Players

Jordan Adams

Audrey Allen

Matt Andrews

Michael Berry

Christopher Bowers

Jared Cook

Andrew Creech

Jason Frey

Anna Gugel

Jordan Hill

Tessa Jordan

Elizabeth Lawrence

Jordyn Mader

Michael Makrides

Bryan Mayo

Sammy Mishkin

Matt Pate

Devin Prather

Dadisi Sanyika

Arsalaan Sayani

Cooper Sewell

Alex Sotka

Elizaveta Sukhai

Andrew Yi

*Thank you to Alex Peneton for joining us on electric bass.*

## *Biographies*

### **Jesse W. D. James, composer**

Jesse W. D. James is an Atlanta composer that resides in Decatur. He received his Bachelor's of Music in Piano Performance from Furman University and his Master's of Music in Piano Performance from James Madison University. He has written concert music for percussion, conducted orchestral recording sessions with musicians from the Atlanta Pops, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and the Georgia Symphony Orchestra. He has also supervised composition, conducting, arranging, copy, sound design, sound editing, and dialogue for film, media, and video games. He has worked with clients such as Origin Creative, Bungie, Volvo, Certain Affinity, Hulu, The Smithsonian, and others.



**Justin Chesarek, drum set**, began gigging at the age of twelve with Pittsburgh jazz legend Harold Betters and spent time listening to Roger Humphries live, well-known for his work with Horace Silver.

After earning a Bachelors of Music in Music Education from Slippery Rock University, Justin pursued a MM and Jazz Studies at Georgia State University. Along the way, Chesarek filled his gig-calendar, making a name for himself as an exceptional musician.

He performs regularly with Joe Alterman, Trey Wright, Gary Motley, The Joe Gransden Big Band, the ATL Collective, and he is a regular at the Atlanta Jazz Festival. He has performed at The Iridium and The Blue Note in New York, Washington DC's Kennedy Center, a TED Talk, the Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival in Alaska, The North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland, and the Montreaux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

Chesarek teaches Jazz Percussion at Kennesaw State University, is the Artist Affiliate of Jazz Percussion at Emory University, and runs a private studio of his own, working with students of all ages. His students have gone on to become professional touring musicians, off-broadway theater pit players, and top call Atlanta drummers. He is a board member of the Atlanta Lovers of Music Association, and a proud endorser of Regal Tip drum sticks, mallets, and brushes. Justin lives in Decatur, with his wife and two daughters.



**Marja Kerney, guest conductor**, is Artist-in-Residence and Part-time Assistant Professor of Percussion Performance at Kennesaw State University. Prior to her appointment at KSU, she was the percussion professor at the Stetson University School of Music. A native of Michigan, Kerney earned her BM from Michigan State University and MM and DMA from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

An avid chamber music performer, she cofounded the piano/percussion quartet P4 as well as the clarinet/percussion duo 421. As a new music collaborator, Kerney has worked with a wide range of composers including Chen Yi, Sydney Hodkinson, Zack Browning, Baljinder Sekhon, and Chad Rehmann. In addition to her extensive contemporary chamber experience, Kerney has performed as a percussionist/timpanist with orchestras including the Kansas City Symphony, Florida Orchestra, and

Jacksonville Symphony, and has served as a pit percussionist for musicals including *A Chorus Line*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *9 to 5*, and *Spamalot*.

Aside from her appointments at Kennesaw State and Stetson, she has served on the faculties at Bethune-Cookman University and Seminole State College. Kerney is a longtime member of the Percussive Arts Society, currently serving on the University Pedagogy Committee and the Leadership Steering Committee, and formerly as Secretary/Treasurer of the Florida chapter of PAS. In addition to percussion-related education, she has taught courses in music history, aural skills, and protest music, and she remains active as a free-lance percussionist and timpanist in the Atlanta area.



**John Lawless, conductor**, joined the music faculty of Kennesaw State University in 1998 and became the Director of Percussion Studies in 2004. Principal Timpanist of the Atlanta Opera orchestra since 1979, John held the same position with the Chattanooga Symphony for 21 years. Since 1978, Mr. Lawless has performed, toured and recorded with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra while maintaining a thriving freelance career as a studio and pit percussionist.

A founding member of the Atlanta Percussion Trio, Mr. Lawless performs hundreds of school concerts a year for thousands of children throughout the Southeastern United States. Along with Scott Douglas and Karen Hunt, the trio has been a performing group for 32 years, bringing educational programs to children of all ages.

As a soloist, Mr. Lawless played several concertos with the Chattanooga Symphony, including: *The Olympian for 8 Timpani and Orchestra* as well as *The Messenger for Multiple Percussion and Orchestra*, both written by James Oliverio. In 2009, Mr. Lawless performed Joseph Schwantner's *Concerto for Percussion* with the Cobb Symphony Orchestra. In 2014, he performed the Southeastern premier of Christopher Theofinidis' *Marimba Concerto* with the KSU Wind Ensemble for the Festival of New Music.

A graduate of Georgia State University, Mr. Lawless' teachers include Tom Float, Jack Bell, Cloyd Duff, Paul Yancich, Bill Wilder and Mark Yancich. Previous faculty appointments include those at Georgia State University, Clark Atlanta University and West Georgia State University.



## Welcome!

Thank you for making time in your busy schedules to support the performances of the Kennesaw State University School of Music. We are excited that you are here and we appreciate your love of music and support of our faculty, students and musical guests!

The School of Music at Kennesaw State University continues to be an exciting place! This year's *Signature Series* features four wonderful performances that we know will be memorable and well worth your investment. The

27-time Grammy Award winning Atlanta Symphony is with us again. We so value our professional relationship with this orchestra and we love having them here on our Morgan stage.

Having just completed our 10th Anniversary Season, the Dr. Bobbie Bailey & Family Performance Center is poised to begin the next decade of bringing you outstanding musical performances and artists from around the world! The Bailey Center continues to be transformational in the life of our school and for you, our patrons!

We are continuing our *Name a Seat* campaign this year. If you have a friend, loved one, child, student, teacher, or significant other that you would like to honor or memorialize, we welcome your support. Your \$1,000 gift to the *Name a Seat* endowment helps us to ensure that we can continue to bring you amazing musical performances well into the future.

I look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with you. With your continued support of music and the arts, I look forward to all we can accomplish together!

Stephen W. Plate, *Director, KSU School of Music*

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