

CSUN
Percussion Ensemble

Aaron T. Smith, Director

April 24th, 2026

7:30PM

Shigemi Matsumoto Recital Hall

PROGRAM

“Intermezzo” from <i>The Nose</i>, Op. 15	Dimitri Shostakovich
<i>Third Construction</i>	John Cage
<i>Leaves Fell Playfully</i>	Josh Gottry
<i>Headtalk</i>	Mark Ford
<i>Le Coucou</i>	Ryan Dorin

INTERMISSION

<i>Percussion Suite</i>	Johanna Beyer
<i>SyncoShift</i>	Angela Kepley
<i>Music for Pieces of Wood</i>	Steve Reich
<i>Fractalia</i>	Owen Clayton Condon

PERSONNEL

Aaron T. Smith, Director

Max Allen, Frankie Crystal, Delin Han, Leighton Johann,
Garrett Juretic, Eric Ko, Daisy Lopez, Pedro Lozana,
Joshua Maestre, Tori Mitchell*, Joseph Montaña,
Justin Page*, Wren Ray, Trini Rojas*,
Lauren Rooke*, Tony Vallejo*, Christian Vargas,
Ziraili Viniegra, Eliana Witke

* ensemble coach

NOTES FOR SELECT WORKS ON TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

“Intermezzo” from The Nose, Op. 15

The Nose is based on a story of the same name by Nikolai Gogol in which a government official, Platon Kovalyov, awakens to find that his nose has left his face. He later discovers the nose has taken on a life of its own, becoming human size and even outranking him as an official. The opera begins with a barber who discovers a nose in a loaf of bread baked by his wife. Assuming he has somehow cut it off one of his clients, he attempts to dispose of it by throwing it into a nearby river.

This percussion-only intermezzo follows, serving as a transition from the grotesque yet still plausible situation to the opera's fully surreal world, in which the nose exists independently. Stripped of melody and harmony, Shostakovich's use of rhythm, sharp timbres, and increasing fragmentation creates a sense of instability and disorientation, marking a break from ordinary reality. When Kovalyov awakens in the next scene and looks in the mirror, he is horrified to discover that his nose is gone.

While part of a much larger work, the “Intermezzo” also holds a significant place in percussion history as one of the first pieces written for percussion ensemble, predating Edgard Varèse's *Ionisation* by one year.

Third Construction

In 1939, John Cage wrote the following: “Percussion music is revolution. Sound and rhythm have too long been submissive to the restrictions of nineteenth century music. Today we are fighting for their emancipation ... At the present stage of revolution, a healthy lawlessness is warranted. Experiment must necessarily be carried on by hitting anything-tin pans, rice bowls, iron pipes-anything we can lay our hands on.” Cage’s music and writing on music fostered a new, deeper and wider appreciation for percussion in art music all over the world.

He composed *Third Construction* in 1941. The score calls for a mixture of indigenous instruments (claves, shakers, the jawbone of a donkey), “found” instruments (tin cans) and more traditional items (drums, tambourine, cymbals) The work is unified by a complex, overlapping rhythmic structure.

Le Coucou

Ryan Dorin borrows the theme from Louis-Claude Daquin’s work of the same name, written in 1735. Scored for four percussionists, two playing on the “other side” of the marimba, along with non-pitched percussion, and a pre-recorded accompaniment, Daquin’s melody is a starting point for a variety of twists and turns, and free improvisation. Dorin is the creator of *Ratboy Genius*.

Percussion Suite

Johanna Beyer was largely overlooked during her lifetime, but her compositions explored many new ways of writing for percussion. She intersected with Cage, Henry Cowell, and other modernists in New York. One of her other compositions for percussion, IV, is written for nine unspecified instruments, one of the first compositions to have an indeterminant nature while still using a strict framework of rhythm and time. Her work in many ways presaged aspects of minimalism that emerged in the '60s and '70s.

Music for Pieces of Wood

Steve Reich is often described as a minimalist, a term he doesn't like. Instead, he prefers the term "process music." In 1968 he wrote: "I do not mean the process of composition, but rather pieces of music that are, literally, processes. The distinctive thing about musical processes is that they determine all the note-to-note (sound-to-sound) details and the overall form simultaneously. (Think of a round or infinite canon.) I am interested in perceptible processes. I want to be able to hear the process happening throughout the sounding music."

Music for Pieces of Wood grew from a desire to make music with the simplest possible instruments. The rhythmic structure is based entirely on the process of rhythmic "buildups" or the substitution of beats for rests, and is in three sections of decreasing pattern length: 6/4, 4/4, 3/4

***The CSUN Music Department is thankful for
generous donations of support from the following
individuals and foundations.***

6/1/24-7/31/25

Endowments

Curt Allen (dec.)
Linda S. Anderson (dec.)
The Augustine Foundation
Robert & Josephine Barbera
Mary & Jack Bayramian (dec.)
Don & Sandra Aguado Bostrom
Garth & Sandy Brooks
Mike Curb
Les & Terry Cutler
Marcy Drexler
Etude Music Club
Nancy Fierro
Michael Gintz
Arnold & Gladys (dec.) Gould
Earl Greinetz (dec.)
Marilyn N. Hankins
Houle Family Trust
John & Susan Joyce
Albert (dec.) & Sherry Lapides
Winnifred L. McGinnis (dec.)
Shigemi E. Matsumoto and Martin Stark
Charles & Glee Murphy
National Association of Recording Arts & Sciences
David and Krystyna Newman
Chuck Niles (dec.)
Martha & grant Nissen
Ellen and Howard Press
Elizabeth Ann Purcell
Mary Louise Reilly-Knoblauch (dec.)
Delores Rhoads (dec.)
Andrés Segovia (dec.)
Michael Sandler
Carson E. Schreiber
Bella Veksler
Richard J. Weigand (dec.)
Dr. Robert W. & Milona Moore Wienpahl (dec.)
Withers Family Foundation
Sandy and Ronald (dec.) Zacky

\$25k+

The Herb Alpert Foundation
Sandra J. Bostrom Aguado and Donald E. Bostrom The
Colburn Foundation
The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation

Nancy Fierro
Michael Gintz
Sherry Lapides
Jim and Jamie Self
Shigemi E. Matsumoto and Martin Stark
Withers Family Foundation

\$10k-\$24,999

Rising Star Music Fund
Robert Barbera
Rosa Maria Belli
Les and Terry Cutler

Gita Kronen
Sherry Lapides
Joan Thompson

\$5k-\$9,999

Arts Council for CSUN
Mike Elizondo
Matthew Keating and Family

\$1k-\$4,999

Arts Council
Anne Marie De la Vega
Leanne Freeman
The Benny Golbin Foundation
Les Hershberger
Iglewski Family Foundation
Eden Miller
Joseph R. Murphy
Michael Ryan and Kenneth Howard
Michael Sandler
Carson Schreiber
Peter Rotter
Sandy Zacky

\$500-\$999

Jonathan Braun
Jane Brockman
Brian Driscoll
Nancy Fierro
Joseph Gardner
Diane Ketchie-Saar and Raymond Saar
Martha and Grant Nissen

CSUN Music Department

www.csun.edu/music

(818)-677-3181

@csunmusic

Connect with us! * linktr.ee/csunmusic