

STACI TOMA, PERCUSSION

WITH
MATT ANDREINI
CHRIS COTTEN
MATTHEW COLEY
HUNTER GROSS
RYAN FROST
JAMIE CLARK

PROGRAM

Opening (1981)Philip Glass
(b. 1937)

Aravot Lousaber (Ascending Light) (2013)Armenian Traditional
arr. Matthew Coley (b. 1979)
with Matthew Coley and Hunter Gross

Tome NaGhanaian Traditional; Bernard Woma
(1966-2018)
GandayinaGhanaian Traditional; Woma
with Ryan Frost

Song and Dance (2009)Gene Koshinski
(b. 1980)
with Matt Andreini

21 (2008)Andy Akiho
(b. 1979)
with Jamie Clark, cello

Etude op. 6, no. 9 (B Major) (c. 1941)Clair Omar Musser
(1901-1998)

Special appearances by Matt Andreini and Chris Cotten

PROGRAM NOTES

"Opening" is the first piece in *Glassworks*, a chamber music work of six movements by Philip Glass. Following his larger-scale concert and stage works, it was Glass's successful attempt to create a more pop-oriented "Walkman-suitable" work, with considerably shorter and more accessible pieces written for the recording studio.

Philip Glass has said "Glassworks was intended to introduce my music to a more general audience than had been familiar with it up to then."

The LP and cassette were released in 1982, each with its own separate mix: the record album intended for home listening and the tape for personal cassette players. The headphone-specific mix, previously only available on cassette, was reissued digitally 2016.

"Aravot Lousaber," written for marimbas in 2013, is originally a sacred Armenian chorale that has been recorded innumerable times by choirs around the world. Here it has been expanded and embellished to feature the marimba duo or trio in the unique setting of performing a chorale. The melody was left intact and for the most part the harmony was too. However, an introduction that returns just before the final section, an optional third obbligato part, and some exploratory harmony were all liberties taken in creating this version of the chorale. The overall concept of the arrangement was to give a chorale to a marimba duo that begins with minimal voices and ends with the power of the "mega-marimba tremolo" in 9-10 voices. ~Matthew Coley

Thank you to Matthew Coley and Hunter Gross for agreeing to perform this work in the middle of a Heartland Marimba tour!

The **gyil** (West African xylophone) was what Staci studied with the late Bernard Woma. Bernard was a force of nature, a true gyil virtuoso who popularized the instrument in the US and in the world. His school, the Dagara Music Centre in Medié, Ghana, has been hosting international students for more than two decades. *Saakumu*, Bernard's performance ensemble, still brings Ghanaian rhythms, dances, culture, and energy to students in the US. Bernard's approach to music and to teaching hold a strong influence on Staci's approach to percussion pedagogy. Staci still owes Bernard 5,000 Honey Browns.

Tome Na ("Our Work") is composed in the style of Dagara Bewaa dance music. The text encourages listeners to always give their best effort to an activity. As Bernard explained, "if it is your work to be a teacher, teach well; if it is your work to be a farmer, farm well; if it is your work to be a liar, lie well so that nobody catches you."

Gandayina is a funeral piece played by Dagara and Lobi Birifor gyil players. "Ganda" means a powerful/strong person who is prominent in the family or community. This performance of Gandayina is dedicated to Uncle Frank Bruner, who was very much a prominent force in the family and communities of Iowa and Colorado.

Thank you to Ryan Frost for agreeing to play kuor last minute!

"Song and Dance" is scored for percussion duo in two movements: I. Song of the Metals; II. Dance of the Drums. The first movement features the kalimba accompanied by bells, djembe, shaker, and other small percussion instruments. A recording of birds singing accompanies the entire movement providing a background of nature sounds. The second movement is in stark contrast with very primal drumming. Interlocking groove-oriented patterns permeate the movement while a conch shell is used as a single-pitch melodic instrument. Both movements are dances, however two very different aesthetics.

Thank you to Professor Matt Andreini for agreeing to play this piece in addition to his innumerable other performances this month!

"21" was written for Mariel Roberts in October 2008 and premiered in Rochester, NY on December 14, 2008. After meeting Mariel at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, I became extremely impressed with her sense of rhythm and effortless mastery of the cello. I first realized her talent when we performed "I falleN TwO" for string quartet and steel pans.

My goal with this piece was to incorporate techniques and phrases that would offer a unique contemporary sound world rooted in traditional Trinidadian Soca rhythms. The cello part requires the performer to play a kick drum and operate a loop pedal while simultaneously playing the cello. The percussion part requires the performer to play a tambourine with the foot pedal in addition to marimba. The title "21" refers to the twenty-first measure of the Fugue movement in J.S. Bach's Violin Sonata #1 in G minor. The harmonic chords in this bar are the inspiration of the sequence of notes for "21." ~Andy Akiho

Thank you to Jamie Clark for agreeing to play this piece despite the commute!

The **Etudes** by Clair Omar Musser have remained a staple of marimba literature since the early 20th century. Musser was one of the most important influences on the development of the marimba in the United States. All facets of the marimba -- design and construction, teaching, composing of etudes and solos, a four-mallet grip and even the popularity of the instrument itself -- came under his positive influence.

A teacher of renown, Musser headed a marimba specialty program in the mid-1900s at Northwestern University. Musser's solo compositions, transcriptions, and ensemble arrangements still enjoy great popularity in the percussion community.

Enjoy the show!

ABOUT THE ARTIST

An advocate for global musical traditions, **Staci Toma** is dedicated to expanding the percussion repertoire through multicultural education and performance. She has studied and performed diverse styles of percussion across the world, including West African drumming in Ghana and Guinea, marimba in Austria and Australia, and orchestral percussion in the United States. Her extensive international experience informs her teaching and performance, providing students with a rich and varied musical perspective. She has had the privilege of studying with renowned teachers such as Gordon Stout, Kevin Bobo, John Tafoya, Michael Spiro, Dr. Eric Hollenbeck, Fara Tolno, and the late Bernard Woma.

As a soloist and ensemble performer, Toma has appeared in concerts across the United States, performing with professional orchestras, concert bands, and various traditional drumming ensembles. She presented at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) in 2021, delivering an interactive workshop on integrating West African rhythms into American music education. Notably, her marimba playing won first place in two concerto competitions.

Toma currently serves as Assistant Adjunct Professor of Percussion at the University of Northern Iowa, where she offers courses on world music, instructs applied percussion lessons, and teaches percussion pedagogy to future music directors. Her teaching philosophy emphasizes the importance of cultural and global connections in music, preparing students to become versatile musicians and informed global citizens.