



# Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

## STUDENT **RECITAL**

April 25, 2024  
12 p.m., von Kuster Hall  
Meagan Foster, *percussion*

Aquatic (2021)

Russell Wharton  
(b. 1990)

To Varese (2013)

Joseph Tompkins  
(b. 1970)

Northern Lights (1989)

Eric Ewazen  
(b. 1950)

The Anvil Chorus (1991)

David Lang  
(b. 1954)

Across the Floor (2013)

Justin Bunting  
(b. 1986)

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Bachelor of Music (Performance) degree.*

## Program Notes

### Russell Wharton: *Aquatic*

“When one considers oceanic life, it is like considering the whole of the world: massively interconnected ecosystems, staggering biodiversity, and a frightening degree of fragility, all still largely shrouded in mystery. The beings that live in the ocean can be friendly, terrifying, alien, majestic, enormous, and microscopic.

“*Aquatic* was inspired not only by the life under the sea, but also by the media that raises awareness about that life, including *Blue Planet*, *Planet Earth*, *Our Planet*, *My Octopus Teacher*, and *Subnautica*. The piece uses pleasant harmonies mixed with undulating and uneven rhythms to create a sense of unfamiliarity mixed with hopefulness. A great deal of the soundtrack for this piece was written using Spitfire Audio’s Orchestral Swarm, which was featured in *Blue Planet II*.”

– Russell Wharton

### Joseph Tompkins: *To Varese*

This multiple percussion solo is based on a motif from French composer Edgard Varese’s piece *Ionisation*. *Ionisation* is a piece for 13 percussionists, written between 1929–1931. It is considered one of the earliest works for percussion ensemble. Tompkin’s homage includes other elements drawn from the original piece: sirens, a lion’s roar (synthesized by a low tom), and concert bass drum. This piece makes use of Tompkins’ compositional language that he calls “French-American Rudimental”, combining the military drumming traditions of both North America and France. Special thanks to Daniel Morphy for allowing me to borrow the foot-operated cabasa used in this piece.

– Meagan Foster

### Eric Ewazen: *Northern Lights*

*Northern Lights* was written for marimbist and composer Gordon Stout. A classic of marimba literature, the piece features shifting moods and colours. While working on the piece, I have envisioned a night in the cold North gazing up at the swirling colours of the aurora. Listen for the changing textures and intense emotions throughout.

– Meagan Foster

### David Lang: *The Anvil Chorus*

“When percussionist Steve Schick asked me to write him a solo piece, I wanted to do something that showed percussion’s connection to real life activities. I didn’t want to work with the pretty instruments, like vibraphone or chimes, that were invented so that percussionists could play politely with other musicians. I wanted to write a piece that reminded the listener of the glorious history of percussion — that since the beginning of time people have always banged on things as a result of their professions.

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## David Lang: *The Anvil Chorus* (cont.)

“Then I remembered that I had once read a book on the history of blacksmithing, and I had become particularly interested in how medieval blacksmiths used song to help them in their work. Although small jobs could be accomplished by individual smiths, larger jobs created an interesting problem — how could several smiths hammer on a single piece of metal without getting in each other’s way? Smiths solved this problem by singing songs together which would control the beat patterns of the hammers. There was a different song for each number of participating blacksmiths — obviously, a song that allowed for three hammer strokes would be confusing and even dangerous if used to coordinate four smiths.

“My solo percussion piece the anvil chorus also uses a ‘melody’ to control various beat patterns. The ‘melody’ is played on resonant junk metals of the percussionist’s choosing, and, by adding certain rules, it triggers an odd accompaniment of non-resonant junk metals, played both by hand and by foot.”

– David Lang

## Justin Bunting: *Across the Floor*

“*Across the Floor* is a world percussion solo with a multiple-percussion/drum set-type setup. The impetus for the piece was my experience accompanying modern dance classes on world percussion instruments. The title comes from the exercises performed by the dancers generally near the end of a class called going ‘across the floor’. The piece itself simulates the entire structure of a basic modern dance class. It begins slow and relatively simple as the dancers warm up and stretch, which is followed by an acceleration and moderate tempo representing their first standing exercises. The final section is in a fast tempo as the dancers move across the floor. The music aims to represent the energy level that the percussionist must present to the dancers to adequately inspire their performance.”

– Justin Bunting

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