

**Stockton Symphony Gatherings Series
Orphic Percussion**

Thursday, August 19, 2021 6:30 pm
River Islands Boathouse Lawn
Friday, August 20, 2021 6:00 pm
Michael David Winery



Michael Downing, Sean Clark, Stuart Langsam, and Jonathan Latta, *percussion*

Alexis Alrich
(b. 1955)

Inferno from Muse of Fire

Kenneth Froelich
(b.1977)

Stuck in Loops

Shaun Tilburg
(b. 1981)

a series of accidents

Stefan Cwik
(b. 1987)

Celestial Dance

Kevin Bobo
(b. 1974)

Quartet for Four Snare Drums

Program Notes *provided by Orphic Percussion*

Inferno from Muse of Fire

Alexis Alrich

Born in Los Angeles, July 26, 1955

Muse of Fire was composed by Alexis Alrich for the Impetus Percussion Quartet in 2015 and has become a fan favorite at Orphic concerts. A native of California, Alexis also lived in Hong Kong and Beijing as a music critic for more than a decade. Our quartet discovered her by chance via a YouTube video of her Marimba Concerto which was performed by Evelyn Glennie. The three-movement *Muse of Fire* draws heavily on the sonorities of Asian cultures, particularly those of China. The movement you are hearing today is the third and final movement of the composition and, unlike the other movements, is scored entirely for keyboard percussion. Alexis's compositional style has been labeled "California impressionism" and blends the more

traditional Asian harmonies with a hint of rock 'n' roll groove.

Stuck in Loops

Kenneth Froehlich

Born in Chester, Pennsylvania, September 22, 1977

Stuck in Loops for mallet quartet, composed for Orphic Percussion, is inspired by the constant dying, restarting, and dying again that occurs in a very difficult video game. The opening gesture represents the starting point in a gameplay loop where multiple paths present themselves. Fittingly, this gesture appears numerous times throughout the work through a musical representation of death and repetition. Each path is represented as a section of music, containing unique challenges for the players to overcome. However, where in a video game trial-and-error is the only possible way

to achieve success, in this composition success is inevitable as the work winds its way to a hard-fought conclusion.

a series of accidents

Shaun Tilburg

Born in Houston, Texas, March 1981

“I was a victim of a series of accidents, as are we all.” —Kurt Vonnegut, *The Sirens of Titan*

a series of accidents has been called a “posthumous collaboration” between Kurt Vonnegut and Shaun Tilburg, though Shaun Tilburg is very much alive, playing principal percussion with the Phoenix Symphony and teaching at Arizona State and Lynn Universities. *The Sirens of Titan*, like many of Vonnegut’s works, explores the individual’s eternal struggle against forces they cannot resist, nor comprehend; he would challenge the notion that any of us truly has free will.

Celestial Dance

Stefan Cwik

Born in Chicago, Illinois, 1987

Celestial Dance for percussion quartet follows the odd genre of “Invocation and Dance,” a half dance form/half programmatic piece. The “invocation” is in reference to the ritual of invoking, through song, a deity or spiritual power. The piece opens with “calls and incantations” led by striking chords and flowing figurations. As the material from the invocation culminates, we are led into our

first dance, in triple meter, signaling the entrance of the spiritual presence. This is also signaled by the entrance of the kick drum. We are presented with two themes in two different harmonic areas. Once developed, the energy begins to pool even more and the tempo is kicked up into an even more spirited dance, in duple meter. At this point the energy of the dance, while still developing our two themes, is continually raised, climaxing at the end of the entire piece when the spiritual presence has synthesized with the human presence and the ritual is now complete.

Celestial Dance was heavily inspired by electronic dance music, specifically techno and tech-house. The incessant driving beat of the kick drum and the focus on building textures slowly through repeated rhythmic patterns, with a series of breakdowns and climaxes, is a hallmark of the electronic dance music genre.

Quartet for Four Snare Drums

Kevin Bobo

Born in Kansas, September 20, 1974

An energetic and exciting work written in 2000, Bobo’s Quartet for Four Snare Drums features a variety of rudimentary style figures including flams, diddles, buzzes, various sticking patterns, and both open and closed rolls. Woven within this rhythmically driving work are short composed solo breaks for each player. In the central “free” section, individual parts emerge and submerge into a continuous texture.

About the Artists

Orphic Percussion is a Northern California-based percussion quartet dedicated to the creation and performance of new music. Orphic means “beyond ordinary,” a phrase that characterizes the ensemble and its mission: to commission

and premiere new works by today’s most compelling composers; to broaden the audience for contemporary music; and to present concerts that are vibrantly communicative, musically expressive, and inspiringly virtuosic—or, quite simply, extraordinary.



Michael Downing is a founding member and executive director of Orphic Percussion. He is section percussionist with the Sacramento Philharmonic and acting principal with the Stockton

Symphony. His positions as an educator include visiting lecturer at the University of the Pacific. Michael has been featured as a soloist with both the Phoenix Symphony and the Stockton Symphony performing *Uzu and Muzu from Kakaruzu*, a double percussion concerto by Avner Dorman, which he and fellow percussionist Graham Thompson premiered in 2012. Michael is an ardent supporter of new music and active with the Percussive Arts Society.



Sean Clark serves as director of percussion at Saratoga High School, where he teaches concert, world, and marching percussion. A high-energy

soloist and chamber musician, Sean has given clinics and performed across the United States and internationally. Whether it be teaching or playing, Sean aims to bridge the gap between classical and commercial music—making classical music more accessible to today's contemporary audiences.

Originally from Southern California, **Stuart Langsam** holds degrees from San Jose State and Oklahoma State Universities and is pursuing his doctorate at the University of Oklahoma. He was a member of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic for eight

seasons and also played with the Kansas City, Tulsa, and Ft. Smith Symphonies. He has since performed with the Stockton, Santa Cruz, and Berkeley Symphonies as well as the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, Symphony Silicon Valley, and a variety of musical theater productions and summer festivals. In 2011 he presented a marching percussion exhibition at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention with the Oklahoma State University Drumline. He has also presented clinics at the Oklahoma Music Educators Association and the PAS Oklahoma Day of Percussion.

Jonathan Latta is currently a faculty member at the University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music. He has performed throughout the country as a professional military musician as well as a percussionist in chamber music, orchestral, and jazz settings. He previously taught percussion and jazz at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and he was principal timpani with the San Juan Symphony for six years. Jonathan holds a Master of Music degree from East Carolina University and Doctor of Music Arts degree from the University of Arizona.

