



# USC PERCUSSION GROUP

APRIL 5, 2022 • 7:30 PM • NEWMAN RECITAL HALL

JOSEPH PEREIRA • DIRECTOR

**USC Thornton**  
School of Music

# PROGRAM

## UNEXPECTED PATHS

Percussion music of anticipation and tension

*Mallet Quartet*  
(2009)

**Steve Reich**

*featuring*  
Sorie Bangura  
Zoe Beyler  
Dominic Grande  
Sean Yan

*Gutterfly's*  
(2020)

**JaRon Brown**

*featuring*  
Jeremy Davis  
Dominic Grande  
Soojin Kang  
Paul Matthews

*Mallet Quartet*  
(2013)

**Joseph Pereira**

*featuring*  
Austin Cernosek  
Jeremy Davis  
Mary LaBlanc  
Paul Matthews

*Wooden Music*  
(2008)

**Masakazu Natsuda**

Joseph Pereira, conductor

*featuring*  
Sorie Bangura  
Zoe Beyler  
Jeremy Davis  
Michael Dehan  
Dominic Grande  
Soojin Kang,  
Mary LaBlanc  
Paul Matthews  
Sean Yan

# COMPOSER'S NOTES

**Steve Reich**

*Mallet Quartet* (2009)

*Mallet Quartet* (2009) is scored for two vibraphones and two five octave marimbas. I had never written for five octave marimbas extending down to cello C. On the one hand I was delighted to have the possibility of a low bass and on the other hand apprehensive since just slightly too hard a mallet that low can produce noise instead of pitch. Eventually, after a bit of experimentation, this was well worked out.

The piece is in three movements, fast, slow, fast. In the two outer fast movements the marimbas set the harmonic background which remains rather static compared to recent pieces of mine like *Double Sextet* (2007). The marimbas interlock in canon, also a procedure I have used in many other works. The vibes present the melodic material first solo and then in canon. However, in the central slow movement the texture changes into a thinner more transparent one with very spare use of notes, particularly in the marimbas. I was originally concerned this movement might just be “too thin,” but I think it ends up being the most striking, and certainly the least expected, of the piece.

*Mallet Quartet* is about 15 minutes in duration. It was co-commissioned by the Amadinda Quartet in Budapest, on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary, Nexus in Toronto, So Percussion in New York, Synergy Percussion in Australia, and Soundstreams in Canada. The World Premiere was given by the Amadinda Quartet in Bela Bartók National Concert Hall on December 6, 2009. The American Premiere was given by So Percussion at Stanford University Lively Arts in California on January 9, 2010.

Steve Reich

**JaRon Brown**

*Gutterflys* (2020)

“And in the pit of his buttered rum belly,  
making him sick, split liquorice churned jelly,  
made a bed of cumbersome, gum Gutterflys”

*Gutterflys* for percussion quartet by JaRon Brown is a unique musical soundscape that depicts the somewhat crippling feeling of experiencing performance anxiety. Derived from the expression of “having butterflies in the stomach,” this composition explores the jittery quirkiness and the

ambivalent essence of being nervous. This piece flutters amongst the dread of impending unsettling anxiousness in a peculiar hocket driven musical illustration.

JaRon Brown

### **Joseph Pereira**

*Mallet Quartet* (2013)

I have always found it fascinating to discover ways to manipulate sound—how notes are played and more importantly what happens after you play them and how they resonate or speak in different ways. My “Mallet Quartet” (2013), written for the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet, for two vibraphones and two marimbas, attempts to consider all elements of sound on these instruments. Each pitch is considered on its own as a scale, of many timbral particles waiting to be examined. For the most part the focus is on the resonances, the attacks, and the overtones. By constantly drawing parallels between all the particles of sound, I was able to develop multiple scales of material to structure the piece as a whole.

The introduction contains all the elements of the piece. From here on, all sections are to be developed, layered and woven onto and over each other. They often appear either clearly developed or completely disguised, dependent on the varied dimensions applied to their appearance. This idea of using a 3 dimensional approach to sound, which on one hand goes towards unpitched sounds, and on the other hand digs deeper beyond the fundamental tones into the natural overtones, constantly creates a shifting focus of tension. Pivoting between this axis of sound, creates an endless spectrum for each pitch used. A total consideration of sound—the playing techniques, the pitch structure, and the timbres are all of equal importance, not one dominating the other. The LA Percussion Quartet’s *Sono Luminous* recording of “Mallet Quartet” was rated “Best of 2014 Classical Music” from iTunes.

Joseph Pereira

### **Masakazu Natsuda**

*Wooden Music* (1996)

In this piece you will see four different scenes. The opening performed by six players in the front row is the process where six patterns of neumes and their tempos gradually synchronize. Then in the back row three players on the log drums introduce the second scene. Here, the eighteen neumes are weaved together one by one and a cannon is heard as

the players progress in various tempos. The third part is brief, with front row percussionists gathering towards a phrase which consists of three note neumes with a repeated note added as an upbeat. In the final scene, the ensemble divides into three groups as they all share the pulse of the sixteenth notes, and develop three, four and five note neumes in two different time scales. Forests are homes to primates including mankind, therefore trees and human beings have always been inextricably linked. The hitting sounds that came from pieces of wood in one's hands (perhaps rocks or bones...) would have been some of the first sounds that mankind produced besides their spoken words. The scene comes clearly to my mind as I live in a country (Japan) where most of the islands are covered in forests.

*Masakazu Natsuda*



# **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Apr. 8th at 8:00 p.m.

**USC Thornton Concert Choir**

Apr. 12th at 7:30 p.m.

**Thornton Edge**

Apr. 15th at 7:30 p.m.

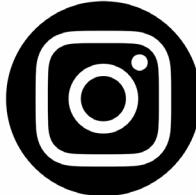
**USC Thornton Chamber Orchestra**

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