

Ethos Percussion Group

Trey Files, Michael Lipsey, Eric Phinney and Yousif Sheronick

Points of Departure

Music for Percussion Inspired by Four Continents

Program

Duo 77 (2002) Yousif Sheronick

Ziggurat (interior) (2007) John Hollenbeck

These Trees That Speak (2007) Susie Ibarra

Drumming, Part I (1971) Steve Reich

---Intermission---

The Guiros Talk (2006) Dafnis Prieto

Gandrung (2002) Bill Alves

see/change (2004) Trey Files

The Guiros Talk, These Trees That Speak, Ziggurat (interior) and *see/change* were commissioned by the Jerome Foundation Emerging Composers Commissioning Fund for the Ethos Percussion Group.

www.ethospercussiongroup.org

About the Program

Duo 77 was originally written for two large frame drums and is dedicated to my frame drum teacher, Glen Velez. This version has been arranged for Ethos Percussion Group with the great help of my fellow ensemble members. *Duo 77* is based on South Indian rhythmic practices and contains three main compositions along with solos. Compositions One and Three are based on the South Indian practice of reduction. The Second is a "gat" where rhythms are played at increasing ratios of speed.

~ Yousif Sheronick

Ziggurat (interior) was inspired by the ancient Ziggurats of Mesopotamia, and the workers who built them. A counterpart to *Ziggurat (exterior)*, an octet I wrote for saxophones and percussion, this piece focuses on small, detailed sounds - interior construction that I imagine in the small spaces used for secret rituals--the sounds of four skilled artisans working together and individually on a sacred magical temple.

~ John Hollenbeck

These Trees That Speak is inspired by my ongoing interests in folkloric animism and trance music, and also by visuals of Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*. I have a personal affinity towards both folkloric spirits in our everyday lives and respect for the mysteries of our dreams. It is also inspired by the nature of trees and of their unspoken lives. ~ Susie Ibarra

Drumming represents the culmination of Steve Reich's early career. The four-movement work is the last to utilize his signature process known as "phasing" (which requires musicians to play the same ostinato at slightly different speeds), and the first in which he gradually "substitutes beats for rests" as a means to create a sense of metric acceleration. *Part I*, which uses four pairs of specifically tuned bongos, is often performed independently of the remaining three movements. ~ Ethos

The Guiros Talk is a quartet for four guiros (gourd scrapers) that takes traditional rhythms from Cuba and Latin America as a point of departure, but quickly distorts them by displacement and other devices drawn from Indian rhythmic theory. ~ Dafnis Prieto

One of the most interesting, if currently rare, ensembles from Bali in Indonesia is the gamelan gandrung. Its instruments are made of wooden slabs somewhat like Western xylophones, and its five-tone scale derives from the pelog or saih pitu tuning system. Gandrung is also known for accompanying a vivacious, flirtatious dance of the same name. Though in the nineteenth century it enjoyed royal patronage, as the court music became more refined gandrung's dynamism and erotic associations soon relegated it to the village street. While this piece includes explosions of activity and complex interlocking patterns as in gandrung, none of the music is borrowed literally from those traditions. Instead I have tried to freely evoke the exuberant spirit and challenging musicianship of gandrung. ~ Bill Alves

see/change was written in an effort to facilitate collaboration between Ethos Percussion Group and student performers encountered by the ensemble as it tours the country. Scored as a double quartet, the four "Ethos" players are flanked on either side by "guest" musicians. The solo pattern played by the triangle in the first two measures serves as source material for the entire piece, with each of the composition's three sections defined by its approach to this syncopated rhythm and its juxtaposition of resonant and dry sounds. ~Trey Files

About the Artists

ETHOS PERCUSSION GROUP has inspired audiences throughout the country since 1989 with its exceptional music-making and collective devotion to the world of percussion music. Ensemble members Trey Files, Michael Lipsey, Eric Phinney and Yousif Sheronick are individually accomplished artists who are equally at home with contemporary classical repertoire or in collaborations with master musicians from non-Western traditions. Ethos' unique performances transport global instruments and playing styles into Western chamber music to create a visually and aurally compelling experience.

Ethos has presented concerts across the United States and the United Kingdom, with major engagements at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater, the Bermuda Festival, London's Wigmore Hall, the Krannert Center, the Library of Congress, and the Percussive Arts Society International Convention. Recent collaborators include the Kansas City Symphony, Glen Velez, Bernard Woma, M' Bemba Bangouran, and Pandit Samir Chatterjee.

In addition to presenting clinics and master classes at institutions such as The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, University of Illinois, and Berklee College of Music, Ethos has worked with thousands of students in New York City's public schools through concert and classroom activities. Long-term educational residencies elsewhere in the country have included programs with Sun Valley Center for the Arts and Quad City Arts. Ethos is currently ensemble-in-residence at Lehman College (Bronx, NY).

Ethos Percussion Group is a member ensemble of Chamber Music America and a sustaining member of the Percussive Arts Society. The ensemble gratefully endorses products from Cooperman Drums, Innovative Mallets and Yamaha.

Ethos' discography includes *Building* (2008), *Sol Tunnels* (2002), *The Persistence of Past Chemistries* (1999) and *Ethos Percussion Group* (1996).

TREY FILES has performed and/or recorded with a variety of ensembles, including Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, New Music Consort, and the Michael Gordon Band. His extensive work in theater includes Broadway's *Spring Awakening* (where he served as associate conductor) and *American Idiot*, as well as the groundbreaking off-Broadway show *De La Guarda*. His discography features the Grammy Award-winning cast album of *Spring Awakening* and numerous other releases on the Decca/UMG, Reprise, Newport Classics, Koch International, Traditional Crossroads, Resonator, and Victory labels. Trey is an Adjunct Artist in Music at Vassar College and a recent graduate of the doctoral program at City University of New York.

MICHAEL LIPSEY has performed throughout North America, Europe and Asia with artists such as Talujon Percussion, Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, Steve Reich, Bang on a Can, Tan Dun, New York New Music Ensemble and Riverside Symphony. He has recorded for Sony Records, Red Poppy Records, Nonesuch, Albany, Capstone, and Mode. He has presented solo performances and master classes at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Juilliard School of Music, and many universities around the country. Michael is Associate Professor of Percussion at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College.

ERIC PHINNEY has performed with the Berkshire Opera Orchestra, St. Cecilia Orchestra, New World Symphony, New Music Consort, Pulse Percussion Ensemble, and Music from China. With Pulse and the New Music Consort, he has performed at music festivals in Moscow, Tokyo and Osaka. He is a member of Chhandayan, an Indian musical organization based in Calcutta, and is also a devoted student of music from Ghana. He has recorded with the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra on the Koch International and Newport Classics labels.

Hailed by the New York Times for his "dazzling improvisations," **YOUSIF SHERONICK** appears internationally as soloist and chamber musician with groups and artists such as Philip Glass, Glen Velez, Foday Musa Suso, Simon Shaheen, Henry Threadgill, Lark Chamber Artists, duoJalal, and Paul Winter Consort. Distinguished collaborators include Yo-Yo Ma, Branford Marsalis, Pandit Samir Chatterjee, Marcel Khalife, Sonny Fortune, and Cindy Blackman. Mr. Sheronick holds degrees from Yale University and the University of Iowa. He is currently teaching at Lafayette College (Easton PA) and presenting a series of master classes at Manhattan School of Music.