

THE BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC  
Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Chair

presents

*Faculty Percussion  
Recital*

*Mr. Owen Rockwell*

Thursday, April 3, 2014 • 7:30 p.m.  
Belhaven University Center for the Arts • Concert Hall

*There will be a reception after the program. Please come and greet the performers.  
Please refrain from the use of all flash and still photography during the concert.  
Please turn off all pagers and cell phones.*

## PROGRAM

Ellie's Samba (2002) Jason Koontz • b. 1973  
*Ruth Picha, Daniel Bravo, Cierra Lee; Marimbas  
Justin Nipper, Bass Marimba; Victor Piantanida, Drum set; Miriam Smith, Percussion*

Fission (1993) Alice Gomez • b. 1960  
Arr. Owen Rockwell • b. 1976  
*Justin Nipper, Xylophone; Trailand Eltzroth, Marimba*

Drumming: Part I (1971) Steve Reich • b. 1936  
*Daniel Bravo, Justin Nipper, & Victor Piantanida, Bongos*

## INTERMISSION

Gary and Owen Revisited: after the *Garryowen* (2003) Owen Rockwell • b. 1976

Rhythm Song (1982) Paul Smadbeck • b. 1955

Psappha for Percussion Solo (1975) Iannis Xenakis • 1925 - 2001  
*Mr. Owen Rockwell, Percussion*

## PROGRAM NOTES

When considering the program for this evening's recital, I wanted to include a representative group of pieces that together demonstrate the range and scope of percussion literature written from the end of the 20th century into the dawn of the 21st. I decided to feature pieces and styles that were familiar to those who have studied music, even nominally. For example: **Drumming** is probably Steve Reich's most referenced work in courses on 20th century music theory and history, as well as in music appreciation textbooks. Just as Reich successfully fused African drumming with minimalist compositional techniques, popularizing them at a time when people were increasingly exposed to these elements in the media (late 1970s and early 80s, as they are today), the rhythms found in **Ellie's Samba** are

commonly used in all types of popular music and jazz and should be recognizable to almost anybody. Conversely, a couple of pieces will likely be unfamiliar to every single person here tonight. **Psappha for percussion solo** has never been heard live, in Mississippi. Furthermore, I am blessed to share the stage with several fine students from the Belhaven University percussion ensemble and very pleased that they could join me on the first half of this program.  
-O.R.

In **Ellie's Samba**, composer Jason Koontz evokes the rhythms of Brazil's Carnival season, especially found in Rio de Janeiro, and combines it with harmonies found in American jazz. He manages to orchestrate surprisingly dense sonorities for using only seven

performers, while the resulting music sets a mood that at once encourages the hearer to be both active and relaxed.

*-Note provided by Mr. Rockwell*

The music of composer Alice Gomez reflects a varied interest in the music of Latin America, Africa, and her own Native American roots. *Fission* contains a celebratory melody accompanied by a strict 6/8 ostinato in the low marimba part which is at once reminiscent of West African mbira, balifon, and gyl musical traditions. Since I often get to play for modern dance classes at Belhaven, and this piece felt akin to many of the patterns I am asked to play for dancers, it seemed like a perfect presentation in between two larger works on this program.

*-Note provided by Mr. Rockwell*

For one year, between the fall of 1970 and the fall of 1971, I worked on what turned out to be the longest piece I have ever composed.

**Drumming** lasts from 55 to 75 minutes (depending on the number of repeats played) and is divided into four parts that are performed without pause. The first part is for four pairs of tuned bongo drums, stand-mounted and played with sticks; the second for three marimbas, played by nine players with two women's voices; the third, for three glockenspiels played by four players together with whistling and piccolo; and the fourth section is for all of these instruments and voices combined.

**Drumming** is the final refinement of the 'phasing' process, where two or more identical instruments move gradually out of synchronization and then gradually back into synchronization, but in a slightly different rhythmic relationship. I discovered this process in 1965 in *It's gonna Rain* and never used it again after **Drumming** in 1971. This work also introduced three new techniques (1) the process of gradually substituting notes for rests (or rests for notes within a constantly repeating rhythmic cycle), (2) the use of the human voice in an instrumental ensemble to precisely

imitate the sound of instruments, (3) gradual but complete changes of timbre while pitch and rhythm remain constant.

*-Note provided by the composer*

Written in the spring of 2003, **Gary and Owen Revisited** is takes its name from an ancient fife and drum call known as *Garryowen*. I wrote the solo as a tribute to my father, Gary, and the influence he had early in my life while exposing me to the rich history of American rudimental drumming. The piece itself is a journey through several rudimental styles from the 1700's through the present, incorporating rudiments from German, Scottish, and Swiss drumming traditions. It is a pedagogical piece as well as a show-piece, meant to challenge the player to greater depths of dexterity between the right and left hands. The sections of the piece alternate from the original drum part from *Garryowen* with several variations based on the rhythmic, as well as melodic ideas found in the fife and drum parts. The return of the main drum call is a sort of musical reflection on my constantly revisiting the roots of drumming, the training from my youth, even as I continue to grow as a musician and teacher.

*-Note provided by Mr. Rockwell*

One of the marimba's most unique qualities comes from the fact that it is struck with a stick, like a drum, while at the same time possessing the notes of a piano keyboard in a versatile four to five octave range. This percussive quality, coupled with its tonal capabilities, gives the marimba expressive power that is unmatched by any traditional western instrument, and it is this power that lies at the heart of **Rhythm Song**. Minimalist in its construction, the entire work is based on a simple eight-measure theme which is repeated in various guises throughout the first section of the piece, building in intensity with each statement. This gives way to a development of various interwoven lines, ending in a "rhythmic modulation" from the original, driving pulse in 7/4 to a quieter and more lilting 6/8 with a decidedly African feel. Here the theme is stated yet again and a new

framework of voices, simultaneously connected and contrasting, is built up between the four mallets. These are then stripped away one at a time, leading first to a false ending, and then after a repeat of the “stripping away” process, to its actual, quiet conclusion.

*-Note provided by the composer*

Before performing **Psappha for solo percussion**, I will briefly share some background on the piece, given its pivotal role in the history and development of composed pieces for a single percussionist. **WARNING:** This piece is meant to be **LOUD!** Plugging your ears in certain places will not offend the Performer, and may even enhance the effect for some listeners.

*--Note provided by Mr. Rockwell*

Special thanks to: Dr. Steven Sachs and Ms. Cynthia Newland, Chairs of the Departments of Music and Dance (respectively) for their unwavering support for my efforts, both personally and professionally; my outstanding students who shared their time, talents, and occasionally instruments for this evening’s performance; Ms. Valerie Tate in the Department of Music office; Mr. Kyle Woolley who designed the flyer for this event as well as the other students behind the scenes striving to make it all happen. Finally, to Erin, my faithful wife, companion, supporter, inspiration, challenger and friend, I am grateful in ways too numerous to mention here, but suffice it to say: I love and admire you.

Praise God, from whom all blessing flows!

## **DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT**

The Music Department seeks to produce transformational leaders in the musical arts who will have profound influence in homes, churches, private studios, educational institutions, and on the concert stage. While developing the God-bestowed musical talents of music majors, minors, and elective students, we seek to provide an integrative understanding of the musical arts from a Christian world and life view in order to equip students to influence the world of ideas. The music major degree program is designed to prepare students for graduate study while equipping them for vocational roles in performance, church music, and education. The Belhaven University Music Department exists to multiply Christian leaders who demonstrate unquestionable excellence in the musical arts and apply timeless truths in every aspect of their artistic discipline.

The Music Department would like to thank our many community partners for their support of Christian Arts Education at Belhaven University through their advertising in “Arts Ablaze 2013-2014.” It is through these and other wonderful relationships in the greater Jackson community that makes many of our concerts possible at Belhaven. We praise God for our friends and are truly thankful for their generosity. Please mention The Arts at Belhaven University when you visit our community partners.

For a complete listing of Music Department scheduled spring semester programs, please visit our website at <http://www.belhaven.edu/music/recitals.htm>. A complete listing of major Belhaven University arts events may be found at <http://www.belhaven.edu/arts/schedule.htm>.

*Thank you to those working behind the scenes to make today’s program a success: music faculty supervisor, Dr. Girtmon; student workers –house manager, Kyle Carter; ushers, Thorburn McGee & Brooke Kressin; stage manager, Wil Murphy; stage hands, Daniel Bravo, Justin Nipper & Libby Roberts; recording/sound, Grace Anna Randall; lighting, Michael Adkins; videographer, Julie Wolfe; reception assistants, Lydia Moore & Lydia Jones.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, April 4, 7:30pm, Concert Hall  
Saturday, April 5, 3pm, Concert Hall  
Saturday, April 5, 7:30pm, Concert Hall  
Tuesday, April 8, 7:30pm, Concert Hall  
Friday, April 11, 6:30pm, Concert Hall  
Saturday, April 12, 2pm, Concert Hall  
Saturday, April 12, 7:30pm, Concert Hall  
Monday, April 14, 7:30pm, Concert Hall  
Monday, April 21, 7:30pm, Concert Hall

Alesia Sterling Junior Voice Recital  
Instrumental Arts Concert  
Brooke Edwards Senior Voice Recital  
Dr. Rebecca Geihlsler Faculty Voice Recital  
Tianna Rogers Senior Collaborative Piano Recital  
Katie Rowan Senior Collaborative Piano Recital  
Choral and Vocal Arts Concert  
Best of Belhaven III  
Jocelyn Zhu Senior Violin Recital

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*Mr.*  
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**THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2014 7:30PM**

**COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSION**

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