



International  
Presentations of  
Music & Dance

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Nexus

BOB BECKER    ROBIN ENGELMAN  
BILL CAHN    RUSSELL HARTENBERGER  
JOHN WYRE

GLEN VELEZ AND PERCY DANFORTH, *Guests*

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 2, 1984, AT 8:00  
POWER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Ancient Military Aires ..... TRADITIONAL DRUMMING  
A medley, *à la Nexus*, of drumming descended from the French, British, and American military traditions.

Rain Tree ..... TORU TAKEMITSU  
*Rain Tree* belongs to Takemitsu's *Rain Series* and is scored for vibraphone, two marimbas, and croatales. In planning the piece, he was greatly influenced by a novel of Kenzaburo Oe entitled "Atama no ij Ame no Ki." The opening page of the score carries this paragraph from the novel: "It has been named the 'rain tree'; for its abundant foliage continues to let fall rain drops collected from last night's shower until well after the following midday. Its hundreds of thousands of tiny leaves — finger-like — store up moisture while other trees dry up at once. What an ingenious tree. Isn't it?"

Third Construction ..... JOHN CAGE  
*Third Construction* is the pinnacle of Cage's innovative percussion ensemble writing. It is his final work in this medium, and perhaps his most complex and mature. Many Mexican, Central American, and Native Indian instruments are called for in this piece, including quijadas, cricket callers, conch shell, and rattles. Other unusual instruments such as graduated tin cans play a prominent role in the work. Both the rhythmic shape and the overall structure of the piece are related to Cage's "square-root theory," in which components of various relationships within a piece reflect the numeric proportions of the square-root. In *Third Construction* there are 24 sections, each in turn divided into 24 bars. In addition, there is a 24-bar introduction. This proportionate writing is extended to Cage's elaborate use of cross-rhythmic relationships among the individual parts. This builds toward the end of the sections where up to four sub-divisional flows of 3, 5, 7, and 9 are played simultaneously.

*Tonight's program takes place during the Percussive Arts Society International Convention 1984, now meeting under School of Music auspices on the University of Michigan campus. The Musical Society acknowledges the support of PASIC, Remo, Inc., and Kori Percussion, U.S.A. in presentation of this concert.*



Kebjar-Bali . . . . . BILL CAHN  
 "Kebjar" is a twentieth century musical style, performed by the gamelans (orchestras) of Bali. A gamelan may consist of as many as 25 musicians playing on various gongs, drums, cymbals, metallophones, xylophones, flutes, and occasionally string instruments. The word "kebjar" literally means "to burst into flame," and this is represented in the music of the gamelan by highly technical and rhythmically intricate passages which are usually interspersed with musical sections in a more stately traditional style.

INTERMISSION

Frafra Suite . . . . . NEXUS  
 This is a piece shaped by some of the rhythmic patterns of the Frafras of Northern Ghana. These patterns create the accompaniment for the Lapland flute and the bombard.

Palta . . . . . BOB BECKER  
*Palta* is the Hindi word used by Indian musicians to refer to variations made on a theme. In this piece the tabla plays improvised variations on several rhythmic themes. The accompanying instruments, which include almglocken, crotales, glockenspiel, marimba, song bells, and tuned gongs, play variations on a cyclic melody. In addition, there are solos played on musical saw and Surrogate Kithara.

Favorite Grand Sonata for Pianoforte and Tambourine, Op. 18 . . . . . JOSEPH DALE  
 Tambourine accompaniment by Joseph Dale, Jr.

GLEN VELEZ, *Tambourine soloist*

Joseph Dale (1750-1821) was a musician and music publisher in London. He composed sonatas and took out a patent for his improvements on the tambourine, an instrument which also interested Joseph Dale, Jr.

African Funeral Song . . . . . TRADITIONAL AFRICAN  
 A haunting melody originally played by the Atenteben flute ensembles of Ghana, arranged by Nexus.

Novelty Ragtime Selections . . . . . GEORGE HAMILTON GREEN

PERCY DANFORTH, *Bones*

During the 1920s a type of ragtime became popular in the United States; known as "novelty ragtime," this music was highly technical, programmatic, and speedier than previous rag music. Many of the tunes which Nexus performs were written by xylophone virtuoso George Hamilton Green and have been arranged by Bob Becker and Bill Cahn. They have such lighthearted titles as *Fluffy Ruffles*, *Jovial Jasper*, and *Dill Pickles*.

**Nexus** was formed in 1971 when its members came together to improvise on their vast collection of instruments gathered from all over the world. Combining their backgrounds in jazz, symphonic, and contemporary music with the indigenous music of many cultures, they have acquired a prodigious repertoire, much of which is created within the group. They also program works by such contemporary composers as Toru Takemitsu and John Cage, and have made arrangements of music by Spike Jones and ragtime xylophone master George Hamilton Green. Their collection of instruments includes rattles, bundt pans, marimbas, xylophones, and more exotic instruments such as Chinese gongs, Japanese temple bowls, and West African drums, to name a few.

Branching out from their base in Toronto, Canada, Nexus has toured Japan, England, and the Southern United States, performed in Paris, New York, and Washington, D.C., and appeared at the Tanglewood Music Festival and in West Germany's Cologne Festival. They recently returned from an international tour which took them to eleven countries in Europe and the Far East, and also participated in Toronto's International Festival as part of "Supercussion" in June 1984. The current season includes guest artist appearances with several symphony orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic. They have previously performed with the symphonies of Toronto and Winnipeg.

The ensemble has recorded five albums and made the intriguing soundtrack for the Academy Award-winning documentary "The Man Who Skied Down Everest." Nexus has also led a variety of workshops and held residencies at universities in Canada and the United States. Their workshops have received support from arts councils in Ontario, New York State, Connecticut, and Great Britain, and they especially acknowledge the general support of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council.

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