# Temple University Percussion Ensemble

and

# Philadelphia Percussion + Piano Project

Phillip O'Banion, director

Monday, October 25, 2021 • 7:30 PM Temple Performing Arts Center 1837 North Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19122

#### Program

Ionisation Edgard Varese

AWOL Bob Becker

Doumbek Concerto Anthony DiSanza

Phillip O'Banion, soloist

Aggression Yō Gotō

The Feeling of Coming Home Victor LaBozzetta

| Intermission |

The **Philadelphia Piano + Percussion Project** plays the music of Marc Mellits from their latest release No Strings Attached

No Strings Attached\*

Marc Mellits

- I. Spifflicated Mustard
- II. Stiletto Crunch
- III. This Side of Twilight
- IV. Curried Kafka
- V. Quarks & Leptons

Troica

Selections from 'Red'

- Moderately funky
- V. Moderate, with motion
- IV. Slow, with motion
- VI. Fast, obsessive, bombastic, red

Black

\*world premiere

## Temple University Percussion Ensemble

Phillip O'Banion, director

Josh Arnone Julia Baker Jillian Bojakowski Caleb Breidenbaugh Joel Cammarota Emma Cullum Alonzo Davis Garrett Davis Nicholas Demkowicz Oladipo George Merritt Leidv Alvin Macasero Aidan Moulton Elijah Nice John Panza Milo Paperman Hannah Parker **Emilyrose Ristine** Paige Ritter Adam Rudisill Alex Snelling Jonathan Sayage Andrew Stern Zach Strickland Jake Strovel Jeremy Zolner

# Faculty performers:

Christopher Deviney, Angela Zator-Nelson, William Wozniak, Phillip O'Banion

#### No Strings Attached Program Notes

"I don't think about a particular style when composing. The only thing I can think about is how to create this piece of music from beginning to end and how it can communicate with a listener," says composer Marc Mellits.

Each year around the globe Mellits's music has hundreds of performances. "Black" (heard here) has been heard nearly 3,000 times to date. His growing catalog of work has been played by the world's leading ensembles and he has been commissioned by a diverse range of artists, including the Kronos Quartet, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Duo Assad, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and many others.

"Marc is a composer who genuinely loves the sound of percussion instruments," says Phillip O'Banion, conductor of the Philadelphia Percussion + Piano Project. "He embraces what percussion does really well, with music that has dynamism, groove, and repetitive energy. Marc isn't afraid of the nature of percussion instruments. He enjoys the immediacy of sound, the energy of the strokes, and the musical inertia these instruments can create, especially when layered together—it's music with punch and attitude."

Mellits's influences defy categorization. "I grew up listening to a lot of Bach, Vivaldi, and Corelli. But my oldest brother liked to show me another type of 'Vivaldi:' Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, The Kinks, Pink Floyd, and later King Crimson," he says. "When he played this music for me, I was too young to appreciate the differences between different types of art, classical music and pop music. Stylistically, I knew it was different from, for example, Bruckner, but what struck me was how both were tremendously virtuosic. Hearing Jimmy Page [Led Zeppelin's guitarist] play, hearing how the music was constructed, blew me away—the same way Vivaldi blows me away or Bach's counterpoint does. They were all very much the same to me. I didn't look at it as rock, I looked at it as another version of Corelli."

Romania is a frequent source of inspiration. "I'm crazy about the place, and my wife is Romanian," says Mellits. "One of the first times we went to Romania, we visited Transylvania in the winter. We took a walk in the snow-covered forest, and it was beautiful. We were walking for a few minutes when a Troică (a Romanian three-horse sled) came sliding up to us and the driver offered us a ride. There were blankets in the sled and the driver offered us some *palincă* (Romanian moonshine). Two of the

horses were young, but the third was a bit older and couldn't quite keep up. As we were riding, I kept listening to the sounds of bells on the horses. The sound was a two-beat against three rhythm—the younger horses on three and the older on two. That's the inspiration—not music, but the sound. My ears are always open."

On *Troică*, you'll hear a section two-thirds of the way through where two of the instruments form the quicker rhythm and the marimba is the slower one—the sounds of those horses. "I took snippets of that and put it in the beginning, weaved everything to that point, then de-weaved it getting to the end, which is the same material as the opening, completing the circle," Mellits says.

Red was inspired by a chance meeting with Andrei Codrescu, a Romanian poet and writer Mellits admires. "I was in Bucharest, I think 2008, and had writer's block. I just stopped and let the batteries recharge, so I went out with a friend to get something to eat and have a few beers. I heard this voice, and because he was speaking in English, my ears tuned in. I said to my friend, 'I recognize the voice.'" It was Codrescu, and after much prodding, Mellits introduced himself. "I tell him that I'm a composer and we have this great conversation; all about coffee and creativity and how they are the same. The next day I was suddenly able to write again and Red just came out. I finished the entire piece in a week. The connection, being in former communist Romania, spoke in shades of *Red* to me."

O'Banion points out, "There are definitely chord progressions and some melodic patterns listeners will hear reappearing in some of the pieces, but mostly just listen for the shifting colors and grooves." The music sometimes follows the traditional rules of harmony, but at other times it "seems guided by an intuitive ear for color—Marc weaves musical lines in and out in creative and inventive ways."

All the pieces on *No Strings Attached* were arranged by Mellits. Some, like *Black*, exist in multiple versions, including its original two–bass clarinet scoring and later versions for two vibraphones, two marimbas, or four marimbas. "We preferred the four-marimba version," says O'Banion, "as it maintained the homogeneity of timbre, like the original, had a similar full-throated and woody quality, and just seemed to balance and blend better through the ensemble so that all the musical lines presented themselves clearly."

"It's all performer or instrument driven," says Mellits. "For me, it's less about being faithful to the original and more about bringing new sounds. When you try to stay absolutely faithful to the original and

write for new instruments, the final result is not quite this and not quite that—I hate that."

No Strings Attached was originally written for the Auchincloss Piano. Howland Auchincloss was a medical doctor with a penchant for creating things. He invented a modern fortepiano, digitizing the sound of the old instrument so it would have an 18th century flavor with echoes of 1970s synthesizers. Mellits says, "I was so into it. The idea of taking the old and new and mixing them up, using a double manual Belgian harpsichord sound and putting vibraphone tones on top of it was really attractive to me. I think Auchincloss had only three made, so unless you were one of the people in the world who has one, the piece cannot be played."

And therein laid a problem. "Phil asked me if I would be interested in arranging the piece for mallet quartet," Mellits explains. "That's challenging, and the more challenges and restrictions you put upon yourself, the more creative you are. I was so excited for the piece to be heard again."

Surprise is a marvelous element in Mellits's music, from his tricky-to-pin-down style to his quirky titles. All of this is certainly a prompt for first-time listeners to ask, what do I listen for in your music?

Mellits has a surprising answer. "Close your eyes and let the music try and figure you out; let it come to you. We understand music better when we let it speak to us rather than trying to hear certain things. You shouldn't have to study or work hard to enjoy music. Art should work hard to enjoy you."

--Craig Zeichner

#### About the Ensemble

The Temple University Percussion Ensemble seeks to provide a quality chamber music experience for its members. The group performs literature in a variety of styles and encourages the composition of new works for the percussion medium. Student members hail from all degree tracks in the college - performance, education, theory, technology, and therapy. The ensemble is directed by Phillip O'Banion, Associate Professor and Artistic Director of Percussion Studies.

The Temple University Percussion Ensemble has worked with composers Jennifer Higdon, John Mackey, Augusta Read Thomas, Michael Daugherty, Russell Hartenberger, Michael Colgrass, Bob Becker, Adam Silverman, Gordon Stout, Michael Burritt, Ivan Trevino, Daniel Levitan, and the NEXUS and MOBIUS Percussion Quartets. The ensemble has been featured on the Philadelphia Orchestra's chamber music series at the Kimmel Center performing Steve Reich's *Drumming* among other works. In 2016 TUPE gave the Philadelphia premiere of Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*. The group collaborates frequently with other disciplines within Temple's Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts.

Members of the group were featured in a new recording of George Antheil's 'Ballet Mecanique' and Bernstein's 'Halil' as part of the Philadelphia Piano + Percussion Project. Temple University has also been instrumental in commissioning and premiering a number of new works including Alejandro Vinao's sextet Water, Marc Mellits Gravity, Adam Silverman's Sparklefrog, a new choreography of Mass by John Mackey, Volcanic Eruption by adjunct faculty member Rolando Morales-Matos, Russell Hartenberger's Cadence and Four Faces by Gordon Stout. Alumni of the ensemble work professionally as performers and teaching artists nationally and internationally.

#### About the Artists

PHILLIP O'BANION is Associate Professor and Director of Percussion Studies and ensembles at Temple University. O'Banion performs often with the Philadelphia Orchestra and other symphonic orchestras, new music groups, and theater productions. He is a percussionist with Orchestra 2001 and Network for New Music, and principal of the Mann Center Orchestra. O'Banion has appeared as performer and conductor in concerts presented by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and is a frequent collaborative guest with the Philadelphia Orchestra Percussion Group (POPG).

O'Banion has been involved in the commission or premiere of over sixty new works in the solo and chamber music genres to date. He has appeared internationally in Europe, Canada, South America, and across the United States. Mr. O'Banion can be heard on recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra on the Deutsche Grammophon label. His solo album for percussion and electronics, Digital Divide, and his recording of Adam Silverman's marimba concerto Carbon Paper and Nitrogen Ink are available through BCM+D records. As director and conductor of the Philadelphia Percussion + Piano Project he leads exciting chamber music projects from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The group's recent releases include Radiant Outbursts: (In)Human Progress in 2020 and No Strings Attached: Percussion Music by Marc Mellits in 2021. Both projects feature world premiere recordings, as well as Bernstein's Halil and George Antheil's Ballet Mècanique.

Professor O'Banion currently chairs the Percussive Arts Society's symphonic committee, and has been a regular contributor to the new music and literature review column for Percussive Notes. He has appeared at numerous PAS conventions, Days of Percussion, and international music festivals. O'Banion serves as faculty and percussion coordinator for Sewanee Summer Music Festival in Tennessee. He endorses musical instruments made by Pearl/Adams, Sabian, Evans, Vic Firth, and Grover Pro Percussion.

CHRISTOPHER DEVINEY has been principal percussion of The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2003. Prior to assuming this title, he was section percussionist with the Houston Symphony. He has also previously performed and recorded with the New Orleans Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the

Atlanta Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

In 2008 Mr. Deviney appeared as a co-soloist (along with principal timpani Don Liuzzi) with The Philadelphia Orchestra performing Bartok's Concerto for Two Pianos and Percussion with Emanuel Ax. In 2017 Mr. Deviney premiered his Imaginary Day, Duo Concerto for Vibraphone and Marimba, with The Philadelphia Orchestra alongside marimbist She-e Wu.

Mr. Deviney was a faculty member at Rutgers University from 2004 to 2008, as well as the percussion coordinator at the Curtis Institute of Music from 2008 to 2009. Since 2010 he has taught the graduate percussion program at Temple University. In 2012, 2014, and 2016 he performed as principal percussion in the acclaimed PBS broadcast production All-Star Orchestra with conductor Gerard Schwarz.

Mr. Deviney is a graduate of Florida State University, where he studied under Gary Werdesheim, and Temple University, studying with Alan Abel. He was the recipient of the first Charles Owen Memorial fellowship at the Aspen Music Festival, as well as a Tanglewood Institute Fellow and National Repertory Orchestra invitee. He has given multiple master classes at the New World Symphony, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, the National Youth Orchestra, and the National Repertory Orchestra, and he has been a featured guest lecturer at the University of Michigan.

Mr. Deviney is a proud endorser of Pearl/Adams percussion instruments, Evans drumheads, Innovative percussion sticks/mallets, and Sabian cymbals.

**ANGELA ZATOR NELSON**, associate principal timpani and section percussion, joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1999 as the first female percussionist ever hired by the Orchestra.

Along with performing classical music, Ms. Nelson is an active chamber musician with a forte in new music. She has premiered and recorded the first five of George Crumb's American Songbooks written for the chamber group Orchestra 2001 and scored for four percussion, piano, and voice. The premieres took place at the Salzburg Music Festival, in Carnegie Hall, and in the Perelman

Theater at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. Ms. Nelson also performs regularly with the Network for New Music and the Philadelphia Orchestra Percussion Group.

Ms. Nelson has participated in the Tanglewood, Pacific, and Peninsula music festivals, the National Repertory Orchestra, and the Saratoga Chamber Music Festival. As a marimba soloist she has performed with the Temple University Symphony, the Bay-Atlantic Symphony, the Main Line Symphony, and the Philadelphia Classical Symphony.

Ms. Nelson joined the faculty at Temple University as adjunct professor in 2001. She has given master classes to numerous students of all ages and has presented classes at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, the Oberlin Percussion Institute, and at the annual Alan Abel School of Orchestral Studies.

A native of the Chicago area, Ms. Nelson graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from Northwestern University's School of Music, where she studied with James Ross and Patricia Dash of the Chicago Symphony and marimba virtuoso Michael Burritt. While in Chicago Ms. Nelson was principal percussion of the Civic Orchestra for three years. She then earned a Master of Music degree from Temple University, where her principal instructor was former Philadelphia Orchestra member Alan Abel.

Ms. Nelson and her husband, percussionist David Nelson, enjoy working as a percussion duo performing recitals and educational concerts for both children and adults. They are also members of the Bob Beach Trio performing blues, folk, and rock in local coffeehouses and regularly at Philadelphia's World Café Live. They are also proud parents of three daughters.

Ms. Nelson is a Zildjian Performing Artist and endorses their cymbals. She also endorses Grover Pro Percussion.

Originally from Toledo, OH, **WILLIAM WOZNIAK** began studying percussion at the age of 5 with members of the Toledo Symphony. In 1992, William entered the Curtis Institute of Music to study percussion with Michael Bookspan and Don Liuzzi of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He continued his studies with Alan Abel at Temple University.

Highlights of his performing career include performances at Carnegie Hall, European Festivals Tour with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Evian Music Festival in France, the Tanglewood Music Center, the 2005 MTV VMA's in Miami, FL with Shawn 'Diddy' Combs, and with Luciano Pavorati on his Farewell Tour.

He has held the position of Principal Timpani of the New World Symphony (under the Direction of Michael Tilson-Thomas), Principal Percussion with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra and has been a Guest Timpanist and Percussionist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Florida Philharmonic Orchestra and Naples Philharmonic. Whilst living in Europe, he performed with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden (London), the English Sinfonia, and the RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland. Currently, he is the Principal Timpanist of the Delaware and Reading Symphonies, and performs regularly as an extra with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Composer MARC MELLITS is one of the leading American composers of his generation, enjoying hundreds of performances throughout the world every year, making him one of the most performed living composers in the United States. From Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, to prestigious music festivals in Europe and the US, Mellits' music is a constant mainstay on programs throughout the world. His unique musical style is an eclectic combination of driving rhythms, soaring lyricism, and colorful orchestrations that all combine to communicate directly with the listener. Mellits' music is often described as being visceral, making a deep connection with the audience. "This was music as sensual as it was intelligent; I saw audience members swaying, nodding, making little motions with their hands" (New York Press). He started composing very early, and was writing piano music long before he started formal piano lessons at age 6. He went on to study at the Eastman School of Music, Yale School of Music, Cornell and Tanglewood. Mellits often is a miniaturist, University, composing works that are comprised of short, contrasting movements or sections. His music is eclectic, all-encompassing, colorful, and always has a sense of forward motion.

Mellits' music has been played by major ensembles across the globe and he has been commissioned by groups such as the Kronos Quartet, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw

Orchestra (Holland), Duo Assad, Bang On A Can All-Stars, Eliot Fisk, Canadian Brass, Nexus Percussion, Debussy Quartet, Third Percussion, Real Quiet, New Music Four-In-Correspondence (National Symphony Orchestra), Musique En Roue Libre (France), Fiarì Ensemble (Italy), Percussions Claviers de Lyon (France), Talujon, the Society for New Music, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, and the Albany Symphony's Dog's Of Desire. Additionally, Mellits' music has been performed, toured, and/or recorded by members of the Detroit Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Minneapolis Symphony, Brooklyn Philharmonic, eighth blackbird, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, New Millennium Ensemble, Da Capo Chamber Players, and the American Modern Ensemble, among many others.

On film, Mellits has composed numerous scores, including the PBS mini-series "Beyond The Light Switch" which won Dupont-Columbia award. the most prestigious documentaries. Mellits also directs and plays keyboards in his own unique ensemble, the Mellits Consort. He was awarded the prestigious 2004 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award. CD, there are over 50 recorded works of Mellits' music that can be Box, Endeavour Classics, Black CRI/Emergency Music, Santa Fe New Music, Innova, & Dacia Music. Marc Mellits is an Associate Professor of music at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He lives in Chicago with his wife and two daughters, and spends significant time in Romania.

**.** 

The Boyer College of Music and Dance is part of the Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, home to a thriving arts community located near the city's celebrated cultural institutions. The Boyer College offers BM (performance; education; therapy; jazz), MM, diploma, and DMA degrees in percussion.

Temple's percussion program, under the direction of Phillip O'Banion, provides students performing opportunities in symphony orchestra, percussion ensemble, wind symphony, concert bands, contemporary and new music chamber ensembles, marching band, big bands, jazz combos, and Latin music ensembles. Students are immersed in an academic environment that is both challenging and

rewarding. A diverse, flexible curriculum compliments private instruction and ensemble coaching by faculty who are actively performing professionals of the highest artistic caliber.

All of the percussion faculty maintain notable reputations internationally. Adjunct professors include Christopher Deviney, Angela Zator-Nelson, William Wozniak, Rolando Morales-Matos, Tony Miceli, Steve Fidyk, Dan Monaghan and Justin Faulkner. The M.M. program in orchestral percussion, established by the late Alan Abel and now coordinated by Christopher Deviney (principal percussionist of the Philadelphia Orchestra) has a distinguished history with over 70 graduates performing in full-time symphony orchestras across the globe.

Both B.M. and M.M. alumni of Temple's percussion program hold professional playing appointments and teaching positions at secondary schools, universities, and conservatories. Recent graduates have secured full-time positions with symphony orchestras, service bands, clinical positions (music therapy), toured with notable jazz groups, served as community teaching artists, or continued study at respected peer graduate institutions. They've also been winners of the Modern Snare Drum Competition and the TROMP international percussion competition (Netherlands), and performed with groups such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, and Shanghai Philharmonic.

The College frequently hosts visiting percussion artists and lecturers. Recent guests have included Russell Hartenberger, Gordon Stout, Michael Burritt, Colin Currie, Gwen Dease, NEXUS, Douglas Howard, Don Liuzzi, Bob Becker, She-e Wu, Dr. Aiyun Huang, Ray Dillard, Shannon Wood, Eriko Daimo, Ryan Dilisi, David Friedman, Fernando Meza, Ivan Trevino, Frank Epstein, Leigh Howard Stevens, Brian DelSignore, Joseph Petrasek, Thomas Sherwood, Dr. John Lane, Pablo Rieppi, Timothy Adams Jr., Michael Rosen, MOBIUS Percussion, Square Peg/Round Hole, Warren Wolf, John Piper, Ignacio Berroa, Victor Provost, Clarence Penn, and Jeff Hamilton.

#### Boyer College of Music and Dance

The Boyer College of Music and Dance is part of the Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts at Temple University. Students at the Boyer College have the unique opportunity to interact with leading composers, conductors, educators, performers and choreographers while experiencing a challenging and diverse academic curriculum. The Boyer faculty is recognized globally as leaders in their respective fields. Boyer alumni are ambassadors of artistic leadership and perform with major orchestras, opera and dance companies, teach at schools and colleges and work as professional music therapists, choreographers and composers.

boyer.temple.edu

#### The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts consists of the Boyer College of Music and Dance, School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater and the Temple Performing Arts Center. Boyer is home to the three-time Grammy nominated Temple University Symphony Orchestra, award-winning Jazz Program and research and scholarly advancements in music therapy, music theory, history, education, conducting, keyboard, voice and dance. The College also manages its own record label, BCM&D Records, which has released more than thirty recordings. The School of Theater, Film and Media Arts engages gifted students with nationally and internationally recognized faculty scholars and professionals. A hallmark of the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts is the Los Angeles Study Away program, housed at historic Raleigh Studios. The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater engages visiting performers, guest artists, set designers, playwrights and other Broadway professionals. The Temple Performing Arts Center (TPAC), a historic landmark on campus, is home to a state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium and 200 seat chapel. More than 300 concerts, lectures and performances take place at TPAC each year.

arts.temple.edu

#### Temple University

Since 1884 when founder Reverend Russell Conwell began teaching students, Temple University has evolved into a comprehensive urban research and academic institution. Temple has a world-class reputation and an international presence with campuses in Philadelphia, Ambler and Harrisburg in Pennsylvania, in Tokyo, Rome and educational centers in Seoul, Beijing, London, Paris and Mumbai. Temple's seventeen schools and colleges, nine campuses, hundreds of degree programs and 35,000 students combine to create one of the nation's most comprehensive and diverse learning environment.

#### Temple University 2021-2022 Season Upcoming Events

#### Tuesday, October 26 at 2:30pm

Dance Studies Colloquium Series: Ketu H. Katrak, University of California, Irvine

Curating Crisis, Excess, Spillage: Live Art in South Africa

Presented on Zoom

#### Wednesday, October 27 at 7:30pm

Early Music Ensemble Rock Hall Auditorium

#### Thursday, October 28 at 4:30pm

Rite of Swing Jazz Café: The Kirsten Grace Group Kirsten Grace, vocals Scott Edmunds, piano Christian Hencek, bass Stephanie Phillips, drums Temple Performing Arts Center Lobby

#### Friday, October 29 at 1:00pm

Music Studies Colloquium Series: Heather Mease, "Sampling Media, Nostalgia, and the Texture of Decay"

Rock Hall Auditorium

### Friday, October 29 at 7:30pm Saturday October 30 at 7:30pm

Dance Alumni Showcase

Tickets: \$20 General Admission, \$15 students/senior citizens, \$10 Temple employees, \$5 Temple student with OWLcard. Available at boyer.temple.edu, 215.204.1122, in-person at the Temple Arts Box Office (Tomlinson Theater lobby, 1301 W. Norris St., Mon-Fri 12-6pm), or at the venue 45 minutes before each performance. Credit, debit and checks only. Cash not accepted.

Conwell Dance Theater

#### Saturday, October 30 at 7:30pm

conTemplum: Insomnia Sounds Rock Hall Auditorium