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Third Coast Percussion

Sean Connors Robert Dillon Peter Martin David Skidmore

PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR
"Digital TCP: Philip Glass, Jlin, Blood Orange and Peter Martin"
March 28, 2020
7:00pm central/8:00pm eastern time
"doors open" at 6:30pm/7:30pm

Streaming Live from TCP's studio in Chicago

Presented by 92nd Street Y, University of Chicago Presents, and
Chamber Music Society of Detroit

PROGRAM ORDER

BEND (2016)

Peter Martin (b. 1980)

Perfectly Voiceless (2018)

Devonté Hynes (b. 1985)

"Duality" from *Perspective* (2020)

Jlin (b. 1987)

Perpetulum (2018)

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

Performing artists everywhere are experiencing cancellations of their engagements for months to come. Our friends at New Music USA have set up a Solidarity Fund for musicians with whose livelihoods are in jeopardy.

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PROGRAM NOTES



Photo: Saverio Truglia

Renowned as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator, Third Coast Percussion's **Peter Martin** was Assistant Professor and Director of Percussion Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond before returning to Chicago in 2013 to pursue TCP full time. Peter has composed music for many of the group's educational and concert projects in recent years.

His quartet **BEND** draws inspiration from the player piano compositions of Bruce Goff, a wonderfully unconventional architect and amateur composer. Many of Goff's piano rolls were highly stylized geometric designs perforated into the scrolls, resulting in music that created very clear sonic "shapes." Whereas these shapes would create the pitch and rhythm in a player piano performance, **BEND** translates these shapes into volume, tone, and gesture. The composer's experience with the piano rolls - through a blurry, decades-old video - inspired an unconventional sound palette created with alternative techniques on 2 marimbas.

Duration: 8 minutes

Devonté Hynes is a British singer, songwriter, composer, producer, and author, now residing in New York City. He has released five studio albums under the name "Blood Orange," and previously released two albums as "Lightspeed Champion." He has produced for artists such as Solange Knowles, Sky Ferreira, and Carly Rae Jepsen, and has made his own solo appearances on the Pitchfork and Coachella Music Festivals. Hynes plays cello and piano, and recently performed some of Philip Glass's etudes as part of an all-star lineup for Glass concerts at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. Hynes also has a background in dance and has worked with ballet dancer Maria Kochetkova and choreographer Emma Portner in his own music videos.



Photo: Matthew Leifheit

Hynes composed the music for an entire evening-length program featuring Third Coast Percussion and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, with new choreography created by Emma Portner, Jon Boogz, and Lil Buck, which premiered in Chicago in September 2018. To create this 75-minute opus, Hynes composed music with synthesized and sampled sounds, which he then sent to Third Coast Percussion. TCP experimented with instruments to create a live performance version of the music, which they then recorded and sent back to Hynes for feedback, then eventually to the choreographers to create the dance. Tonight's program features a section of this program, **Perfectly Voiceless**, that served as a musical interlude between choreographed pieces.

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Third Coast Percussion's album "Fields," which includes all of the music composed by Hynes as part of the project with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago was released on Cedille Records in October 2019.

This work was commissioned by the Charles and Joan Gross Family Foundation. The project was supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Third Coast Percussion New Works Fund, and the Elizabeth F Cheney Foundation.

Duration: 11 minutes



photo by Ebru Yildiz

Jlin (Jerrilynn Patton) is a producer based in Gary, Indiana. Her unique and evolving electronic sound is rooted in Chicago's iconic footwork style, with additional influences ranging from Nina Simone to Igor Stravinsky. Jlin's work assembles evocative and vivid sounds into a musical style that she describes as "clean, precise, and unpredictable." Her debut album "Dark Energy" was released to critical acclaim in 2015, and her second album "Black Origami" in 2017 to rave reviews from NPR Music and Pitchfork. She composed a work for Kronos Quartet's "50 for the Future" project, and music

for choreographer Wayne McGregor's "Autobiography," and has recently performed at the Big Ears Festival, Whitney Museum of Art, and Toledo Museum of Art, among others.

Her seven-movement work *Perspective* was written for Third Coast Percussion through a highly collaborative process modeled after TCP's project with Devonté Hynes in 2018. Jlin visited TCP at their studio in Chicago multiple times to discuss their musical inspirations and new possibilities, and to explore and sample instruments from TCP's vast collection of percussion sounds. She then created the first version of each of the work's seven movements in FL Studio (a Digital Audio Workstation) using these samples and other sounds from her own library.

The members of Third Coast Percussion then set about determining how to realize these pieces in live performance. Jlin provided the ensemble recordings of the full tracks as well as the stems (individual recorded parts) that make up the track. Diving into each of the tracks, the percussionists found a beautiful complexity—dozens and dozens of stems in each track, patterns that never seem to repeat when one would expect them to, and outrageous sounds that are hard to imagine recreating acoustically. Even typical percussion sounds like snare drum, hi-hat, or kick drum exist in multiple variations, subtle timbral shades in counterpoint or composite sounds.

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In pursuit of the broad expressive range of Jlin's original tracks, TCP's live version of this piece incorporates—in addition to standard instruments like marimba and vibraphone—mixing bowls filled with water, bird calls, a variety of gongs and tambourines, Mbira, and a metal spring coil, as well as many variations of drum set-like sounds: instruments that are like a hi-hat but not a hi-hat, or serve the function of a snare drum but are not a snare drum. The live performance also incorporates electronic delay, and electronic playback of some of Jlin's original stems.

Jlin named her piece *Perspective* as a reference to this unique collaborative process, that this work would exist in two forms, the same music as interpreted through different artists and their modes of expression.

In addition to concert performances, Third Coast Percussion will feature the full 7-movement *Perspective* in its Carnegie Hall debut in January 2021, as part of a collaboration with Movement Art Is, featuring new movement choreographed by MAI founders Lil Buck and Jon Boogz, and new music by Tyondai Braxton in addition to Jlin's work and TCP's arrangements of music by Philip Glass.

Perspective by Jlin was commissioned for Third Coast Percussion by the Boulanger Initiative, Carnegie Hall, the Lester & Hope Abelson Fund for the Performing Arts at the Chicago Community Foundation, the DEW Foundation, and Third Coast Percussion's New Works Fund.

"Duality" duration: 6 minutes



Photo: Raymond Meier

Through his operas, his symphonies, his compositions for his own ensemble, and his wide-ranging collaborations with artists ranging from Twyla Tharp to Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen to David Bowie, **Philip Glass** has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his times.

Although percussion instruments have played an important role in much of Philip Glass's music, and a number of his works have been arranged for percussion by other musicians, Glass had never composed a work for percussion ensemble until Third Coast Percussion commissioned *Perpetuum*. Glass, who was 81 years old when he composed this work, harkened back to childhood memories of his first experience with percussion instruments. Though Glass's primary musical instrument was the flute, he had the opportunity to participate in a percussion class while a student at the Preparatory Division of the Peabody Conservatory in his hometown of Baltimore. *Perpetuum* blends an almost child-like exploration of the sounds of percussion with Glass's signature musical voice.

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The work is in three sections, with a cadenza between the second and third section. Glass proposes some general concepts and instruments for the cadenza, but leaves it to the performers to compose this segment of the music themselves.

Perpetuum by Philip Glass was commissioned for Third Coast Percussion with lead support from the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation. The work was co-commissioned by Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting for Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Bravo! Vail Music Festival, San Francisco Performances, Town Hall Seattle, Performance Santa Fe, the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, and the Third Coast Percussion New Works Fund, with additional support from Friedrich Burian, Bruce Oltman, MiTO Settembre Musica, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's Liquid Music Series, and the Percussive Arts Society.

Duration: 22 minutes

BIO



Photo: Saverio Truglia

Third Coast Percussion is a Grammy Award-winning Chicago-based percussion quartet. For fifteen years, the ensemble has created exciting and unexpected performances that

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constantly redefine the classical music experience. The ensemble has been praised for “commandingly elegant” (New York Times) performances, the “rare power” (Washington Post) of their recordings, and “an inspirational sense of fun and curiosity” (Minnesota Star-Tribune). Third Coast Percussion maintains a busy tour schedule, with past performances in 34 of the 50 states plus international tour dates in Colombia, the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Taiwan, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, and Poland.

A direct connection with the audience is at the core of all of Third Coast Percussion’s work, whether the musicians are speaking from the stage about a new piece of music, inviting the audience to play along in a concert or educational performance, or inviting their fans around the world to create new music using one of their free mobile apps. The four members of Third Coast are also accomplished teachers, and make active participation by all students the corner stone of all their educational offerings.

The quartet’s curiosity and eclectic taste have led to a series of unlikely collaborations that have produced exciting new art. The ensemble has worked with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, dancers at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and musicians from traditions ranging from the mbira music of Zimbabwe’s Shona people, to indie rockers, to some of the world’s leading concert musicians. Third Coast Percussion served as ensemble-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center from 2013-2018.

A commission for a new work from composer Augusta Read Thomas in 2012 led to the realization that commissioning new musical works can be—and should be—as collaborative as any other artistic partnership. Through extensive workshopping and close contact with composers, Third Coast Percussion has commissioned and premiered new works by Philip Glass, Jlin, Tyondai Braxton, Augusta Read Thomas, Devonté Hynes, Georg Friedrich Haas, Donnacha Dennehy, Glenn Kotche, Christopher Cerrone, David T. Little and today’s leading up-and-coming composers through their Emerging Composers Partnership Program. TCP’s commissioned works have become part of the ensemble’s core repertoire and seen hundreds of performances across four continents.

Third Coast Percussion’s recordings include six full-length albums, three EPs, and a number of appearances on other releases. The quartet has put its stamp on iconic percussion works by John Cage and Steve Reich, and Third Coast has also created first recordings of commissioned works by Philip Glass, Augusta Read Thomas, Devonté Hynes, Gavin Bryars, Donnacha Dennehy, David T. Little, Ted Hearne, and more, in addition to recordings of the ensemble’s own compositions. In 2017 the ensemble won the Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance for their recording of Steve Reich’s works for percussion. They were nominated again in 2020 for their album “Perpetulum,” which features music written for TCP by Philip Glass, Gavin Bryars, and members of the ensemble.

Third Coast Percussion has always maintained strong ties to the vibrant artistic community in their hometown of Chicago. They have collaborated with Chicago institutions such as Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, the Chicago Children’s Choir, the Civic Orchestra of

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Chicago, and the Adler Planetarium, performed at the grand opening of Maggie Daley Children's Park, conducted residencies at the University of Chicago and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, created multi-year collaborative projects with Chicago-based composers Augusta Read Thomas, Glenn Kotche, and chamber ensemble Eighth Blackbird, and taught tens of thousands of students through partnerships with the People's Music School, the Chicago Park District, Rush Hour Concerts, Urban Gateways, and others.

The four members of Third Coast Percussion (Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore) met while studying percussion music at Northwestern University with Michael Burritt and James Ross. Members of Third Coast also hold degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Rutgers University, the New England Conservatory, and the Yale School of Music. Stay up-to-date and go behind-the-scenes by following Third Coast on Twitter (@ThirdCoastPerc), Facebook (@Third Coast Percussion), and Instagram (@ThirdCoastPercussion).

*Third Coast Percussion is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.