



# THIRD:COAST PERCUSSION

FEBRUARY 10



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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2020 • 7 PM  
GUNTER THEATRE

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Sean Connors

Robert Dillon

Peter Martin

David Skidmore

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## *“Perpetulum”*

*Percussion Quartet*, mvt 1 (2019)

*BEND* (2016)

*Resounding Earth*, mvt 2: “Prayer” (2012)

*Death Wish* (2017)

*Perfectly Voiceless* (2018)

Danny Elfman (b. 1953)

Peter Martin (b. 1980)

Augusta Read Thomas (b. 1964)

Gemma Peacocke (b. 1984)

Devonté Hynes (b. 1985)

## *Intermission*

*Aphasia* (2010)

*Ordering-instincts* (2014)

*Perpetulum* (2018)

*Torched and Wrecked* (2016)

Mark Applebaum (b. 1967)

Robert Dillon (b. 1980)

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

David Skidmore (b. 1982)

## **ABOUT THIRD COAST PERCUSSION**

Third Coast Percussion is a Grammy® Award-winning Chicago-based percussion quartet. For 15 years, the ensemble has created exciting and unexpected performances that constantly redefine the classical music experience. The ensemble has been praised for “commandingly elegant” (*The New York Times*) performances, the “rare power” (*The 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 cornerstone 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 workshoping 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.

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 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.**

*Program content provided by Third Coast Percussion.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Percussion Quartet by Danny Elfman**

**Duration: 5 minutes**

For over 30 years, four-time Oscar® nominee **Danny Elfman** has established himself as one of the most versatile and accomplished film composers in the industry. Beginning with his first score on Tim Burton's *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, Elfman has scored over 100 films, including: *Milk*, *Good Will Hunting*, *Big Fish*, *Men in Black*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Batman*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *Justice League*, and *The Grinch*, as well as writing the iconic theme music for the television series *The Simpsons* and *Desperate Housewives*.



Before beginning his film scoring career, Elfman played in the Gamelan at Cal Arts (though he was never officially enrolled as a student), made a self-guided tour across Africa absorbing a diversity of musical traditions, worked with his brother Richard in an experimental musical theater group in France, and helped found the band Oingo Boingo. In recent years, Elfman has expanded his composition projects into the concert music world. His *Serenada Schizophrana*, commissioned by the American Composer's Orchestra, premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2005, and *Rabbit and Rogue*, for the American Ballet Theater choreographed by Twyla Tharp, was performed at The Metropolitan Opera house in 2008.

Elfman's **Percussion Quartet** was written for Third Coast Percussion, to premiere at Philip Glass's "Days and Nights" Festival in Big Sur, California, in October 2019. In composing his first percussion piece for the concert hall, Elfman drew on the vast collection of instruments he has amassed in his studio over the years, as well as recorded samples of many of Third Coast's unique instruments, including tuned metal flat bar and wooden slats. Each of the *Percussion Quartet's* four movements maintains a steady energy while shifting rapidly between sounds, styles, and tempos, and Elfman's distinct voice is clearly recognizable in a slightly warped harmonic language, and moments of playfulness, mystery, and drama.



### **BEND by Peter Martin**

**Duration: 8 minutes**

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. Martin 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 two marimbas.

### **Resounding Earth by Augusta Read Thomas**

**Duration: 9 minutes**

Grammy® Award winner **Augusta Read Thomas** was Mead Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony from 1997-2006. She is the 16th ever University Professor (of five current University Professors) at The University of Chicago, and she was named one of the *Chicago Tribune’s* “Chicagoans of the Year” in 2016.



*Resounding Earth* is scored for four percussionists playing bells (and bell-like instruments) from a wide variety of cultures and historical periods. The piece was conceived as a cultural statement celebrating interdependence and commonality across all cultures; and as a musical statement celebrating the extraordinary beauty and diversity of expression inherent in bell sounds.

Bells can be used to celebrate grand occasions, hold sacrificial rites, keep a record of events, give the correct time, celebrate births and weddings, mark funerals, caution a community, enhance any number of religious ceremonies, and are even hung around the necks of animals.

*Resounding Earth* was commissioned by The University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, with additional funding from The Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, Department of Music, and the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Chamber Music America Endowment Fund.



### **Death Wish by Gemma Peacocke**

**Duration: 10 minutes**

**Gemma Peacocke** is a composer from New Zealand who currently resides in Princeton, NJ. Peacocke’s music works in both acoustic and electronic sound worlds, and she is interested in how music can amplify the voices of under-heard groups of people. She is a co-founder of Kinds of Kings, a collective of US-based composers focused on producing immersive and inclusive work.

About her piece *Death Wish*, Peacocke writes:

“I wrote *Death Wish* after watching a short film featuring New Zealand survivors of sexual assault. One of the survivors, Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan, spoke about the out-of-control spiraling of her life for many years and how she developed what she called a

'death wish.' In the piece I thought about the spooling and unspooling of energy and how we are all bound and driven by forces both within and beyond ourselves.

With the greatest of respect for Hinewirangi Kohu-Morgan who has used her life to create art and music and to help survivors of abuse and those who have perpetrated abuse.

"I'ōrea te tuātara ka patu ki waho. Aroha nui."

### **Perfectly Voiceless by Devonté Hynes**

**Duration: 11 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 at the Pitchfork and Coachella Music Festivals. Hynes plays cello and piano, and recently performed some of Philip Glass's études 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.



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. The Peace Center program features a section of this program, **Perfectly Voiceless**, that served as a musical interlude between choreographed pieces.

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.

### **Aphasia by Mark Applebaum**

**Duration: 9 minutes**

**Mark Applebaum** is the Edith & Leland Smith Professor of Composition at Stanford University. Always an "outside the box" thinker, his compositions include a work for three conductors and no players, a concerto for florist with symphony orchestra, and music notated on the face of a wristwatch. His TED Talk, "The Mad Scientist of Music,"



has been seen by more than three million viewers. Applebaum is also an accomplished jazz pianist and builds electroacoustic sound-sculptures out of junk, hardware, and found objects. At Stanford, Applebaum is the founding director of [sic]—the Stanford Improvisation Collective.

**Aphasia** is a work for solo vocalist, notable as the composer says, “for its absence of live singing.” Instead, this work (which has gained great popularity among percussionists) consists of a recording of a number of transformed voice samples from baritone

Nicholas Isherwood and a series of specifically-prescribed physical gestures to be performed live. These gestures include familiar everyday motions such as turning a key, eating a sandwich, or buckling a seatbelt, and are synchronized with the samples, but unrelated in meaning.

### **Ordering-instincts by Robert Dillon**

**Duration: 8 minutes**

Third Coast Percussion member **Robert Dillon** has enjoyed a career as an orchestral, solo, and chamber musician, as well as an educator for all ages, and since college, has pursued music composition as an additional expressive avenue.



**Ordering-instincts** draws a big sound from a very compact setup of instruments. The four percussionists share eight wooden planks, an octave of loose crotales and two tom-toms, from which they create a variety of different sonic colors in tightly interwoven rhythms. All musical content arises from the composite of all the players together; no one player’s part forms a complete voice by itself.

*Ordering-instincts* is dedicated to the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center at the University of Notre Dame, on the occasion of its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



### **Perpetuum by Philip Glass**

**Duration: 22 minutes**

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 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.

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.

### ***Torched and Wrecked* by David Skidmore**

**Duration: 5 minutes**

The compositions of Third Coast Percussion member **David Skidmore** are performed regularly in concert halls and universities across the country. In 2011, his multi-movement work *Common Patterns in Uncommon Time* was commissioned by Frank Lloyd Wright scholar Sidney K. Robinson to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Taliesin, home of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture. In 2007 his piece *Unknown Kind* was premiered at Carnegie Hall. He has also received commissions from the Rush Hour Concert Series in Chicago, and a number of leading percussion soloists and pedagogues.



***Torched and Wrecked*** comes from Skidmore's cycle of works entitled "Aliens with Extraordinary Abilities," all of which explore the idea that the same piece of music can move at several different speeds at the same time. The movements of this cycle take their cryptic names from memorable Third Coast Percussion touring experiences. An electronic audio track—Skidmore's most intensive work with electronic composition to date—expands and reinforces the live percussion. Video artist Xuan was commissioned to create accompanying video for this and other movements in the cycle.