

Percussion Ensemble

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

PLU Percussion Ensemble

Miho Takekawa, *director*

Ben Coats • Ben Hegge • Brandon Liukkonen • Cadence Philbeck • Eleanor Sherry
Evan Nakanishi • Garrett Saez • Kyle Gough • Jenea Staples • Makayla Wu-Yin Lu
Ronin Schoolcraft • Thomas Tafoya • Jayden White • Janelle Chin • Courtney Stark

Program Notes

Mas Fuerte, written by Stephen Rush for percussion sextet, is a study piece in non-pitched loudness, and reflects a strong Afro-Caribbean influence, specifically influences of Congolese dance music and the Costa Rican version of the Calypso.

– program notes by composer, Steven Rush

After almost two years without composing any original music for percussion, witnessing the grit and hard work from my students at Lamar University over the course of the eventful 2020-2021 year inspired me to write this short but deeply meaningful piece for mallet sextet, *Ephemera*. Of note, my admiration of Murcof and Vanessa Wagner's 2016 album *Statea* is evidenced throughout (in particular, their adaptation of Philip Glass's *Metamorphosis 2*).

– program notes by composer, Francisco Perez

Indonesian gamelan may be performed independently, i.e., to be listened for its own sake. But gamelan is also an essential accompaniment for theatrical performances, such as dance, drama and shadow wayang puppet play. Whether accompanying theatrical forms or not, gamelan is performed in several different contexts, especially in rite-of-passage events and communal festivals. As history and technology advance, other contexts are created, including gamelan performance on radio and television stations. From little historical evidence we could find, it is safe to say that smaller ensembles, whether they accompanied singing or not, characterized music ensembles during the early period of Javanese history. In the 16th to 17th century, the ensemble began to develop into a larger size. This was achieved by synchronizing loud and soft-sounding instruments, and vocal repertoire into an integrated musical concept. The growth into the creation of larger ensembles had resulted in the creation of a more expansive repertoire in today's gamelan practice.

About the Composer

Drawing on her multi-cultural background, Alice Gomez is rapidly gaining international acclaim for her Latino and Mexican indigenous influenced compositions. She grew up in San Antonio, Texas, a city rich in cultural diversity, playing the drums in her father's Latino dance band. Alice spent three years, from 1993-1996, serving as Composer-in-Residence, through Meet the Composer, Inc., with the San Antonio Symphony – a role that united the symphony with the largely Hispanic community of San Antonio. During her tenure, Ms. Gomez created 21 new works. Since 1990, she has also worked as an arranger of Hispanic and popular music for the San Antonio Symphony. She has arranged music for its Pops series featuring Tejano artists Emilio Navaira, Patsy Torres, and Esmeralda. The television broadcast of the 1994 Pura Vida Hispanic Music Awards opened with Ms. Gomez' *La Charanga Sinfónica*, performed by the San Antonio Symphony. The Symphony also performed Ms. Gomez' musical arrangement of the Tejano Song of the Year, *La Charanga*, by Fandango, U.S.A. Alice is also an Instructor of Music at San Antonio College, where she teaches basic composition, percussion, world music, and jazz ensemble. As a percussionist, she performs professionally with a variety of musical groups including the San Antonio Early Music Ensemble and the San Quilmas Consort, as an extra percussionist with the San Antonio Symphony, and as a co-founder of the Latin folk performing/recording group Marimba Quest. In addition to performing, she has lectured at several schools and universities throughout Texas. She has also served in an advisory capacity on panels for The National Endowment for the Arts and Meet the Composer, Inc.

Various political and social struggles have influenced Gomez' compositions. In the fall of 1993, Alice was awarded an individual artist's grant from the city of San Antonio's Department of Cultural Arts and Affairs for her *Mass for Justice and Peace*. This composition is a musical and spiritual plea for universal peace and understanding, and was inspired by the devastation of the starvation in Somalia. Ms. Gomez' chamber work for viola, percussion, and piano, *Number 9*,

depicts the Bosnian struggle. ...*and justice for all* was commissioned by the City of San Antonio for the 1995 Diez y Seis celebration, and premiered by the San Antonio Symphony at the Avenida Guadalupe.

About the Director

Miho Takekawa is originally from Tokyo, Japan. She teaches at Pacific Lutheran University, where she is head of the percussion studio and directs the school's Percussion Ensemble and Steel Band. Previously, she was an interim professor of percussion at the University of Washington School of Music from 2011 to 2012. Miho began piano at age three and took up percussion at age thirteen, ultimately graduating from Tokyo's prestigious Kunitachi School of Music. She earned both her masters and doctoral degrees in percussion performance from the University of Washington School of Music in Seattle, where she was awarded the coveted Boeing Scholarship, among other honors. Takekawa is a sought-after performer in many styles of music including classical, steel pan, and West African drumming. She performs with Vashon Opera, Pan Duo, and many other groups. She is also a founding member of the Miho & Diego Duo (www.mihodiego.com). Significant awards include a Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship and grants from King County 4Culture. In addition to her own performance career, Miho directed the North Rainbow Steel Drum Group (Sapporo, Japan) and served as an arranger for the Hirosaki Rainbow Steel Pan Group. In 2023, the Miho & Diego Duo traveled to Namibia, Africa to teach marimba at Sunshine Private School and performed with the Ongama Drum Cafe Group. They have also received an invitation to perform with the Hirosaki University Tsugaru Shamisen Group, which is a concert supported by the Agency of Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan. Miho's other significant activities include serving as Vice President of the Washington Chapter of Percussive Arts Society, directing the PLU Alumni Steel Band, and working with the Folk & Traditional Arts Program of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Additionally, she is a contributing coauthor of *A Composer's Insight: Thoughts, Analysis and Commentary on Contemporary Masterpieces for Wind Band* published by Meredith Music. Miho has worked to foster cultural exchange between Japanese and American youth music groups. Many of Miho's past activities can be found at www.tymusicexchange.com.