

POPG*

Philadelphia Percussion Project, Vol. II

**includes the members of The Philadelphia Orchestra percussion section*

Chris Deviney

Don Liuzzi

Angela Zator Nelson

Anthony Orlando

Rolando Morales-Matos

Scott Robinson

Karen Haringa

Pablo Batista

Adjia and Phillip, special guest percussionists

(on "Capture") from Drum and Dance Troupe of Ghana

Executive Producer: Don Liuzzi

Producer: Rodney Whittenberg

**"ZONES", "LITTLE RHUMBA", "SEOUL SPIRIT" were recorded at
Widener University, John Vanore: engineer**

**"CAPTURE" and "CONVERSATIONS (Pablo Meets Rolando)"
were recorded at Sigma Sound, Mike Tarsia: engineer**

**"PRAISE SONG ONE" was recorded at Melody Vision studio,
Rodney Whittenberg: engineer**

**"GAINSBOROUGH" was recorded at Fleischer Art Memorial,
Rodney Whittenberg: engineer**

Editing: John Vanore at Acoustical Concepts, Rodney Whittenberg at Melody Vision studio

Mixing: John Vanore at Acoustical Concepts, Rodney Whittenberg at Melody Vision studio

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ZONES

Seven World Premiere Recordings

including

Jennifer Higdon's Zones

POPG*

Philadelphia Percussion Project: Volume II

EQUILIBRIUM

Zones – Philadelphia Percussion Project, Vol. II, Featuring POPG*

In 1998, a Philadelphia Orchestra initiative began: to send chamber music into the schools of Philadelphia, for 3rd-6th graders, as a means of introducing and encouraging interest in the instruments of the orchestra. POPG* was born to take part in these outreach concerts in local Philly schools. Our regular repertoire included *Gainsborough*, *Little Rhumba*, various rags, and lively interactive presentations of rhythm, using elements of West African and Latin drumming.

The music in this volume is solely for percussion chamber ensembles. No one theme predominates in the repertoire choices, but it does reflect the concerts we gave in schools between 1998 and 2001. *Capture* was introduced at some of these later school concerts. As we enjoyed performing for the children, the idea was born to record as much as we could of this early repertoire. *Zones* was first performed as a quartet in 1991 for the Network for New Music. A Philadelphia Free Library sponsored concert in 2004 was the birth of the quintet version, and its power was a must to include on this recording project. "Powerful" is the description I would give to every work on this recording, and not just a reference to volume, but really in emotional expression. *Don Liuzzi, Executive Producer*



Catalina Ríos teaches Spanish to Pre-Kindergarten through 6th grade children at Abington Friends School outside Philadelphia. Multicultural, multi-racial, and cross-cultural approaches are a vital part of her teaching practice. She holds degrees from Wesleyan University and Middlebury College in Latin American Studies and Spanish language and culture. Catalina has led S.E.E.D seminars, served as Diversity Coordinator, as educational programs director at Taller Puertorriqueño,

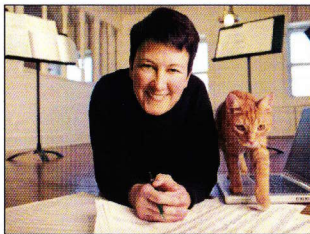
and as educational consultant for the "Latinos in Philadelphia" project of

the Historical Society of Philadelphia and the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies. She is a published poet and has offered numerous poetry residencies including those at Coopertown Elementary, Friends School Haverford, and Bushrod Library. Catalina was a recipient of a Harmony Grant from the Leeway Foundation for her "Rowhouse Chains" community poetry project.



Charlotte Blake Alston is a nationally acclaimed storyteller, narrator, instrumentalist and singer who performs in venues throughout North America and abroad. She is the host of *Sound All Around*, the Philadelphia Orchestra's Preschool concert series and has appeared as host or narrator on the orchestra's school and family concerts since 1991. She has been a featured host, storyteller and narrator on the Carnegie Hall Family and School Concert series' since 1995. She has made multiple appearances in such venues as the Smithsonian Institution, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the

NationalStorytelling Festival and the National Festival of Black Storytelling. Her international appearances include performances or festival appearances in Accra, Ghana, Cape Town, South Africa, Beijing, China, Miyazaki, Japan, Basel, Switzerland and the Cape Clear Island Storytelling Festival in Ireland. She has worked with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, Singing City Choir and has appeared as a narrator for several orchestras around the country. Her narrative voice can be heard on documentaries aired on PBS and on two Fels Planetarium shows. Ms. Alston has performed at both Presidential and Gubernatorial Inaugural activities. More recently she has been a commissioned librettist, creating texts for orchestral and choral works. She has received numerous honors and awards including a *Pew Fellowship in the Arts*, the Commonwealth of PA. *Artist of the Year Award*, the National Storytelling Network's *Circle of Excellence Award* and the *Zora Neale Hurston Award*, the highest award conferred by the National Association of Black Storytellers.



Jennifer Higdon (b. Brooklyn, NY, December 31, 1962), Pulitzer Prize and Grammy winner, is one of the most performed living American composers working today. She has also been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Koussevitzky Fellowship, a Pew Fellowship, and two awards from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Commissions have come from a wide range of performers: from the

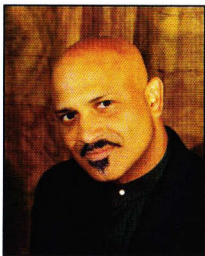
Philadelphia Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra, to The President's Own Marine Band; from the Tokyo String Quartet to the new music ensemble, eighth blackbird, as well as individual artists such as singer Thomas Hampson, violinist Hilary Hahn and pianist, Yuja Wang. Her first opera on Charles Frazier's book, "Cold Mountain", was commissioned by Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia and Minnesota Opera. She makes her living from commissions and serves as composer-in-residence with various orchestras throughout the country. Her works are recorded on over 50 CDs. She holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. For more info, visit www.jenniferhigdon.com



Tom Gauger was born in Wheaton, Illinois and went to the University of Illinois where he studied percussion with Paul Price and Jack McKenzie and music composition with Kenneth Gaburo. He also learned to play and record the Bamboo Marimba with Harry Parch, an experimental contemporary composer who created his own instruments using a 43 tone octave. While still in school he attended the Tanglewood Music Center summer program and afterwards was asked to be the Percussionist at a music festival in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

He then played four years in the Oklahoma City Symphony while teaching at Oklahoma University and Oklahoma City University. He also played drum set in various other venues including nightclubs, rodeos, and a tour with singer Ray Eberle.

He joined the Boston Symphony in 1963 and played with many conductors from Pierre Monteux, and Charles Munch to Leonard Bernstein, and Seiji Ozawa. Boston Pops conductors included Arthur Fiedler, John Williams, Keith Lockhart and more. He has made somewhere over 300 recordings and television shows with both Symphony and Pops and has recorded background music for several movies including the Temple of Doom, Schindler's list, Saving Private Ryan and Mystic River. From 1965 until 1997 he was also on the faculty at Boston University and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. He retired in 2005 to spend time with his family and write more music.



Rolando Morales-Matos, a multi-faceted percussionist and composer, is a well sought after Latin, Jazz, and Classical musician. He is a band leader/vibraphonist/composer of Latin Jazz group "Rolando Morales-Matos & Forward". He has toured worldwide performing at the major jazz festivals as a percussionist of Ron Carter Foursight Quartet, as well as appearing with artists such as Paquito D'Rivera, Dave Samuels, Dave Valentine, Willie Colon, to name a few. He is the Percussionist and Assistant Conductor of the Broadway

musical *The Lion King* in New York City, and frequently plays with The Philadelphia Orchestra as an extra percussionist. He was the recipient of the 2006 Drum Magazine's World Beat Percussionist of the Year Award. In 2008, he released his solo album "From The Earth" featuring the Hang Drum and, in 2013, his Latin Jazz group's debut album "Forward". His published works include the textbook "Techniques and Basic Patterns for Congas, Timbales, and Bongos" and over 30 compositions for percussion ensembles, big bands and latin jazz ensembles.

Rolando Morales-Matos graduated from Temple University, Duquesne University and Carnegie Mellon University. He is a faculty member at The Curtis Institute of Music and Temple University, The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music and New Jersey City University.

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ZONES (1991, 2004 quintet revision) is about the various reactions people have to war... more specifically, the Vietnam War. This work deals with war and the reactions that soldiers in the field (grunts) have when going into battle. I chose to focus on these emotions because of their likely intensity – especially since drums have historically played such an important roll in war throughout time. The use of an electronic music part is symbolic of the Vietnam conflict – it is representative of the modern technology that was very much a part of that war. **ZONES** refers to war zones, as well as those various reactions of the mind to war. This work was originally composed for Network for New Music as a quartet; this quintet version is inspired by and dedicated to Don Liuzzi.

- Jennifer Higdon

CAPTURE (2000) The musical depiction of the African slave trade has been vividly composed in other works, most notably Hannibal's *African Portraits* (1998) for full orchestra, chorus, and vocal soloist. Morales-Matos' **CAPTURE** is a percussion ensemble suite that is a kind of literal bird's eye "reporter's" view of the horrendous African slave trade in its violent beginnings, with a final movement cry for freedom. At times in the 2nd movement it is as if one is listening to a radio report of the capturing of villagers into slavery. Rolando Morales-Matos' own description of the work is as follows:

"**CAPTURE** is inspired by the many stories about our ancestors. **CAPTURE** is a three movement work that tells the story of how a happy little village in west Africa was disturbed by the forces of conquistadors, taking everything from them and selling the village people to slavery in a new land. After many years of hostility, the new-generation villagers rebel and fight for their freedom. This is musically depicted in three movements listed here and on the track titles.

Movement I: The Village

Movement II: Daily Routine and The Capture

Movement III: The Liberation"....Rolando Morales-Matos

The accompanying narrative poem is by Catalina Rios, commissioned for this recording project for "CAPTURE":

I remember our names our stories....our rhythms....our homeland ...before chains.

*Each morning: affirmation. Each new day: beauty.
Our names are glory. Freedom is our daily breath.
Village unbroken. Morning sun, familiar friend, sisters, brothers.
Your smiles delight me.
We greet one another. Our children play.
All have a place here, a circle of celebration.*

*This daily order, our way of life, is both ordinary and divine.
Trees and beasts eternal. We are whole. We are one.
And freedom is our daily breath.*

*There is work to be done now, and our hands tend,
they plant, hunt, harvest.
We prepare. Each one tends, gathers, labors, for the good of all.
Body, spirit. This is our strength.
We are fed....vital....rich....vibrant....home.*

*Night arrives, and it is time to gather and rest, tending to the fire.
We are fed. But. In the distance, plans of surprise, plans of thieves,
those who force a wicked will,
those who approach, sneaking in through grasslands,
thick with tenderness.*

*How suddenly all is changed
heart of my village
chains scratch the earth
and curses of violence and greed fill the night air.*

*We are shaken. We are forced. Our peace interrupted.
We are broken, the circle is broken.
We mourn our home lost to greed.*

*Still, I remember our names, our stories, our rhythms
our homeland before chains.
These chains cannot harness our beauty.
Deep in my bones our beauty
Deep in memory our songs
Deep in my people our freedom.*

*Spirit survives in the memory of our names
and freedom is our daily breath. ["Abolition!"]*

PRAISE SONG ONE (1996)

Mandinka sung words – translation: "Praise to the Creator of the Sun, Moon, and Stars"

In some West African oral traditions, a praise song will precede the telling or singing of stories. *Praise Song One* is my personal offering in keeping with this tradition.

Spoken poem for *Praise Song One* by Charlotte Blake Alston

*Praise to the Creator of the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars.
Praise to the One who allows our hearts to beat in our chests,
Allows our lungs to draw in the sacred breath of Life,
Allows us to see, to hear, to think, to feel, to speak,
so that we might share in the telling of stories.*

*Praise to all of those whose stories have been lost, stolen,
not listened to, misunderstood, changed, and used as weapons.*

*Praise to all of those whose stories were left in the hulls of slave ships,
to all of those whose stories lie at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.*

*Praise to all of those whose stories were left in cattle cars, in the ovens of Eastern Europe,
To all of those whose stories were left on the killing fields of Cambodia.*

*Praise to all of those whose stories were left on the Trail of Tears on American soil.
To all of those whose stories mingle with their blood, sweat, and tears
And are running down into the soil in areas where there is hatred,
And where there is war.*

*Praise to all of those who -- in this moment -- are suffering somewhere in the world
Because they have spoken stories of peace, freedom, and humanity.*

*Praise to all of those who -- in this moment -- are forming in their minds
the stories, the actions, that will bring peace in areas where there is war.*

*Praise to all of those ancestors whose collective toil, tears, pain, struggles,
hopes, dreams, and prayers, beckoned us into existence -- so that
we might speak their stories -- and speak our own.*

LITTLE RHUMBA (1998) is essentially a bongo trio, meant to imitate a bongo jam in a San Juan park. It is expanded here for congas (Pablo Batiste) and timbales on part 1 (Rolando), with the rest of the ensemble on bongos. An opening free solo section jumps into an introductory trio with basic 16th note cells being passed around. A rhumba groove then gets established which sets the stage for more solos on top of the groove. Following the groove solos, an triplet based Afro-Cuban pattern takes over in a call and response mode between players 2 and 3. A rousing coda follows an accelerando in the old rhumba groove.

SEOUL SPIRIT (2004) was composed in 2004 after a visit with Professor Dong-Wook Park in Seoul, South Korea. Mr. Park introduced me to the traditional percussion instruments of Korea, including the chuk (also called buk) drum, the kaengkari bell, the jang-gu or Changko (an hourglass shaped rope drum with double sided stick techniques), and the jing (traditional gong of Korea). I wrote a piece that uses all these new-old instruments but not an attempt to imitate traditional Korean folk music. I added other Asian instruments including Thai Gongs, tam-tams, Peking opera gongs, Feng (wind) gong, a water gong, 4 Chinese tom-toms, a small high-pitched one-headed Chinese drum, and a make-shift Shang – a Chinese mouth organ that was performed on a western melodica for this recording. The first movement, “*Staid*”, is a kind of static sound scape. A bass drum and tom-tom pattern towards the end of this movement accelerates into the 2nd movement, “*Moving*”, which features a frenzied battle between the Korean buhk (Chris Deviney) and the Chinese tom-toms (Rolando Morales)..... *Seoul Spirit* is dedicated to my dear friend Professor Dong-Wook Park, and his talented percussionist/daughter Yun Park.....

- Don Liuzzi

GAINSBOROUGH (1965) – Percussion Quintet. The piece was written for the percussion section of the Boston Symphony around 1965 and quickly became the second most popular ensemble in the United States (with Chaves, Toccata) for three years running. It still has a following around the world.

GAINSBOROUGH has been played by different Percussion sections such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Teatro alla Scala, the Concertgebouw Orchestra and The Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute. It was also chosen to be played in Prague at a joint concert of music written by composers from Czechoslovakia and the United States.

GAINSBOROUGH is a quintet that explores the accessible limits of tonal percussion music with only 2 Marimbas, Vibraphone, Bells, Chimes, Timpani, drums, and cymbals

The first movement is in 9/8 and has some of the feeling of a jazz waltz. The second movement is slow and hesitant with a section in the middle somewhat like a recitative for solo Vibraphone and Marimba. The third movement is quite fast in ABA form with changing meters and solos for just about everyone.

The name “**GAINSBOROUGH**” came from the street where he lived while writing the piece in Boston.

CONVERSATIONS (Pablo Meets Rolando) (2001) is an improvisatory duo for bongos and congas played by Pablo Batista and Rolando Morales-Matos. Solos get traded followed by a unison duple pattern (played on congas by both players.) The groove continues, with Pablo jumping over to a shekere gourd solo, as the players fade away.