

[1] Ku-Ka-Ilimoku – (Christopher Rouse)

© 1981 Helicon Music Corp/European American Music (BMI)
Anthony DiSanza, Paul Harkins, John Maloney, Gregory White

[2-4] A Cord of Three Strands – (Brian Precht)

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Anthony DiSanza, Payton MacDonald, Clifton Smith

[5] Tribeca Sunflower – (Julie Spencer)

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Matthew Sexton~lead marimba

Solos by Anthony DiSanza~percussion,

Payton MacDonald & Jonathan Ovalle~marimba

[6] Marimbastück – (Maki Ishii)

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Paul Harkins~marimba with Anthony DiSanza & Clifton Smith

[7-8] Shadowplays – (Kevin Beavers)

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Timothy McAllister~alto saxophone, Carter Pann~piano

Anthony DiSanza, Paul Harkins, Clifton Smith

[9] Why – (Gernot Blume)

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Andrew Kitchen, Clifton Smith, John Spirtas, David Walker

[10] Imaginary Landscape No. 3 – (John Cage) (ASCAP)

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Ron Glenn, Elizabeth Hanson, John Maloney,

John Spirtas, Jonathan Vener, Virginia Weibel

Michael Udow – conductor

KU-KA-ILIMOKU

Christopher Rouse (b.1949 Baltimore, Maryland) offers the following thoughts about *Ku-Ka-Ilimoku* (1978) which appear in the Helicon Music Corp. published score. "In Hawaiian mythology, Ku is perhaps the most fundamental and important of gods, occupying a place similar to that of Zeus in Greek mythology or Odin in Norse legend. Ku is manifested in several forms: as Ku-Ka-Ilimoku he represents the god of war. Thus, this work for percussion ensemble is best viewed as a savage, propulsive war dance." *Ku-Ka Ilimoku* was commissioned by the Syracuse Symphony Percussion Ensemble and was completed on August 5, 1978 with the composer's inscription, *Deo Gratias*. The work is dedicated to Mary Voisin. It is one of three well known percussion works composed by Christopher Rouse: *Ogoun Badagris*, based on Voodoo ritual, is recorded on Equilibrium's EQ2 Compact Disc. *Bonham* was commissioned by the Percussion Ensemble at the New England Conservatory of Music under the leadership of Frank Epstein, percussionist with the Boston Symphony.

One of the most acclaimed composers of his generation, Christopher Rouse has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the League of Composers/ISCM, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the American Music Center, the Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Fund, Warner Brothers, BMI, and Pitney-Bowes. He is the recipient of the 1988 Kennedy Center Friedheim 1st Prize Award for his Symphony No. 1 and received the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for his *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra*. Rouse has composed for many renowned soloists and ensembles including Yo-Yo Ma, Jan de Gaetani, the Blackearth Percussion Group, and The Brass Ring. Recent commissions have come from the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Saint Louis Symphony, the Houston Symphony and numerous other distinguished ensembles.

A member of the University of Michigan's music faculty from 1978 until 1981, where he was also a Fellow in the University's Society of Fellows, he left to assume a post at the Eastman School of Music, where he continues to teach. Rouse has been composer in residence with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under the auspices of the Meet the Composer Orchestra Residencies Program. He holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory (B.Mus., 1971) and Cornell University (M.F.A. and D.M.A., 1977) and numbers George Crumb, Karel Husa, and Richard Hoffmann among his teachers. ~ M. U.

A CORD OF 3 STRANDS

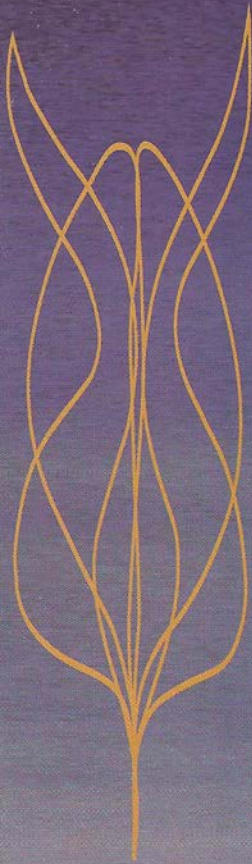
A Cord of Three Strands was written in 1994 and premiered at the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson, Wyoming. In all of my music, I strive to integrate a variety of musical styles resulting in an overall statement that is purposeful and relevant. This stylistic convergence of “serious” and “popular” forms is a major element in my work and serves to involve the listener emotionally while also providing a framework for musical exploration. The work is structured in three movements and calls for three players.

The first movement, entitled *What It Is* expresses the general conversational quality of percussion instruments and concentrates heavily on mallet instruments. The second movement, entitled *Whisper*, explores the more intimate colors of the keyboard instruments. The color of these instruments is enhanced by the unique timbre and approximate pitch of a set of clay flower pots which lie underneath the texture, providing an atmosphere which is both organic and surreal. This mood is shattered by the explosion of the *Shout*, which is the final movement of the work. It employs strictly unpitched instruments in a rhythmic frenzy, celebrating the buoyant and vital voice of percussion.

This piece celebrates not only the various “languages” of percussion but the relationship that grows out of the union of minds, taking place in a percussion section or chamber group. “A Cord of Three Strands is Not Quickly Broken” is quoted from Ecclesiastes 8:12. In this passage and in this piece, the power of unity and cooperation is celebrated. In a percussion section, as in any union, the mystery of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts is evident when minds meet in a spirit of unity. ~ BP

Brian Prechtl has been a member of the percussion section of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic in Fort Wayne, Indiana since 1989. Previous to that appointment he has held principal percussion positions in both the Columbus Symphony Orchestra in Ohio and the Toledo Symphony Orchestra. He graduated with high distinction from the University of Michigan in 1984 with a Bachelor of Music degree and went on to earn his Master of Music degree at Temple University in Philadelphia in 1986. His teachers include Alan Abel, Michael Udow, Charles Owen, and Salvatore Rabbio. He spends his summers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming as a performer in the Grand Teton Music Festival.

In addition to his busy performing schedule, Mr. Prechtl is active as a composer with world premiere performances at the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Eastman School of Music, and in Fort Wayne. He has recently earned commissions from members of the Chicago Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and faculty at the Eastman School.



This composition includes rhythmic and melodic improvisation and has been arranged and recorded in various instrumentations. ***Tribeca Sunflower*** features the buzz marimba sound reminiscent of South American marimbas and African balaphones. A panoply of odd meters combined with simple melodic phrases, the piece is a sound portrait of energy in constant motion. ~ J. S.



Julie Spencer is an internationally acclaimed solo marimbist and composer. She has received commissions including a 1994 Jazz Composition Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts to write a large work for the percussion ensemble "Nexus." Currently a Visiting Lecturer in Percussion at the University of Michigan, Ms. Spencer taught at the California Institute of the Arts from 1990 to 1994, having received an M.F.A. at Cal Arts, studying jazz improvisation, composition and both Indian and African drumming. She earned a B.F.A. and was awarded the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. Spencer has been a clinician/performer for Percussive Arts Society International Conventions in 1985, '86, '91, and '94. Endorsements with companies include KORI Marimbas, KAT, Inc., Paiste Cymbals and Gongs, TOCA Percussion, and Mike Balter Mallets.

TRIBECA SUNFLOWER

MARIMBASTÜCK

Marimbastück (1971) is notated using a proportional time-space grid in which precise pitches and timbres appear across all but two of the thirteen pages of music indicating approximate times to play musical gestures. There are clear indications on the ten fully notated pages as to when and in what order gestures should be played amongst the three performers. Carefully notated vertical alignment of diverse and unusual individual timbres coincide to produce intriguing colors. Two pages of graphic musical gestures allow the performers to react to and interact with one another or to independently move forward in time from one gesture to another. Maki Ishii calls for a large number of traditional Japanese percussion instruments as well as a few Western percussion instruments. The composer does provide a list of possible substitutions for the traditional Japanese instruments. In this recording, however, the performers do utilize a vast majority of the indicated traditional instruments from Japan.

Maki Ishii (b. 1936 Tokyo, Japan) is an internationally renowned composer who has received notable commissions from the amazing Sado Island percussion group, KODO; legendary marimba virtuoso, Keiko Abe, as well as symphonic commissions from major orchestras throughout the world. Having studied composition in Tokyo from 1952 to 1958, Ishii-san moved to Berlin where he continued his studies with Boris Blacher and Josef Rufer. Mr. Ishii was awarded the Berliner Künstleprogramm DAAD (German Academic Exchange Fellowship) in 1969. Since that period, Mr. Ishii has been an active composer and conductor particularly in Germany and Japan. Notable performances of his music have taken place at the Festival d'Automne 1978 in Paris, at the Berlin Festwochen 1981, at the Eté Japonais 1983, at the Music Today Festival 1983, at the Insel Music Festival 1978 as well as part of the 750th anniversary festival of the city of Berlin. His works have also been programmed at Tokyo's Interlink Festival by his close friend and eminent composer, Toshi Ichianagi. Maki Ishii's music fluidity melds unique abstract sonic gestures with complex innovative textures while setting these gestures apart with profound silences. ~ M.U.

SHADOWPLAYS

Shadowplays was premiered by saxophonist Eric Haltmeier and the West Virginia University Percussion ensemble at the North American Saxophone Alliance Conference in May of 1994.

The first movement, *Drones or Mayhem and Repose* begins amorphously and builds up momentum until a huge explosive climax is reached. The closing section of the movement is slow and serene.

The second movement, *Higher, Faster, Louder* is wild and exciting. It combines many popular idioms including rock and jazz to create a roaring and bombastic frenzy. The piece ends with a bang. ~ K.B.

Kevin Beavers was born on June 10, 1971, in Colombia, South America, but the majority of his youth was spent in his hometown of Keyser, West Virginia. His principal composition teachers have been William Bolcom, William Albright, and John Beall. Kevin has been active as a performer, conductor, and composer, and his music has been performed by many ensembles, including the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the University of Michigan Symphony Band, and University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra. He has received numerous awards, honors, and commissions including an ASCAP Grant for Young Composers, a MacDowell Fellowship, a Charles Ives Award from the Academy of Arts and Letters, an ASCAP Grant for Young Composers, a MacDowell Fellowship and a Tanglewood Fellowship. Kevin received a Bachelor of Music degree from West Virginia University and a Master of Music degree at the University of Michigan where he is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition.

GUEST ARTISTS

Timothy McAllister, saxophonist, holds degrees from the University of Michigan where he studied with renowned saxophonist, Donald Sinta. He has received numerous awards and honors including, most notably, the distinguished Albert A. Stanley Medal from the University of Michigan School of Music. Dedicated to new music, Mr. McAllister has commissioned and premiered over twenty new works for the saxophone and has been praised by many composers including William Albright, Leslie Bassett, William Bolcom, and Ross Lee Finney for his interpretations and insight into their works. Additionally, Mr. McAllister has recorded for the Equilibrium, Einstein, and Centaur labels.

Carter Pann is currently pursuing a P.H.D. in composition/theory at the University of Michigan where he also received a Master of Music degree. He received a Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music in 1994. As a pianist, he has premiered many new works and continues to perform with the university's Contemporary Directions Ensemble. His own compositions have been performed in Chicago, Boston, Rochester, Freiburg and Manchester. He won an ASCAP Grant in 1993 for his viola concertino entitled *L'Ange Tom*.



WHY

The marimba quartet **Why** (1991) is the result of my immersion in Balinese gamelan orchestras, Ghanaian drum ensembles, and jazz. Particularly reflected are the aspects of interlocking melodies, driving pulse, angular phrases, and walking bass lines. Originally conceived as a piano solo, **Why**, in its present form, evolved from a string quartet arrangement. ~ G. B.

German multi-instrumentalist and composer, **Gernot Blume**, received the B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees from the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts), focusing on North Indian sitar and tabla as well as jazz piano and composition. His writing, performing and recording experience includes music for contemporary chamber ensembles, dance, film, theater, big bands, jazz combos and electronic MIDI ensembles.

The co-founder of several Jazz/World Music based ensembles, he works closely with his wife, American virtuoso marimbist and composer, Julie Spencer.

Blume is now pursuing a doctorate in Ethnomusicology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he has directed the University's Indonesian Gamelan Ensemble. His music reflects a profound internalization of vastly different yet reconcilable sounds.

IMAGINARY LANDSCAPE No. 3

Imaginary Landscape No. 3 has a rhythmic structure of 12 x 12 (3, 2, 4, 3) measures. The absence and presence of the electric buzzer in the first twelve measures of the work helps to clearly establish this rhythmic structure. Other instruments employed by the six performers include 2 sets of five tin cans; an audio frequency oscillator, variable speed turntable, amplifier and loudspeaker with a constant frequency record; a turntable, amplifier and loudspeaker with a continuously variable frequency record; two muted Balinese (button) gongs; variable speed turntable, amplifier, and loudspeaker playing a generator whine; an amplified ordinary radio aerial coil attached to a phonograph pick-up arm (instead of a needle) and an amplified marimbula (large thumb piano - mbira "grande").

John Cage (1912 - 1992) was born in Los Angeles, California. He studied composition with Richard Buhling, Adolf Weiss, Henry Cowell and Arnold Schönberg. He also collaborated with numerous composers including noted percussion composers, Lou Harrison, Lejaren Hiller and Morton Feldman. John Cage's work with choreographer, Merce Cunningham, is regarded as a hallmark of 20th Century inter-arts collaboration. A mere sample of his innovative impact on a global scale includes his invention of the prepared piano in 1938, his involvement in the first *Happening* at Black Mountain College in 1952, his connections to both DADA and Fluxus, his design of the 1967 *Music Circus* at the University of Illinois Stock Pavilion and the 1969 *HPSCHD* event with co-collaborator, Lejaren Hiller, at the University of Illinois Assembly Hall. His visual art creations and his writings are also highly regarded. John Cage's visionary remarks in his lecture, *The Future of Music: Credo* (1937) appearing in his book, *Silence*, have great relevance to his 1942 composition, *Imaginary Landscape No. 3* which seems to depict, from the heart, the horrors of war. His other percussion works include: *Quartet* (1935), *Trio* (1936), *First Construction* (1939), *Living Room Music* (1940), *Double Music* co-composed with Lou Harrison (1941), *Third Construction* (1941), *Forever and Sunsmell* (with voice) (1942), *Credo In Us* (1942), *March (Imaginary Landscape #2)* (1942), *Amores* (1942), "*Quartet*" from *She Is Asleep* (1943), *Sixteen Dances* (1951), *27' 10.554"* (1956) *Music for Three* (1984), and his series of works for amplified plant materials. ~ M.U.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

was directed by James D. Salmon from the mid-1950's until his retirement in 1970. During his tenure, Charles E. Owen led the group beginning in 1971. Since 1982, the ensemble has been guided by Michael Udow.

The University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble participated in the October 1993 Toyama Festival in Japan with the Toho Gakuen Marimba Ensemble directed by Professor Keiko Abe and the Toho Gakuen Percussion Ensemble directed by Professor Koichi Sano. In May of 1993 the ensemble performed at the Taipei International Percussion Convention in Taiwan hosted by Professor Tzong-Ching Ju. They had the honor of participating in this festival with the other performing ensembles including: Les Percussions de Strasbourg of France, The Kroumata Ensemble of Sweden, Tri-Perkussions-Ensemble of Germany, The Percussion Ensemble Okada of Japan, and the Ju Percussion Group of Taiwan. The ensemble was invited to present a series of concerts and residencies during a one month tour of Japan in 1988 with legendary marimba virtuoso, Keiko Abe which culminated in the recording of Ms. Abe's *Prism* for her CD, *Marimba Spiritual*. The group also held joint performances and workshops with the Toho Gakuen Marimba & Percussion Ensembles directed by Professor Keiko Abe; the Kunitachi College of Music Percussion Ensemble directed by Professor Tomoyuki Okada; and the Percussion Ensembles of Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Tokyo College of Music directed by Professor Makoto Aruga. The University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble also performed a concert at the Fumon Band Festival and performed a concerto with the famed Kosi Wind Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Frederick Fennell.

The University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble has also recorded several CD's available on the Equilibrium label. Michael Kowalski's *Tracks* for piano and four percussion as well as a second version of Mr. Kowalski's *Vapor Trails* are released on [Einstein CD's]. The University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble recently premiered Dary John Mizelle's *Transmutations and Metamorphoses* on the World Music Institute's concert series at New York's Merkin Hall. The ensemble also recorded this work for a soon to be released CD. Under the sponsorship of the Music from Japan Series, (Naoyuki Miura, Artistic Director), the ensemble performed at New York's Lincoln Center, Detroit's Orchestra Hall and Rackham Auditorium in Ann Arbor with the famed traditional Japanese music ensemble, Pro Musica Nipponia in the commissioned premiere of Kaoru Wada's *Rakuichi-Nanaza*. In 1988, Pro Musica Nipponia and the University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble once again collaborated in the Japanese premiere of Kaoru Wada's composition at Tokyo's Seimei Hall for an NHK-TV global Broadcast.

The University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble has performed at several Percussive Arts Society International Conventions including Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Ann Arbor, the American Orff Schulwerk International Convention, and the Chicago MENC National Conference. The group also recorded the soundtrack for John Altman's film, *Dancing Hands: The Art of Rita Blitt*. ~ M.U.

