

Musical Program

Alexis Corbin & Friends

Alexis Corbin
Hovey Corbin
Jeff Cornelius
Alan Zimmerman

Ney Rosauro (b. 1952)

Three Moods for Solo Steel Pan: "Impatient"

Peter Garland (b. 1952)

Apple Blossom (Marimba Quartet)

John Cage (1912-1992)

Living Room Music (Percussion Quartet on Household Items)

Juan Tizol (1900-1984)

"Caravan," arr. Corbin & Corbin (Steel Pan and Marimba)

Gemma Peacocke (b. 1984)

Death Wish (Marimba Quartet)

INTERMISSION

Ney Rosauro (b. 1952)

Three Moods for Solo Steel Pan: "Meditative"

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

Lux Aurumque, arr. Joby Burgess (Marimba Quartet)

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

[sō I hear you're into] Taxidermy (Percussion Quartet on Vibraphone, Marimba, Flowerpots)

Morgan Lewis (1906-1968)

"How High the Moon," arr. Corbin & Corbin (Steel Pan and Marimba)

Nigel Westlake (b. 1958)

Omphalo Centric Lecture (Marimba Quartet)

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Presents

Alexis Corbin & Friends

Sunday, March 23, 2025



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Notes On Today's Concert

Originally from Brazil, composer **Ney Rosau** is considered one of the most important composers for percussion of the 20th century, according to his website. He is professor emeritus of the University of Miami. "With his unique style of writing, which combines charming melodies with catchy rhythms, Rosau utilizes the rich elements of Brazilian folklore to create stylized compositions that are full of life and fantasy..." The three movements of this piece are titled "Baroque," "Meditative," and "Impatient." [NeyRosau.com]

American composer **Peter Garland** has written dozens of chamber works for a wide variety of instrumental combinations. His music has been influenced by extensive world-wide travels and his years of living in small Mexican villages studying the cultures of indigenous peoples. He also spent a decade in Santa Fe, where he directed his own performing ensemble and studied Hispanic and Native music traditions of the region. Robert Carl, in *Fanfare* magazine, said, "Garland's music seems to be about the sheer expressive power of sound itself. He is one of our true originals." [Brightworknewmusic.com and Encyclopedia.com]

American composer and music theorist **John Cage** was a leading figure of the post-WWII avant-garde movement. His "Living Room Music" was composed in 1940 and dedicated to his then-wife Xenia. The first and fourth movements ("To Begin" and "End") "...are to be played on household objects such as magazines, a table, books, the floor, or using architectural objects like window frames." Movement 3 ("Melody") calls for one player performing on "any suitable instrument." This movement is optional. The text of Movement 2 ("Story") is by poet Gertrude Stein ("The World is Round"). [JohnCage.org]

Juan Tizol was a Puerto Rican jazz trombonist and composer. He is best known as a member of Duke Ellington's big band and for writing the jazz standards "Caravan," "Pyramid," and "Perdido." Irving Mills wrote the lyrics to "Caravan," but they are rarely sung. The song was first performed by Ellington in 1936; Ellington is sometimes credited as co-composer. The song enjoyed a surge in popularity after being featured prominently in the 2014 film "Whiplash."

Gemma Peacocke is a U.S.-based composer from New Zealand whose work spans a wide range of genres, including chamber music, orchestral works, and multimedia collaborations. "I wrote 'Death Wish' after watching a short film featuring New Zealand survivors of sexual assault," she says. "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 writing 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." [GemmaPeacocke.com]

Eric Whitacre is a well-known American choral composer. His "Lux Aurumque" was inspired by a Nativity poem by Edward Esch that Whitacre had Charles Anthony Silvestri translate into Latin. Whitacre invited singers from all over the world to send in video performances of the work, a novel idea back in 2009. The "Virtual Choir" compilation of those performances, featuring 185 singers from 12 countries, has been viewed more than seven million times on YouTube. British percussionist **Joby Burgess** arranged this and other Whitacre compositions for marimba quartet at the composer's request. [EricWhitacre.com and JobyBurgess.com]

Notes (Continued)

Pulitzer Prize and Grammy winner **Caroline Shaw** is an American composer, violinist, and singer. She composed "Taxidermy" in 2012 for the ensemble Sō Percussion. Explaining the title, she says, "Why 'Taxidermy'? I just find the word strangely compelling, and it evokes something grand, awkward, epic, silent, funny, and just a bit creepy – all characteristics of this piece, in a way." The repeated spoken phrase ("The detail of the pattern is movement") is from T.S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton." Shaw says she has used it in other works, too, "as a kind of whimsical existentialist mantra." [Caroline-Shaw-Editions.myshopify.com]

Morgan "Buddy" Lewis was a writer of jazz songs, some of which were also recorded in the pop music genre. He wrote songs and Broadway theatre scores with lyricist Nancy Hamilton. "How High the Moon" was first featured in the 1940 Broadway revue "Two for the Show." Benny Goodman made a hit recording of the song that same year. An Ella Fitzgerald version was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2002. Another famous song by the Lewis-Hamilton team was "The Old Soft Shoe."

Nigel Westlake is an Australian composer and clarinetist with many film and television music credits to his name. His compositions have won more than a dozen APRA (Australasian Performing Right Association) awards in various categories, including Best Soundtrack Album, Best Orchestral Work, and Best Feature Film Score. About today's piece, Westlake says, "The title comes from a painting by Paul Klee – the direct and centered simplicity of which was an inspiration to me during the writing of this piece. The piece also owes much to African balafo (or xylophone) music, with its persistent ostinati, cross-rhythms, and variations on simple melodic fragments." [SteveWeissMusic.com/product/1126157/mallet-ensemble]

Program notes compiled by Jay Rodman (with guidance from Alexis Corbin) from cited sources and Wikipedia.

About The Ensemble

Alexis and Hovey Corbin have been performing together since 1997, in a variety of styles and settings, from marimba bands to musical theater, heavy-metal vaudeville to calypso, church services to dive bars. Alexis is the executive director and long-time weekday program host of classical music radio station KHFM.

The works on this program were chosen to balance accessibility with innovation—inviting both seasoned percussion enthusiasts and newcomers to the world of percussion ensemble music. The selections deliberately juxtapose different compositional approaches: Shaw's textural landscapes alongside Rosau's more melodically-driven works; Whitacre's lush harmonic language contrasted with Garland's minimalist sensibilities; Cage's experimental structures in conversation with Peacocke's narrative-driven compositions.

Says Alexis enthusiastically, "But most importantly, these are pieces we enjoy playing together, and we are excited to share them with all of you."

Exhibit Five Artists

Logan Ortwerth

"Rooted in the tradition of mineral and earth pigment painting, my art is a journey of discovery, seeking the sacred within the ordinary and the divine within the earthly. My art is a reflection of my deepest beliefs and experiences with Jesus."

Cherie Martin Irwin

"I am drawn to work that is primitive and untrained. That is my approach as a maker, although there is plenty of irony and snarkiness at play. I take making things with a huge grain of salt and an assumption that I will learn something new."

Dale Jensen

"Textiles of all kinds have been a lifelong passion of mine. For several years now I've been experimenting with combining fabrics with hardware cloth, telephone wire, and various embellishments to create visually exciting and intriguing pieces of art."

Mary Louise Skelton

"Gourds are magic for me to work with and each gourd plant has its own shape and quality lending to its uniqueness. Recent works may include other art media which opens up my work to even more possibilities. It's just fun to see the work grow."

Art On Exhibit
3/7/2025 - 4/17/2025



Logan Ortwerth
oils, watercolors & acrylics



Cherie Martin Irwin
fiber & mixed media



Dale Jensen
fiber & mixed media



Mary Louise Skelton
mixed media gourds