

Like Style, Dig?

TIM PATTERSON

THE MUSIC OF

John Bergamo



1. **Interactions** (1963) 8:08
for vibraphone and percussion

Three Pieces for the Winter Solstice (1968)

for solo vibraphone

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 2. | I. | 2:26 |
| 3. | II. | 0:23 |
| 4. | III. | 2:52 |

Five Miniatures (1966)

- | | | |
|----|----|------|
| 5. | 1. | 0:45 |
| 6. | 2. | 0:21 |
| 7. | 3. | 0:26 |
| 8. | 4. | 0:18 |
| 9. | 5. | 0:46 |

Duets & Solos (1968)

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|------|
| 10. | 1-2 | 1:03 |
| 11. | 9 | 1:30 |
| 12. | 10 | 0:34 |
| 13. | Christmas Bell | 3:40 |
| 14. | 5-6 | 2:03 |
| 15. | 7-8 | 2:02 |
| 16. | Like Style, Dig? | 0:33 |

17. **Blanchard Canyon** (1985) 13:39
for five amplified suspended cymbals

Five Short Pieces for Marimba (2000)

- | | | |
|-----|------|------|
| 18. | III. | 1:40 |
| 19. | I. | 0:46 |
| 20. | IV. | 2:00 |
| 21. | V. | 2:18 |
| 22. | II. | 5:48 |

— 53:58 —



My interactions with John Bergamo began in 2003 as a master's candidate at the California Institute of the Arts, although his music and teachings had already touched my life in a multitude of ways. By the time I arrived, John was close to retirement and wasn't around CalArts much of the time. Instead, I drove out to his residence in Piru for weekly lessons that always included lots of entertaining stories from John's musical experiences and infamous past, along with discussions regarding many of the percussion works found on this recording. At some point early in my first semester I was digging around John's storage closet at CalArts when I stumbled across a copy of *Blanchard Canyon* buried at the bottom of a stack of music. Written for five amplified suspended cymbals, the piece requires performers to use numerous extended techniques to create a vast palette of timbres on each cymbal. I immediately was fascinated with the score and as I examined it, questions arose concerning interpretation and the execution of various extended techniques, so I brought the score out to John's house and began asking questions. During these conversations we talked about the need for a recording of his innovative percussion works and first explored the idea of this project. Over the next several years, I performed and directed Bergamo's works in various settings, affording me the opportunity to dig further into the scores and continue my conversations with Bergamo regarding the vision and direction of this project. Of all the many joys associated with making this CD, I will forever appreciate and cherish the knowledge, guidance and encouragement John shared with me throughout all of our interactions.

Bergamo's solo and chamber percussion works included in this project represent a highly individualized and experimental body of work that has significantly expanded the percussion repertoire. It is my intention that this recording and companion guidebook help clarify the interpretive issues inherent in Bergamo's music and will make its exploratory nature more accessible for all audiences.

— Tim Patterson



JOHN BERGAMO

A world-renowned percussionist, composer and educator, John Bergamo, was born on May 28, 1940 in Englewood, NJ. Bergamo studied with notables such as Paul Price at the Manhattan School of Music, Max Roach at the Lenox School of Jazz, Karlheinz Stockhausen at Darmstadt International Summer Course in New Music, and composition with Michael Colgrass. During the formative years of 1964-66, Bergamo was a member of the SUNY Buffalo-based new music ensemble Creative Associates, a group of cutting edge musicians that explored the avant-garde in a wide variety of twentieth century styles. In 1968 Bergamo briefly taught percussion at the University of Washington before accepting a position to establish the percussion program at a new school called the California Institute of the Arts where he continued teaching until his retirement in 2005. As a hand-drumming pioneer, Bergamo also immersed himself in the study of non-Western music, studying South Indian drumming with T. Ranganathan and T.H. Subashcandran, North Indian tabla with Mahaparush Misra, Shankar Ghosh, and Swapan Chaudhuri, African drumming with Alfred and Kobla

Ladzekpo, Javanese gamelan with K.R.T. Wasitodiningrat, along with many other teachers in many different styles. Throughout his storied and eclectic career, Bergamo performed and recorded with a diversity of artists such as Frank Zappa, John McLaughlin, Ali Akbar Khan, Morton Feldman, Herb Albert, Ringo Starr, Charles Wuorinen, and Lou Harrison, and played on 18 Hollywood film soundtracks. He published 28 compositions and wrote many more that remain unpublished, released three instructional videos, and published articles in Percussive Notes, Percussionist, Drum!, Percussioner International and Modern Drummer. Bergamo also served on the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) Board of Directors from 1979 to 1988. Additionally, Bergamo co-founded two highly acclaimed percussion ensembles, the Repercussion Unit and Hands On'Semble. In 2012 he was inducted into the PAS Hall of Fame. An incredibly humble and generous individual, Bergamo inspired and touched everyone he met with his contagious spirit. On October 19, 2013, John Bergamo passed away in his home in Piru, CA at the age of 73. For a more extensive biography, bibliography, discography and videography, please visit www.johnbergamoguidebook.com.

INTERACTIONS (1963)

An innovative musician and composer, the music of John Bergamo is inimitably unique and inventive. Bergamo's exploration of extended techniques and timbral possibilities on percussion has been the signature of his distinctly creative style. This exploration is evident in his first piece for percussion ensemble. After graduating from the Manhattan School of Music in the spring of 1962, Bergamo began studying composition with Michael Colgrass, an imaginative improviser and composer who placed an emphasis on melody and a lyrical form of drumming. Much of Colgrass's music focused on extracting timbral variety out of a singular instrument using a variety of implements, which further influenced Bergamo's creativity. Additionally, Colgrass introduced Bergamo to Josef Rufer's book, *Composition with Twelve Notes Related Only To One Another* while studying serial composition techniques. Scored for solo vibraphone and six percussionists, *Interactions* is based on a three-note row, applying standard manipulations used in twelve-tone compositions, while exploring colorful timbral sensibilities and using pointillistic attacks of metallic percussion sounds creating a musical landscape that slowly unfolds like a vibrant wind chime.

THREE PIECES FOR THE WINTER SOLSTICE (1968)

Three Pieces for the Winter Solstice was writ-

ten for solo vibraphone in 1968 while briefly teaching at the University of Washington. Bergamo was living just east of Seattle near the small town of Issaquah, on Lake Sammamish in a cabin with no power or utilities. The peaceful solitude of the unencumbered natural environment combined with psychedelic drug experimentation to produce one of John's most colorful and imaginative compositional works. In *Three Pieces for the Winter Solstice*, Bergamo's exploration of sound and esoteric knowledge of the vibraphone creates a music that places timbre in an essential role. These unique techniques produce timbral qualities that creatively redefine the sonic possibilities of the vibraphone and create a kaleidoscope of colors.

FIVE MINIATURES (1966)

Bergamo's percussion quartet, *Five Miniatures*, was composed during his formative years as a member of the new music ensemble, Creative Associates, a group of cutting edge musicians that explored the avant-garde in a wide variety of twentieth century styles. *Five Miniatures* showcases the influences of two composers: the brevity of Anton Webern, and the percussion writing of Karlheinz Stockhausen. In 1962, Bergamo had the distinct privilege of receiving private lessons with Stockhausen while on scholarship to the Darmstadt International Summer Course in New Music in Germany. The variability of instrument choice, the flexibility to perform

the pieces in any order, inclusion of spatial notation, use of improvisation and the indeterminacy of allowing each player to pick a line at random in *Miniature V* provides clear evidence of the influence of Stockhausen's monumental multi-percussion solo, *Zyklus*. The instrumentation of ringing metal, metal, wood, skin, and "other" allows for a plethora of sonic possibilities in *Miniatures I, III & V*, while the use of various beaters, specific articulations and 'a coperto' (to cover) expands the timbral palette of the more traditional keyboard lineup in *II & IV*. The SUNY Buffalo Percussion Ensemble premiered *Five Miniatures* in 1967.

DUETS AND SOLOS (1968)

Duets and Solos for marimba and vibraphone is a collection of seven pieces; five mallet duets and two vibraphone solos. These pieces can be performed in any order, can be broken up between other pieces in a program, and do not need to be performed as a complete set. In the duets, Bergamo meticulously explores the possibilities of blending the timbres of the two instruments in unusual ways, such as lengthening the sustain of the vibraphone with bowed marimba, and merging the pointed attack of triangle beater on vibraphone with a fingernail strike on marimba. As a whole, *Duets and Solos* explores the sonic possibilities of the marimba and vibraphone through many extended techniques such as bowing, harmonics, bending pitches, playing

on the nodes, and the use of unconventional implements.

BLANCHARD CANYON (1985)

Blanchard Canyon is an example of Bergamo's continued curiosity to meticulously extract the sonic possibilities out of percussion instruments. Commissioned by the California E.A.R. Unit, the work was composed in 1985 upon a request and a gift of cymbals from Paiste. Written for five amplified suspended cymbals, this piece employs a plethora of sounds on the cymbals using various implements including fingers, fingernails, bows, knitting needles, BBQ skewers, wooden dowels, yarn mallets, and superball mallets. The slight amplification of the cymbals picks up the subtle sounds not normally part of the cymbal's vocabulary. There are five specified muffling techniques used to further vary the sounds and produce harmonics on the cymbals. These muffling techniques include muffling the dome, pinching the edge with thumb and forefinger, covering both the dome and resting the arm across the cymbal, muting with the performer's belly against the edge and a combination of the previous two methods for maximum muffling. If you listen carefully, *Blanchard Canyon* also includes an improvised section on one of Bergamo's favorite tunes, Thelonious Monk's, 'Round Midnight. Located just outside the composer's residence in Piru, CA, Blanchard Canyon was one of John's favorite places to enjoy a peaceful hike.

FIVE SHORT PIECES FOR MARIMBA (2000)

Five Short Pieces for Marimba is a fascinating addition to the marimba repertoire. Bergamo interweaves staccato (press strokes) and legato notes with varying note lengths (long and short) to create angular thematic material in *Movement I*. *Movement II* uses two “super ball” mallets played as press rolls on the nodes of the marimba bars. *Movement III* is a slowly evolving, almost aurally nebulous chorale, while *IV* employs bowed marimba over a mysterious, melancholic bass melody. *Movement V* requires the performer to coordinate playing the common African 12/8 bell pattern in the right hand while the left hand plays a support pattern found on the Ewe drum, kagan. Each hand progresses through an additive pitch process starting with 1 pitch to a total of 5 pitches, at which point the process is reversed. Bergamo wrote each piece without a key signature with the intention of having the performer apply any one of the ten parent scales of Hindustani music included with the solos. This choice of scale ultimately allows the performer to decide the mood and character of each intimate piece.

THE GUIDEBOOK

A Guidebook to Performing the Percussion Works of John Bergamo is available as a free, downloadable PDF at www.johnbergamoguidebook.com. The guidebook explores John Bergamo’s use of extended techniques in his

solo and chamber works for Western percussion and offers descriptive performance instructions to help clarify their execution and timbral intent, as the intended aural effect is not always entirely clear from indications included in the scores. Additionally, the guidebook includes extensive biographical information about the composer, program notes on each piece along with corrections to errata in the published editions.

TIM PATTERSON

Tim Patterson is an active percussionist and educator in Madison, WI where he performs regularly in a versatile selection of groups including the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, New MUSE (new music chamber ensemble), WADOMA (West African drum and dance group), The Handphibians (community Brazilian bateria), Old American Junk (Americana) Tani Diakite & the Afrofunkstars (Malian blues/funk) and Grupo Balança (Brazilian pagode). An advocate for contemporary music, Tim has worked with numerous composers, including Matthew Burtner, Gavin Bryars, James Tenney, John Zorn, and John Bergamo. He has earned a B.M. in Music Education & Performance from UW-Green Bay, a M.F.A. in Multi-focus Percussion from the California Institute of the Arts, and a D.M.A. from UW-Madison. Tim currently serves as music faculty at Madison College.

CREDITS

Produced by Tim Patterson
Recorded, Mixed and Mastered by Landon Arkens
at Blast House Studios (Madison, WI)

THREE PIECES FOR THE WINTER SOLSTICE and
FIVE SHORT PIECES FOR MARIMBA
Tim Patterson

INTERACTIONS

Lisa Garza (Player 1)
Cobrun Sells (Player 2)
Vincent Mingils (Player 3)
Tim Patterson (Player 4)
Jacob Bicknase (Player 5)
Elena Wittneben (Player 6)
Lucas Gutierrez (Player 7)

FIVE MINIATURES

Tom Ross (Player 1)
Tim Patterson (Player 2)
Joseph Murfin (Player 3)
Dave Alcorn (Player 4)

DUETS AND SOLOS

Anthony Di Sanza (Marimba on 1-2,
Christmas Bell, & 10;
Vibraphone on 7-8 & *Like Style, Dig?*)
Tim Patterson (Vibraphone on 1-2, *Christmas
Bell*, 5-6, 7-8, 9, 10, & *Like Style, Dig?*)

BLANCHARD CANYON

Peter Schmeling (Player 1)
Zac Schroeder (Player 2)
Brian Short (Player 3)
Tim Patterson (Player 4)
Gregory Thornburg (Player 5)

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My sincere thanks and deepest appreciation to my teachers with whom I have been honored to study: Anthony Di Sanza, Cheryl Grosso, Randy Gloss, David Johnson, Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri, Kobla Ladzekpo, and John Bergamo. Shradhanjali! My sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the musicians who dedicated their time and extraordinary talents to performing on this CD. Thank you to my family for their constant love and support. Special thanks to my sister for being there for me every step of the way. To my dearest Jaimie; thank you for your encouragement, guidance and beautiful smile when I needed it most. I'm incredibly lucky.

And finally, my sincerest thanks and gratitude to John Bergamo: I am so honored to call you my teacher, mentor, inspiration and dear friend. So much love and appreciation for everything you gave me. I humbly dedicate this project to you.

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Philip Blackburn, director
Chris Campbell, operations director
Steve McPherson, publicist

www.innova.mu

www.johnbergamoguidebook.com

