

WiPE
Williams Percussion Ensemble
Matthew Gold, Director

Friday, November 6, 2020 @ 7:30 PM
Chapin Hall

Light the Paths

Juri Seo	<i>Shui</i> (2017) for six crotales and water
John Luther Adams	<i>Drums of Winter</i> (1993) for percussion quartet
Viet Cuong	<i>Cymbal-isms</i> (2018) for four suspended cymbals
Alexis C. Lamb	<i>Lux Semitae</i> (“ <i>Light the Paths</i> ”) (2020) for percussion ensemble

Light the Paths celebrates music making as a means of coming together in difficult times and finding new ways forward. The four percussion works on this program explore our new musical ecologies and allow us to share our sounds across spatial and musical distances. From small cymbals dipped in water, toy desk bells, and scrapyard metal, to marimbas, vibraphones, and roaring drums, the musicians of WiPE discover new sounds and previously unknown acoustic spaces.

WiPE is
Josh Lee '24
Nicholas Patino '21, TA
Noah Poll '24
Alden Powers '24
Roman Ruiz '22
Shaurya Taxali '24
TJ Watkins '23
Matthew Gold, director

Special thanks to Jeffrey Miller, stage and orchestra manager.

"The Williams Percussion Ensemble stood under the warm May sun and sent sharp-edged, tightly organized rhythmic salutes into the Berkshire hills."

—The Boston Globe

In programs featuring cutting-edge new music and forward-looking works of the past, the Williams Percussion Ensemble (WiPE) surveys a vast terrain of sound and rhythm. The ensemble employs all manner of percussion instruments, found sounds, and electronics to create music that resonates across boundaries of genre and discipline. WiPE is especially dedicated to programming that presents new voices, fresh perspectives, and novel approaches to creating music, acting as an important vehicle for new music in the Williams community. Beyond its regular performance schedule in the Williams College Department of Music, WiPE appears frequently at venues including The Clark, the '62 Center for Theatre & Dance, Bennington College, EMPAC (Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), and is featured on the annual I/O Festival of New Music. WiPE strives to offer creative programs, visceral performances, innovative presentation, and immersive experiences for adventurous listeners.

Acknowledgements

Ed Gollin, *Music Department Chair*; Jonathan Myers, *Concert and Event Manager*; Jeffrey Miller, *Stage and Orchestra Manager*; Marilyn Cole Dostie and Michelle Picard, *Music Department Staff*; Nicholas Patino '21, *Percussion TA*

About the Program

Juri Seo: *Shui*

I conceived *Shui* as a miniaturized version of an extended musical meditation. The circular shape of the instrument, the round bowl, and the long resonance are all conducive to a meditative environment. As in any ensemble music—perhaps more palpable in this case—the performers are indispensable parts of the whole. Each performer has only two pitches so that all melodies have to be played collectively. There's one moment they have to pass crotales to each other without killing the resonance, as if the sound is a living being.

—Juri Seo

John Luther Adams: *Drums of Winter*

Drums of Winter is drawn from *Earth and the Great Weather*, an evening-length “sonic geography” of the Arctic. Although purely “abstract” in form, it is my hope that it is in some small measure informed by the elemental power of the natural forces in the Arctic, and by the ecstatic power of Iñupiat Eskimo drumming and dancing.

—John Luther Adams

Viet Cuong: *Cymbal-isms*

Cymbal-isms is scored for four suspended cymbals employing a range of striking and dampening techniques. It was commissioned by Matthew and Margret Duvall for the Interlochen Center for the Arts in 2018.

Alexis C. Lamb: *Lux Semitae* (“*Light the Paths*”)

The year 2020 has presented many students in school with a number of extremely difficult challenges, from the outbreaks of COVID-19, to relearning how to work or study online, to racial and social justice issues within America and how these relate to their coursework. However, Benjamin Perez's perseverance and optimism that he provides for his students continues to inspire and encourage them to achieve excellence. This piece is a commentary on overcoming chaos and obstacles that appear in our lives. These students will be the lights that continue to shine on in our world.

—Alexis C. Lamb

Additional Notes by Benjamin Perez

When I first began teaching in 2016, I had no idea what was in store for myself and my future as a musician and educator. Bel Air High School is located in the lower valley of El Paso, Texas. While the numbers might say that our students come from low income and struggling households; I have come to know some of the most amazing, intelligent, and well-rounded students and human beings while teaching there.

At the beginning of the 2019 school year, I knew I wanted to do something special for my seniors; they were after all my first class. I contemplated multiple ideas on how to show my appreciation to these students for a few months. However, when scrolling through the internet I came across the amazing works of Alexis Lamb. I don't know what struck me, but I immediately knew that the only way to show my love and appreciation to my students would be to have a piece commissioned specifically for them. We were immediately blessed and honored by Alexis' response and the birth of this new project.

Lux Semitae "Light the Paths," is a perfect representation of how I feel about all my students and my role as an educator. Seeing these students for hours a day and sometimes having them at the school longer than they are at their own house; I have always found that it's my job to do more than just teach music. Like I said before, the numbers for our school don't support our students, but I have done everything in my power to show my students how to become successful in life as a human being. Whether it be college applications, forms to enlist in the military, job applications, resumes, or letters of recommendations I have helped them complete these important steps to continue their lives after high school.

Listening to *Lux Semitae "Light the Paths,"* the atmospheres of both the student and teacher are displayed. Excitement, anticipation, and small doses of anxiousness can be heard throughout this entire piece. Through all the "chaos," however, come beautiful underlying melodies or uplifting grooves. You can argue that this is the life a high school student goes through when figuring out themselves, their friendships, and their future; or you can argue it's the teacher who pushes through the ups and downs every day having to overcome situations day by day set by the students, administration, or any other outside source. You cannot, however, argue that at the end of each journey the student while excited to move on in life is saddened by the life they must leave behind, and the teacher who has become so connected to the students struggles to let go and watch them leave to become and do bigger and better things. That is exactly what you can hear and feel, at the end of this piece through the slow and dissonant decay.

I have been blessed with this amazing job and I cannot ask for more. Thank you so much to Alexis for helping me make this dream a reality. And to the Bel Air Percussion Class of 2020, I say thank you, I love you, and I will miss you. Antonio, Dominick, Jessica, Kaitlyn, Stephanie, and Robert; each one of you and your unique personalities has made me love you more than I could ever imagine. I am extremely proud of you all, and I cannot wait to see where the future takes you and the amazing things you all will do with your lives. Congratulations on all your accomplishments, and don't ever forget where you came from. And remember; always raise your standards.... oh yea and Big Red Loves You.

—Benjamin Perez