

TRAVEL DIARY

Meehan/Perkins Duo

Todd Meehan & Douglas Perkins, percussion

1) **Observations** | Tristan Perich [11:40]

2) **Diving Bell** | Nathan Davis [9:40]

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4) I) Leaving Home [5:01]

5) II) Cruising Speed [4:15]

6) III) Lost in Philly [3:50]

7) IV) Arrived, Phone Home [6:27]

Observations by Tristan Perich

My compositions for acoustic instruments with 1-bit electronic music explore a sonic and conceptual space I began exploring with *1-Bit Music* in 2004: the foundations of electronic and acoustic sound. The simplest electronic tones can be created by sending on and off pulses of electricity to a speaker, effecting an oscillation at the desired pitch. These pulses are represented digitally in binary as 1-bit information, where a 1 or 0 signifies the corresponding electrical state. Reducing electronic music to the most basic components probes its very roots, inspired by similar investigations in the foundations of mathematics or physics by the likes of Kurt Gödel or Werner Heisenberg.

The 1-bit tones are generated by microchips that I program, which become instruments themselves in these duets between human musicians and code. When working with 1-bit waveforms, data becomes equivalent to sound and vice versa; no higher-level translation is need. The most basic method of electronic sound production couples with the most basic method of acoustic sound production: vibrating strings, resounding wind chambers, oscillating percussive objects, etc. While 1-bit sound is also the palette of aggressive electric alarm clocks, I find its primitive timbre inspiringly fresh and mysteriously organic when combined with classical acoustic instruments.

These works, including *Observations*, are about this relationship of basic sonic systems and the point found at their intersection.

Diving Bell by Nathan Davis

Humble and magnificent, the triangle holds a world of sounds, many of which are only apparent when one holds it close to the ear, like a tuning fork. In *Diving Bell*, triangles are struck and scraped at different points and with different materials in order to separate discrete overtones that are present in the overall timbre of the instruments. The players use hand-held microphones as musical stethoscopes, routing the signal to electronic processing that exaggerates prominent pitches and spectra. *Diving Bell* resculpts these many overtones in a meditation on a single sound.

table of contents by David Lang

Writing *table of contents* was suggested to me by the percussion duo formed by Doug Perkins and Todd Meehan, both of whom I knew well from their days as members of So Percussion. My original idea for the piece was a visual image that reminded me of the television variety shows of my youth—someone would come out onstage and make music by picking up an odd array of noise makers, in lightning succession, all of which produced sound in different ways. When I presented this piece to Todd and Doug I mentioned that I imagined that all the odd objects in the piece should be set out on a table, to be picked up and animated in turn. They told

me I was crazy. So we suspended the instruments on racks instead. But the idea of the table and its contents remains, if only in the title.

Travel Diary by Paul Lansky

T*Travel Diary* is a kind of percussion meditation on travel, particularly for those who don't do it that much. While not literally programmatic, each movement has some characteristics that reflect the sense of its title. The first movement, *Leaving Home*, surveys the percussion ensemble, looking around to see what we've packed for the trip, making sure we have what we need. In the second movement, *Cruising Speed*, we get onto the highway or into the air and are on our way. The third movement, *Lost in Philly*, was inspired by a minor disaster I once had after packing my wife and two small children in the car for a trip from Princeton to Los Angeles and promptly taking a wrong turn leaving us searching for a way to get past Philadelphia (with the younger child asking 'are we there yet?'). Finally, the last movement, *Arrived, Phone Home*, has some references to old signaling devices, horn calls, morse code, and ends with a spirited feeling of relief to have finally arrived, only to sink into a relaxing sleep at the end. *Travel Diary* was commissioned by the Meehan/Perkins Duo in 2007 and first performed by them at the Round Top Percussion Galore Festival in March 2008. The work is published by Carl Fischer.

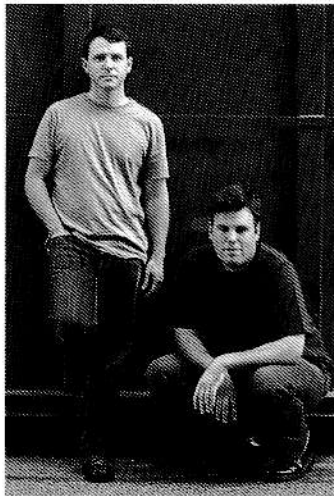


photo by Ben Johannsen

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 2006, the Meehan/Perkins Duo (Todd Meehan and Doug Perkins) has redefined the American percussion duo through its diverse commissions and engaging performances. Dedicated to creating a new body of work for the percussion duo genre, the Duo has collaborated with composers

David Lang, Paul Lansky, Nathan Davis, Matt McBane, Jonathan Leshnoff, and John Supko to expand the repertoire and produce eclectic new acoustic and electro-acoustic works for percussion. The Duo has shared this music with audiences throughout the country and abroad, including performances at Weill Recital Hall, the Ojai Music Festival, the International Festival-Institute at Round Top, Monadnock Music, the Yellow Barn Music Festival, the Stone, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, and at universities and conservatories. In December 2010 the MPDuo embarked on its first international venture, performing and teaching in St. Petersburg and Petrozavodsk, Russia.

In February 2011 the Duo released a groundbreaking recording of largely unknown percussion music from the 1930s on New World Records entitled *Restless, Endless, Tactless—Johanna Beyer and the Birth of American Percussion Music*. It has been called “an engaging exper-

ience” by Gramophone and “immaculately played” by BBC Music Magazine. Fanfare sums up the recording by stating “this is a must-hear for anyone remotely interested in the development of music in the past century and is strongly recommended.” The project, a collaboration between the MPDuo and the Baylor Percussion Group, features the complete percussion works of Johanna Beyer along with works by John J. Becker, Henry Cowell, Harold Davidson, Gerald Strang, Ray Green, and Doris Humphrey.

The Duo performs on Pearl/Adams musical instruments, Black Swamp Percussion accessories, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, Zildjian cymbals, and Remo drumheads. More information at www.mpduo.com



photo courtesy Tristan Perich

NEW YORK-BASED COMPOSER and artist Tristan Perich explores sound and image through the interaction of simple digital processes with the physical world. His music often combines traditional acoustic ensembles on stage with arrays of loudspeakers, connected to hand-built 1-bit audio circuits. The WIRE Magazine describes his compositions as “an austere meeting of electronic and organic.” His works for soloist, ensemble, and orchestra have been performed internationally at venues as diverse as the Whitney Museum,

Merkin Hall, Issue Project Room, Zipper Hall, Lentos Museum and Mass MoCA. As a visual artist, he has had solo exhibitions at bitforms gallery (NYC), Mikrogalleriet (Copenhagen), the Addison Gallery (Andover), the Katonah Museum, Museo Carandente (Spoleto) and Monster Truck (Dublin). *1-Bit Music*, his 2004 release on Cantaloupe Music, was the first album ever released as a microchip, programmed to synthesize his electronic composition live. His recent circuit album, *1-Bit Symphony*, was released in 2009; the London Daily Telegraph writes: "From these meagre components he fashions strikingly ambitious and emotionally resonant compositions... as affecting as any piece of music that's been released this year."

photo by Adam Szecepaniak



NATHAN DAVIS MAKES MUSIC inspired by natural processes, acoustic phenomena, and the abstraction of simple stories. He has received commissions from the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Calder String Quartet, the Ojai Festival (for Eighth Blackbird and an installation by sound-sculptor Trimpin), TimeTable Percussion, and the Moving Theater Dance Company, and received awards from Meet The Composer's Commissioning Music/USA, the Jerome Foundation, American Music Center, MATA, the Argosy Foundation, ASCAP, and

the ISCM. In February 2011, Lincoln Center presented the premiere of his 30 minute site-specific work "Bells" to open its first Tully Scope Festival. Nathan's music has also been programmed at NYC's Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, Roulette, and at Darmstadt, Helsinki Musica Nova, and other festivals in North America, Poland, China, and Cuba. Recordings include his electroacoustic percussion cd *Memory Spaces*, flutist Claire Chase's debut *Aliento*, and *The Bright and Hollow Sky*, a monograph longplay from ICE. Nathan is also a percussionist for ICE and for the cello/percussion duo Odd Appetite. www.nathandavis.com

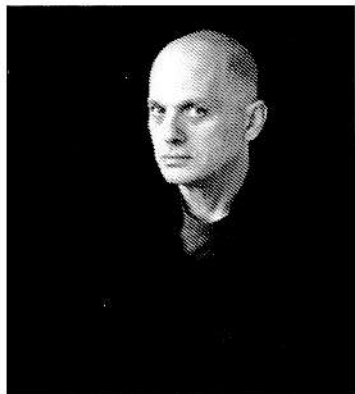


photo ©2009 Peter Serling

DAVID LANG IS THE RECIPIENT of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in Music for the *little match girl passion*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for the vocal ensemble Theatre of Voices, directed by Paul Hillier.

One of America's most performed and honored composers, many of Lang's pieces resemble each other only in the fierce intelligence and clarity of vision that inform their structures. His catalogue is extensive, and his opera, orches-

tra, chamber and solo works are by turns ominous, ethereal, urgent, hypnotic, unsettling and very emotionally direct. Much of his work seeks to expand the definition of virtuosity in music—even the deceptively simple pieces can be fiendishly difficult to play and require incredible concentration by musicians and audiences alike.

His recent works include *writing on water* for the London Sinfonietta, with libretto and visuals by English filmmaker Peter Greenaway; *the difficulty of crossing a field*—a fully staged opera for the Kronos Quartet; *loud love songs*, a concerto for the percussionist Evelyn Glennie, and the oratorio *Shelter*, with co-composers Michael Gordon and Julia Wolfe, at the Next Wave Festival of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, staged by Ridge Theater and featuring the Norwegian vocal ensemble Trio Mediaeval. The commercial recording of *the little match girl passion* was released in 2009 on Harmonia Mundi, and received the 2010 Grammy Award

for Best Small Ensemble Performance. His music is published by Red Poppy (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

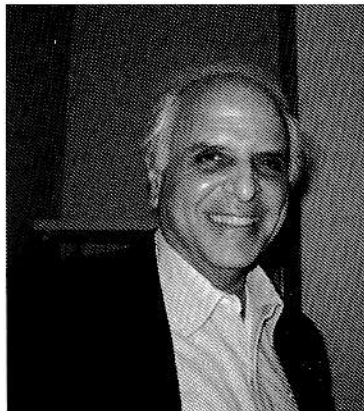


photo by Becky Starobin

UNTIL THE MID-1990s, the bulk of Paul Lansky's work was in computer music and he has long been recognized as one of the pioneers in the field. His music is well represented on recording (mainly on Bridge Records) and played and broadcast widely.

During the mid-1990s he began to turn more intensively toward the writing of instrumental music. A recent percussion quartet, *Threads*, written for So Percussion has been widely performed by that group and others. He has written a number of other works for percussion including *Hop*, *Three Moves for Marimba*, *Travel Diary* and *Idle Fancies*. His trio for horn, violin and piano, *Etudes and Parodies*, written for William Purvis, was the winner of the 2005 International Horn Society Competition. During the 2009-10 season he was composer in residence with the Alabama Symphony who performed his orchestral works *Line and Shadow*, *With the Grain*, *Arches*, and their commissioned work *Imaginary Islands*. His music is published by Carl Fischer.

For more information see
paullansky.com

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Cover Photograph: Douglas Holly

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Recorded January 5-8, 2010 in Jones Concert Hall, Glennis McCrary Music Building, Baylor University, Waco, TX

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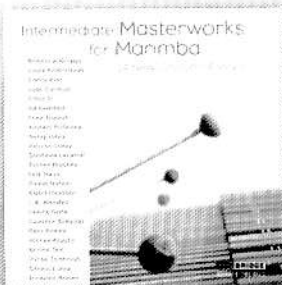
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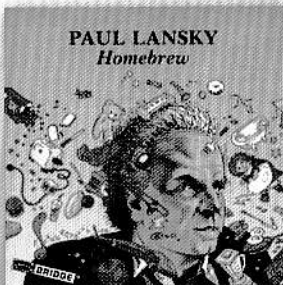
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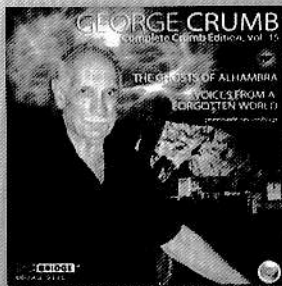
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