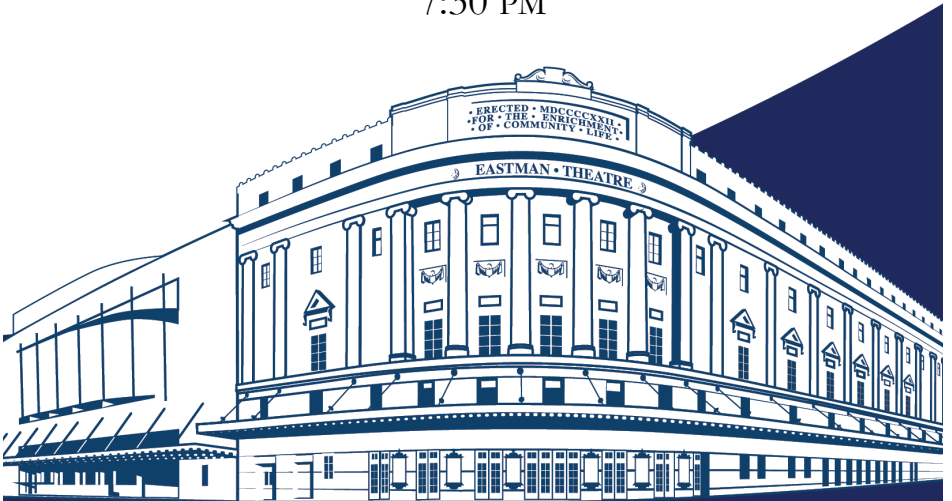


# EASTMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

MICHAEL BURRITT, DIRECTOR

Thursday, March 5, 2026  
Kilbourn Hall  
7:30 PM



Eastman School of Music

## PROGRAM

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**Squish It** (2025)

Gordon Stout  
(b. 1952)

*World Premiere*

**Rain Tree** (1981)

Tōru Takemitsu  
(1930-1996)

**Musique de tables** (1987)

Thierry De Mey  
(b. 1956)

**A Journey Beyond Time: American Songbook II** (2003)

George Crumb  
(1929-2022)

- I. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
- II. Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho
- V. A Psalm for Noontime
- VI. Sit Down, Sister
- VIII. Go Down, Moses

Joshua Conyers and Isa Apodaca, voice  
Irene Huang, piano

## INTERMISSION

**Village Burial with Fire** (1989)

James Wood  
(b. 1953)

**Tempus Uri**<sup>6</sup> (2025)

Michael Burritt  
(b. 1962)

*World Premiere*

## PERSONNEL

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### EASTMAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Michael Burritt, director

Ryan Cozzolino  
Kai Gray  
Liz Morad  
Grace Tighe  
Lucy Chugh  
Izaiah Gonzales  
Aiden Hughes  
Lexi Kunz  
Ben Landon  
John Dawson  
Sammy DeAngelis  
Jake Kundu  
Makena Mailer  
Michael Lee Smith  
Remy Thomas

Brian Stotz, percussion technician

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Squish It** (2025)

Gordon Stout

*Squish It* is a one movement marimba sextet that evokes the unique harmonic world and rhythmic animation of Gordon Stout's music. The work is quite virtuosic in nature, both in the technical prowess of the individual parts but also in its demanding ensemble density and complexity. *Squish It* is another example of Stout's prolific and lasting contribution to the percussion canon.

—*Michael Burritt*

### **Rain Tree** (1981)

Tōru Takemitsu

Toru Takemitsu's *Rain Tree* is a percussion trio that combines the shimmering sounds of crotales and vibraphone with the delicate droplet-like texture of the marimba to evoke an atmosphere of "water circulating in the cosmos". It is the first in a set of 3 compositions including *Rain Tree* (1981), *Rain Tree Sketch* (1982), and *Rain Tree Sketch II* (1992, in memoriam Olivier Messiaen). The titles of these pieces is from the novel *Atama no ii, Ame no Ki* by Kenzaburo Oe: "It has been named the 'rain tree', for its abundant foliage continues to let fall rain drops collected from last night's shower until well after the following midday. Its hundreds of thousand of tiny leaves - finger-like - store up moisture while other trees dry up at once. What an ingenious tree, isn't it?"

—*Aiden Hughes*

### **Musique de Tables** (1987)

Thierry De Mey

The central element in Thierry De Mey's compositions is movement. *Musique de Tables* (1987) is a representative example of this sense of movement. The composition is for six hands on three tables. The three percussionists have only the table as an instrument and perform various movements with both hands, from simple actions such as "le plat" (striking the table with the palm), "le revers" (touching the surface of the table with the back of the hand), "le trenchant" (a sort of karate chop), "la dactylo" (parallel rubbing motions of the wrists over the table) and "les essuie-glaces" (wiping motions with the underside of the arms) to circular movements and more pianistic techniques such as "arpèges" and "les one-finger-Pianist" (pretending to strike the keys of a piano with a finger, but then in different places on the table). De Mey characterises each action

## PROGRAM NOTES

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with a name and a symbol, adding the complete repertoire of symbols to the score as a kind of legend. The intended variation in sounds is notated by De Mey in a score in which a “staff” is provided for each hand, similar to a piano score. The positions of the hands and the moving figures are a sort of formal language that can be compared with a dance choreography, with the difference that the visual aspect is directly related to the musical and vice versa. With this composition, De Mey explores the boundaries between music and the movement that this music produces and makes audible. It comes then as no surprise that De Mey has collaborated with Belgian choreographers. He has chosen to produce mostly functional music. Since musical principles need to be brought to life in a way which is also useful, De Mey has opted for composing in dialogue with other disciplines. This has resulted in works mainly for dance or film. The composer states that there is a clear starting point for his compositions in these concrete situations: the music must be danceable or useful in the editing of film. During the process of composing, dance and film function as buttress. This goes hand in hand with a scepticism for total serialism – he speaks of “composers who play Tetris with note-duration and pitches” – and other overly-stringent artistic ideas, including psychological or political irritations, philosophical ideas or mystical beliefs.

—*Matrix New Music*

### **A Journey Beyond Time: American Songbook II (2003)**      George Crumb

George Crumb’s *A Journey Beyond Time: American Songbook II* (2003) bears the subtitle “Songs of Despair and Hope: A Cycle of Afro-American Spirituals.” The work sets traditional African American spirituals for voice, amplified piano, and percussion. *American Songbook II* is indicative of the beautiful sound world Crumb creates through his masterful use of percussion throughout his many works. Both the extended techniques and unique instrumentation that goes beyond the western classical norms is on display here. The use of percussion sounds such as *devil chasers* (bamboo sticks that create a buzzing sound), *Appalachian Bones* (wooden spoons creating a castanet like sound) and *prayer stones*, takes the listener on a journey outside the typical classical experience.

—*Michael Burritt*

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Village Burial** (1989)

James Wood

Paul Klee used to refer to his own work as 'abstract with memories'. I hope he will allow me to borrow the term, at least in this instance.

Here the memories are of a Hindu, princely funeral ceremony - for two months the villagers have been making preparations - hundreds have turned out wearing their most lavish and colourful clothes, and carrying offerings of food on their heads. First there is the noisy procession down to the river for purification of the soul, then a short ceremony, and then the vast funeral pyre is set alight. At this moment it seems as though the whole village has exploded into music and dancing - soon, some go into trance. Gradually the physical form of the pyre disintegrates, and the spirit of the deceased is formally set free to mingle with the spirit world. In the evening, when the festivities have moved on to another place, some mourners lament beside the glowing embers.

*Village Burial with Fire* was commissioned by the Hungarian percussion group, Amadinda for the 1989 Arts Council Contemporary Music Network, with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The first nine performances were given by Amadinda during their Arts Council tour of Britain during November 1989 in London, Leicester, Winchester, Cheltenham, Bristol, Manchester, Durham, Sheffield, and Huddersfield.

—James Wood

### **Tempus Uri**<sup>6</sup> (2025)

Michael Burrirt

*Tempus Uri*<sup>6</sup> was commissioned by the wonderful percussion trio, 3D Percussion. They asked for a work that could close a program that was full of energy and virtuosity. *Tempus Uri* means, *Time to Burn* or *Burning Time*, and I believe the music is true to the title. The energy never stops, simmering throughout the work in all dynamic ranges. After hearing the trio version, I was inspired to create a sextet format for the piece, expanding the textures and range of percussive colors.

—Michael Burrirt

## MEET THE ARTISTS

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Grammy-nominated American Baritone, **Joshua Conyers** has been singled out by *Opera News* for his “deliciously honeyed baritone that would seduce anyone,” by *The New York Times* as having “a sonorous baritone” that “wheedled and seduced,” and by *The Washington Post* for having a “show stealing” performance. A native of Bronx, NY, he is known for his captivating performances and recognized as one of the



leading dramatic voices of today. Mr. Conyers has performed with the most prestigious opera companies, symphonies, and concert halls in the world such as The Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, English National Opera, New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, and many others. As a concert soloist and recitalist, he has sung throughout the United States and Europe. His recordings include the Grammy-nominated *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, his debut solo album *A Miracle in Legacy*, *Morgiane, ou, Le sultan d’Ispahan*, and *Bernstein, Gershwin, & Copland: Works*.

Mr. Conyers has a deep commitment to community engagement, giving masterclasses and seminars at several universities and organizations across the United States and abroad. Active in the community, Joshua was a member of the Young Professionals Advisory Board of the Newark Boys Chorus School, mentoring underserved young men of color who find their paths through music. Mr. Conyers is an Assistant Professor of Voice at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. Joshua received his BM in Vocal Performance and Professional Artist Certificate from the UNC School of the Arts/A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute, and his MM in Vocal Performance from Indiana University.

## MEET THE ARTISTS

**Isa Apodaca** is a current senior at the Eastman School of Music pursuing both a Music Education and Vocal Performance degree. Recently, they performed as ‘Amarilli’ in Eastman Opera Theatre’s production of *24, The Cure for Love* and last season Isa was cast as a ‘Niña’ in *Ainadamar*. Isa has also been accepted to many summer programs including, but not limited to, Miami Music Festival, SongFest at Sewanee, and Bel Canto in Tuscany. Last summer, Isa joined Bel Canto in Tuscany to play ‘The Countess’ in Mozart’s *Le Nozze de Figaro* as well as being an ensemble member in Bellini’s *Norma*.



Growing up in Toronto, **Irene Huang** began her piano studies at age three and earned her ARCT Piano Diploma from the Royal Conservatory of Music - First Class Honours with Distinction at age twelve. In 2020, she was accepted as a full-scholarship student to The Phil and Eli Taylor Performance Academy for Young Artists. An active collaborative pianist, Irene has extensive experience working with



instrumentalists and vocalists across a wide range of repertoire. She has served as pianist of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra and the North Toronto Songbirds, performing in recitals, exams, competitions, and ensemble settings with strings, woodwinds, brass, and singers. Irene has appeared at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, Jordan Hall, Roy Thomson Hall, Koerner Hall, and Kilbourn Hall, and participated in festivals including Morningside Music Bridge, Connecticut Summerfest, and Wintergreen Music Festival. She currently studies at the Eastman School of Music under the studio of Dr. Joseph Rackers.

*We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.*

## UPCOMING EASTMAN SERIES CONCERTS

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Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at [EastmanTheatre.org](http://EastmanTheatre.org)

### FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

#### **Steven Doane, cello**

Friday, March 6, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

### EASTMAN PRESENTS – FERNANDO LAIRES PIANO SERIES

#### **Sir Stephen Hough**

Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

One of the most distinctive artists of his generation, Sir Stephen Hough combines a distinguished career as a pianist with those of composer and writer. Since taking first prize at the 1983 Naumburg Competition in New York, Sir Stephen has appeared with most of the major European, Asian and American orchestras and plays recitals regularly in major halls and concert series around the world from London's Royal Festival Hall to New York's Carnegie Hall. In 2014 he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honors in 2022.

### EASTMAN PRESENTS – KILBOURN CONCERT SERIES

#### **SO Percussion**

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

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## UPCOMING STUDENT ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

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All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

#### **Celentano Quartet Award Recitals**

Friday, March 6, 2026 at 4:30 PM & 8:30 PM

Hatch Recital Hall

#### **Eastman School Symphony Orchestra**

Friday, March 6, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre



For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.



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