

# **Percussion Plus**

**Freitag 29. Mai 09  
19.30 Uhr Kleiner Saal**

# Percussion Plus

Studierende der Klasse Prof. Rainer Römer

**George H. Green** (1893-1970)

Valse brillante

**Louisa Marxen**, Xylofon

**Martin Hiendl**, Klavier

**Philippe Hurel** (\*1955)

Tombeau (erster Teil)

**Louisa Marxen**, Schlagzeug

**Hye-Lee Chang**, Klavier (Klasse Prof. Vickers)

**Elliott Carter** (\*1908)

Esprit rude/Esprit doux II

**Louisa Marxen**, Marimba

als Gast: **Merve Karzokoglu**, Klarinette, **Jillian Norton**, Flöte

**Anders Koppel** (\*1947)

Konzert für Marimba

**Agnieszka Koprowska-Born**, Marimba

**Evgenia Vasicheva**, Klavier

**Bob Becker** (\*1947)

Mudra

**Michael Feil**, Solo Drum

**Lucas Dillmann**, **Agnieszka Koprowska-Born**,

**Matthias Lang**, **Nadezhda Rousseva**, Schlagzeug



Xylophone virtuoso **George Hamilton Green** was born in Omaha, Nebraska on May 23, 1893. His grandfather, Joseph Green, was a violinist and violin maker in New York City, but when he moved to Omaha, he became a conductor and baritone horn soloist. George Hamilton Green's father (G. H. Green, Sr.) followed his father in becoming a coronet soloist, arranger, and conductor of the Seventh Ward Silver Cornet Band.



George and his older brother Joseph, also an accomplished xylophonist, began their musical training at the piano. However, they soon convinced their father to purchase them a xylophone, "a small, awkward-looking instrument of two octaves, some of the bars being more narrow than others. It had no resonators and no stand ... [but] it seemed wonderful, the most marvelous thing we had ever seen." The boys soon built a replica so they could both practice at the same time.

George began playing solos with his father's band at age twelve and was playing vaudeville engagements by the summer of 1912. From Chicago, he moved to New York in 1915 and quickly earned rave reviews for "his touch, his attack, his technique, and his powers of interpretation." Praising their new Edison artist in 1917, the *Edison Phonograph Monthly* proclaimed: "Critics who are familiar with the possibilities of the xylophone concede that George Hamilton Green of Chicago is one of, if not the greatest xylophone players in the world."

Photo reproduced from *Composers and Artists whose Art is Re-Created by Edison's New Art* (c. 1920), Thomas A. Edison, Inc. Gerhardt Collection



Photos courtesy James A. Strain

In addition to almost single-handedly inventing xylophone technique, Green developed an extensive popular recital repertoire for the instrument. By 1916, Green claimed a repertoire of nearly three hundred standard overtures, rhapsodies, fantasies, concert waltzes, transcriptions of violin concerto and concert piano pieces. His list of original works includes novelties, salon waltzes, popular dance tunes, a remarkable collection of ragtime tunes – all illustrating his inimitable technique and a highly original musical mind. Many of these works were quickly published and some are still available in modern editions.

George Hamilton Green's recording career began in 1917 with a series of six xylophone solos for Edison, and he remained with the company until 1928. Before their recording careers were over, he and his brother Joe recorded over 150 "sides" as leaders of their own groups, recording under various ensemble names, for all the record labels, including the big three – Edison, Victor, and Columbia. He was able to improvise intricate obbligato lines, as well as highly syncopated novelty ragtime rhythms, both of which give his recordings a great vitality.

With his brother Joe, he was a founding member of the *Green Brothers' Xylophone Orchestra* and the *Green Brothers Novelty Band (Orchestra)*. Their brother, Lewis, born in 1910, joined the *Novelty Band* in 1928 to play banjo and guitar. The Green brothers' xylophone playing and drumming would be heard in the waltzes, one-steps, two-steps, and the fox-trots of a number of top recording bands, including *Earl Fuller's Rector House Orchestra*, *Fred Van Eps quartet*, and the *Yerkes Jazarimba Orchestra*, directed by another popular xylophone player, Harry A. Yerkes. Green also performed with Victor Arden

(piano) and F. Wheeler Wadsworth (alto saxophone) as the *All Star Trio*.

George Green co-authored a correspondence course for marimba and xylophone with Joseph, which they sold by mail order. Each of the fifty lessons cost one dollar. At one time, their correspondence course attracted an international enrollment of over 1500 students. Complete editions of the lessons are now prized among collectors.

George Hamilton Green was a mysterious genius with a complex personality. Toward the end of the xylophone's "Golden Age," he joined the staff of a major broadcasting network, but in the middle of a radio program in 1946, Green put down his mallets and walked out of the studio. Apparently he never played the xylophone in public again.

Nevertheless, he spent another twenty-four years as a productive, creative artist. Always a talented visual artist, his cartoons and illustrations appeared regularly in such journals as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's* until his death in 1970. He was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame in 1983.



Cartoon reprinted from *Leedy Drum Topics* (April 1927)



This information is taken from the liner notes of the Eastman Marimba Band's "Nola" (Mercury Recording SRI 75108, 1976). See also William Cahn's *The Xylophone in Acoustic Recordings*, and other sources collected by Edwin Gerhardt.

Photo reproduced from 1925 *Leedy Xylophones and Marimbas* catalog. Gerhardt Collection



**Anders Koppel**, dänischer Komponist und Musiker, wurde 1947 geboren. Sein Oeuvre umfasst eine große Anzahl an Werken für unterschiedliche klassische Ensembles, darunter die Kompositionen: „Toccata for Vibraphone and Marimba“ (1992) und „Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra“ (1995), die bereits auf der ganzen Welt aufgeführt wurden.

Weiters komponierte Anders Koppel die Musik für 8 zum Teil hoch umjubelte Balletts, und Musik für mehr als 125 Filme, 50 Theaterstücke und 3 Musicals. Zu seinem jüngsten Schaffen zählen die

Werke „Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra“ (2000), „Concerto no. 2 for Marimba and Strings“ (2000) und „Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra“ (2001)

After studying musicology at the Université de Toulouse, and composition and analysis at the Paris conservatory, **Philippe Hurel** carried out research at IRCAM (1985-1989), and received a grant to live and work at the Villa Médicis in Rome. He later returned to IRCAM, where he taught computer music from 1997 to 2001. Recipient of the 1995 Siemens Foundation Prize (*Six Miniatures en Trompe-l'œil*), Hurel was awarded the 2002 Prix SACEM for composers, as well as the 2003 Prix SACEM for premiere of the year (Aura). Formerly artist-in-residence at the Arsenal de Metz and the Philharmonie de Lorraine (2000-02), he has served as artistic director of the Ensemble Court-circuit (under the musical direction of Pierre-André Valade) since 1991. Hurel's works have been performed by numerous ensembles and orchestras, under conductors such as Pierre Boulez, Esa Pekka Salonen, David Robertson, Jonathan Nott, Reinbert de Leeuw, and many others, as well as Pierre-André Valade, with whom he maintains a steady working partnership.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra devoted a workshop/concert to Hurel's work as part of the 2002 MusicNow festival in Chicago, while the BBC Symphony Orchestra performed *Flash-back* in the same year. In March of 2003, the American Speculum Musicae and Argentino ensembles performed several of his works in New York during the Sounds French festival. A featured guest at the 2004 Ultima d'Oslo festival, two of Hurel's latest compositions were premiered by the Bit20 ensemble and the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra during the event, capping a season that included performances of his music by

the Berlin Radio Orchestra. Currently in the works is a cycle of short pieces for solo instruments or duets entitled *Loops*. Hurel's music is edited by Gérard Billaudot, and published by Editions Henry Lemoine. His recordings are available on the Universal label (Contemporary composers) and on Eon (*Flash-back*).

Born on June 22, 1947 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, **Bob Becker** holds the degrees Bachelor of Music with Distinction, and Master of Music (Performance and Literature) from the Eastman School of Music where he studied percussion with William G. Street and John H. Beck, and composition with Warren Benson and Aldo Provenzano. As an undergraduate he was also awarded the school's prestigious Performer's Certificate for his concerto performance with the Rochester Philharmonic. He later spent four years doing post-graduate study in the World Music program at Wesleyan University where he became intensely involved with the music cultures of North and South India, Africa and Indonesia. As a founding member of the percussion ensemble NEXUS, he has been involved with the collection and construction of a unique multi-cultural body of instruments as well as the development of an extensive and eclectic repertoire of chamber and concerto works for percussion.

Becker's performing experience spans nearly all of the musical disciplines where percussion is found. He has been percussionist for the Marlboro Music Festival and timpanist with the Marlboro Festival Orchestra under Pablo Casals. He has also performed and toured as timpanist with the Kirov Ballet and the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra. For several years he toured as drummer and percussionist with the Paul Winter Consort. He has performed and recorded with such diverse groups as the Ensemble Intercontemporaine under Pierre Boulez, the Ensemble Modern of Germany, the Schoenberg Ensemble of Amsterdam, and the Boston Chamber Players. In 2003 and 2004 he performed as percussionist with the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra. He has worked with today's most significant conductors including, among many others, Seiji Ozawa, Zubin Mehta, Christoph Eschenbach, Sir Andrew Davis, and Michael Tilson Thomas. In 1988 he directed and performed in the show *SuperPercussion* at the Tokyo Music Joy Festival, which brought together NEXUS, the Korean percussion group Samul-Nori, drumset artist Steve Gadd, and Ghanaian master drummer Abraham Adzenyah.

His work with African percussion traditions includes study and performance with master drummers Abraham Adzenyah, Gideon

Alorwoye, and Freeman Donkor, as well as with mbira specialist Paul Berliner. In 1986 he traveled to Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, and Kenya as the representative of the World Drums Festival of Expo '86. He was co-founder and the first director of the Flaming Dono West African Dance and Drum Ensemble in Toronto, a group devoted to learning and performing the dance-drumming styles of the ethnic groups in present-day Ghana.

A disciple of Pandit Sharda Sahai, the foremost exponent of the Benares tabla style, Becker began his study of Hindustani music in 1970. He has since appeared with many of India's leading artists including sarangi virtuoso Ram Narayan, sarodist Amjad Ali Khan, composer and flutist Vijay Raghav Rao, and vocalists Lakshmi Shankar, Pandit Jasraj, and Jitendra Abisheki. In addition, he has worked closely with some of the most significant American exponents of Indian classical music - sitarist Peter Row, bansuri flutist Steve Gorn, and sarodist Steve Oda. For several years Row, Gorn, and Becker performed together as the Vistar Trio. Becker made his tabla solo debut in 1982 at the Nagri Natak Academy Concert Hall in Benares, India.

Becker co-founded the percussion group NEXUS, which gave its first performances in 1971 and continues to perform around the world. The ensemble has toured extensively throughout North America, Europe, and Asia, performing in chamber music venues as well as with symphony orchestras, and has recorded over twenty-five CDs. With NEXUS Becker has appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, among many others, and has received the Toronto Arts Award and the Banff Centre for the Arts National Award. In 1999 he and the other members of NEXUS were inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame.

Becker has been a regular member of the ensemble Steve Reich and Musicians since 1973. With this group he has appeared as soloist with the Israel Philharmonic, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic and the London Symphony and recorded extensively for Deutsche Grammophone, EMI and Nonesuch. In 1998 the ensemble won a Grammy award for its recording of Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*. Becker has been a featured performer in all of Reich's percussion music, including *Drumming*, *Piano/Marimba Phase*, *Six Pianos/Six Marimbas*, *Sextet*, and *Nagoya Marimbas*; the large ensemble and orchestral pieces, such as *Tehillim*, *The Desert Music*,



and *City Life*; and also the recent large-scale theater works, including *The Cave* and *Three Tales*.

Generally considered to be one of the world's premier virtuoso performers on the xylophone and marimba, Becker also appears regularly as an independent soloist and clinician. In particular, his work toward resurrecting the repertoire and performance styles of early 20th century xylophone music has been recognized internationally. He has appeared as xylophone soloist at the Blossom Festival, the Eastern Music Festival, the Meadow Brook Festival, the Grand Teton Music Festival and with orchestras and concert bands throughout the United States. Since 2000 he has directed an annual ragtime xylophone seminar at the University of Delaware, Newark, DL, which has attracted an international student body. In 1998 he was concertmaster, marimba soloist, and xylophone soloist with the 164-member Musser Festival Marimba Orchestra, conducted by Frederick Fennell, at West Point, NY. In 2005 he was again concertmaster and soloist with the Clair Musser World's Fair Marimba Orchestra at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Becker has performed and lectured for music departments and percussion programs throughout North America and Europe. His clinics and workshops cover a wide variety of percussion topics including North Indian tabla drumming, West and East African percussion, "melodic" snare drumming, rudimental arithmetic, creative approaches to cymbal playing, and ragtime xylophone improvisation concepts. In 1996 and 2001 he was a Guest Lecturer for the Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta. In the fall of 2002 he was a jurist for the Geneva International Music Competition in Switzerland and in 2005 he was a member of the jury for the International Percussion Competition Luxembourg. He has served as editor for the contemporary percussion issue of the British publication *Contemporary Music Revue* and served for two years on the board of directors of the Percussive Arts Society. For the fall term of 2005 he was appointed Lecturer in Percussion and Director of the Percussion Ensemble at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

Since 1988 he has been associated with the Malletech Company, where he helped design the *Bob Becker Concert Xylophone* as well as a successful line of signature xylophone mallets now used by percussionists around the world. As an endorser for the Sabian cymbal company he has helped design special instruments for applications in symphonic and contemporary chamber contexts, the *Becker Bowing Cymbal* being one result. In 2005 he received Sabian's

Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2006 he was recognized as a “Master Drummer” by the International Association of Traditional Drummers, an organization founded by the legendary rudimentalist John S. Pratt.

Becker's compositions and arrangements are published by Keyboard Percussion Publications and are performed regularly by percussion groups world-wide. He also has a long history of association with dance, and has created music for the Joffrey Ballet in New York, among others. In 1991 he and Joan Phillips were awarded the National Arts Centre Award for the best collaboration between composer and choreographer at Toronto's INDE '91 dance festival. His most recent works include *There is a Time*, commissioned by Rina Singha and the Danny Grossman Dance Company, *Noodrem*, commissioned through the Canada Council by the Dutch ensemble Slagwerkgroep Den Haag, *Turning Point*, composed for the NEXUS ensemble, *Cryin' Time*, a setting of poetry by the Canadian artist Sandra Meigs, *Never in Word* and *Time in the Rock*, settings of poetry by the American author Conrad Aiken, and *Music On The Moon*, commissioned through the Laidlaw Foundation by the Esprit Orchestra in Toronto. Five of his compositions are included on his solo album, *There is a Time*, released in 1995 on the Nexus Records label. In the spring of 1997 he was selected to be composer-in-residence for the Virginia Waterfront International Festival of the Arts which featured the United States premier of *Music On The Moon* by the Virginia Symphony, conducted by JoAnn Falletta, and a concert of his chamber works by his own group, the Bob Becker Ensemble. In April, 2005 he was featured during the 25th Anniversary of the Budapest Spring Festival as guest soloist with the Hungarian percussion ensemble Amadinda in a concert of his own compositions. He is presently finishing work on a book titled *Rudimental Arithmetic*, an in-depth study of the mathematical bases of the rudiments of snare drumming and their applications in composition and polyrhythmic theory.