Student Recital Series

ROBERTO DE LEON
Percussion

“Latinx Voices in Modern Chamber Music”

Assisted by: Joshua Bedeau, bass pan; Jalen Charles, cello pan; Steffi Delgado, voice; Rashunda Dorset-Headley, double seconds; James Gibson, tenor pan; Matthew Kiser, double seconds; Imanol Ruiz, percussion; Melissa Wang, berimbau, bongó, cowbell, percussion; Asa Valenciano, trumpet; and NIU Banda

Sunday, December 5, 2021
11 a.m.
Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Descobertas por pau e pedra (2013) Alexis C. Lamb
Roberto De Leon, berimbau
Melissa Wang, berimbau

Festrio (2001) Alvaro Ponce de León Ruiz
Roberto De Leon, cajón
Imanol Ruiz, congas
Melissa Wang, bongó, cowbell

Yellow: Madness, Sickness and Fear (2021) Melissa Wang
Roberto De Leon, percussion
Melissa Wang, percussion
-Intermission-

Cuando la Caja Repica la Trompeta Suena (2012)  
Carlos Camacho  
(b. 1989)  
Roberto De Leon, snare drum  
Asa Valenciano, trumpet

Mis Muertos Cantan (2003)  
Javier Diaz  
(b. 1976)  
Roberto De Leon, marimba  
Steffi Delgado, voice

Caravan (2014)  
John Wasson  
arr. Roberto De Leon  
Joshua Bedeau, bass pan  
Jalen Charles, cello pan  
Roberto De Leon, drum set  
Rashunda Dorset-Headley, double seconds  
James Gibson, tenor  
Matthew Kiser, double tenor

El Toro Mambo (1978)  
Banda El Recodo  
arr. Roberto De Leon  
Assisted by Banda NIU:  
Nicolas Barrios & Dante Rozatto; voice  
Daniel Burke, Jenny Estrada, & Mitchell Garcia; clarinet  
Nick Basich, Amos Egleston, & Chris Groth, Asa Valenciano; trumpet  
Spencer Mackey, Liam Kantzler, & Hannah Speer; trombone  
Sergio Montiel & Rebecca Ting-Yun Wu; alto horns  
Zephan Drew & Cody Toth; sousaphone  
Roberto De Leon & Alejandra Hernandez; percussion
PROGRAM NOTES

“Descobertas por pau e pedra” was written during my undergraduate degree at Northern Illinois University while doing a semester-long independent research project with my professor, Dr. Gregory Beyer. The focus of the project concerned the history of the berimbau and its possibilities for use in contemporary music. The title of the piece reflects the discoveries that I made while learning about the instrument and how these translated into my own compositions. Two works by Steve Reich, “Clapping Music” and “Six Marimbas,” formed the point of departure for the compositional ideas I present in “Descobertas.” I would like to dedicate this work to Greg as a thank you for all his work with me on this project, as well as his continuous mentoring and encouragement in my percussive endeavors.” – Alexis C. Lamb

*Cuando la Caja Repica la Trompeta Suena* is a work that is a tribute to the rhythms and melodies of marching band styles in Panama. According to Camacho, “it is very important to consider the balance between the two instruments. A fortissimo on the trumpet is not the same as a fortissimo on the drum. Although I use these dynamics to keep track of the energy of the overall musical passage, material can be used to effectively dampen the drum so long as the 'campana' (the rim shot on the snare drum) has tone and resonance. In some of the softer parts, playing at the edge nearest to the drummer can facilitate the movement of the head-campana.”

*Yellow: Madness, Sickness and Fear* reflects the diary of Frida Kahlo, a Mexican artist who enjoyed painting figures. In her diary, she described how she viewed certain colors. One of the lines she wrote was “Amarillo - locura, enfermedad, miedo. Parte del sol y de la alegría.” The translation from Spanish to English is “Yellow: madness, sickness, fear. Part of the sun and of happiness.” This piece for two intermediate percussionists captures Kahlo’s response to the color yellow.

*Festrio* is a piece based on the traditional music of the Peruvian coast, especially the kind known as the “Festejo,” which uses typical instruments such as the cajón, bongo and conga. There are also several improvisatory sections.

*Mis Muertos Cantan* (My Dead Sing) was originally written for piano and mezzo soprano. This version is set for marimba and voice, featuring text in Spanish by the composer. The piece is an ethereal re-interpretation of a traditional South-American style called *zamba* (slow rhythmic and melancholic song style from Argentina).

My arrangement *Caravan* was the same featured in the 2014 film *Whiplash*, with some small changes to the chart and instrumentation. *Whiplash*’s director, Damien Chazelle, is not only a successful filmmaker, but also a drummer. Chazelle takes his experience as a musician to tell a story of a jazz drummer’s attempt at achieving greatness. I wrote this version of *Caravan*
remembering the first time I walked through the halls of the Music Building at Northern Illinois University and hearing the NIU Steelband rehearse in August 2016 as an undergraduate. I knew I needed to make this arrangement at the time and to join NIU Steelband.

_El Toro Mambo_ is performed by _Banda Sinaloense El Recodo de Don Cruz Lizárraga_, or _Banda El Recodo_ for short. It was composed by clarinetist Cruz Lizárraga and was released off their 1978 album _Tambora Sinaloense_. The version Banda NIU plays is an arrangement of mine. The tune features a strong trumpet section introduction, which leads into the mambo section that passes solos throughout the different sections, and finally ends in a 6/8 ranchera feel. Don Cruz Lizárraga was an innovator of traditional Mexican Banda music since he started his group in 1938, which still performs today.

This performance is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Performer’s Certificate.