

# The University of Virginia Music Department

*presents*

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## A Night of Percussion

*Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the  
UVA Percussion Ensemble*

**Directed by I-Jen Fang**

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Saturday, April 5, 2025

8:00 pm

Old Cabell Hall

University of Virginia

# Program

Percussive Main Tenants (2025)\*

Craig Hunter  
(b. 1993)

Canopy (2018)

Mark Panetti  
(b. 1996)

Connectivity (2025)\*

Molly Joyce  
(b. 1992)

I-Jen Fang, *marimba*

~ **Intermission** ~

The Feeling of Coming Home (2017)

Vitor LaBozzetta III  
(b. 1997)

Khamsa (2015)

Judith Shatin  
(b. 1949)

Duel of the Beasts (2025)\*

Charles Meyersberg  
(b. 2005)

Night Songs (2025)\*

Cameron Church  
(b. 1999)

\*World Premiere

# UVA Percussion Ensemble

Directed by I-Jen Fang

Rohan Chowla

Noah Dale

Helen Dunn

Cason Duszak

Ryan Healy

Eva Houston

Shreyans Jain

Emerson Lee

Charles Meyersberg

Luci Nguyen

Connor Rogers

Matthew Rusten

Milen Satish

Nicole Shou

Gabe Silverstein

Rasmi Tangirala

Bri Velasco

Thomas Worden

# UVA Percussion Ensemble Alumni

Leah Baetcke

Cameron Church

Sarah Clements

Kevin Cooper

Jack Engel

Hayden (Aaron) French

Olivia Hale

Nathaniel (Caleb) Hara

Craig Hunter

Laura King

Emily Kinser

Julianna Lee

Gregory Lewis

Coby Lovelace

Steven Moore

Roman Ramirez

Will Simpson

Tyler Smith

Miles Solliger

Shaun Spisak

# About the Director



Described as an “intrepid percussionist” by *Fanfare Magazine*, I-Jen Fang has a career as a solo performer, chamber musician, orchestral player, and teacher. She joined the faculty of the Music Department at the University of Virginia in 2005 and serves as the Principal Timpanist and Percussionist of the Charlottesville Symphony. She received her B.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University, M.M. from Northwestern University, and D.M.A. from the University of North Texas.

I-Jen has performed or recorded with artists such as Keiko Abe, William Cahn, Christopher Deane, Mark Ford, Mike Mainieri, Ed Smith, Michael Spiro, Nanik Wenton, Nyoman Wenton, Attacca Percussion Group, EcoSono Ensemble, Cantata Profana, and Da Capo Chamber Players. She is also a founding member, with Ayn Baliya, of the Piedmont Duo. I-Jen has performed as a soloist in Taiwan, U.S., Austria, France, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and South Africa. She has also appeared as a featured performer at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, PAS Day of Percussion, International Viola Congress, National Flute Association Conference, TechnoSonics Festival, Staunton Music Festival, Wintergreen Festival, and Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival. I-Jen Fang is an Innovative Percussion, Sabian, and Marimba One artist.

# Program Notes

## *Percussive Main Tenants*

*Percussive Main Tenants* is a piece for large percussion ensemble constructed to replicate the musicality and expression of a full orchestra. While an orchestra typically utilizes many percussion instruments, the majority of thematic responsibility usually rests with the strings, brass, and woodwinds. This piece makes use of the timbral contrast between marimba and vibraphone to emulate the passing of melodies between winds and strings, and utilizes tubular bells and piano to mimic the boisterous strength of an orchestral brass section.

The work is a single continuous movement, but is comprised of three sections:

1. An opening Allegro that establishes the main melodic theme in C minor, and introduces some rhythmic and harmonic motifs
2. A middle passage, marked a little slower, which explores a new melody and changes to Ab Major and briefly Db Major
3. A final section that reintroduces the main melodic theme, but in C major, and in compound meter.

The title has two meanings: First, it is a simple pun on the humorous term “percussive maintenance”. Second, it is a dedication to I-Jen Fang and her disciples: they will always be the main percussive tenants at the University of Virginia.

— Craig Hunter

**Craig Hunter** was an undergraduate student at the University of Virginia from 2011 to 2015. While a student, Craig was a percussionist in the Charlottesville Symphony and a member of the UVA Percussion Ensemble. As a composer, he annually contributed a new piece to the UVA Percussion Ensemble, writing to the specific size of the ensemble. Additionally, Craig wrote the original score for two short films which were featured at the Virginia Film Festival. Craig was also an active composer with the Student Video Game Developers club. Craig graduated from the University of Virginia in 2015 with a double major in Computer Science and Music. Since graduating, he has continued to write and arrange music for local schools, ensembles, and independent media projects. Craig now lives with his fiancé Lanna and his dog Albus in Reston, Virginia.

## *Canopy*

A tropical rainforest typically has a number of layers. The forest floor, the bottom-most layer, receives only 2% of the sunlight. It contains decaying plant and animal matter, which disappears quickly, because the warm, humid conditions promote rapid decay. The understory layer is home to a number of birds, snakes, and lizards. The leaves are much larger at this level and insect life is abundant. The densest areas of biodiversity are found in the forest canopy, a more or less continuous cover of foilage formed by adjacent treetops. The emergent layer contains a small number of very large trees called emergents, which grow above the general canopy. Eagles, butterflies, and small mammals inhabit this layer. This piece was first premiered by the UVA Percussion Ensemble on April 17, 2018.

— Mark Panetti

**Mark Panetti** graduated from the University of Virginia in 2018 with a double major in math and computer science. He recorded and performed with the UVA percussion ensemble while completing his undergraduate degree. He has been playing percussion for about 17 years, and he started composing when he was in high school. His musical influences include progressive rock, djent, and concert percussion.

## *Connectivity*

*Connectivity* is a percussion soloist and ensemble work that challenges the traditional relationship between soloist and ensemble. Typically, the soloist plays the more virtuosic and technically demanding part, while the ensemble provides a supporting role. This piece begins by acknowledging that dynamic but gradually reverses it, transforming the soloist into an accompanist to the ensemble. In doing so, *Connectivity* questions conventional musical hierarchies and expectations.

Furthermore, I was honored to compose this piece for percussionist I-Jen Fang and the UVA Percussion Ensemble in celebration of the ensemble's 20th anniversary, commissioned by the University of Virginia. I have long admired I-Jen's theatricality and dedication to her craft and was grateful for the opportunity to explore the vast possibilities of percussion through this collaboration.

— Molly Joyce

**Molly Joyce** has been deemed one of the “most versatile, prolific and intriguing composers working under the vast new-music dome” by The Washington Post. Her work is concerned with disability as a creative source. Molly’s creative projects have been presented and commissioned by Carnegie Hall, GM Europe, TEDxMidAtlantic, SXSW:EDU, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Bang on a Can Marathon, Danspace Project, Americans for the Arts, National Sawdust, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, National Gallery of Art, and in Pitchfork, Red Bull Radio, and WNYC’s New Sounds. She is a graduate of Juilliard, Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Yale, and alumnus of the YoungArts Foundation. She holds an Advanced Certificate and Master of Arts in Disability Studies from CUNY School of Professional Studies, and is a Dean’s Doctoral Fellow at the University of Virginia in Composition and Computer Technologies. For more information: [www.mollyjoyce.com](http://www.mollyjoyce.com)

### ***The Feeling of Coming Home***

*The Feeling of Coming Home* is a percussion octet written in the summer of 2017. The piece can be described as the harmonic equivalent of dipping one’s fingers into cans of paint and smearing all of the colors onto an empty easel. By setting this color palette with a metric grid that slowly becomes transparent over several repetitions of an eight-bar melody, the piece intends to match the feeling one may find upon a long-awaited return to the place they call home. *The Feeling of Coming Home* was written for and premiered by the Eastman Percussion Ensemble at PASIC 2017 in Indianapolis.

— Victor LaBozzetta III

**Victor LaBozzetta III** is a vibrant and charismatic percussionist, composer, and theorist from New York. A consistently engaging percussionist, Victor has performed for (and/or with) numerous composers and performers, including Stuart Saunders Smith, Anders Åstrand, George Lewis, Doug Perkins, Lesley Flanigan, Doug O’Connor, Christopher Deane, James Carter, and Se-Mi Hwang. He has also premiered chamber works by Matt Curlee and John Psathas. And upon their releases, he will appear on two Eastman Wind Ensemble recordings and one Eastman Percussion Ensemble recording. Victor also co-authored a book with his drum set teacher, Justin Gallo, called *A Practical Approach to Understanding Time Signatures*. With both easy and difficult exercises across seven different time signatures, the book is designed for musicians of any age. A Jack Kent Cooke College Scholar, Victor completed his undergraduate studies in Percussion Performance and Music Theory at the Eastman School of Music, studying primarily with Michael Burritt, Rich Thompson, and Henry Klumpenhouwer. Now, as a Jack Kent Cooke Continuing Graduate



Scholar, he is pursuing his M.M. in Composition at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University with Felipe Lara. He is currently working on several projects, including a marimba solo, a percussion suite, and a vibraphone/trumpet duo.

### ***Khamsa***

The title, *Khamsa*, which means ‘five’ in Arabic, refers to an ancient palm-shaped amulet that has been used as a sign of protection against the ‘evil eye.’ It has meaning in all three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, though it predated any of them. During this current time of increased turmoil in the Mideast and beyond, I chose this title, and designed a structure based on the five digits, as a way of expressing hope for better times ahead and for protection for all people against intolerance based on religious creed and ethnicity. Each of the five members of the quintet represents the fingers of the open palm. At times they work in concert, at times there are animated interchanges among them. *Khamsa* was commissioned by the UVA Percussion Ensemble and its director I-Jen Fang on the occasion of their tenth anniversary in 2015, and is dedicated to them.

— Judith Shatin

Composer **Judith Shatin** ([www.judithshatin.com](http://www.judithshatin.com)) is known for both her acoustic and electroacoustic music. Called “highly inventive on every level” by the Washington Post, her music fuses timbral imagination with dynamic narrative design, informed by ongoing collaborations with musicians, artists and community groups. Shatin’s music has been commissioned by organizations including the Barlow Endowment, Fromm Foundation, Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, the Kronos and Cassatt Quartets and the Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Arts Partners Program. It has been featured at festivals including Aspen, BAM Next Wave, Grand Teton, Havana in Spring, Moscow Autumn, Seal Bay, Soundways (St. Petersburg) and West Cork, while orchestras that have presented her music include the National, Houston, Illinois, Knoxville, Minnesota and Richmond Symphonies, as well as the American Composers Orchestra. Shatin has held residencies at Bellagio (Italy), Brahmshaus (Germany), La Cité des Arts (France), Mishkan Omanim (Israel) and in the US at MacDowell, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo. Her music is widely performed and recorded on the Centaur, Innova (two portrait discs), Neuma, New World and Ravello labels. Judith Shatin is William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor Emerita at the University of Virginia, where she founded the Virginia Center for Computer Music.

## *Duel of the Beasts*

This piece is about the brutal fight between a mighty predator and its vulnerable prey. Starting with a quiet, sleeping predator and its prey trying to avoid it, the duel evolves into a startling chase for life, and represents a fierce, natural relationship between these beasts. The coexisting relationship is represented as a Low Tom and High Tom, Marimba and Vibraphone, and groupings of 2s and 3s. Among the chaos, the time signatures of 7/8, and 7/4 represent the number 7, and the constant chance of never knowing the outcome of the duel.

— Charles Meyersberg

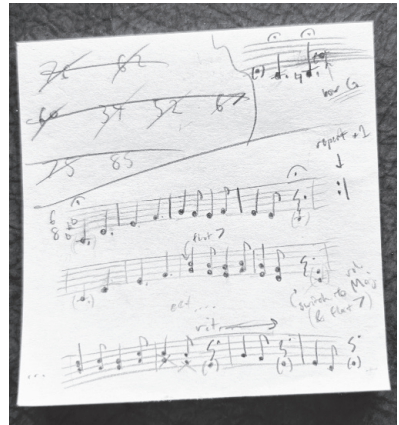
**Charles Meyersberg** is a first year urban planning major from Spokane, WA. He started drum set lessons in 3rd grade and has been playing percussion ever since! Charles especially loves playing marimba, concert snare drum, and drum set. He has enjoyed arranging in MuseScore, and *Duel of the Beasts* will be his first original composition ever being performed! Charles is very thankful to be a part of such an amazing Percussion Ensemble at UVA and that friends get to play awesome music together.

## *Night Songs*

A few years ago my spouse and I got electric toothbrushes. Since then, every night before bed we both go into the bathroom to brush our teeth together. As we do, the tiny motor that powers my brush sends a vibration into my head, soothing my eardrums with a constant tone. Most nights, I really can't help but hum along. On top of that drone, I'll start to hum melodies, what ever comes to mind in my tired state. Not really caring about what comes next or how long I spend on each note,

just following along with whatever feels right. One night, the melody stayed in my head long after I had gone to bed. The song of a passing moment while doing something mundane. I decided to jot down the notes on a sticky pad on my bedside table. A drone. A melody. A harmony. A rhythm. I put my pencil down and fell asleep. That sticky note became the foundation of *Night Songs*.

I tell you that story to highlight something important about melodies: They surround us in every moment — in the car, at your desk, at the dinner



table, and yes, even brushing your teeth. Most are transitory, unnoticed, and unremembered. There's something precious in that fleeting existence. In fact, perhaps this piece can be seen as sacrilegious from a certain viewpoint. Trapping a momentary joy in ink and paper, removing the sacred ephemerality it once held. I can understand that view, but I must say I prefer another perspective. By taking this song, expanding it as I have, and sharing it with you all, it creates a new experience. Maybe for those who hear this piece, on this night, in this place, with these people, they can find comfort in knowing that this one moment exists just here and now. It is unique, but it is not special. Moments like this happen to everyone every day. Take notice, and find comfort in that.

I was thrilled when I-Jen asked me to compose a piece for this concert. I have very fond memories of composing for the Percussion Ensemble back when I was a student. I was especially excited to write for the returning alumni, many of whom I had the privilege to play in the ensemble alongside while we were at UVA and many others I have the pleasure to have my first performance with tonight. This is by far the largest percussion ensemble I have ever composed. With 38 performers in total, our expansion of the performance beyond the stage and into the audience is not only a necessity for such a large group, but also creates a more immersive experience for the audience. Because of its scale, I know this piece is a massive undertaking, and I truly appreciate all the effort each player has put into creating this performance. My hope is that everyone here tonight, both performers and audience alike, will find joy in this piece — joy in this ephemeral experience together.

— Cameron Church

**Cameron Church** is a composer, a performer, and a sound artist. Prior to graduating from the University of Virginia in 2020, Cameron was a member of the UVA Percussion Ensemble for 8 semesters, having 5 pieces premiered by the ensemble in that time. In his exploration of music and performance art, Cameron often performs as a pianist, percussionist, laptopist, and much more. He enjoys using his background in mathematics and computer science to write music which is built around complex systems of interaction between performers. While he loves writing music on his own, Cameron's favorite part of composing is working with fellow performers and composers where he can engage with other creative minds to make something exciting to perform. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with artists and groups including Ben Giroux, Ensemble Dal Niente, Nadia Sirota, the Neave Trio, the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, the Piedmont Duo, Popebama, and many more. He also organized the Compose on the Clock festival at the Peabody Institute as

well as co-founded the DEX Digital Sample Library and the Critical Error Ensemble. Cameron received his B.A. in Music and in Mathematics from the University of Virginia, and his M.M. in Music Composition at Peabody studying under Oscar Bettison, Felipe Lara, and Sky Macklay.

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## *Special Thanks To:*

All my students over the past 20 years. Because of you, my passion for teaching has only grown stronger every year. Thank you so much for sharing your musical talents with me and allowing me to nourish them. Thank you for your dedication, your care, and your smiles. Making music with you and seeing you grow have been the most cherished moments during my time at UVA.

The Mead Endowment for your continuing support over the years and supporting the festivities during this reunion weekend.

The Department of Music and all the students, interns, and volunteers who made this performance possible.

*This is an Arts Enhancement Event supported by the Office of the Provost & the Vice Provost for the Arts. This event is also supported by the Eleanor Shea Music Trust*

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