

**Garrett Mendelow “*singing to his craft...*”**

*February 27th, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.*

*Conrad Prebys Music Center, Experimental Theater*

***Elanga N’Kake (singing to his craft...) (1993)***

**James wood (b.1953)**

Marimba/quarter-tone extension, set up percussion, and voice

***Homework I (in the Garage) (2008)***

**Francois Sarhan (b.1972)**

Body percussion and voice

***falling into place... (2017-2020)***

**Garrett Mendelow (b. 1989)**

Fretless zither, Indian tabla, metallic percussion, voice, and electronics

***Atlas Vocalis I (2019)***

**Rodrigo Bussad (b. 1985)**

Multiple percussion, voice, and electronics

***Elanga N'Kake (singing to his craft...)*** by James Wood was inspired by a live performance of the Zairean musician, *Elanga N'Kake*. His performance at London's South Bank Centre during the programmed series 'Music of the Royal Courts' and was quoted by James as "one of the most touching and memorable musical performances I have ever had the good fortune to hear." The musician's performance utilized the Mbira (which was tuned in a microtonal fashion) and the voice, which the musician used to communicate a story about him and his friend the blacksmith while also creating a variety of sounds in a "rapped parlando" vocal style with minimal tonality. Though there was not much singing, and the language itself was not understandable to a majority (if not all) of the audience, the vocal slurs and sounds of the language in combination with the micro-tonal Mbira and the theatrical storyline created a compelling performance. The piece is scored around a 5 octave marimba and a quarter-tone row of additional marimba bars. Around the marimba are two Chinese toms, a bamboo simantra, two almglocken, a low woodblock, a small prepared tambourine, a Thai gong, a Djembe, and a sandboard attached to the bass frame of the marimba. Additionally, the performer plays on the prescribed set up whilst vocalizing, whistling, and acting throughout the work. The spoken text itself incorporates linguistic elements from multiple languages. With the exception of select moments in the work, the words formed are given meaning not through what is said, but rather how it is said. Because James Wood constructs the piece around a set of seven character sketches, and thirteen different emotions, theatrics perpetuate the direction of the composition. The emotions are constantly changing, and gradually turn from one character sketch to the next. Resulting in an open-ended storyline that is left to the discretion of each audience member to interpret.

***Homework I (in the garage)*** by Francois Sarhan is a work written for solo body percussion and voice, and this the first part of a three movement work. Through a groove-oriented body percussion part and a rapped vocalization, the performer tells a story of a person building a machine in the garage. However, the person in this story is constantly finding the pieces do not fit together as planned, and even when they finally do, the builder becomes trapped in the machine, and the piece transforms into an agitated and desperate effort on behalf of the performer to escape. "Performing this work reminds me a lot of my own attempts to construct an instrument or to fix something around the house. I will be stubborn and presumptuous in thinking that I do not need directions or visuals of some sort, and then I will run into a dead-end, or finish the project only to realize later that I have forgotten an important piece or element."

***falling into place...*** by Garrett Mendelow is written for a Japanese-speaking percussionist. In addition to tuned pipes, crotales, and Indian tabla, the percussionist must also play a fretless zither with live reverb and delay over a pre-recorded track. The text for the piece is a re-translated and re-interpreted realization of select writings by the Japanese author, *Haruki Murakami*.

ORIGINAL TEXTS in English:

"Every one of us is losing something precious to us.

Lost opportunities, lost possibilities, feelings we can never get back again.

That's part of what it means to be alive." (From *Kafka on the Shore*)

"Humans by necessity must have a midway point between their desires and their pride.

Just as all objects must have a center of gravity." (From *A Wild Sheep Chase*)

"Our hearts are not stones.

A stone may disintegrate in time. And lose it's outward.

But hearts never disintegrate." (From *After the Quake*)

"If you listen carefully, you can hear these things.

If you look carefully, you'll see what you're after." (From *Dance Dance Dance*)

"At my core, there is nothing.

Neither is it parched wastelands.

At my core, there is love." (From *IQ84*)

(continued)

*"I wanted to communicate some of the most profound lessons I had learned in the last years of my twenties. Haruki Murakami's words resonated with me so well during this time period, and I wanted to transform these words for my own speaking purposes so that the friend I lost could hear them somehow, and know that I've fallen into place."*

**Atlas Vocalis I** by Rodrigo Bussad was a recent commission by Garrett Mendelow for his upcoming album, *"singing to his craft..."* The text material of the piece was inspired by the book *Pauliceia Desvairada* from the Brazilian writer *Mario de Andrade*. This collection of short poems take the reader into a sort of delusional and carnivalesque state, having the city of São Paulo as its protagonist. The vocal and theatrical parts in the piece capture this mental and emotional state. The word "São" implies several meanings, such as "saint" (more specifically to reference Saint Paul, who is the protector of the city of São Paulo), or to be "sane." The word "Anhagabau" (Anyagabauh), is a Native South American word that means "filthy river." It was also the name of a river in São Paulo city that was covered up, and as a result, gave birth to one of the most iconic neighborhoods of the state capital. Below is a complete chart of texts used in the composition:

WORDS	TRANSLATION
SÃO*	SÃO
MÃO	HAND
CORAÇÃO NA MÃO	THE HEART IN THE HAND
MÃO NO CORAÇÃO	THE HAND IN THE HEART
VIRA VOZ	TURN INTO VOICE
VIRA REI	TURN INTO KING
MEU PAI FOI REI	MY FATHER WAS KING
FOI, NÃO FOI	WAS, WAS NOT
MEU PAI FOR A BURGUES	MY FATHER WAS BOURGEOIS
PAULISTAMENTE	IN THE SÃO PAULO FASHION
O REI MENTE	THE KING LIES
REI PAULISTA	THE PAULISTANIAN KING
ANHAGABAU**	ANHAGABAU*
ES REI!	WAS KING!
OLHA O REI NU!	LOOK AT THE NAKED KING!
O ANHAGABAU ERA RIO	THE ANHAGABAU WAS RIVER
UM RIO PROFUNDO	A DEEP RIVER
RIO IMUNDO	FILTHY RIVER
MUNDO	WORLD
DLOROM***	DLOROM**
VIRA SOM	TURN INTO SOUND
O REDONDO SOM DLOROM	THE ROUND SOUND DLOROM
INSPIRAÇÃO****	INHALE/INSPIRATION***
O REI FOR A CORAÇÃO	THE KING WAS HEART
APLAUSOS! OLHA!	APPLAUSES! LOOK!

## Garrett Mendelow



“A great groove, clarity, and awareness of the ensemble.” Garrett Mendelow is an up and coming percussionist from the United States. Though his interest in percussion extends to many different facets of the art, he dedicates much time to contemporary percussion performance practices and new music in both solo and chamber settings.

In the last decade, Garrett has appeared in national and international venues throughout North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and regions of the Asian continent. Venues include the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, Hill Auditorium, the Vienna Muziekverein, and the Salzburg Großes Festspielhaus. Major festival appearances include the Cross-Linx Festival (2014), the Tromp Percussion Festival (2014), the Transplanted Roots Festival (2015), and the International Society for Performing Arts convention in New York (2017). He is currently undergoing the recording of his first solo album,

*“singing to his craft...”* which features works for a solo vocalizing percussionist.

As an educator, Garrett has given master classes at major universities throughout the world, such as the Académie Supérieure de Musique de Strasbourg, the Conservatory Van Amsterdam, the Sydney Conservatory of Music, the Victoria University of Wellington, and the Tainan National University of the Arts. He has also had the privilege of working with many accomplished composers such as James Wood, Matthew Burtner, John Psathas, Gareth Farr, and Braxton Blake. As a collaborator, Garrett has appeared with the Britten Sinfonia and Colin Currie, the Cedar Rapids Symphony Orchestra and Jason Richard Huxtable, Schlagwerk Den Haag, Sō Percussion, and the Knights Chamber Orchestra of New York.

Garrett is an endorser of Pearl Drums, Adams Musical Instruments, Innovative Percussion, and a composing artist of Edition Svitzer Publications.