A SENIOR RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED BY

Philip Thomas

PERCUSSION

THE MUSICALITY OF A PERCUSSIONIST
Solo piece for timpani with piano accompaniment..............................by Mervin Britton
accompaniment by Susan Zimmer

_A Minute of News_ .................................................................by Eugene Novotney

_Interlock_ .............................................................................by R.K. LeVan

_Sonatina in G major Movement 2_ ...........................................by Ludwig Van Beethoven

_Tear Drops_ ............................................................................by Mitchell Peters

**INTERMISSION**

_Pocket Groove_ .............................................................by Philip Thomas and Jamar DeShields

_Exodus_ ...................................................................................by Philip Thomas and Charles Smith

_Giant Steps_ ............................................................................by John Coltrane

**PROGRAM NOTES**

_Eugene Novotney_. American composer (b. 1960), experienced jazz, classical and symphonic repertoire as a young child but soon became heavily influenced of the Motown sound of rock-and-roll. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, he chose to continue his studies at the University of Illinois where he was awarded the Edgar Varese Percussion Award for outstanding achievement. Novotney was the first recipient of the Krannert Debut Solosists Award, sponsored by the Center of Performing Arts in Illinois. The purpose of the competitive award is to recognize the student soloist closest to a professional career. Novotney has traveled with the Balckstone Magic show, a tour of _A Chorus Line_, and played for the Florence Henderson and Jim Nabors special.

_Mitchell Peters_ is former principal timpanist and percussionist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. He has composed well-known pieces for the marimba such as _Yellow After the Rain_ and _Sea Refractions_; it is said that these works were composed because Peters felt that there was a lack of musically interesting material that would introduce his students to four-mallet marimba techniques. Several of his snare drum and timpani etude books are in common use as well. He began his career in the army orchestra. He later was principal percussionist of Dallas Symphony before taking the principal percussion position in the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1969. When principal timpanist William Kraft retired in 1981 to pursue his career as a composer, Peters stepped up to assume the role as timpanist, a position he occupied through the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s 2005/2006 season. During his tenure as timpanist, he took the
position as Professor of Percussion at the University of California, Los Angeles. He continues to teach at UCLA where he gives private lessons to students and leads the UCLA Percussion Ensemble.

**John William Coltrane** (1926-1967) was an American jazz saxophonist and composer. Working in the bebop and hard bop idioms early in his career, Coltrane helped pioneer the use of modes in jazz and later was at the forefront of free jazz. He was prolific, organizing at least 50 recording sessions as a leader during his recording career and appearing as a sideman on many other albums, notably with trumpeter Miles Davis and pianist Thelonious Monk. As his career progressed, Coltrane’s music took on an increasingly spiritual dimension. His second wife was pianist Alice Coltrane, and their son Ravi Coltrane is also a saxophonist. He influenced innumerable musicians and remains one of the most significant tenor saxophonists in jazz history. He received many awards, among them a posthumous Special Citation from the Pulitzer Prize Board in 2007 for his “masterful improvisation, supreme musicianship and iconic centrality to the history of jazz.”

**The Philip Thomas Group** was formed through a conversation with the director of student activities at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Philip Thomas. The idea was to have a jazz café-like setting that students and faculty could enjoy together, as well as further spread the heritage of the American musical art form known as jazz. Since that time the group has expanded to playing engagements locally and on the Western Shore due to the belief: “No limits. No boundaries.” Depending upon the venue you could hear music ranging from blues, jazz, fusion, R&B and gospel. Through this group’s appreciation and love for music, they hope to become the next generation of well-rounded musicians.

**MUSICIAN BIOGRAPHY**

Philip Thomas is a native of Wilmington, DE, and Cleveland, OH. Thomas’ first musical experience was in church, hearing the organ, bass, and drums work together so well where they could pull some of the greatest emotions and reaction out of people peaked his curiosity. He started playing drums in church and from there began to build a foundation for (at the time) drum vocabulary. Progressing through school Thomas never received any private instruction but looked to his fellow upper class men in high school to help him reestablish the fundamentals. After finishing high school, Thomas attended the University of Maryland Eastern Shore where he began to study with Ted Nichols. Under the instruction of Nichols, Thomas began to understand how to become a musical percussionist and drummer. While playing in the jazz band at UMES under the direction of John R. Lamkin II, Thomas began to understand jazz and how to incorporate it in with the other styles to better play gospel music. After transferring to Salisbury University, he played in the jazz band under the direction of Jerry Tabor. The preparation received from UMES only help to propel Thomas’ playing to the next level. Thomas has had the pleasure of performing with Wynton Marsalis, Wycliffe Gordon, Steve Turre, Bilal, Dr. Donald Bryd, Dr. Larry Ridley, John R. Lamkin III, Onjae Allen Gumbs and Chris Vadala. He also has been given the opportunity to record with artists Colleen Clark, Suzanna Mallow and Hope Holeman.
SPECIAL THANKS

 Philip Thomas offers the following thank you:

 Philip thanks God for putting in him something that he valued so much that he entrusted in men and now passed to him the power of music. Philip also thanks his parents Jimmy and Yolanda Thomas, Zachary Thomas, Jocelyn Lamkin (My Heart), UMES Music Department, SU Music Department, his mentors from Cleveland, The Philip Thomas Group (David, Jamar, Aaron, Johnny, Mike, Virgil, Stanley)—he greatly appreciates you guys—and Ms. Zimmer for your great musical gifts and Mr. Nichols for all of your percussion and life instruction.

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