

# LYNN VARTAN & SHALINI VIJAYAN: VIOLIN/MARIMBA DUO



## *Project Muse* Guide – October 2009

This presentation will focus on music for the unique instrument combination of marimba and violin. Percussionist Lynn Vartan and Violinist Shalini Vijayan perform works from composers William Kraft, David Jones, and Eric Sammut.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ABOUT LYNN VARTAN & SHALINI VIJAYAN



Lynn Vartan and Shalini Vijayan, together known as 61/4, have been performing together since 2002. Lynn Vartan, percussion, is an active performer and educator who is an advocate for diversity in music. She specializes in commissioning and performing new music. Lynn performed with the Tambuco Percussion Ensemble on Southwest Chamber Music's new 3-CD release of William Kraft's *Encounters* and *Complete Chamber Works of Carlos Chávez, Volume 3*, which was nominated as Best Classical Album for the

2005 GRAMMY Awards. Lynn is currently the Director of Percussion at Southern Utah University. Shalini Vijayan, violin, is a prominent performer and collaborator in music ranging from the Baroque period to the present. Currently Shalini is a full-time member of the Pacific Symphony Orchestra. She is also an advocate of modern music and fulfills this role as Principal Second Violin of the New York based Absolute Ensemble, which she helped found.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ABOUT SOUTHWEST CHAMBER MUSIC

GRAMMY® Award-winning Southwest Chamber Music has been bringing PROJECT MUSE in-school performances to schools throughout Los Angeles County since 1994 with music that reflects the vast diversity of art music from around the world. We perform throughout the year in venues throughout Los Angeles County, including the Armory Center for the Arts, The Colburn School, and a summer festival at The Huntington Library.



## FEATURED COMPOSERS



**William Kraft (b. 1923)** has had a long and active career as composer, conductor, percussionist, and teacher. He served as chairman of the composition department at UC Santa Barbara. From 1981-85, Mr. Kraft was the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer-in-Residence, during which time he founded and directed the orchestra's performing arm for contemporary music, the Philharmonic New Music Group, which continues to this day as the Green Umbrella series. Mr. Kraft had previously been a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 26 years; eight years as percussionist, and the last 18 as Principal Timpanist. Mr. Kraft has received numerous awards and commissions. Southwest Chamber Music has recently released new 3-CD set of Mr. Kraft's *Encounters*. He resides in Altadena, California. The piece

featured today, *Encounters X*, was written in 1992 and intends for the marimba to "attain a range of expressivity as equal to the violin as possible."

**David Jones (b. 1958)** grew up in Seattle, Washington where he began his musical studies on the clarinet at the age of six. Later, he studied the saxophone and piano, performing with the Seattle Youth Symphony, Seattle Civic Light Opera and various school ensembles before turning to composition during his high school years. Since then, he has received over eighty performances of his music in Paris, New York, Boston, Seattle, St. Paul, Salt Lake City, Nashville, San Antonio, Radford (VA), Keene (NH), Potsdam (NY), and at the Tanglewood Festival and New England Music Camp. Mr. Jones holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition from the University of Washington and a Master of Music in Composition (with Academic Distinction and Performance Honors) from New England Conservatory where he studied with Malcolm Peyton, William Bergsma, William O. Smith and John Rahn.

**Eric Sammut (b. 1968)** was born in Toulouse, France, where he studied piano and percussion and became known for his musical abilities at an early age. His varied musical experiences have led him to appreciate music of all genres, from that of Bach and Mozart to jazz and rock. After his studies at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Musique de Lyon he became the First Percussionist at the Opera. His passion for the marimba emerged during this period, as he found a new musical and technical approach to the instrument. In 1995 he won the "Leigh Howard Stevens International Marimba Competition" and toured the USA, performing concerts and conducting masterclasses. Since then he has given recitals in France, Europe, and Asia, as well as the USA, gaining recognition as an international artist. He now serves as First Timpanist of the Orchestre de Paris and teaches marimba at the Conservatoire de Paris. Specializing in the art of improvisation, his scope of musical interactions ranges from Bach to Cole Porter and from Prokofiev to Edith Piaf. Sammut has also become one of the foremost composers of music for the marimba and actively promotes the instrument throughout France and all of Europe.



## ABOUT THE MARIMBA AND CLASSICAL MUSIC

The marimba originated in Africa and has an early history in Latin America. It was brought to the United States in the early 1900s by Guatemalan Marimba bands. Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, improvements to the marimba have made it even more beautiful-sounding, with a richer and warmer tone and a lower, more expansive range. This evolution has made the instrument more accepted as a soloist in the classical world, and an exciting option for composers.

Until recently, very few classical performers specialized in the marimba. It began appearing as a solo instrument in the 1940s. With little of its own repertoire, performances consisted of mostly transcriptions of music written for other instruments. 20<sup>th</sup> century composers such as **Pierre Boulez**,

**Karlheinz Stockhausen**, **Olivier Messiaen** and **Steve Reich** composed for marimba in both solo and chamber works. With more of its own repertoire, the marimba gained popularity among musicians in the 1970s. Artists such as Japanese marimba player **Keiko Abe** became inspiration for younger musicians to focus on the instrument. Now the marimba is celebrated by numerous virtuosos, festivals and international competitions.

Many jazz vibraphonists have also played the marimba. Check out artists such as **Bobby Hutcherson**, **Dave Pike**, and **Gloria Parker**. Also hear the electrically amplified marimba and vibraphone in experimental rocker **Frank Zappa's *Mother's of Invention***. **Evelyn Glennie**, the first full-time solo professional percussionist in 20<sup>th</sup> century western society, is another artist to become familiar with. Glennie is profoundly deaf, and always performs barefoot in order to hear with other parts of her body.

### The evolution of the modern concert marimba:



To learn more about Southwest Chamber Music and our programs, visit [www.swmusic.org](http://www.swmusic.org) and find us on Facebook.

## **Musical Vocabulary** (from the California Standards for the Arts)

**DYNAMICS** are various degrees of volume in the performance of music, such as loud and soft.

**EXTENDED TECHNIQUES** are unconventional, unorthodox or “improper” techniques of playing musical instruments, in order to expand and explore the possibilities of different instruments.

**IMPROVISATION** is the spontaneous creation of music.

An **INTERVAL** is the distance in pitch between two tones.

**MALLETS**, unwrapped or wrapped, are used on a marimba, vibraphone and other instruments with softer keys. Mallets have heads of kelon, nylon, acrylic or other medium-hard materials wrapped in softer materials like yarn, cord or latex.

**MARACAS** are a musical instrument consisting of two hollow containers, usually wood, filled with beans or small stones, which are shaken to provide the rhythm.

The **MARIMBA** is a musical instrument in the percussion family. Keys or bars (usually made of wood) are struck with mallets to produce musical tones. The keys are arranged as those of a piano. The modern marimba was developed by Japanese and American builders based on the Hispanic-American traditional marimba.

A **MELODY** is an organized sequence of single notes.

The **METER** is the grouping of beats by which a piece of music is measured.

The **PERCUSSION FAMILY** includes all musical instruments that are played by being struck.

**PONTICELLO** is a string instrument technique where one plays on the bridge of the instrument to achieve a special effect.

**RHYTHM** is the combination of long and short, even and uneven sounds that convey a sense of movement in time.

**SCORDATURA** is an alternate tuning used for the open strings of a string instrument. It is an extended technique used to allow the playing of otherwise impossible melodies, harmonies, figures, chords, or other note combinations.

A **SCORE** is the written form of the entire composition. All players have a part of the score for their instrument, unless they have memorized the notes.

**SOUND PERCEPTION** is how you interpret what you hear and where you hear it.

The **STRING FAMILY** (also called **Chordophones**) is the group of instruments that uses strings to produce sound. The strings are made of gut, steel, or nylon. Stringed instruments can be played with a bow- a long stick that has horsehair attached to it, or they can be played by plucking or strumming the strings with the fingers.

The **TIMBRE** is the tone color or character of sound heard.

The **TONALITY (KEY)** is the tonal center of a composition.

**TREMOLO** is a shaking sound which is achieved by repeating the same note extremely quickly or by playing two notes very quickly, one after the other.

**TUNING** is to adjust a music instrument to the desired frequency or pitch.

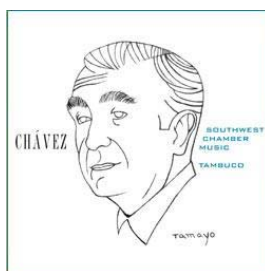
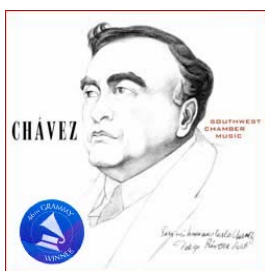
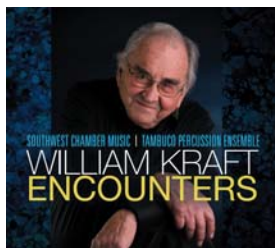
The **XYLOPHONE** is a musical instrument in the percussion family which probably originated in Indonesia. It consists of wooden bars of various lengths that are struck by plastic, wooden, or rubber mallets. A Xylophone is pitched an octave higher than a Marimba.

## Look for Southwest Chamber Music Recordings on



Itunes, [www.classicsonline.com](http://www.classicsonline.com), & [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com)!

Check out Lynn Vartan and Shalini Vijayan's performances in Volume 3 of Southwest Chamber Music's *Complete Chamber Works of Carlos Chávez*:



### Continue Learning with these Internet Resources:

For more information on *Lynn Vartan and Shalini Vijayan*, visit:

[www.myspace.com/sixtyonefour](http://www.myspace.com/sixtyonefour)

[www.lynnvartan.com](http://www.lynnvartan.com)

[www.marimba1.com/artists.html](http://www.marimba1.com/artists.html)

For more information on our *featured composers*, visit their websites:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Kraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Kraft)

For more information on *the Marimba*, we recommend these links:

[www.marimba.org](http://www.marimba.org)

[www.lafi.org/magazine/articles/marimba.html](http://www.lafi.org/magazine/articles/marimba.html)

[www.classicalmarimba.com](http://www.classicalmarimba.com)

[www.tambuco.org](http://www.tambuco.org)

To try to create your own composition at

[www.creatingmusic.com](http://www.creatingmusic.com)

Another excellent interactive website for kids with *information about instruments* is [www.playmusic.org](http://www.playmusic.org)

To learn more about Southwest Chamber Music and our programs, visit [www.swmusic.org](http://www.swmusic.org) and find us on Facebook.

Become a Fan

facebook

For more information, and to access exciting educational videos and podcasts:  
1.800.726.7147 or visit our website [www.swmusic.org](http://www.swmusic.org) or find us on

facebook

## Come to Our Concert!

See Preview of our program at the Guadalajara FIL Arts Festival in Mexico, featuring works by:  
Alexandra du Bois, John Adams, Carlos Chavez, and Aaron Copland.



Monday, November 16 @ 8 p.m.

at

**The Colburn School**

200 S. Grand Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90012

\$38 general admission, \$28 senior, and \$10 student



Southwest Chamber Music's educational programs are funded in part by the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Amphion Foundation, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund, B.C. McCabe Foundation, California Arts Council, The Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation, City of Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division, The Cultural + Planning Group, D'Addario Music Foundation, Dept. of Cultural Affairs – City of Los Angeles, Fletcher Jones Foundation, Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, Green Foundation, Henry Family Fund, James Irvine Foundation, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Los Angeles Philanthropic Committee for the Arts, Metropolitan Associates, National Endowment for the Arts, Pasadena Arts League, Pasadena Educational Foundation, Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts, Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation, Supervisor Michael Antonovich, U.S. State Department, Wells Fargo Foundation.