

Timber

Cross//Hatch

Jan Serr Studio – Kenilworth Square East
Thursday, February 24, 2022
7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Timber (2011)

Michael Gordon

In this memorable evening presented by both Chamber Music Milwaukee and MKE Unplugged, Cross//Hatch presents the Milwaukee premiere of Michael Gordon's stirring evening-length minimalist score for six amplified simantras (2×4's), *Timber*. The work is a meditation on sound and rhythm, bringing the physicality, endurance, and technique of percussion performance to a new level. It is often characterized as a hypnotic musical experience comprised of rough natural timbres, ever-shifting rhythmic crosscurrents, and hovering overtones that fuse in and out of phase, like the splatter of uneven rainfall on a flat roof.

Partnering with [Revitalize Milwaukee](#) (additional information below) to perform on recycled deck posts, warehouse rafters, and framing lumber from their projects in the Milwaukee community, this performance of *Timber* ponders the human relationship with wood as both a natural resource in need of sustainable conservation and as a tool for social justice to provide basic necessities, such as shelter and accessibility for those in need.

For this performance, Cross//Hatch is Andy Miller, Alex Wier, Colin O'Day, DeLane Doyle, Aaron Gochberg, and Paul Westfahl. They are joined by visual artists Natalie Derr and Nicki Gamroth.

PROGRAM NOTES

I began working on Timber in 2009 at the invitation of the Dutch-based dance group, Club Guy & Roni, and the percussion ensembles Slagwerk Den Haag and Mantra Percussion. I had written many orchestral works over the decade, beginning with Decasia in 2001 up to Dystopia in 2007, and I wanted to clear my mind of pitches and orchestration.

For that reason, I decided early on that Timber would be for non-tuned percussion and that each percussionist would play one instrument only. I thought of composing this music as being like taking a trip out into the desert. I was counting on the stark palette and the challenge of survival to clear my brain and bring on visions.

I imagined that the six instruments would go from high to low, and that, through a shifting of dynamics from one instrument to the next, the group could make seamless and unified descending or ascending patterns. After working on rhythmic sketches with Mantra Percussion in early 2009, I went to Amsterdam in June to workshop my ideas with Slagwerk Den Haag. I had the plan but I was searching for the right instruments.

After some experimentation, Slagwerk's Fedor Teunisse brought out a set of wooden simantras. These slabs of wood, which looked like standard building materials from a lumberyard to me, had a gorgeous sound. It was distinct enough so that the clarity of the percussive hits could be heard, and was also extremely resonant, producing a complex field of overtones. With inspiration from this discovery, I returned to New York to finish the music for Club Guy & Roni's extravaganza 'Pinball and Grace,' which premiered in October of 2009.

—Michael Gordon

Revitalize Milwaukee

Revitalize Milwaukee is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose goal is to reduce social, economic, and environmental disparities by providing free home repairs throughout Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. We are the largest provider of home repairs to eligible homeowners in Southeast Wisconsin and the only one that provides them for *free*. While we directly impact individuals and families, we also improve economic stability by keeping long-term, existing homeowners in their homes. This stabilizes neighborhoods and the tax base paid to the city. Over time, health and safety issues develop from the inability to pay for repairs and other necessary services. Without our free services, many Milwaukee residents would suffer serious injuries or even be forced to move out of their homes that they've lived in for over 30 years.

We employ 15+ City of Milwaukee licensed and insured minority contractors on a yearly basis, providing sustainable wages and helping the local economy. We operate on an annual budget of \$2.1 million dollars. Each dollar received is leveraged approximately 4:1, creating a total reinvestment of \$20 million dollars back into the community. Over 97% of our funding comes from private sources (grants, corporations, and individuals).

Cross//Hatch

Cross//Hatch, an emerging Milwaukee-based percussion group, draws inspiration from the visual art technique of crosshatching – shading through the use of intersecting lines – and explores the deeper shadings, nuances, and expressions made possible through the interweaving of individual artists to create a collaborative and compelling musical vision. With a core membership of Alex Wier, Andy Miller, and Colin O'Day, the ensemble is a collective of percussionists committed to engaging regional audiences with high-quality performances of contemporary chamber music and inspiring young musicians through interactive educational programs. Cross//Hatch has performed on the Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra virtual chamber concert series, the Percussive Arts Society Wisconsin Day of Percussion, and at the UWM Jan Serr Studio featuring a program that explored the collision of distinct sonic worlds through an interwoven collection of resonant metals, found sounds, and thundering drums.