



*"When you base your expectations only on what you see,  
you blind yourself to the possibilities of a new reality"*

*-Zaheer*

**We would like to thank the Houghton College administration for its  
faithful support of the Greatbatch School of Music.**

***Shirley A. Mullen***, President

***Jack Connell***, Provost and Dean of the Faculty

***Vincent Morris***, Chief Financial Officer

***Greatbatch School of Music Faculty, Staff, and Administration***

M. Jerome Bell, a student of Dr. David Hanner, is performing this recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Music degree in Composition.

As a courtesy to the performer and your fellow audience members, please be certain that all cell phones, watch alarms, and pagers are either turned off or set for silent operation. Flash photography can be very disconcerting to performers and is not permitted during the performance. Thanks for your cooperation.

# HOUGHTON COLLEGE

GREATBATCH SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

## M. Jerome Bell

composition

in

### Graduate Recital

Assisted by

Dillon Hirsch, *alto sax*

Arthur Ward, *bass*

Shehan Rodrigo, *drum set*

Ian Riley, *percussion*

Kira Browning, *viola*

Hannah Messerschmidt, *piano*

*The Bravada Quartet*

Recital Hall

Center for the Arts

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

8:00 p.m.

Program

## Drum Shed

### Drum Shed

M. Jerome Bell  
(b.1993)

Dillon Hirsch, *alto sax*  
Jerome Bell, *piano*  
Arthur Ward, *bass*  
Shehan Rodrigo, *drum set*  
Ian Riley, *tom-tom*

### What Does It Mean to be a Black Art Musician?

Jerome Bell, *black art musician*  
Hannah Messerschmidt, *piano*

### Sax 'n' Beats

Dillon Hirsch, *alto sax*  
Jerome Bell, *pen percussion*

### For Viola

- I. Introduction
- II. Hymn
- III. Drum Shed of Praise
- IV. Groove

Kira Browning, *viola*

### When The Clarinet Is Alone

- I. Aloneness
- II. Prayer
- III. Waiting
- IV. When?!
- V. Drum Shed of Praise

Jerome Bell, *clarinet*

### The Struggle of the String Quartet

- I. Jazz Club
- II. Church
- III. Beats

Hannah Hijleh, *violin I*  
Cassie Harrison, *violin II*  
Anna Philbrick, *viola*  
Steven Thomas, *cello*

### The Uncertainty of Two Pianists

Jerome Bell, *piano*  
Hannah Messerschmidt, *piano*

# DRUM SHED

## Program Notes

The *Drum Shed* series is a genre that I have explored and created as I attempted to implement the drum shed technique into the context of art music. A traditional 'drum shed' gathering utilizes a virtuosic playing style within the African-American church tradition—especially with the use of drum sets. In my original piece *Drum Shed for Solo Piano*, I attempted to emulate the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic language that musicians within the African-American gospel church tradition are accustomed to. *Drum Shed for Solo Piano* was then the base inspiration to implement this style in other compositional work written for solo and chamber genres. The Drum Shed Opus attempts to reflect several elements of African-American music.

### **Drum Shed (2017)**

My overall goal for this composition was to simulate a real drum shed. This is achieved by utilizing an improvisatory and aleatoric approach, which enables the performers to add freely to the session. In keeping with the tradition of a typical drum shed, the performers have not rehearsed beforehand. Again, this experience is supposed to be improvisatory and "in the moment." Most natural drum sheds are not planned and happen sporadically. This simulation attempts to capture this idea. Before a traditional drum shed session, the facilitator states something along the lines of:

*"Okay, there's been no rehearsal, we gonna shed—like a real shed. There will be no retakes. No do overs..."*

### **Drum Shed: What Does It Means to be a Black Art Musician? (2017)**

What does it mean to be a black art musician? Well, let's brainstorm...

### **Drum Shed: Sax 'n' Beats (2017)**

This work incorporates minimalistic elements while maintaining the Drum Shed technique by utilizing 'pen percussion'. This composition opens with the solo saxophone, which represents elements of the human voice. The motivic ideas presented at the beginning of this work are then incorporated into the "groove" section. The primary goal of this work was to emulate the beats and rhythms of today's Pop, RAP, and Hop-Hop styles—significant elements that influence modern-day drum sheds.

### **Drum Shed for Viola (2015)**

The first, third, and fourth movements of this work are similar in nature in that the motivic material derives from real drum sheds. Throughout these movements there is a persistent polyrhythm, and an ostinato groove that serves as the ground bass and driving force while the melodic material around it acts as the "improvising" instruments. The second movement is in sharp contrast as it is inspired by the black church hymn. This second movement is meant to be sweet and lyrical.

### **Drum Shed: When the Clarinet is Alone (2017)**

Most pieces within in the Drum Shed Opus are similar in nature: rhythmic and filled with unyielding energy. Even though this newly-established genre attempts to replicate many styles within African-American practice (such as Jazz, Hip-hop, RAP, and Black Gospel), there are many elements within the African-American practice that have been overlooked while developing this genre, such as lyricism, asymmetric rhythms, and musical embellishment out of time. The most recent addition to this collection, *Drum Shed: When the Clarinet is Alone*, attempts to highlight these otherwise absent elements by providing music that appears embellished or improvised—rather than music meant to establish a groove.

This work in particular attempts to capture the struggle in feeling alone within the context of the Christian faith. The title of each movement serves as a guide to highlight the struggle that may transpire when attempting to communicate with God. For instance, in the second movement *Prayer*, there is a moment of uncomfortable silence. This represents the silence we hear from God when it seem like we need Him most. Regardless of the circumstances, our God deserves all of our praises—this is the primary message of the final movement.

### **Drum Shed: The Struggle of the String Quartet (2016)**

This work is meant to reflect the struggle between the spiritual and the worldly realms. The motivic materials from the first and last movements are derived from actual rap songs and jazz harmonies that attempt to emulate the day-to-day struggles in an urban setting, whereas the motivic material from the middle movement is derived from the famous “Doxology” hymn tune. This dichotomy between the spirit and the world reflects the struggle of my own spiritual walk, as it is sometimes difficult to see God in the midst of the pain that takes place in the urban setting.

### **Drum Shed: The Uncertainty of Two Pianists (2016)**

This is a piece that exists out of time for me personally, and even though *Drum Shed for Solo Piano* was my first composition in this style, *The Uncertainty of Two Pianists* was actually the piece I conceived in my head when wanting to create this style. Early in my college career, I heard a musician who had mastered the art of improvisation in the Gospel and Jazz idioms. During a performance, he asked members of the audience to suggest random pitches to him, which he then used to create a whole piece based on a motive that included those random pitches. *The Uncertainty of Two Pianists* is inspired by that motive juxtaposed with a motive derived from a musical setting of “Uncertainty of a Poet” by David Thomas.