

PERELMAN THEATER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

7:30 PM

FRESH INK

Bang on a Can All-Stars
with special guest **Glenn Kotche**

Bang On A Can All-Stars

Robert Black, bass

David Cossin, percussion

Mark Stewart, electric guitar

Caroline Stinson, cello

Ning Yu, piano and keyboards

Evan Ziporyn, clarinets

Jody Elff, sound engineer

Special Guest

Glenn Kotche, percussion

Program

Michael Gordon

Julia Wolfe

David Lang

New Work

Lick

Sunray

—Intermission—

Glenn Kotche/Steve Reich

Steve Reich

Clapping Music Variations

Music for Pieces of Wood

(For Drums—arr. by David Cossin)

David Cossin and Glenn Kotche, drums

Glenn Kotche

Glenn Kotche

Mobile

Snap

Snap was commissioned by Carolina Performing Arts at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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JULIA WOLFE

Lick

I see music as something other than presentation. Each piece is its own world that I've found a way into. It starts from an emotional place—not sentimental or an expression of an emotion—but connected to the spirit. I begin with an image—a fragment of a tune, a visual or sonic image—a joyous, active, rhythmic thing that unravels like a little knot. To really make a piece and not just piece things together, you have to be less attached to every moment and stand back and let the music go how it wants to go. It's a funny combination of intuition and construction. Lately I have been veering more towards the power of sound. There's an insistence, a feeling of pushing things to the edge, and there's a certain kind of groove, a dance quality. The body energy of pop music has come into my music and it's definitely in *Lick*. Motown, funk, rock. This is the music I grew up on—listening, dancing to it. It has a certain kind of freedom to it. *Lick* has a lot of meanings and the piece has to do with all the meanings you can think of. It's saucy and it has an edge. It's impatient; although it stays with things for a long time, it hammers at them. I took a fragment, a lick, and magnified it. And the beat is split up by all the players, so it becomes fragmented, a fragmented energy. The piece is about attacks, but it has a more sensual side. I really thought about the Bang on a Can All-Stars when I wrote it because I wanted to see them lock in with this intense energy. It's definitely over the top.—Julia Wolfe

DAVID LANG

Sunray

I started thinking about writing a piece called *Sunray* last year, while in residence at MASS MoCA. Last summer, my family was staying in the MASS MoCA artist's housing in North Adams, which is next door to the SUN cleaners. Every morning I would wake up, make a cup of coffee, and stare out the window at the rays of the sun on the cleaner's big sign. Even on rainy mornings I woke up to the rays of the sun. It is dedicated to my father, Daniel Lang, on his 80th birthday.

GLENN KOTCHE/STEVE REICH

Clapping Music Variations

Almost all of the elements in this piece were inspired from Steve Reich's 1972 duet for hand clapping, "Clapping Music." I was fascinated by the rhythmic complexity of something so compositionally simple and pure. I used the negative rhythm of each part separately and in

tandem. I used rhythmic stand posts, treating each line as musical phrase independent of meter, and then used the rhythm of the first, second or third notes of each phrase exclusively. I assigned pitches to the original pattern and let the melodies evolve in the same manner that the rhythms of the original evolve. I used the two parts independently of each other and utilized them in retrograde and half time. The spaces of the original patterns are the sole indicator of when elements of the variations are dampened or left sustained. I took liberties with the number of repetitions of each pattern, letting some of the variations overlap.

STEVE REICH

Music for Pieces of Wood (for Drums)

The original version of *Music for Pieces of Wood* was written for claves. Tonight's version is arranged for drums by David Cossin.

"Reich was born in New York in 1936 and, while growing up, studied music with special focus on percussion. Among his composition teachers were Darius Milhaud and Luciano Berio. Intertwined with his traditional studies was a budding interest in the music of other cultures. Reich is one of several highly successful minimalist composers of his generation along with Terry Riley, Phillip Glass, and Frederic Rzewski. This piece, *Music for Pieces of Wood*, is a fine example of how something of interest can be made with only basic elements. Pitch is involved in the tuning of the claves, but after the piece is launched, that parameter fades more to the background. To understand the piece, imagine listening to a kaleidoscope. A pattern is established, then it shifts as with the click of the kaleidoscope. There are 58 shifts of pattern within a general 10 minute time frame. Three general sections comprise the overall form. Each section employs an additive progression to build density and is linked to the neighboring section by the underlying quarter note laid down by the first clave player."—Joe Holmquist

GLENN KOTCHE

Mobile

All three parts of this piece are based on three interlocking kalimba melodies, utilized in various voices, positions and contexts. Their relationships are constantly changing just like the pieces of a mobile sculpture. The drums from Parts 2 and 3 come from these melodies. Part 1 finds each note of the melody eventually replaced with a sustained tone of the opposite rhythm, its shadow, revealing the unintentional rhythm of the spaces, that is, the rhythm of what isn't there.

GLENN KOTCHE

Snap

A couple of years ago while recording the Wilco record *Sky Blue Sky*, I began immersing myself into the music of the Stax record label. *Sky Blue Sky* was a more soulful and stripped down record than its predecessors in an attempt to capture the sound and feel that we get as a group while performing live. The sessions relied on the sound of the whole band recording together at the same time in the same space without the use of digital technology. The focus for me, as the drummer, became to establish the perfect feel or groove for each song while leaving enough room for the other five musicians in that setting. The feel that I was going for in my playing harkened back to a different time when many rock drummers were actually jazz or gospel drummers who also played rock and roll to make a better living. Hence, there is an inherent swing in the grooves—a buoyancy that is missing in much of the rock music of the last 20–30 years. I thought there was no better place to research and absorb this great feel than the performance-oriented recordings of one of the most important cultural institutions of popular music of the last century. Stax was a studio, a record store (Satellite Record Shop), a record label and ground zero for Memphis music during the '60s and '70s. The music produced was a raw, gritty brand of soul, blues, and proto-funk with an edge not found in the music of its main rival of time—Motown. The key to the groove of many of the Stax hits was its rhythm section—the racially mixed Booker T. and the MGs.

Although Stax recording artists were primarily African American, the company, its musicians and most importantly—its audience—was ethnically split. This music was equally appealing to both blacks and whites. Stax was an ideal model of real integration in the south and proof of what amazing results could be produced when people simply worked and played together towards a common goal.

When the Bang On A Can All-Stars asked me to compose a piece for them I thought it might be fitting to tap my love of the Stax music for this most rocking and stylistically adventurous of new music ensembles. While listening to the music of Stax, I was particularly drawn in by a few specific characteristics besides the feel. One of these was the liberal use of horns—oftentimes in place of background vocals. The horns provide the hooks in many of these songs and their unison lines took the place of where instrumental solos might ordinarily occur in a song. I was also

struck by the prevalence of the bottom end in many of the recordings. Besides great bass lines—the drumming tends to be grounded through both repetition and by leaning on more of the earthy sounds on the kit to establish the groove as opposed to relying on the ride cymbal as is common in jazz. Another factor contributing to this sound is that the vocals are more in the middle of the mix instead of being out front and louder than the instruments as is commonplace in pop music.

I began to contemplate transposing drum grooves to other instruments by parceling out the various voices of the drum kit to the unique instrumentation of the All-Stars. I also thought it might be interesting to transfer some of the horn lines into drum grooves. This started me on a path of choosing a handful of tunes that would become my source material or inspiration to draw upon in the writing of *Snap*. Sometimes more general elements were chosen—like tonal centers or formal structures—and sometimes more specific things were chosen like the rhythm of a certain guitar part or the rhythm of the knocks from *Knock on Wood* which begin the piece. I took elements from some of the songs that resonated the most with me and then by employing a variety of techniques, expanded and developed them—eventually molding it all into the piece you'll hear today.

The songs chosen included selections from: Otis Redding, the Staple Singers, Isaac Hayes, Sam and Dave, Booker T. and the MGs and Eddie Floyd. Although *Snap* bears no audible resemblance to these songs, my goal was for it to retain the vibrancy, groove, power, and beauty of this music. The homage is apparent in the title, which was chosen from the snapping fingers of the Stax logo.