

Todd Meehan
Percussion/School of Music

Commissioning a Double Percussion Concerto by Composer Jonathan Leshnoff

The creation of new music is one of the most important endeavors of the contemporary classical musician. While classical music is at times thought to be an "old" art, there is currently a vibrant world of composers and performers collaborating to create what will become defining works of this musical era. The commissioning process is one in which an individual or organization petitions a composer to create a new musical work. While the composer serves as the creator of the music with pen and paper (or in today's world, computer), the work does not fully come to life until it is put in the hands of a performer. Most major musical works performed as standard repertoire by today's orchestras and opera companies were the result of this commissioning process. From Mozart's operas to Haydn's London Symphonies, the commissioning process has enabled history's greatest composers to produce new musical masterpieces.

The purpose of this research project is to commission composer Jonathan Leshnoff to write a Double Percussion Concerto for orchestra and percussion duo (two percussionists). Dr. Leshnoff is an internationally acclaimed composer and Associate Professor of Music at Towson University in Maryland. He has agreed to write the Double Percussion Concerto for the Meehan/ Perkins Duo (Todd Meehan and Doug Perkins). The work will be completed by September 1, 2011 and will receive its initial performances during the 2011-2012 academic year. The Round Top International Festival-Institute's Texas Festival Orchestra, the Baylor Symphony Orchestra, the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, and the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra have already committed to performances and additional organizations will be brought into partnership over the coming months. Dr. Leshnoff's music has been called "a diaphanous orchestral fabric of beautiful transparency" by the Kansas City Star and he has received commissions from such prestigious organizations as the Philadelphia Orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic, among many others.