



EVENT PROGRAMME

NEW SOUNDS 2026: TOM FOOLERY WITH PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Friday, 13 March 2026

Windsor Building Auditorium

with

Royal Holloway Percussion Ensemble

Dr Thomas Wagner Director

Dr Will Shüler Narrator

There will be a short rest break during this evening's event

Estimated event finish time: 9.45pm

Please no flash photography or visual/audio recording throughout the event.

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PROGRAMME NOTES

ROBERT CLAYSON

Skylights

Skylights is inspired by looking up at a clear sky during a pitch-black night and seeing all of the stars across the night sky. I can't really explain why, but I have always imagined stars "sounding" metallic, so I chose to use only metal instruments for the ensemble.

Composer's Note © Robert Clayson

STEVEN WULFF

Taiko á la Tom Tom

Taiko á la Tom Tom is written for an ensemble of four pitched drums. The composition mimics a marching band drumline, where the drums' rims are struck to provide colour and resultant rhythms emerge as rhythmic fragments are passed between drums.

Tom Wagner

JOSH WALKER

Chaos Supreme

Chaos Supreme has a fast pace, a singable melody, and a feature for everyone in the ensemble. Composed as a teaching piece, the runs and rhythms are simple enough for inexperienced percussionists to perform while the tempo still presents challenges to ensemble playing.

Tom Wagner

KEVIN ROBLES

Stand Music

Stand Music is a fun piece that features simple rhythms that intertwine and overlap to hint at a marching band drumline feel but in a percussion ensemble setting. It is geared towards programs with students who want to venture into the percussion ensemble world, but it can also be a fun choice for professional ensembles looking for novelty music. Although the score features only three parts, the piece is accessible to any number of performers.

Composer's Note © Kevin Robles

JOHN WILLMARTH

Beware the Jabberwock

with Will Shüler (Narrator)

Beware the Jabberwock is a programmatic piece for percussion that depicts the events in Lewis Carroll's famous poem Jabberwocky. The poem tells the tale of an epic battle between a boy and the vicious creature known as the Jabberwock. Originally included in the 1871 novel *Through the Looking Glass*, Jabberwocky is widely considered one of the greatest examples of the "literary nonsense" genre. Carroll's creative use of wordplay in the poem has become so ingrained in pop culture that many words such as chortled, galumphing, and vorpal have become part of the English language. *Alice in Wonderland* remains Carroll's best-known work which has stayed in print since it was originally published in 1865.

Composer's Note © John Willmarth

SHORT BREAK

10 minutes

TYLER TOLLES

Twenty-Four

The inspiration and source material for 'Twenty-Four' is from Taps, a military bugle call sounded during a military funeral which honours the deceased. The call is comprised of twenty-four notes and organized into eight sets of three-note phrases. The primary rhythmic motor underpinning this work is based on sextuplets in 4/4 time, of which there are twenty-four. The number also frequently appears in the subtle dynamic phrases as well as the macro- and micro-rhythmic architecture of the work.

Composer's Note © Tyler Tolles

CHAD HEINY

Undisclosed

'Undisclosed' is a modern homage Michael Colgrass's Three Brothers. Like its inspiration, Undisclosed features three soloists out front and six performers in the back, all using similar yet modernized instrumentation. The piece is completely through-composed and has a relentless, exciting forward motion.

Composer's Note © Chad Heiny

WES STEPHENS

Tom Foolery

Tom Foolery is similar to Taiko á la Tom Tom in its drumline-esque compositional approach. In this case, hocket rhythms emerge between from the accented notes each drummer plays. A further homage to drum corps visuals can be seen at the end, when the drummers play each other's instruments.

Tom Wagner

ZACH PARIS

Cascade

‘Cascade’ is a contemporary work for percussion quintet that fuses elements of both Japanese Taiko drumming and atonal improvisation. The piece was written for the Yellowstone Summer Music Camp hosted at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming, and its title is derived from the cascading waterfalls common to the Yellowstone region. The power of these turbulent waterfalls is often contrasted by tranquillity both above the cascade and below. This piece showcases these waterfall characteristics through powerful and tranquil possibilities of percussion instruments. Much like water, the aleatoric improvisation sections allow each rendition of this piece to have its own unique character.

Composer’s Note © Zach Paris

JIM CASELLA

Technology

‘Technology’ was written in 1998 for a high school district music festival in Fremont, California. The piece was learned in one day by beginning and intermediate students who had never played together before. It was then to be performed for a large audience that same evening. The “techno”-style groove was composed to motivate percussion students of the 90’s, giving them something they could relate to while still in a concert percussion ensemble setting.

Composer’s Note © Jim Casella

PIERO UMILIANI (ARR. CHRISTOPHER M. RETSCHULTE)

Mah-Ná Ma-Ná

with Owen Ward (Bass) and James McPhearson (Trumpet)

Mah-Ná Ma-Ná was composed for the Italian mondo film Sweden: Heaven and Hell (1968). It first gained popularity in English speaking countries as the soundtrack to the repeated cold-open sketch during the 1969-70 season of The Red Skeleton Show. Today, the tune is best known for its use in the premier episode of The Muppet Show in 1976.

Tom Wagner

THE PERFORMERS

ROYAL HOLLOWAY PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

This Percussion Group Ensemble is led by percussionist and ethnomusicologist Dr Tom Wagner. Students will explore the sounds and rhythms for an array of percussion instruments. This is a free-form ensemble in which all types of percussionists welcome (tuned/untuned, kit specialists, varied genres, etc.)

Adam Addison
Rafe Bennett
Will Bishop
Pheobe Bonnar
Jack Brooke
Bernadette Chin
Katie Cuppage
Anna Davis
Livia Domaingue
Marlene Everling
Charlotte Farrugia
Luke Gore
Alice Grant
Ben Hall
Jacob Halls
Tom Hyatt
Kate Kiriakidis
Hannah Lam
Jacinta Lam
Joshua Li
Sophie Lockley
Phedra Low
Nicole Yuen
Jamie Mura
Dusan Novakovic
Luca Parr
Will Relf
Ewan Shayshutt
Arren Szabo

Ben Theobald
Hsin-Hsang Tong
Reece Walker
Rachel Whiting
Sandali Widyaratne
Theo Wolstenholme



WILL SHÜLER

NARRATOR



I am an Associate Professor in Drama and Theatre Studies. My research and teaching is focused in the areas of performance pedagogies, teaching and performance-making with new technologies (AR, VR, MR, VP, AI), and Queer theatre/Greek tragedy. I have recently submitted a manuscript for my actor-training book *An Actor's Guide to New Technologies*, contracted with Bloomsbury. Recent articles I have written include topics such as understanding Greek tragedy through the lens of queer desirous gaze in my *Theatre Research International* article "The Athenian Male Gayze: Desire and Spectatorship in Ancient Greek Tragedy" and about queer casting practices through the lens of string theory, multiple universe theory, and queer temporality for *Studies in Theatre and Performance* titled "A Queery of Everything: Queer-Conscious Casting and Multiverse Dramaturgy". I have also published book chapters on higher-education role-immersion games in relation to the pedagogic theories of contemporary French philosopher, Jacques Rancière "The Emancipated Educator: Chance, Will, and Equality in Higher Education Role-Immersion Pedagogies," *Rancière and Performance* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021) and the educative functions of ancient Greek choral training qua military training "The Greek Tragic Chorus and Its Training for War: Movement, Music and Harmony in Theatrical and Military Performance," *War and Theatrical Innovation* (Palgrave, 2017).

I have received funding to develop several educational projects around new technologies in teaching and performance-making. My work on the funded development of a web-based Augmented Reality (AR) toolkit for distance teaching and performance-making (ARStorydecks) resulted in being shortlisted for the prestigious Times Higher Education Innovative Teacher of the Year Award (2022). I shared some of my findings in an article for *THE "Augmented Reality in Teaching: Key Challenges and How to Overcome Them"* (2022). I was also the lead on a funded project to develop an actor-training toolkit for onboarding on Volume LED Virtual Production film sets (2022). I regularly contribute theatre reviews to *The Conversation*.



Department of Music

Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

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19 March 2026

Folk Around the World with String Society

20 March 2026

Swing into Spring with Undergraduated

26 March 2026



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