



NAXOS

Alrich • Jenkins • Rorem

CONCERTOS FOR Mallet INSTRUMENTS

Evelyn Glennie, Percussion
City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong
Jean Thorel



ALRICH • JENKINS • ROREM

Concertos for Mallet Instruments

This compilation of concertos for mallet instruments features percussion virtuoso Dame Evelyn Glennie and City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong in a world premiere recording of Alexis Alrich's *Marimba Concerto*, and mallet works dedicated to Dame Evelyn Glennie by Sir Karl Jenkins and the Pulitzer prize-winning composer and diarist Ned Rorem.

Alexis Alrich (b. 1955): **Marimba Concerto** (2004)

My music is influenced by American minimalism, Asian music and Western classical and folk music. In 2010 Dame Evelyn Glennie and City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong gave the Asian premiere of my *Marimba Concerto*. It was first played in 2004 by the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra. Technical advice from American percussionist Matthew Cannon, the marimba soloist, was invaluable in the development of the piece. The *Concerto* has also been performed by Gwendolyn Burgett Thrasher and the Michigan Philharmonic conducted by Nan Washburn. Composed in three movements and characterised by bold rhythms, colourful orchestrations and an air of exuberance, the *Marimba Concerto* is highly demanding for the soloist and fully exploits the technical possibilities and sound palette of the five-octave marimba. The opening *Con moto* with its string tremolos and whispering wind motifs provides an atmospheric entrance for the solo marimba. A set of variations follow, including a duet for marimba and bassoon, passages for four mallets and a charming waltz with harp accompaniment leading to an exhilarating cadenza for the solo marimba. The middle *Lento* movement starts with a gently pulsating theme that recurs between contrasting sections, including one in Mexican folk style. The final *Energico*, with its relentless and driving main theme, climaxes with a multi-layered, Asian-inspired chorale. The work culminates with a toccata-style cadenza for the soloist followed by a brilliant orchestral flourish.

Alexis Alrich

Karl Jenkins (b. 1944): **La Folia** (2004)

Sir Karl Jenkins is one of the most performed composers in the world today. Defying conventional categorisation, his style and integrity has transcended musical boundaries and includes jazz-rock with Soft Machine, the 'cross-genre' phenomenon *Adiemus*, soundtracks for Levi's and British Airways and a score for a movie featuring Kiefer Sutherland. His work *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* has been performed up to 3,000 times and the recording has remained in the UK classical charts for 17 years. Knighted in 2015, Sir Karl Jenkins has been hailed as the most popular living composer by Classic FM's 'The Ultimate Hall of Fame', and praised by *Classic FM Magazine* for his approach to composing that is 'perfectly in tune with the spirit of the times.' His composition *La Folia* for marimba and strings was commissioned by IMG Artists for Dame Evelyn Glennie, who gave the first performance with the City of London Sinfonia conducted by Nicholas Ward in 2004. Originating from the 15th century, *La Folia* is a musical framework, comprising a melody above a passacaglia-esque chord progression. A famous set of variations was published by Arcangelo Corelli in 1700, and interpretations persist into the modern day, as this offbeat arrangement into a concerto for the marimba demonstrates. Adhering to his Baroque source, Jenkins sets the quietly sedate statement of the theme as a mellow marimba solo, before the embellished variations take on contrasting characteristics, and increase in intensity. The marimba performs a cadenza in a final display, before a return to the calm of the opening theme.

Jane Downer

Ned Rorem (b. 1923): **Mallet Concerto** (2003)

American composer Ned Rorem studied orchestration with Virgil Thomson and composition with Aaron Copland and Arthur Honegger in New York. He worked in Morocco and Paris, where he was associated with the cultural circle of Francis Poulenc. During his career he held teaching positions at the Universities of Buffalo and Utah, and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In 1976 he won a Pulitzer Prize for Music for his *Air Music: Ten Etudes for Orchestra*. Rorem is most widely recognised as a latter-day master of the art song, having composed hundreds of outstandingly effective settings of lyric poetry for solo voice and piano. His music is intrinsically vocal, noted for its tonal and lyrical qualities, rich orchestration, rhythmic imagination and combination of unusual timbres. Commissioned for the Scottish virtuoso percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, Ned Rorem's *Mallet Concerto* highlights the contrasting resonances of four different types of pitched mallet instruments displayed in its seven movements (i.e. vibraphone, glockenspiel, marimba and xylophone). Solo vibraphone interjects its thematic pattern periodically throughout the opening movement, entitled *A Beginning*. *Another Minotaur* features a dynamic role and cadenza for the glockenspiel. In *Back and Forth*, the marimba is adopted, playing a repetitive sequence and a legato melody. Rorem presents diverse themes for the xylophone in *A Xylo-Waltz*, accompanied by some rippling triplet sections for the orchestra. The marimba returns in *Let Me In*, its wooden tones effectively portraying 'knocking at the door'. The themes of *Tag* are alternated between the glockenspiel and solo instruments of the orchestra. In *An Ending* Ned Rorem uses musical material from the first movement and suggests vibraphone or chimes as the solo percussion instrument. Dame Evelyn Glennie has chosen the vibraphone in this recording.

Jane Downer

Dame Evelyn Glennie



Dame Evelyn Glennie is the first person in musical history to successfully create and sustain a career as a full-time solo percussionist. As an eclectic and innovative musician and composer, she is constantly redefining the goals and expectations of percussion. Her diverse collaborations include performances with Björk, Bobby McFerrin, Sting, Mark Knopfler, The King's Singers and Béla Fleck. She has performed as soloist with many of the world's major orchestras, and took a lead role in the opening ceremony to mark the 2012 Olympics in London. Dame Evelyn Glennie has commissioned over two hundred new works for solo percussion from many of the world's most eminent composers. She has made over forty solo recordings, three of which have received GRAMMY awards. A motivational speaker and educationalist, she has written a best-selling autobiography, *Good Vibrations*, and a book entitled *Listen World!* dedicated to teenagers. Her stance on sound was captured by the renowned film director Thomas Riedelsheimer in his film *Touch the Sound* and through her hugely popular TED talk. She has received over ninety international awards, including an Order of the British Empire (OBE), Dame Commander (DBE) and the Companion of Honour.

www.evelyn.co.uk

City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong



City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong (CCOHK) enjoys a unique position as one of Asia's leading chamber orchestras. The orchestra has performed with world-class artists including Dame Evelyn Glennie, Sir James Galway, Christian Lindberg, Sarah Chang, Branford Marsalis, Richard Galliano and Sir Neville Marriner. CCOHK has made its mark on tour in Italy, Taipei, Shanghai and Beijing, and in internationally acclaimed recordings with Danish recorder virtuoso Michala Petri and Argentine bandoneon master Daniel Binelli. *Bug Symphony*, CCOHK's fully staged musical, won the Public Choice Award at the 2017 YAM Awards in Portugal. From 2008 to 2016 Jean Thorel served as chief conductor and was succeeded by Vahan Mardirossian in 2019.

www.ccohk.com

Jean Thorel



French conductor Jean Thorel was awarded the Vocation Foundation Prize. As a guest conductor he has performed with the Royal Chamber Orchestra of Wallonia, Ensemble Quartz, Musiques Nouvelles in Belgium, Athelas Sinfonietta, the Danish Chamber Players, Percurama Copenhagen, the Bolshoi Theatre Percussion Ensemble, So Percussion in Washington, the Copenhagen Royal Ballet, Musica Vitae in Sweden, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Aarhus and Odense Symphony Orchestras, the Russian National Orchestra, the EOS Repertoire Orchestra in Beijing, the National Light Orchestra in Shanghai, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, the Nice and Marseille Philharmonic Orchestras, and the Hilliard Ensemble, among others. From 2008 to 2016 he was chief conductor of City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong and led numerous concerts with world-class artists. An impassioned promoter of new works and rare music, he has given 700 world premieres and has appeared regularly at major festivals of contemporary music. Jean Thorel's discography includes a recording of works by Louis Saguer with the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble which won the 2002 Académie du Disque Lyrique Orphée d'Or prize.

www.facebook.com/jean.thorel.conductor

This compilation of concertos for mallet instruments features triple GRAMMY Award-winning percussion virtuoso Dame Evelyn Glennie and City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. Alexis Alrich's *Marimba Concerto*, a rich amalgam of bold rhythms and exuberance, also explores Mexican and Asian-inspired music. Sir Karl Jenkins traces the 15th-century tune *La Folia*, furnishing it with refinement and strongly characterised intensity. Ned Rorem's *Mallet Concerto* highlights the contrasting resonances of four different pitched mallets in music of drama and dynamism.

CONCERTOS FOR MALLET INSTRUMENTS

	Alexis Alrich (b. 1955): <i>Marimba Concerto</i> (2004)*	32:57
❶	I. Con moto	11:08
❷	II. Lento	9:49
❸	III. Energico	11:48
❹	Karl Jenkins (b. 1944): <i>La Folia</i> (2004)	11:15
	Ned Rorem (b. 1923): <i>Mallet Concerto</i> (2003)*	26:33
❺	I. A Beginning	3:32
❻	II. Another Minotaur	5:24
❼	III. Back and Forth	3:36
❽	IV. A Xylo-Waltz	3:18
❾	V. Let Me In	4:42
❿	VI. Tag	2:12
⓫	VII. An Ending	3:36

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

**Evelyn Glennie, Glockenspiel ❹ ❿, Marimba ❶–❹ ❼ ❾,
Vibraphone ❺ ⓫, Xylophone ❽**

City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong • Jean Thorel

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