Tonight’s performance includes music composed collaboratively by the members of Third Coast Percussion, interwoven with pre-existing music by American composers Philip Glass (arranged by Third Coast) and Jacob Druckman, and traditional music of the Shona people of Zimbabwe. The music composed by Third Coast Percussion accompanies the 1966 film *Paddle to the Sea*. The other works are performed with newly created video art by Joseph Burke.

“Please Put Me Back in the Water”

The protagonist of Holling C. Holling’s 1941 children’s book *Paddle-to-the-Sea* is a small wooden figure in a canoe, lovingly carved by a Native Canadian boy. From the Nipigon Country north of Lake Superior, the figure travels for years through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway out to the Atlantic Ocean and beyond, encountering a variety of people, creatures, and environments along the way. Indeed, these encounters make the long journey possible—rather than keeping “Paddle” for themselves, those who find the figurine choose to send him further along the waterways, perhaps with a fresh coat of paint or a new rudder.

In building a performance project around this story, the four members of Third Coast Percussion composed music together as a team to perform live with the 1966 film adaptation of *Paddle-to-the-Sea* — music inspired by, and interspersed with, other music that bears thematic connections to water. This other music represents different aspects of our own musical journeys and places us in the role of musical stewards, adding what we can to each work and sending it out again into the world for others to experience.

*Reflections on the Nature of Water* for solo marimba (Jacob Druckman)

Winner of the 1972 Pulitzer Prize in music, Jacob Druckman was composer-in-residence for the New York Philharmonic from 1982-85, and held teaching positions at Juilliard, The Aspen Music...
Festival, Tanglewood, Brooklyn College, and Yale University. His 1986 marimba opus is one of the few works to have maintained a place over many decades in the relatively young canon of marimba solo music. Each movement explores a different character that water can embody, intricately and evocatively mapping those characters on the marimba. The movements are concise but unhurried, gentle but uncompromising, inviting the listener to discover the rippling flow of an asymmetrical groove, an abundance of musical content in a single flickering gesture, or the powerful calm of stillness between notes. Four of the work’s six movements appear on tonight’s program.

*Agua da Amazonia (Philip Glass/Uakti/Third Coast Percussion)*

While Druckman’s solo revels in textures and timbres unique to the marimba, this music by Philip Glass has experienced multiple lives on different musical instruments. Glass’s *12 Pieces for Ballet*, originally composed for piano, was arranged by Brazilian musical group Uakti for their own gamut of instruments, many of which were custom-made and built by the performers. This new version of the piece was renamed after the Amazon river and its tributaries. Drawing on both the Uakti arrangement and the original piano music, the members of Third Coast Percussion arranged a handful of these pieces, exploiting our vast instrument arsenal and experimenting with color blends across the spectrum from “non-pitched” to “pitched” percussion. Arranging Glass’s music pushed us to reimagine familiar material with a different sound palette and offered a chance to live inside the music of one of the most recognized voices in the contemporary classical music world.

*Chigwaya (Traditional/Musekiwa Chingodza/Third Coast Percussion)*

In recent years, the four of us have been fortunate to be able to expand our artistic practice and musical knowledge with a study of Shona music from Zimbabwe, and the mbira, a thumb piano that plays a leading role in this music. In preparation for this project, our mentor Musekiwa Chingodza taught us *Chigwaya*, a song used to call water spirits in the Shona religion. Chigwaya — literally “the bream fish” — is a symbol for the water spirits or mermaid spirits, who can impart wealth or healing powers but can also be dangerous or demanding. As in many traditional Shona songs, each musician develops their own version of *Chigwaya*. Musekiwa taught us the ways he might perform the piece on the mbira or our marimbas, as well as drum, hosho (shaker) and voice parts. The rendition in this program is our own mbira-focused
interpretation of what we learned from Musekiwa. We encourage listeners to explore Musekiwa Chingodza’s own discography and learn more about this great artist through Kutsinhira Cultural Arts Center, the Oregon-based nonprofit that hosts his biennial visits to the United States.

*Chinotamba mudziva macho*  
It dances in its pool of water

*Mudziva macho Chigwaya*  
In its pool, the bream

*Mudziva macho mvura youya*  
In its pool, the water spirit has come

*Hiya honde*  
(vocable – no meaning)

*Dzoka dzoka dzoka*  
Come back, come back, come back

**Paddle to the Sea (Third Coast Percussion)**

As we set out to score the film *Paddle to the Sea*, we drew inspiration from the musical material and atmosphere of each of the water-related works on this program. In connecting their disparate aesthetics while creating something new, we found an opportunity to express this moment in our ensemble’s own musical journey.

The score’s musical content corresponds to many of the main themes in the film: the “boy theme,” first heard about one minute into act 1, puts a simple melody on pitched desk bells over playful skittering wood blocks, ceramic tiles, and other quirky sounds; the “journey” that begins a few minutes later is soaring, Philip Glass-inspired music for almglocken (tuned cowbells), drum set, and keyboards; our “placid” theme is a simple heartbeat in the low register of the marimba; and the sections we dubbed “turmoil” are marked by driving drum figures in rhythms borrowed from the last movement of Druckman’s *Reflections on the Nature of Water*. We developed and combined these themes in different ways to form a musical narrative that parallels the exuberance, danger, loneliness, and infinite possibility of Paddle’s voyage.

Third Coast Percussion’s album *Paddle to the Sea*, featuring the music on tonight’s program and more, was released on Cedille Records in February 2018.
Third Coast Percussion is a Grammy Award-winning Chicago-based percussion quartet. For fifteen years, the ensemble has created exciting and unexpected performances that constantly redefine the classical music experience. The ensemble has been praised for “commandingly elegant” (New York Times) performances, the “rare power” (Washington Post) of their recordings, and “an inspirational sense of fun and curiosity” (Minnesota Star-Tribune). Third Coast Percussion maintains a busy tour schedule, with past performances in 34 of the 50 states plus international tour dates in Colombia, the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Taiwan, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, and Poland.

A direct connection with the audience is at the core of all of Third Coast Percussion’s work, whether the musicians are speaking from the stage about a new piece of music, inviting the audience to play along in a concert or educational performance, or inviting their fans around the world to create new music using one of their free mobile apps. The four members of Third Coast are also accomplished teachers, and make active participation by all students the cornerstone of all their educational offerings.

The quartet’s curiosity and eclectic taste have led to a series of unlikely collaborations that have produced exciting new art. The ensemble has worked with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, dancers at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and musicians from traditions ranging from the mbira music of Zimbabwe’s Shona people, to indie rockers, to some of the world’s leading concert musicians. Third Coast Percussion served as ensemble-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center from 2013-2018.

A commission for a new work from composer Augusta Read Thomas in 2012 led to the realization that commissioning new musical works can be—and should be—as collaborative as any other artistic partnership. Through extensive workshopping and close contact with composers, Third Coast Percussion has commissioned and premiered new works by Philip Glass, Jlin, Tyondai Braxton, Augusta Read Thomas, Devonté Hynes, Georg Friedrich Haas, Donnacha Dennehy, Glenn Kotche, Christopher Cerrone, David T. Little and today’s leading up-and-coming composers through their Emerging Composers Partnership Program. TCP’s commissioned works have become part of the ensemble’s core repertoire and seen hundreds of performances across four continents.

Third Coast Percussion’s recordings include six full-length albums, three EPs, and a number of appearances on other releases. The quartet has put its stamp on iconic percussion works by
John Cage and Steve Reich, and Third Coast has also created first recordings of commissioned works by Philip Glass, Augusta Read Thomas, Devonté Hynes, Gavin Bryars, Donnacha Dennehy, David T. Little, Ted Hearne, and more, in addition to recordings of the ensemble’s own compositions. In 2017 the ensemble won the Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance for their recording of Steve Reich’s works for percussion.

Third Coast Percussion has always maintained strong ties to the vibrant artistic community in their hometown of Chicago. They have collaborated with Chicago institutions such as Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, the Chicago Children’s Choir, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and the Adler Planetarium, performed at the grand opening of Maggie Daley Children’s Park, conducted residencies at the University of Chicago and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, created multi-year collaborative projects with Chicago-based composers Augusta Read Thomas, Glenn Kotche, and chamber ensemble Eighth Blackbird, and taught tens of thousands of students through partnerships with the People’s Music School, the Chicago Park District, Rush Hour Concerts, Urban Gateways, and others.

The four members of Third Coast Percussion (Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore) met while studying percussion music at Northwestern University with Michael Burritt and James Ross. Members of Third Coast also hold degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Rutgers University, the New England Conservatory, and the Yale School of Music. Stay up-to-date and go behind-the-scenes by following Third Coast on Twitter (@ThirdCoastPerc), Facebook (@ThirdCoast Percussion), and Instagram (@ThirdCoastPercussion).

*Third Coast Percussion is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

Leslie Buxbaum Danzig is delighted to work with Third Coast Percussion again, after stage directing Wild Sound, composed by Glenn Kotche. Leslie is a collaborating director with the dance-theater company Lucky Plush Productions, where she has co-created Rooming House (Steppenwolf 1700, touring in '18-19) and The Better Half and The Queue, both of which received a National Dance Project Award and a National Performance Network creation fund award (‘12 and ‘14). Presenting venues include MCA Chicago, Spoleto Festival USA (SC), CRASHarts at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Dance Cleveland, Flynn Center for the Performing Arts (VT), ODC (CA), and Maui Arts and Cultural Center. For over a decade, Leslie was co-founder and resident director of the Chicago-based physical theater company 500 Clown, which toured throughout the US. She has directed at The Actors Gymnasium, House Theatre, Redmoon, Chicago Children’s Theater, About Face Theater, and New Victory Theater (NYC), and has toured nationally and internationally as an actor with NYC’s Elevator
Repair Service. She is Assistant Professor of Practice in Theater and Performance Studies, University of Chicago.

**Joseph A. Burke** is pleased to be collaborating with Third Coast Percussion on this amazing aural and visual experience. His artistry specializes in lighting and projection design, videography, and content creation. Joseph’s work has been seen at: Case Western Reserve University, Chamber Opera Chicago, Children’s Theatre of Charlotte, Cleveland’s Playhouse Square, Cleveland Public Theatre, Imagine Exhibitions Incorporated, Museum of Contemporary Art-Chicago, Northwestern University, The House Theatre of Chicago, The Poetry Foundation, Travesty Dance Group, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and Writers' Theatre.

*Paddle to the Sea* film credits

Direction and Photography by Bill Mason
Produced by Julian Biggs
Associate Producer: Stanley Jackson
Editing: William Mason
Commentary: Stanley Jackson
Production Assistant: Blake James
Based on the story by Holling C. Holling “Paddle To The Sea”
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