NEXUS

**SHORT BIOGRAPHY:**

“NEXUS is widely recognized as one of the most influential percussion ensembles to have emerged in the post-war period” (2006 doctoral dissertation U of Hong Kong.)  New York Times has called NEXUS “the high priests of the percussion world” and Steve Reich says, “probably the most acclaimed percussion group on earth.” NEXUS is in the Percussion Hall of Fame (along with Ringo Starr) and tours extensively. The group has participated in 60 international festivals, 4 times at the Kennedy Center, twice at the BBC Proms (Royal Albert Hall), 5 times in Carnegie Hall. The group is made up of four master percussionists internationally revered for virtuosity, innovation and extraordinary music out of the broadest array of percussion instruments imaginable. Their original compositions and arrangements, high-end commissions from Pulitzer prize-winners Steve Reich and Ellen Taafe Zwillich, Grammy-winner Libby Larsen, and Japanese master Toru Takemitsu, and famed collaborations with the likes of Canadian Brass, Kronos Quartet, and Richard Stoltzman, have created repertoire ranging from novelty ragtime and haunting African rhythms through award-winning improvised film music and ground-breaking compositions. NEXUS delivers a stunningly virtuosic spectacle of sound and rhythm.

NEXUS wishes to acknowledge the generous support of Pearl/Adams and the Canada Council for the Arts.

**LONG BIOGRAPHY**:

The first, entirely improvised NEXUS concert in 1971 formed a group that touches and entertains people worldwide. Bob Becker, Bill Cahn, Russell Hartenberger and Garry Kvistad are virtuosos alone and bring their knowledge and character to a distinct and powerful whole. NEXUS stands out in the contemporary music scene for innovation, program diversity, an impressive history of collaborations and commissions, their revival of 1920′s novelty ragtime xylophone music, and influential improvisatory ideas.

NEXUS’ commitment to music education and a steady output of recordings and new compositions continue to enhance percussion’s role in the 21st century. NEXUS’ widespread appeal has taken the group to Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Brazil, Scandinavia, Europe, and regularly to the USA and Canada. NEXUS was the first Western percussion group to perform in the People’s Republic of China, and have participated at international music festivals such as the Adelaide, Holland, Budapest Spring, Singapore Arts, Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Blossom Music, the BBC Proms in London, Tokyo’s Music Today and Music Joy festivals, and many World Drum Festivals. NEXUS has received the Banff Centre’s National and the Toronto Arts Awards. NEXUS was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame in 1999 in their 30th anniversary season.

In 2017 NEXUS members Russell Hartenberger and Bob Becker were honoured with the Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts and Musical America’s “Mover & Shaper” award, respectively. The World Cultural Council’s citation says, “Hartenberger is considered a musical visionary and one of the most prominent figures in percussion history”, while Musical America named Becker one of “the Top-30 Professionals in Music” and said, "As a composer, arranger, and founding member of the NEXUS percussion ensemble, Bob Becker has influenced virtually every aspect of percussion performance and repertoire in the profession.” The past few years have taken NEXUS to performances with Steve Reich in Toronto and New York; residencies in the Carolinas and the Curtis Institute of Music; a concert performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra’s percussion section; the launch of Maverick Hall’s 100th Anniversary concert series; appearances with the acclaimed Eastman Wind Ensemble, Rochester Philharmonic and Toronto Children’s Chorus; concerts in Houston, Rockport MA, Open Ears Festival, Drum Boogie Festival with Jack DeJohnette, Ottawa ChamberFest, and with 7-time Grammy-winner Paul Winter and the throat-singers of Prana, resulting in the album **Chiaroscuro.** Recent new commissions have come from Peter Schickele, Libby Larsen, Michael Burritt, Eric Ewazen, Gordon Stout, and Canada’s Norbert Palej, as well as the co-commissioning of Steve Reich for his *Mallet Quartet*. 2011 and ‘12 brought sell-outs in Japan, a featured appearance on the Canadian Brass’s best-selling CD **Stars and Stripes – A Tribute to the USA and in concert appearances,** and John Cage’s 100th Anniversary at the Fisher Center. 2018 will take NEXUS into Northeastern United States and Canada.

Especially renowned for improvisational skill, NEXUS created the music for the National Film Board’s award-winning Inside Time, and the chilling score for the Academy Award-winning feature-length documentary The Man Who Skied Down Everest. NEXUS’ high-profile collaborations include the Kronos Quartet and clarinetist Richard Stoltzman. Toru Takemitsu, a great friend to NEXUS, composed their signature piece From me flows what you call Time…written with each member’s personality in mind. It was premiered for Carnegie Hall’s 1990 centennial conducted by Seiji Ozawa with the Boston Symphony (recorded on Sony with the Pacific Symphony). In 2005, Pulitzer Prize winning composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich composed Rituals for NEXUS and chamber orchestra. New Music Box calls it “one of Zwilich’s most exciting compositions to date…[a] blockbuster piece!” The recording features NEXUS and the IRIS Orchestra.

NEXUS’ newest recording **Home** celebrates ecological sustainability. Their recent album **The City Wears A Slouch Hat** rediscovers once-lost works by John Cage that NEXUS was asked to resurrect and premiere for The John Cage Trust. Their album **Persian Songs** features beloved Iranian vocalist and setar performer Sepideh Raissadat, following on NEXUS solo CD **Wings** (2009) and Juno-nominated **Drumtalker**. Ms. Raissadat was the first female vocalist to perform in public in Iran after the 1979 revolution. Her virtuosic performances of traditional Persian music have been praised through Europe and North America. NEXUS has joined her for an hour-long Voice of America broadcast and performances in Toronto, Kitchener, Ottawa, New York State, and San Antonio TX.

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