How I Became Stupid

Dwayne Engh

Written during a residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in the summer of 2005 for the Calgarian Move to Strike Percussion Group, this playful piece is based on the Martin Page novel of the same name. It is (obviously) influenced by Minuro Miki's brilliant work Marimba Spiritual - for marimba and three percussion players. 'Tis is but a humble attempt at paying homage to a master.

The novel asks the question: “What if ignorance really is bliss?” From the jacket cover: “Tortured by the depth of his own intellect, plagued by his overwhelming sense of self-awareness and the moral implications of every action he makes, Antoine, a twenty-five-year-old Aramaic scholar, is at the end of his rope, with only one viable option in sight: he must denounce his intelligence, by any means necessary…”

The piece plays with and explores Antoine's quest of fulfilling “his dream of becoming stupid enough to be a happily functioning member of society.”

Complete List of Instruments Needed:

Marimba
High Hat
Snare Drum
Floor Tom
Timbales
Bongos (on stand)
Small Bass Drum
Low Cowbell
Cookie Sheet
Triangle
3 Crash Cymbals

Dwayne Engh has been blessed with a wide range of opportunities throughout the world as a composer, conductor, percussionist, and educator. He recently had the opportunity to participate in a residency as a composer at the Banff Centre for the Arts, where he also played for the Banff Centre Opera and with the Banff Festival Orchestra. He holds a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Education (Masters of Teaching) from the University of Calgary.

Dwayne has written for chamber ensembles, choirs, dance, film and theatre. His original compositions have been performed on CBC Television. He has written for dance groups including the Alberta Ballet School of Dance, Corps Bara Dance Company and Providence Catholic Winterguard (Chicago). His most recent works for theatre include Sam Shepard's savage love (2004) and Daniel MacIvor's The Soldier Dreams (2001). He has written percussion ensemble pieces for many ensembles, most notably Move to Strike, the Calgary Stampede Showband, the Sizu-City Elementary School Marching Band (Japan) and the Central Kitsap High School Percussion Ensemble (Washington).

An accomplished percussionist, he has performed with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Ballet Orchestra, recorded for CBC Radio and performed with pit orchestras in both Toronto and Calgary. Mr. Engh is a founding member of the “Move to Strike Percussion Group” and of the saxophone-marimba duo “Saximba.” He has worked as a modern, Flamenco and West African dance percussion accompanist for the University of Calgary Dance Program and for the DJD School of Dance. He is an active freelance percussionist and drummer around Calgary.

Mr. Engh is the Director of Bands for the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede and the Music Director of the community choir Cum Vino Cantus. As well, he was formally an Off-Campus Teacher Representative and a high school English and Music educator for the Calgary Board of Education.