



University of North Texas  
College of Music

Guest Artist Recital | Wednesday, March 25, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.  
Margot and Bill Winspear Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

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**Andy Akiho with UNT Percussion Ensembles**

**Andy Akiho, composer and steel pan**

**Stockton Helbing, drumset**

**Yun-Chen Chou and Dave Hall, percussion**

**Mark Ford, Paul Rennick, and Sandi Rennick, marimba**

**Combined UNT Percussion Ensembles**

**2 O'Clock Steel Band**

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Portal (2023) .....Andy Akiho  
(b. 1979)

Andy Akiho, steel pan  
Yun-Chen Chou, marimba  
UNT Percussion Ensemble  
Dave Hall, director

carTogRAPH (2021)

Yun-Chen Chou, percussion

Pillar VI (2020)

UNT Percussion Ensemble  
Sam Fothergill | Jonah Payne | Eli Roth | Chris Trlak

21 (2009)

Andy Akiho, steel pan  
Dave Hall, marimba  
Stockton Helbing, drumset

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**Program four hundred twenty-seven of the 2025–2026 season**  
**Photography and videography are prohibited**

Pillar VII (2021)

UNT Percussion Ensemble

Hunter Gross | Brayden Haslam | Sebastian Havner | Jonah Payne

-INTERMISSION-

mARImbA (2021)

Chris Trlak, marimba and vibraphone

Alloy (2009)

2 O'Clock Steel Band

Jonah Payne and Mark Ford, directors

Murasaki (2006)

Andy Akiho, tenor steel pan  
Yun-Chen Chou, marimba  
Dave Hall, double second steel pans  
Stockton Helbing, drumset  
Kai Wagner, bass

Aka (2006)

Andy Akiho, tenor steel pan  
Yun-Chen Chou, tenor steel pan  
Dave Hall, marimba  
Stockton Helbing, drumset  
Kai Wagner, bass

Karakurenai (2007)

Combined Guest Artists  
UNT Percussion Ensembles and Faculty

## Biographies

**Andy Akiho** is a "trailblazing" (*Los Angeles Times*) Pulitzer Prize finalist and seven-time GRAMMY®-nominated composer whose bold works unravel intricate and unexpected patterns while surpassing preconceived boundaries of classical music. Called "increasingly in-demand" by *The New York Times*, Akiho has earned international acclaim for his large-scale works that emphasize the natural theatricality of live performance. He is the only composer to be nominated for a GRAMMY® in the Best Contemporary Classical Composition category in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Recent highlights include the world premieres of several major works, most notably *Nisei* — a sweeping new concerto for cellist Jeffrey Zeigler — which headlined this year's Sun Valley Music Festival. Another standout: *Sculptures*, a groundbreaking, triple GRAMMY®-nominated work for Omaha Symphony honoring renowned visual artist Jun Kaneko. Finally, *BeLonging*, a powerful new collaboration with Imani Winds with strong political undertones, also made highly acclaimed live and recorded debuts, receiving two GRAMMY® nominations. Equally at home writing chamber music and symphonies, Akiho is the Oregon Symphony's 2024-25 composer-in-residence.

Other recent engagements include commissioned premieres by the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony, China Philharmonic, Guangzhou Symphony, Oregon Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Music@Menlo, The Industry, and a sold-out run of "Seven Pillars" at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, choreographed by Benjamin Millepied and performed by Sandbox Percussion and LA Dance Project.

Akiho has been recognized via many prestigious awards and organizations including the Rome Prize, American Academy of Arts and Letters, Lili Boulanger Memorial Prize, Harvard University Fromm Commission, Barlow Endowment, New Music USA, and Chamber Music America. His compositions have been featured by organizations such as Bang on a Can, American Composers Forum, The Intimacy of Creativity in Hong Kong, and the Heidelberg Festival.

An active steel pannist, Akiho has performed his works with Imani Winds, the LA Philharmonic's Green Umbrella Series, the Berlin Philharmonic's Scharoun Ensemble, the International Drum Festival in Taiwan, and more. Akiho's recordings *No One To Know One*, *The War Below*, *Seven Pillars*, *Oculus*, *Sculptures*, and *BeLonging* feature brilliantly crafted compositions inspired by his primary instrument, the steel pan.

As a pannist, Akiho has a deeply physical relationship with playing, which undoubtedly informs his compositions. His style is further shaped by his nontraditional path as a composer: having spent most of his 20s playing steel pan by ear in Trinidad and New York City, Akiho only began writing music at age 28. Still, these social and musical roots remain foundational. Akiho frequently composes into the late hours at coffee shops, nightclubs, and restaurants, taking breaks to get to know those around him. Similarly, Akiho develops relationships with his collaborators, as he writes for people, not instruments.

Akiho was born in 1979 in Columbia, SC, and is currently based in Portland, OR and New York City.

**Yun-Chen Chou** is a Boston-based Taiwanese percussionist known for her dynamic artistry across classical, contemporary, and global music genres. A versatile performer, she has collaborated with Grammy-nominated composer and steel pannist Andy Akiho on steel pan at the 2024 TAPS LA Music Festival. In March 2025, Yun-Chen made her Carnegie Hall debut performing marimba solo, *Etude in F-Sharp Minor*, by Pius Cheung.

Born in 1999, Yun-Chen began her musical journey at age 7 with piano, followed by flute at 9 and marimba at 12. She is an award-winning marimbist and percussionist, as well as a burgeoning drummer and steel pannist. Her talents have graced international stages, including PASIC, TMEA, and the TAPS LA Festival, where she was selected to showcase her exceptional musicianship. An advocate for contemporary music, Yun-Chen frequently premieres innovative works, such as Chris P. Thompson's *Marking Time* (2023, found percussion version), the U.S. premiere of Simeon Ten Holt's *Lemniscaat* (1984) with marimba sextet, Mark Ford's *Desert Wood* (2023) for marimba and percussion, and more. Chou has recorded a few albums with the profound North Texas Wind Symphony under the baton of Eugene Corporon in the 2021-22 season. She was also named winner from the 2024 Boston University Carnegie Hall soloist competition, 2020 North Texas Concerto Competition, 2019 Hit Like A Girl international competition, runner up at 2019 PASIC marimba competition, and finalist from Great Plains International Marimba Competition in 2019.

Her artistic interests span diverse genres, from solo and chamber ensembles to film scoring orchestras, pop orchestras, musical theatre, opera, Balinese gamelan, and Brazilian bateria. Yun-Chen has performed in musical theatre productions such as *Something Rotten!* (drums) and *Into the Woods* (percussion). She is an active member of Gamelan Galak Tika, a Boston-based Balinese gamelan ensemble, and Grooversity, a Boston-based Brazilian bateria group. Currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) at Boston University, Yun-Chen is dedicated to expanding her musical horizons. She holds a Master of Music in Percussion Performance from the Boston Conservatory at Berklee and a Bachelor of Music in Percussion Performance from the University of North Texas.

## **Combined UNT Percussion Personnel**

Nick Arnold | Taylor Bowen | David Brown | Josh Camacho | Noah Carrillo  
Matthew Chovanec | Levi Christopherson | Chris Curtis | Evan Danforth  
Henry Duff | Nic Dunn | Tanner Easterling | Gabriel Espada  
Elizabeth Feldman | Sam Fothergill | Natalie Garms | Hunter Gross  
Rune Hall | Brayden Haslam | Sebastian Havner | Smith Humphrey  
Tzu-Ling Hung | Oscar Ibanez | Spencer Key | Josh Landin | Hanna Le  
Jackson Linscomb | Jackson Mally | Alex Mann | Hannah McDowall  
Madison McPherson | Mac McPike | Isaac Morgan | Benedict Mpeti  
Alexis Olvera | Patrick Overturf | Quinn Palmer | Wyatt Parker  
Jonah Payne Braden Price | Molly Rivera | Madison Romberger  
Elijah Roth | Joseph Sidwa | Jack Spelman | Nico Strichartz  
Trey Thompson | Diego Tiessen | Chris Trak | Jonathan William  
Joseph Woodburn | Ming Yang | Caleb Yurasek

## **UNT Percussion Faculty**

Gideon Alorwoyie | José Aponte | Michael Crawford  
Quincy Davis | Mark Ford | Dave Hall | Stockton Helbing  
Paul Rennick | Sandi Rennick | Ed Smith | Poovalur Srijji