

STEVE HEMPHILL (b. 1956)

*Principles of Calabash*

The impetus for the creation of *Principles of Calabash* (2008; originally for nine players) was a simple, long-standing interest in shekere (gourd with beaded netting) technique and a single shekere lesson in the summer of 2008. That lesson—with Kulu Sadira, a musician based in Durango, Colorado (John Denver, Jimmy Buffet, Kenny Loggins, B.B. King) and integrative music-based facilitator (business teams, leadership, conferences, community events)—provided just enough insight to initiate a creative process.

Through a summertime self-study, Hemphill created for his students a supporting notation system and a series of rhythmic dialogs/ensembles to serve both as a preliminary approach to and pedagogical investigation of the instrument, and as an entertaining performance medium with a specified focus. The various physical and large motion-based aspects of performing with shekeres (and the smaller axatse gourds) can provide essential insight into gestural-sound production relationships found in many percussion instruments of the world. The episodic structure of the work includes various technical explorations and rhythmic styles within the ensemble—*Trio, Swirls, Ewe, Commercial Style, Toss Duet, Afro-Cuban Trio, Coda*.