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A Summary and Reflection of the Percussion Repertoire for my Senior Recital

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The College of Wooster

A Summary and Reflection of the Percussion

Repertoire for my Senior Recital

by

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Independent Study Thesis Research

Supervised by

Peter Mowrey

Department of Music

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Introduction

Music is a dynamic and universal language found in all known cultures around the world (van den Bosch, Salimpoor, & Zatorre, 2013; Scherer, 2004). There is no doubt that music has served and continues to serve several functions and purposes throughout history, whether it is used as a means for communication, celebration, therapy, or for pure enjoyment. As music has evolved from simple melodies played on boneflutes dating back to the paleolithic era, the application of music as well as humans' perception of it has also evolved (Conard, Malina, & Münzel, 2009). In contemporary society, music is abundant in various settings such as in films, video games, marketing, and music therapy, and is often used because of the emotional power it evokes in humans (Eerola & Vuoskoski, 2013).

For years, researchers have been asking why music has such an important value to human society, why it has continued to exist and evolve, and why and how it affects humans in the ways it does. Music possesses the power to evoke diverse emotional responses in humans. For example, Eerola and Vuoskoski's (2013) review of music perception research suggests that individuals can experience a wide array of emotions while listening to music such as fear, anger, disgust, happiness, shame, embarrassment, contempt, and guilt. In turn, these same emotional responses are, for some individuals, reasons for listening to music.

Blood and Zatorre (2001) suggest that music is ubiquitous due to its ability to produce pleasure and reward value. For example, some studies have found that people primarily listen to music to modify their emotions, comfort themselves, and to relieve stress (Juslin & Laukka, 2004; Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008). Recent research has tried to explore the underlying neurological, biological, and physiological mechanisms of experiencing pleasure from music (Zatorre & Salimpoor, 2013).

Music and emotion research is a rapidly growing interdisciplinary field in which many studies have found relationships between listening to music, emotional arousal, and physiological arousal (Rickard, 2004; Panksepp, 1995, Salimpoor, Benevoy, Longo, Cooperstock, & Zatorre, 2009). These studies have focused on a specific physiological response called *musical frisson*. This response is also known as the “chills,” “shivers,” or “goose-bumps” one experiences at peak emotional arousal from listening to music. Salimpoor, Benevoy, Larcher, Dagher, and Zatorre (2011) used positron emission tomography (PET) scanning to find that dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with rewards, food, drugs, and sex, was released in the brain during these same “chills” responses during music listening. These findings suggest that one’s brain chemistry can be influenced by experiencing intense pleasure from music.

Throughout my entire life, I have always wondered why and how music can produce such a unique sense of pleasure; I had no idea that psychology and neuroscience were such prominent factors in this phenomenon. As a musician, I often get chills that run down my whole body when I listen to something or perform a piece I immensely enjoy. This physiological response is one of the most influential reasons as to why music isn’t just a hobby to me; music to me is an aural roller-coaster of bodily responses and emotions.

In my opinion, evoking such strong emotional and physiological responses in listeners by performing music is one of the greatest feats a musician can accomplish. When I was preparing for my senior recital and jury for my Music Independent Study, it became my goal to reach a new level of musicianship that could evoke similar responses for the audience. I wanted to express the intricacies of each piece eloquently and precisely. Music

can express feelings and emotions unlike any other art form in that most art forms such as painting, sculpting, and drawing decorate *space*, as opposed to music, which decorates *time*.

Continuing, this paper will supplement my senior recital Independent Study and will simultaneously serve as a reflection for my recital repertoire as well as extensive program notes for each piece. This paper will also include a section about the nature of musical elements. These elements are relevant to this project and are important to musicians because they are all contributing factors that come together to create what we know as music.

Lastly, percussion majors are required to be proficient and perform solo pieces for all percussion instruments such as timpani, mallet instruments, snare drum, and multiple-percussion. When choosing my repertoire, I wanted to pick pieces that would challenge me musically and technically. I also picked the pieces because I truly enjoy playing and listening to them, which could contribute to evoking the chills response in my audience and me. The order of my 45-minute-long recital is as follows:

1. *Raga No. 2* by William Cahn (b. 1946)
2. *Astral Dance* by Gordon Stout (b. 1952)
3. *42nd Street Rondo* by Wayne Siegel (b. 1953)
4. *Impressions: Movement 3* by Nicolas Martyniow
5. *My Lady White: Madrigal, Movement 1* by David Maslanka (b. 1943)
6. *Trio Per Uno: Movement 1* by Nebojsa Zivkovic (b. 1962)
7. *Impressions: Movement 1* by Nicolas Martyniow
8. *Caméléon* by Eric Sammut (b. 1968)

The Nature of Musical Elements

Defining music is a challenging task due to the broad nature of music itself. When defining music, it is important to acknowledge that even though one may not prefer to listen to a certain piece of music, that does not make it a less significant of a piece of music. Edgard Varèse, an influential avant-garde composer of the 20th century, defined music as “organized sound” (Levitin, 2006). By this definition, music can range from Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 5* to John Cage’s controversial chance piece *4’33*,” where the audience hears only the sounds from themselves or the ambient noises of the recital hall. This, although may seem counterintuitive, is in fact “organized sound” because Cage’s score called for any instrument or combination of instruments; the absence of sound is in fact music in a musical context.

Music is traditionally comprised of several distinct features that come together to create aural phenomenon. The fundamental building blocks of music are pitch, rhythm, tempo, contour, timbre, loudness, and reverberation, all of which can be varied and manipulated without altering the others (Levitin, 2006). In order to understand how music has developed through time and has continued to thrive in highly varied forms in cultures all around the world, one must understand how these components interact to create music.

Pitch, the first component, is a psychological construct that is “related both to the actual frequency of a particular tone and to its relative position in the musical scale” (Levitin, 2006, p. 15). In other words, pitch is a mental representation of our perception of a frequency of a sound, not the actual frequencies of air molecules themselves (Levitin, 2006). Pitch encompasses two similar, but different concepts: *tone* refers to what one hears and *note*

refers to what one would see on sheet music (i.e., A, B, C, D, E, F, G). Together, they create the potential to sing or hum a melody.

Rhythm is defined as the “durations of a series of notes, and the way that they group together into units” (Levitin, 2006, p. 15). To elaborate, an easy and well-known example of a simple rhythm is the simple jazz pattern played by a drummer on a cymbal: Dah da da Dah da da Dah da da Dah da da Dah da da. The “Dahs” represent a longer duration of time while the ‘das’ have less amount of time in between them.

Tempo is the pace of the music; samba music, for example, generally has a fast tempo and ballads usually have slower tempos. *Contour* portrays the shape and the overall outline of a melody. *Timbre* is the tone color that the instrument produces when playing sounds. If a piano and a trombone both play the same pitch, although they are the same tone, they do not have the same timbre. That is, the actual sound coming from the instruments differs. This is intuitive because a string instrument is not going to sound the same as a clarinet, but they have the capability of playing the same pitch. Composers utilize the concept of timbre when orchestrating their music to create tone colors and soundscapes to their pleasing.

The final two fundamental building blocks of music are *loudness* and *reverberation*. Levitin (2006) explains that loudness, similar to pitch, is a psychological construct that describes how much energy from which a sound is created (i.e., the amplitude of a tone). *Dynamics*, the musical term for loudness, is employed by composers to create of a balance of contrasting loud and soft sections in their music and to also captivate the listener’s attention.

Reverberation is often underestimated of its true value in music. It refers to the perception of the “spaciousness of singing in a large concert hall from the sound of singing in a shower” (Levitin, 2006, p. 16). Reverb is a common term used by musicians that relates to

how much a sound not necessarily “echoes,” but sustains and resonates after the note has been played. An instrument such as a marimba will reverberate and resonate for longer period of time in a large concert hall than in a small practice room.

Together, these seven fundamental building blocks of music create a subset of more complex musical elements such as meter, key, melody, harmony, scales, tuning, and intervals (Levitin, 2006). The list of musical terms continues to grow from the above elements and create increasingly more complex and interesting music. It is through the *relationship* of all these dimensions that music has subsisted and evolved into what it is today in contemporary society. It is through the interactions of these elements that create music and evoke emotional reactions.

Raga No. 2 by William Cahn

William Cahn, born in 1946, is one of the leading percussion figures in the world. From 1968 to 1995, he was the principal percussionist in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and has been a member of the prolific percussion ensemble, NEXUS, since 1971. Cahn is also an Associate Professor of Percussion at the Eastman School of Music. He is very well-known for writing a variety of solo percussion repertoire for timpani, multiple-percussion, snare drum, percussion ensemble, and concertos for percussion.

Raga No. 2 is a continuation of his piece called *Raga No. 1*, which I actually played for Junior Independent Study Recital. *Raga No. 1* and *Raga No. 2* were influenced by traditional North Indian music, especially the rhythms and techniques used on the tabla. The tabla is an Indian percussion instrument that is comprised of two hand drums of different sizes that contrast in timbre and pitch (Naimpalli, 2005). In November 2014, fellow

percussion students and I went to PASIC (Percussive Arts Society International Convention) where we saw Vineet Vyas, a renowned tabla player, perform and give a masterclass about tabla, which was one of my favorite classes of the entire convention.

The tabla is extremely unique and interesting to me because of the complex rhythms, harmonies, and melodies that the tones can create, even more so due to the delicate finger intricacies used to play the drums. Vyas explained that tabla drumming utilizes a syllabic language that translates into the different sounds and timbres of the two drums. The left hand drum, the “bāyāñ,” is made out of copper and the right hand drum, the “dayan,” is made out of wood as seen below in Figure 1 (Naimpalli, 2005). The timbre of each drum dramatically contrasts from low bass frequencies to high treble pings, especially since the dayan is usually tuned to a higher tonic pitch. When Vyas played, it was tuned to A 440 Hz.



Figure 1. Each of the tabla drums. The smaller right hand drum, the dayan, is made of wood and the bigger left hand drum, the bāyāñ, is made of copper. Image from “artdrum.com.”

Vyas explained how Indian tabla drumming differs from western percussion and drumming due to Indian folk music's cyclical nature. He demonstrated that a tabla drummer must internalize rhythmic cycles called *Taals*. Naimpelli (2005) defines Taal as “a cycle of beats in which a musical composition or dance sequence is set or performed.” In other words, the Taal can somewhat be considered analogous to a time signature in western music, especially since there are many different types of Taals. Just like in western music, there can be stressed and unstressed beats. These cycles of stressed and unstressed beats and syllables are called *Matras* or divisions. The downbeat of the Taal is referred to the *Sum* and is indicated by clap. The beginning of each Matra within a Taal is also indicated by a clap. The unstressed beats within a Matra, the *Khaali*, are indicated by a wave of the hand with the palm facing upwards (Naimpelli, 2005). Vyas also indicated that the Khaali are always void of the bāyāñ drum (i.e., no bass).

During Vyas' masterclass, he instructed the audience to clap and wave our hands at the rhythmically correct times while he was playing a specific Taal called *Dhamar* (translated roughly to “elephant's stride”). Vyas' interpretation of Dhamar consisted of 14 beats with Matras of 3, 4, 3 and 4. As Table 1 shows, we clapped on the Sum, the beginning of each Matra, and waved our hands for the unstressed Khaali. It was extremely difficult to count and to know when to clap because his phrases went over the bar-line until they perfectly landed on the accented Matras. Vyas is an exceptional percussionist whose musicality, technicality, and sense of time inspired me to play *Raga No. 2* by Bill Cahn.

This rhythmically-oriented piece utilizes extended techniques of the timpani such as the use of fingers and hands on the drum heads as well as dead strokes in the middle of the drums. The term *Raga* is analogous to *Taal* in that *Raga* consists of the *melodic* structure

Table 1

The Dhamar Taal

Beat Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Type of Beat	<i>Sum, Matra 1</i>			<i>Matra 2</i>				<i>Khaali, Matra 3</i>			<i>Matra 4</i>			
Clapping/Waving Arrangement	Clap			Clap				Wave			Clap			

while *Taal* is comprised of the *rhythmic* structure of traditional Indian music. The entire piece is in the time signature 7/8, and roughly translates to the *Rupak Taal*. The *Rupak Taal* has 7 beats and is comprised of 3 Matras: the downbeat is unstressed (*Khaali*), beat 4 is stressed, and beat 6 is stressed. In other words, the 7 beats consisted of the following: “Wave 2 3 Clap 5 Clap 7”. Cahn cleverly employed this cycle in this piece by modifying it slightly and making it his own. The downbeat is almost always accented, unless there are certain phrases going over the bar-line. He often switches between having beats 1, 4, and 6 stressed and having beats 1 and 5 stressed. What is even cleverer is that each section of the piece is comprised of 7 measures (or 14 measures which is a multiple of 7). As we will see later on interestingly, the number 7 is persistent trend in my senior recital repertoire.

The four timpani have the following pitches: F, B, C#, and F. In my interpretation of *Raga No. 2*, I imagine the high F as the dayan drum (i.e., the smaller right hand drum tuned to a specific pitch) while the low F represents the bāyāñ (i.e., the bigger left hand drum that has a prominent bass sound). I imagine the B and the C# not necessarily as ghost notes, but not as strongly accented notes as the 2 F’s. When watching Vyas play, he used a combination of fingers and hand hits to play the drums, so I imagine the middle two drums (B and C#) to serve as conversation holders between the two F’s, and to also represent the wide array of different sounds the tabla can make.

Also, sections E, F, and G each have specific instructions for how to hit the timpani. To replicate the sound of the tabla, Cahn instructs the performer to stop using the timpani mallets and use hands and fingers to hit the timpani. Section E, a softer and more legato section, consists of a constant finger roll on the low F drum with the left hand, while the right hand is playing repeated, complex triplet rhythms over the bar-line using the pointer finger at the edge of the drum head. Section F consists of the most tabla-like sounding part of the entire piece because I put my fingers on the edge of the timpani, resembling the playing technique of the tabla.

Section F is divided into two parts. The first consists of 32nd notes as double strokes alternating between the two F drums with accents resembling the *Rupak Taal*. The second part consists of 16th note triplets that then turn into 32nd note triplets by doing a double stroke on the same drum with fingers. This is one of the coolest and most rhythmically complex sections of music I have ever played, and it is extremely fun to play correctly. Since the phrasings of the melodies and rhythms go across the bar-line so often, I tend to ignore the 7/8 time signature and simply play the music. Lastly, section G gives the performer a little break by repeating a similar phrase from earlier in the piece. Cahn adds another element to the piece by having the right pointer finger play rim shots while the left hand uses a timpani mallet. This gives an interesting and more powerful texture and timbre of the timpani. Furthermore, the very last notes of *Raga No. 2* are homage to *Raga No. 1* in that they are the same exact rhythms and notation.

In conclusion, *Raga No. 2* is an incredible technically and musically challenging timpani piece that was heavily influenced by North Indian tabla drumming. Vineet Vyas's performance and masterclass inspired me to play this piece and learn more about tabla

drumming. It has pushed me as a musician to try to think outside of traditional western ways of musical analysis. For example, when I listen to music, I try not to think of the time signature of the piece, but of the *Taal* and the stressed and unstressed beats. Lastly, it would have been very interesting if William Cahn arranged an accompaniment melodic part for Sitar or other traditional Indian instruments.

***Astral Dance* by Gordon Stout**

Gordon Stout, born in 1952, is one of the most renowned marimba composers and performers in the world. He has been the Professor of Percussion at the School of Music, Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York since 1980. Not only is Stout an amazing marimba player, but he's one of the leaders in percussion education. Like Vineet Vyas, Stout gave a masterclass about sight-reading marimba music at PASIC 2014. Unfortunately, we could not attend, but I later saw the class on the internet.

Astral Dance is a marimba piece that requires 4 mallets. When I was preparing for my recital, this piece was one of the hardest to learn, perfect, and play accurately. In my opinion, the hardest part of it is the fact that there are no written time signatures. What makes *Astral Dance* interesting is the interesting sixteenth note composite-rhythm groove that both the right and left hands create. The performer must meticulously learn every single measure of the piece to make sure that they are playing every single nuance and phrase-structure correctly.

The primary groove is in 7/8 and is in F# minor: the right hand plays an ostinato rhythm that alternates between A5 and A4 with accented-type legato markings on beats 1 and 5 (similar to *Raga No. 2*), and the left hand plays in between each of the right hand notes on

F#3, F#4, and C#5 in groups of 4. In other words, the left hand plays F#3, then F#4, then C#5, and then back down to F#4. These lower notes underneath the right hand ostinato create polyrhythmic groove in that 3 groups of 4 are played across 2 bars of 7/8. Furthermore, throughout the entire piece, Stout maintains the primary theme but varies it across hands and octaves to keep the performer and listener constantly engaged. For example, in the second section, the left hand takes over the ostinato pattern on A3 and A4.

Playing this piece is extremely taxing and tiresome, but it has definitely helped me as a marimba player in terms of my octave-position, my chops, and note accuracy. I use graduated mallets for this piece (i.e., my right hand and left hand use different mallets). I use “Very Hard” Marimba One Double Helix Mallets and “Hard” Marimba One Double Helix Mallets in my left. I wanted harder mallets in my right hand because I wanted the right hand melodies to breathe and come out easier, especially since the right hand was primarily higher on the marimba.

Also, in my interpretation of *Astral Dance*, I imagine a conversation between stars and planet earth trying to make contact with each other. Since the right hand is inherently higher on the keyboard and produces a brighter sound with the very hard mallets, I imagine the right hand as the stars, and I imagine the left hand as earth. At parts within the piece, they move farther apart from each other and then get closer and closer, while also overlapping. To me, this signifies the stars literally *dancing* away from earth’s efforts of trying to make contact. It is important as a performer to have these deeper connections with the music because it makes it easier to become part of the piece and part of the instrument.

Continuing, if it would be possible for my recital, I would like to mic the marimba and put electronic processing effects on the sounds to make the piece sound more *astral* and

space-like. I would put a mic on the higher end of the keyboard and a mic on the lower end with different effects to make the difference between the *stars* and *earth* even more apparent. I would like to put “reverb,” “phaser,” “flanger,” and maybe even “distortion” effects on the marimba. This would add a new spin to the piece in terms of the timbre and a deeper conceptual level. In conclusion, *Astral Dance* by Gordon Stout is an extremely technically challenging piece that requires the utmost concentration and relaxed approach from the performer. Playing this has been a confidence booster for me on the marimba.

***42nd Street Rondo* by Wayne Siegel**

Wayne Siegel, born in 1953, is composer whose music is heavily influenced by Steve Reich’s pulse-based minimalistic music. The program notes for *42nd Street Rondo* written by Siegel are as follows:

“*42nd Street Rondo* is written for two percussionists with two matched sets of percussion instruments. Each measure is repeated several times, the number of repetitions being decided by the players. In some cases, player A decides when to move on to the next measure, in other cases, player B decides when to move on and in some cases both players must agree on when to move on. This gives the performers a certain amount of freedom to shape the piece during performance. The title refers to the corner of 42nd Street and Broadway in Manhattan, where street musicians often perform. I originally imagined the piece being performed in this location when I wrote it. *42nd Street Rondo* was commissioned by the Danish Percussion Group with financial support from the Danish State Art Foundation. The piece has been performed widely by the Safri Duo” (Siegel, 1984).

In my realization of this piece, I play player A's part, and Joe Caffrey, a fellow percussion major, plays player B's part. Each player's part requires the following percussion instruments: two differently pitched cowbells, a set of bongos, and two differently pitched toms. After reading Siegel's program notes about how he imagined it being performed in a street corner setting, Joe and I decided that it would be more authentic (and more fun) if we used what "street drummers" play. This required a trip to Lowe's. Instead of using toms, we use a big plastic flower pot for the lower tom and a plastic painter's bucket for the higher tom. For the bongos, we put a small plastic flower pot inside of a large tin can for the higher bongo and toy bongos for the lower bongo. Instead of using cowbells, we use an empty coffee flavoring-syrup bottle for the higher cowbell and a metal anvil for the lower cowbell. To see the full set up, see Figure 2.

Continuing, 42nd *Street Rondo* is in 7/4 and is heavily influenced by Steve Reich's minimalism and pulse/phase music. Each player repeats a certain eighth-note pattern that almost always uses all six instruments. As the piece progresses on, the parts phase in and out of each other, and the resemblance of a downbeat becomes more and more unclear. Just when the listener thinks they may know where beat 1 is, the players change the pattern. While Joe and I were learning this piece, the patterns became increasingly more difficult and difficult to play, repeat, and recall; therefore, we called each measure a different name to help us memorize the pattern. Some names of patterns include *Bob*, *Jeff*, *Grizzly*, *Voldemort*, *Dopetastic*, *Reverse*, *Poopface*, *Offbeat-Yoloswag*, *Doo-dah*, and *Sally*. Although these are silly names, they helped us play this piece very efficiently and musically.



Figure 2. The instrument set-up for *42nd Street Rondo* includes buckets, pots, bongos, tin cans, anvils, and bottles.

In the middle of the piece at measure 19, we put our own spin on the piece by stopping the music completely. Joe then starts his pattern very sporadically at his own tempo until it surely but slowly morphs into his pattern. I then continue with him at measure 20 whenever I decide to. This keeps the piece fresh and not as repetitive for the performers *and* the audience. Also, Joe and I bring our dynamics down to *pianissimo* during the very last measure of the piece and slowly crescendo until we play as loud we can while accelerating

the tempo faster and faster. This creates an exciting climax that is not only extremely fun to perform, but fun for the audience to watch.

Impressions: Movement 3 by Nicolas Martyniciow

Nicolas Martyniciow is a French composer and percussionist whose specialty is in writing and performing snare drum etudes. He often performs with the Paris Orchestra and is a Professor of Percussion at Créteil University in Paris. His most famous composition, *Impressions*, is the most rhythmically complex and technically challenging snare drum piece I have ever played. Martyniciow's program notes for the composition are as follows:

“This work for side drum and two tom-toms lasts about eight minutes, making it one of the longest pieces ever written for the side drum. The last work of comparable dimensions was the *The Same is the Same* by Klaus Huber, written ten years ago. *Impressions* is in three movements, each of which may be performed separately. It demands a very competent technique, and attempts to explore new avenues, since side drum composition, with a few exceptions, has developed relatively little; hence the use of brooms and playing techniques based on bouncing sticks. The piece is further enhanced by the high and low-toms which accompany the side drum” (Martyniciow, 1999).

Movement 3 of *Impressions* primarily consists of intricate brush-work on the snare drum and the high tom-tom. There are several types of stick and brush strokes that Martyniciow specifies (see Appendix A). What attracted me the most to choosing this piece are the sixteenth-note one-handed rolls with the brush on the high tom-tom at a minimum tempo of 164 beats per minute. I've always played one-handed rolls with pencils in classes

throughout my high school and college career; this piece called my name. The other most technically challenging part about this piece is the buzz roll played with one hand by striking the rim with the brush handle. To get a consistent sound from both my right and left hands, I sat at the snare drum for hours and hours practicing until I could accurately play it.

***My Lady White: Madrigal, Movement 1* by David Maslanka**

David Maslanka, born in 1943, is a prolific composer for a variety of genres and has written some of the most well-known marimba solos such as *Variations on 'Lost Love'* and *My Lady White*. I chose the first movement of *My Lady White* because it nicely contrasted with the other two marimba solos in my recital.

Besides the recitative towards the end of the movement, the entire piece is a soft, legato, slow chorale. When I first looked at the sheet music for *Madrigal*, I underestimated the difficulty of the music. Almost any intermediate percussionist could play what is written on the page, but to be able to transform the sheet music into actual *music* requires an advanced interpretation and execution. Since this chorale is a slower and a very tender piece, it became my goal to play as smoothly and eloquently as possible while keeping the audience engaged with my precise dynamics, roll speed, and gestures. Using softer/medium mallets helped me attain this goal.

The chord progressions are my favorite aspect of *Madrigal*. The piece starts out with a dark C# minor chord that starts from *niente*. In order to truly start from *nothing* when rolling on the marimba, I start the rolls on the nodes of the keys and slowly make my way towards the center of the keys. This creates a very nice aesthetic effect for the listener. The E in the C# minor chord becomes an F, creating a Picardy third effect. The C# major chord

then acts as a V chord leading into the next section which is in F# major. The chorale then changes to the relative minor key, D# minor, and is followed by a lovely A# major V chord.

The next section contains the most exciting part of the chorale, in my opinion, but also contains the most technically and musically challenging section. This section is now in Eb major and contains the biggest interval in the left hand I have ever played. For a quarter note, an interval of a minor 10th from C3 to Eb4 is played on the left hand while the right hand is playing both Bb4 and Bb5, creating a beautifully rich C minor 7 chord. Playing these chords smoothly from one to another is extremely taxing and difficult, but sounds so great when done correctly. The piece then changes to the relative minor key, C minor, and continues in C minor throughout the tender and legato recitative.

Madrigal comes to a full circle at the end of the piece via the dark C# minor chord followed by a “distant” G4. To end it, the same type of Picardy third effect happens via the E to F in the C# minor to C# major chords. The C# major chord is followed by the same “distant” G4. I interpret this somewhat off-putting note the same way as I start the entire piece – from *niente*. Instead of coming from *nothing*, I go to *nothing* by rolling smoothly and softly towards the notes of the key until the G4 is inaudible.

***Trio Per Uno: Movement I* by Nebojsa Zivkovic**

Nebojsa Zivkovic, born in Serbia in 1962, is one of the world’s best marimba and percussion soloists and is an extremely prolific composer. Throughout the years, his compositions have become standard repertoire for percussionists world-wide, especially his pedagogical marimba book called *Funny Mallets*. Zivkovic’s program notes for *Trio Per Uno* are as follows:

“*Trio Per Uno* (1995/1999) consists of three movements. The edge-movements have some similarities in manner and appear as if they would present a perfection of wildness in an archaic ritual cult. The second movement has its own special lyric and contemplative mood. The opening [movement] requires a bass drum (lying flat) played with timbale sticks by all three players. In addition to [the bass drum], a pair of bongos and a pair of china-gongs are used by each player. The claim for playing on the same instrument makes interesting effects of strict unison performed parts which are ‘abrupt’ by the contrasting sounds of other participating instruments... The music here expresses the following principle: ‘three bodies, one soul.’ The large number of different rhythmic patterns are mostly played in unison, but also split between the players in a *trialogue*. The possibility of improvisation in the 1st and 3rd movements of the trio makes the piece more interesting, and at the same time, opens the way for the free streaming of the drum-energy, without any obligation to the written text” (Zivkovic, 1999).

Although Zivkovic’s English is a little bit broken, he explains the premise of the piece very well. For my senior recital, I chose to play the first movement with Joe Caffrey and Tom Roblee, my percussion professor. Mr. Roblee plays Percussion 1’s part, I play Percussion 2’s part, and Joe plays Percussion 3’s part. As Zivkovic notes, the first movement is for a flat-lying bass drum, a pair of bongos for each player, and a pair of china gongs for each player (see Appendix B for a visual representation). The polyphony of this piece is not only from the variety of different instruments, but also from a variety of different sounds and extended techniques of playing the instruments. For example, Zivkovic employs specific types of bass drum strokes that including a normal stroke about 8 inches from the rim, a

stroke in the center of the drum, a very soft *tap* stroke, and hitting the wooden hoops of the drum instead of the drumhead itself (see Appendix C for notation explanations).

Trio Per Uno is one of the most fun, exciting, and energetic pieces of music I have ever played. Since most of the piece is played on the bass drum, it is also one of the loudest pieces I have ever played, especially since there are 3 players. As we play it, I imagine that we are members of an ancient tribe calling upon a god, but something goes terribly wrong. By playing the trio, we summon an ancient demon through the bass drum who wreaks havoc on the players and kills the entire tribe community. Each section of the piece denotes spastic occurrences during the ritual. For example, the beginning of the piece, played on the wooden hoops at *mp*, metaphorically represents the calm yet exciting start to the ritual. As the dynamics build and build on the hoops, we then switch to the bass drum head, signifying the next step in the ancient ritual.

Continuing along with several incredibly fast metric modulations, we begin repeating a particular groove and then begin improvising with the addition of the china gongs at section 10. This is where things go awry during the ritual. The china gongs' high, metallic twang causes unrest within the tribe. At section 11, we suddenly play *pp* in the center of the bass drum, slowly building and building as another metric modulation occurs at section 12. To elaborate, the 16th notes in section 11 with a tempo 99 BPM transform into the triplets of section 12 with a tempo of 132 BPM (i.e., the rhythm of our hands does not change; the pulse of the beat changes). However, one measure after section 12, we then play 16th notes at this faster tempo, increasing the intensity and voraciousness of the piece. It is here where the ancient demon rises out of the bass drum and begins wreaking havoc on the tribe. Each

player plays an accented 16th note triplet figure on the bass drum and each of the bongos, and in my mind, translates to a punch/swipe/kick of the demon.

The rest of the piece primarily consists of split bongo and china gong parts between the 3 players at *forte*. From the listener's perspective, it sounds like a symphony of metallic chaos with accented bongo and bass drum patterns in between the flourishing twangs of the gongs. At this time, the demon is violently massacring the tribespeople while their shrieks and cries adding to the chaotic music. At section 15, the 3 percussionists decide to try to recall the demon back into the bass drum to stop the bloodshed. Players 1 and 3 play a complicated repeated phrase of 2 measures as a duet while I play straight 16th notes (with a few accented 16th note triplet figures) as a composite rhythm. Similarly to African Drumming, to end a piece, the lead drummer usually plays a composite rhythm extremely loudly to signal the other players to stop. Analogously, I am signaling everyone to end the piece and to recall the demon. The last 3 measures, as shown in Figure 3, pull the demon back into the bass drum with an absurdly loud (*fff*) and viscous composite rhythm between all 3 players. As we hit the very last sforzando note in the center of the bass drum, the demon retreats into the drum and returns to the underworld. The 3 drummers then remain alone, standing by their instruments, sweating profusely, questioning what had just occurred – the only ones to survive.

As mentioned earlier, it is important for a performer to imagine these types of stories or sceneries while playing music. Although this story has a dark and unpleasant plot, it helps me become one with the piece; it should ideally make the audience perceive a deeper significance behind the performance. I do not want them to see 3 percussionists; I want them to see 3 tribesmen tell a musical story: “three bodies, one soul.”



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Figure 3. The score of the last 3 measures of *Trio Per Uno: Movement 1*. Adapted from *Trio Per Uno* by Nebojsa Zivkovic (1999). Copyright 1999 by Editions Musica Europea.

***Impressions: Movement 1* by Nicolas Martyniciow**

Continuing, the second to last piece on my senior recital is the first movement of *Impressions* by Martyniciow. As I stated earlier, this piece is the most rhythmically complex and technically challenging snare drum piece I have ever played and is often used for auditions for symphonic orchestras. Its unrelentingly fast tempos, sudden meter changes, complex stickings, highly varied dynamics all require masterful technique and playing ability of the snare drum.

The entire movement is an allusion to the infamously repetitive yet challenging snare drum part in Ravel's *Bolero*. The first two measures of the piece are the exact phrase (see Figure 4), but Martyniciow builds and builds the simple phrase by adding subtle accents, drags, single stroke fours, five-stroke rolls, diddles, closed rolls, open rolls, dynamic changes, and even sixteenth note quintuplets. The reference to *Bolero* is also subtly apparent in the very last minute of the movement. To elaborate, the 9/8 section on the last page of the



Figure 4. The snare drum rhythm in Ravel's *Bolero* that Martyniciow alludes to throughout *Impressions*.

movement consists of extremely fast 16th note Swiss Army Triplets of which the accents model after the rhythm presented in Figure 4. Also, the very last line of the piece is comprised of very slow and delicate buzz rolls from bouncing one stick for each roll (see Appendix A for instructions). This composite rhythm is the *Bolero* rhythm but immensely slowed down via quarter notes. It took me until after my jury to realize that the last line emulated Figure 4 thanks to Dr. Mowrey's helpful comments.

***Caméléon* by Eric Sammut**

Eric Sammut, born in 1968, is an exceedingly prolific composer for solo marimba works. He was the principal percussionist in the Orchestre de Paris and has taught percussion at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Some of his most notable pieces include *Caméléon*, *Four Rotaions*, *Ameline*, and his arrangements of *Italian Song* and *Libertango*. Sammut uses a very melodic and jazzy composition style in which the rhythms, melodies, and harmonies fit comfortably on the hands.

I have been working on *Caméléon* since the end of my Junior I.S. recital last year in 2014. This demanding four-mallet marimba solo is a beautiful and luscious piece that not only requires advanced chops on the marimba, but also a mature ability to phrase melodies effectively. *Caméléon* is both tender and intense. To be play this piece lyrically and musucally, I animate myself with energy and purposeful gestures. There are two defining

sections in this piece: the first is a tender jazzy section, and the second is a faster and more rhythmically-defined section.

In my interpretation of the first section, I push and pull with the tempo quite often for the following reasons. First, the only written notes are 8th notes. If I were to play straight 8th notes at a constant tempo, the tune would get extremely boring. She-e Wu, a world-renowned marimba player, played part of *Caméléon* at PASIC 2014, and explained that this song *calls* for an artist's pushing and pulling of the phrase, dynamics, and tempo. Second, there are a variety of time signatures such as 4/2, 11/8, 2/2, 10/8, 15/8, etc. employed within this first section. As I kept playing the piece over and over, these time signatures became arbitrary; they exist only to serve the overarching phrases and motifs. It is up to the performer to create *music* out of these phrases that go across these complex bar-lines by pushing and pulling the tempo, and by bringing out the melody via the accented/legato notes.

The second section is faster, is rhythmically sturdier, and contains the most technically difficult parts of *Caméléon*. The 16th note triplets going up and down the marimba require a triple lateral stroke on each hand. That is, each hand plays *three* 16th note triplets for each stroke. To further elaborate, if I apply this technique to a 4/4 bar that consists of only 16th note triplets, I would play 8 different strokes (one for each 8th note of the measure). However, each of the 8 strokes hits 3 separate notes on the marimba, for a total of 24 notes (i.e., 3 notes X 8 repeats = 24 total notes)! In *Caméléon*, I play exactly that, but for 4 measures in a row, *TWICE*!

The most challenging measure of the entire piece (and the bane of my existence) consists of a full 4/4 bar of 16th note triplets; however, Sammut modifies the permutation of the mallets. Instead of repeating the “2 1 2” (i.e., triple lateral stroke with the left hand

mallets 1 and 2) and “3 4 3” (i.e., triple lateral stroke with the right hand mallets 3 and 4) permutations 4 times within the measure, I repeat a “2 1 3 4” permutation 6 times within the bar (i.e., 4 notes X 6 repeats = 24 total notes)! To add the complexity of this measure, Sammut puts accents on every note that the inside mallets hit (i.e., mallets 2 and 3), which technically creates a composite rhythm of 8th note triplets. To make things even more interesting, these same accented notes are comprised of a whole-tone scale starting on C3 (i.e., C, D, E, F#, G#, A#). While this whole-tone scale is occurring in the inner mallets, it also occurs in the outside mallets, although in different octaves. In other words, in order for there to be a whole-tone scale in the inner and outside mallets, mallets 1 and 2 in the left hand are always at a constant interval of a minor 7th, and mallets 3 and 4 in the right hand are always at a constant interval of a major 9th. Thus, the 16th note triplets of the measure are as follows: |C3 D2 D3 E4| E3 F#2 F#3 G#4| G#3 A#2 A#3 C5|C4 D3 D4 E5| E4 F#3 F#4 G#5| G#4 A#3 A#4 C6|. See Appendix D for a visual representation of these complex melodic and rhythmic measures.

Playing *Caméléon* has pushed me as a musician and a percussionist. The fact that this piece has taken me almost a year to play shows the true magnitude and complexity of this work of art. I tip my hat to Eric Sammut for masterfully creating such an excitingly beautiful yet animated marimba composition that encompasses impressionistic elements and utilizes the marimba in an energetically innate way.

Conclusion

As Gustav Mahler once said, “If a composer could say what he had to say in words, he would not bother trying to say it in music.” Music can express feelings and emotions

unlike any other art form because music decorates *time* as opposed to *space*. It is the job of performers and musicians to ignore their personal identities and become one with the music.

If a musician can elicit a strong emotional response in a listener, then they have succeeded.

While I further prepare for my senior recital in the upcoming month, it is my goal to perform each piece with an advanced level of musicianship, a heightened sense of musicality, and a mastery of musical expression by encompassing all of the knowledge I have gained from my professors, and the hours and hours of practice I have dedicated to this craft called percussion.

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Appendix A: List of Symbols for Impressions

Nomenclature des instruments et notations List of instruments and symbols


Instruments


une caisse claire | one snare drum
un petit tom assez aigu (8" ou 10") | one fairly high tom-tom (8" or 10")
un gros tom (entre 13" et 16") | one big tom-tom (between 13" and 16")

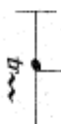
Avec les baguettes : With the drumsticks:


 frappe normale
normal stroke


 sur le cercle
on the rim

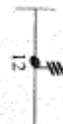
 rimshot normal
normal rim shot

 rimshot avec la baguette
posée sur la peau
rim shot with the stick
resting on the skin


 roulement normal
normal roll


 buzz (joué d'une main)
buzz roll (played with one hand)


 roulement détaillé (dans
ce cas, 6 = 3 doubles)
long roll (in this example,
6 means 3 double strokes)


 idem (12 = 6 doubles)
ditto (12 = 6 double strokes)


Avec les balais : With the brushes:

 frappe normale
normal stroke

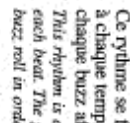
 buzz joué d'une main (en frappant le
marc du balai sur le cercle)
buzz roll played with one hand (by
striking the rim with the brush handle)

 roulement d'une main (frotter le
balai en va-et-vient sur la peau)
one-handed roll (stroke the skin with
the brush in a to-and-fro movement)


 faire glisser le balai sur la peau
(en allant du bord vers le centre)
slide the brush on the skin (moving from
the edge toward the centre)


 va-et-vient régulier du balai frotté sur la peau
regular to-and-fro stroke of the brush rubbed on the skin

Impressions III : lettres A et D (letters A and D)


 Ce rythme se fait d'une main et est obtenu en jouant un buzz
à chaque temps. Le but est de bien contrôler le début de
chaque buzz afin d'avoir quatre coups par buzz et par temps.
This rhythm is obtained with one hand by playing a buzz roll on
each beat. The goal is to carefully control the production of each
buzz roll in order to sound four strokes per buzz and per beat.

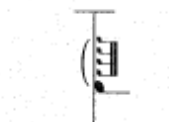
Avec les doigts : With the fingers:


 frappe normale
normal stroke

 rimshot (à l'extrême bord de la peau)
rim shot (at the extreme edge of the skin)

Impressions II : lettre D (letter D)

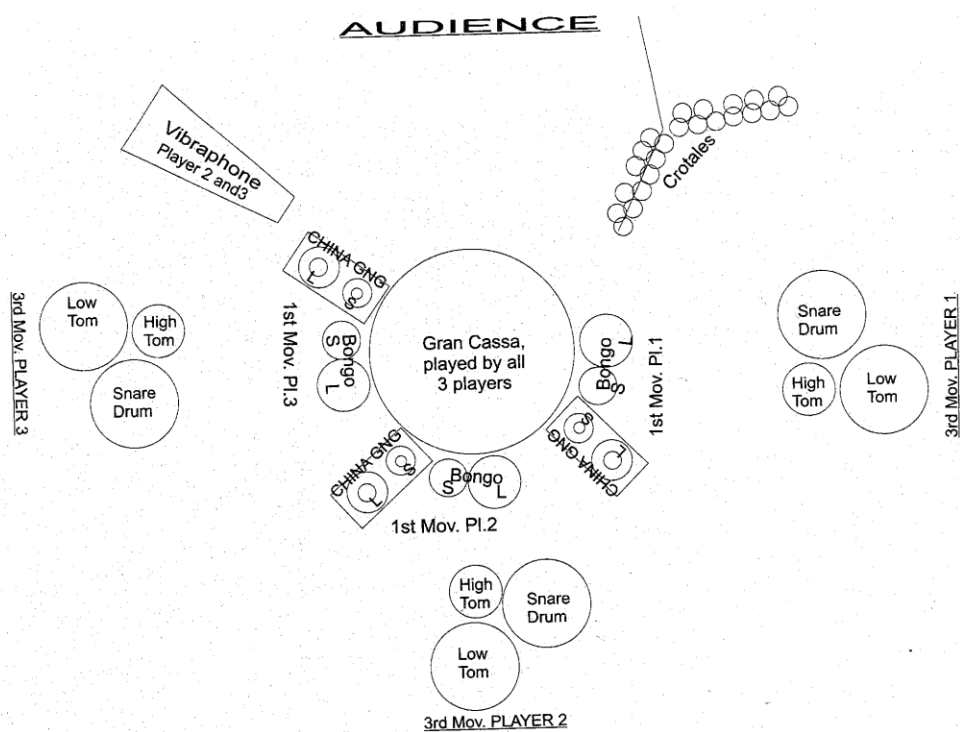
 note sup. : au centre de la peau
note inf. : au bord de la peau
Higher note: in the centre of the skin
lower note: on the edge of the skin

 ra de cinq joué d'une main avec le
doigté : 5,4,3,2,1 (les ras de trois et
quatre que l'on rencontre dans ce
passage n'ont pas de doigté imposé)
ra of five played with one hand using the
fingering: 5,4,3,2,1 (the ras of three and
four encountered in this passage have no
obligatory fingering)

 doubles joués avec deux doigts de chaque
main (ex. : 2^{me} et 3^{me} doigts)
double strokes played with two fingers of each
hand (e.g.: 2nd and 3rd fingers)

Note. Adapted from *Impressions* by Nicolas Martynciow (1999). Copyright 1999 by Editions Henry Lemoine.

Appendix B: *Trio Per Uno: Movement 1 Set-Up*

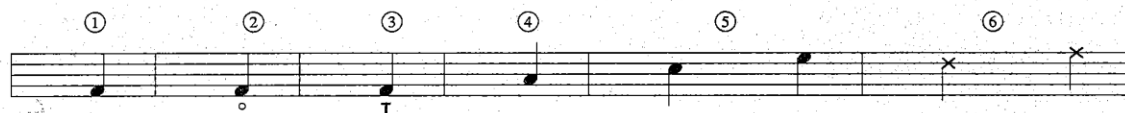


Note. Adapted from *Trio Per Uno* by Nebojsa Zivkovic (1999). Copyright 1999 by Editions Musica Europea.

Appendix C: Notation Explanations for *Trio Per Uno: Movement 1*

Explanation / Notation

1st Movement / 1. Satz



- ① Bass drum, normal about 8" from the rim / Große Trommel, normal (ca. 20 cm vom Rand)
- ② Bass drum, hit in the centre of the drum / Große Trommel in der Mitte gespielt
- ③ Bass drum, very soft "tap" stroke / Große Trommel, sehr leiser "tap" Schlag
- ④ Bass drum, play on the wooden hoop / Große Trommel, am Holzzargen gespielt
- ⑤ Two bongos, high/low / Zwei Bongos, hoch/tief
- ⑥ Two China gongs (opera gongs) lying flat on the trace / Zwei China-Gongs, flachgelegt auf eine Ablage

Note. Adapted from *Trio Per Uno* by Nebojsa Zivkovic (1999). Copyright 1999 by Editions Musica Europea.

Appendix D: Visual Representation of the 16th Note Triplet Measures in *Caméléon*

The image displays three staves of musical notation, likely for piano, featuring complex rhythmic patterns. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a *cresc.* instruction. It contains several triplet markings (3) and sixteenth note patterns. The second staff starts with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes a *mf* marking and a *cresc.* instruction. It features more triplet markings and sixteenth note patterns. The third staff includes dynamic markings of *ff*, *f sub.*, and *f*, along with a *cresc.* instruction. It shows sixteenth note patterns and triplet markings. The notation is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature.

Note. Adapted from *Caméléon* by Eric Sammut (1999). Copyright 1999 by Keyboard Percussion Publications.