

New Percussion Literature and Recordings

Publishers and composers are invited to submit materials to *Percussive Notes* to be considered for review. Selection of reviewers is the sole responsibility of the Review Editor of *Percussive Notes*.

Comments about the works do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Percussive Arts Society. Send two copies of each submission to:

James Lambert

Percussive Arts Society

701 NW Ferris Avenue

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Note: Please provide current address or e-mail, contact information and price with each item to be reviewed. **Whenever possible, please include a performance or rehearsal tape of ensemble music.** Also, if possible, include a translation if text and CD liner notes are not in English.

Difficulty Rating Scale

I-II	Elementary
III-IV	Intermediate
V-VI	Advanced
VI+	Difficult

REFERENCE TEXTS

The Art of Expressive Playing

Jerry and Henry Nowak

\$9.95 (teacher's manual \$24.95)

Carl Fischer

This three-volume series is dedicated to the art of playing wind music for individuals, small ensembles and large groups. It is divided into a book for brass and percussion, a book for woodwinds and mallets, and a teacher's manual, which includes all of the material, plus a CD with 88 musical examples.

The premise of this series is to provide a musical approach to meter, articulation, dynamics, time, melodic phrasing, and ensemble balance, to name a few. Most of the material is applicable to brass and woodwind instruments. The references to percussion pertain only to snare drum and bass drum. There



is no mallet part designated in the music, but mallet instruments could be used for any of the wind instruments in C. Percussionists would benefit from listening to the ideas presented to the brass and woodwinds, and then applying the ideas to their parts.

—John H. Beck

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION SOLO LITERATURE

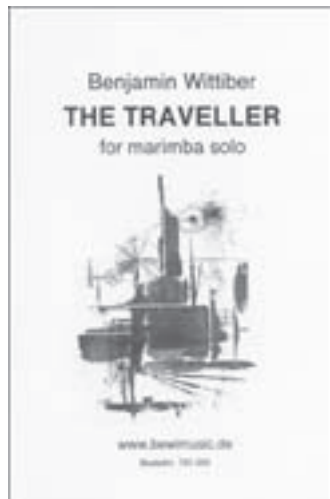
The Traveller

Benjamin Wittiber

\$17.99

Bewimusic

This four-mallet marimba solo is written for a five-octave instru-



ment. The composer takes us through a journey of idioms that describe the styles of different cultures. The opening theme is in duple meter and consists of a series of arpeggios and mallet rotations. The initial theme is followed by similar patterns, but now in a more frantic manner, with the right and left hand echoed by playing all sixteenth notes. The middle section contains rhythmic figures and patterns that are found in many Latin-jazz recordings.

The work closes with a coda in 6/16 meter, ending on an a-minor chord. The solo is predictable through the use of motives that are repeated with slight pitch or harmonic variations. This is an excellent solo and is within the level of an advanced high school or young college student.

—George Frock

Lost Luggage

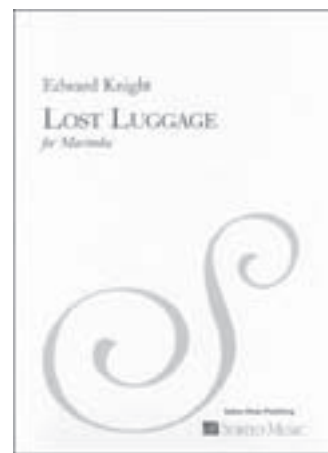
Edward Knight

\$19.95

Subito Music

This five-movement unaccompanied suite for the advanced four-mallet marimbist is programmatic in nature. The movements are subtitled: I. Baggage Carousel; II. Airport Bar; III. Courtesy Phone; IV. Look-alike Bag; V. Meanwhile...Across the Globe. The "pseudo" traveler (marimbist) is capturing the adventure of modern-day airline travel in which his luggage is lost. The musical content of each movement is different and reflects the mood of the traveler.

The first movement is tonal. The entire range of a five-octave marimba is utilized in practically each movement. The second movement has numerous meter shifts from 6/8 to 5/8 to 7/8 and is almost a perpetual motion in its rhythmic complexity. The third movement creates more of a chorale-like character. The fourth movement has a Mixolydian modal center of G for its final cadence. The fifth movement not only requires the marimbist to perform on marimba but also perform simultaneously on a small



multiple-percussion setup of tam-bourine, finger cymbals (mounted), and bass drum and tambourine with kick pedals. Overall, this 15-minute suite will challenge the advanced college marimbist with its compositional demands.

—Jim Lambert

Two Fountains

Kevin Bobo

\$12.00

PercMaster Publications

Those familiar with Kevin Bobo's "Marriage of the Lamb" will discover similarities between it and "Two Fountains," particularly in its encouragement of an imaginative interpretation in which dynamic changes and freedom granted to the performer by the use of *tempo rubato* play significant roles. (The score uses the direction *rubato molto espressivo* no fewer than five times.)

In both movements of "Two Fountains" a continuous stream of sixteenth notes is found somewhere in the musical fabric. In the first movement, which is scored in four parts, the alto contains the unbroken sixteenths, with sustained notes relegated to the tenor and bass lines, typically set as one-handed rolls for the left hand. Steady sixteenth-note movement contributes to a calming, contemplative mood. Although relying on repetitious patterns, a colorful harmonic vocabulary that even em-

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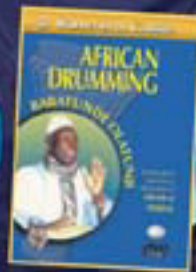
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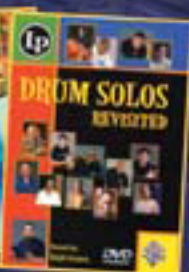
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(0725B)

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(0739B)



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braces several brief bitonal passages makes the movement musically satisfying.

The second movement is cast as a single melodic line, with left and right hands dovetailing to play an uninterrupted stream of sixteenth notes grouped as quintuplets and quadruplets that contribute to a wave-like motion. The movement requires a facile four-mallet technique that can readily accommodate any combination of mallets, even at a rapid tempo, and the maturity to use this technique in achieving a musical performance.

Those who meet these requirements will find this piece a rewarding addition to their solo mallet repertoire.

—John R. Raush

SNARE DRUM LITERATURE

The Art of Playing Snare Drum IV–V

Ronald Ent

\$25.00

Ronald Ent Publications

This is a collection of 12 snare drum solos written in a variety of styles. The solos are a fresh mix of orchestral, rudimental and groove-oriented drumming. Many of the solos include crafty references to or reproductions of various orchestral snare drum excerpts. Some of these include “Pico Bello” (*Pique Dame Overture*), “A Delicate Tale from Scheherazade” (*Scheherazade*), and “Concertino” (Bartok’s *Concerto for Orchestra*). The inclusion of these excerpts make Ent’s solos also valuable for practicing orchestral repertoire.

Other solos, such as “Balls” and “Bonham,” are pure drumming, em-



phasizing chops and groove. Most of the solos in this book require mature hands, as they are permeated with quick and extreme dynamic changes. This book will be enjoyed by students who will find many challenges as well as educators who can use these solos on many levels.

—Scott Herring

MULTIPLE PERCUSSION

Plumage et le Carillon Desinvolte II

Christian Couprie

\$14.20

Alphonse Leduc

Here is an easy, two-movement piece for multiple percussion that can be performed as a solo accompanied by piano or as a trio with the piano part divided between vibraphone and bass. The bass part goes below the range of a five-octave marimba, but the lower notes could be played up an octave. The part could also be played on an electric bass. The multiple percussion part requires a bass drum, three tom-toms, snare drum, suspended cymbals and hi-hat. Different notation is used to indicate various techniques to be used on the snare drum (rimshot, cross-stick, etc.), cymbals (ride, dome, crash, splash) and hi-hat (stick or foot).

The multiple percussion part for the first movement, “Plumage,” is essentially a drumset part written in a rock style. It has a consistent ride pattern with occasional fills. The second movement, “Carillon Desinvolte,” is much more sparse, with the multiple percussion part consisting mostly of cymbal and tom-tom sounds. There are some dots and circles written over the tom parts that are not explained in the key, but may simply mean staccato notes and ringing notes. This short work would make a good introduction to multiple percussion for a younger player.

—Tom Morgan

DRUMSET

Xtreme Drums I–II

Mark Walker

\$11.95

SMT Publications

“Xtreme Drums” takes a fun, car-



toon-like approach to teaching introductory rock drumming. In addition to the basic eighth-note patterns and sixteenth-note fill patterns, Mark Walker includes ten one-page “style summaries” from a list of drummers that most young drummers would recognize (e.g., Travis Barker from Blink-182). This book is best suited for the younger drummer who finds traditional drum books “not exciting enough” and wants a more fun-filled educational experience.

—Terry O’Mahoney

Groove Perspectives

Darryn Farrugia

\$35.57

Musictek

Subtitled “Time playing concepts for the funk/fusion drummer,” *Groove Perspectives* is a drumset technique book that has a little bit of everything—paradiddle exercises, component groove exercises (*a la* the *New Breed* book), accent exercises, rimshot exercises, linear hand/foot patterns (some with thirty-second-note doubles) and independence exercises that emphasize the dynamic independence of each voice. The “theme and variation” exercises take linear patterns and shift accents, add and subtract notes, and reorchestrate strokes (onto other sound sources) to create an infinite variety of new grooves from a single pattern. This book would benefit players looking to expand their timekeeping patterns and who want to technically “clean up” their style.

—Terry O’Mahoney

Portraits for Drum Set

A. Cirone/J. Redlawsk

\$14.95

Warner Bros. Publications



Jeff Redlawsk has adapted/scored Anthony Cirone’s snare drum etude book *Portraits in Rhythm* for drumset and created some new works that are challenging and musically diverse. The premise of the book is to take the rhythms from the original book and adapt them to a musically suitable style for drumset. The 12 etudes selected have been adapted to include New Orleans second-line drumming (complete with clave bass drum/hi-hat ostinato), a jazz waltz, shuffle, uptempo swing, songo, guaguanco, samba/rock, toms/bass drum solo and a mixed meter workout.

Some etudes have additional measures or adaptations to make them musically viable. It is recommended that the reader learn the original snare drum etudes prior to attempting this book, and the accompanying CD (performed by Redlawsk) should be helpful. The performance notes on each piece are very helpful. The book is scored for a drumset with four mounted toms, two bass drums, woodblocks, cowbell, splash cymbals and crash cymbals.

—Terry O’Mahoney

Marco Minnemann Drum Trax IV–V

R. Gratton/M. Minnemann

\$24.95

Warner Bros. Publications

Marco Minnemann burst on the drumming scene in 2001 with his book *Extreme Independence* and followed that up with an instructional DVD in 2003. This CD/book package takes the educational aspect one step further by featuring transcriptions and performance notes

for seven of Minnemann's recorded works (some of which may be seen on his *Extreme Independence* DVD). The tunes are very challenging, both technically and musically, and include the use of mixed meters (e.g., 4/4 to 13/16), double bass patterns, and numerous foot pedals. The book is scored for a drumset with four toms, a foot snare, gong drum, China cymbal, several crashes and a ride cymbal. There are many thirty-second note passages as well as quintuplets and groupings of nine. The play-along charts are very simple versions of what Minnemann might use as a reference for each tune, so the inexperienced player could play and enjoy the charts while working on the technical challenges that Minnemann's transcriptions offer.

—Terry O'Mahoney

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS

The ABCs of Brazilian Percussion

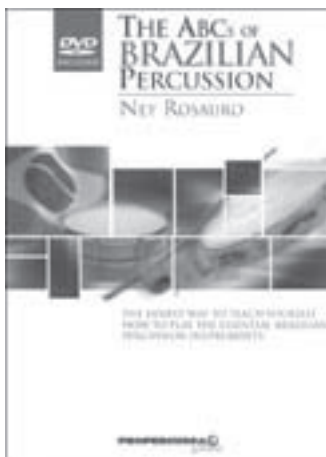
Ney Rosaurio

\$24.95

Propercussa/Carl Fischer

This 33-page book/DVD package covers the basic instruments, technical aspects and rhythmic patterns

II–III



found in Brazilian folk music. Accompanying the photo of each instrument are short technical exercises and advice about some misconceptions about Brazilian music. A section with complete percussion section scores for *samba*, *samba reggae*, *baiao*, *frevô*, and *maracatu* concludes the book. The book is intended as a self-study in Brazilian percussion, and the inclusion of the DVD enables the viewer/reader to achieve the correct feel and phrasing for each rhythm and proper techniques for the instruments.

—Terry O'Mahoney

Guinée: Les Rythmes du Mandeng," vol. 1–3

Mamady Keita

Fonti Musicali

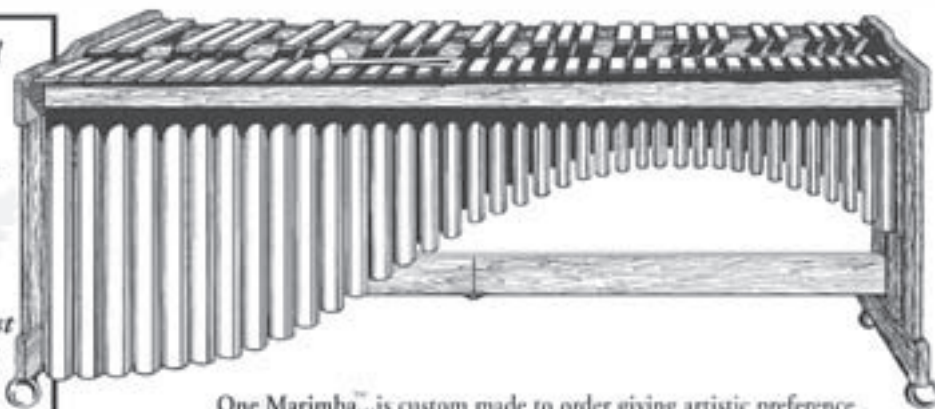
One of the premier performers and teachers of the jembe, Mamady Keita has added to his battery of instructional media with this three-volume instructional DVD collection. The discs advance by proficiency level—beginning, inter-

mediate and advanced—covering seven rhythms per disc. Each rhythm is introduced by a brief description of its geographic and ethnic origins, and includes two-minute demonstrations of two jembe and three dundun parts, played individually and together, and by a full ensemble with Mamady on solo. Volumes 1 and 2 also cover basic instrumental technique.

Technically, the DVDs have excellent sound quality and effective camera angles on the players' hand and body movements. The soundtrack felt a fraction behind at times, which is slightly distracting if you're trying to play along. He included a few obscure rhythms, while some of the more well-known ones are conspicuously absent, though many of those are on his earlier instructional videos, books and CDs. The original language track is in French, overdubbed in a somewhat awkward English, as well as Spanish, German and Japanese.

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The DVD format is ideal for instructional media, allowing the student to navigate between and within rhythms, with instant repeat. Mamady is clear and thorough, though students with prior instruction may find some of his rhythms different from versions

taught by other teachers. The Mande drumming repertoire is characterized by wide regional variation, contributing to the dynamic quality of the tradition. Studying important musicians from different parts of the Mande region will help gain a deeper understand-

ing of the repertoire. This DVD set is valuable to students of any level, but as Mamady warns, "Nothing can replace the hours spent playing with a master, and the DVD is only a nudge in the right direction."

—Julie Strand and
Aboubacar Sanou

Pancho at Montreux

Pancho Sanchez

Concord Picante

"Pancho at Montreux" is a DVD of a live concert by Pancho Sanchez's group at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Although this is not an instructional video, it does have some

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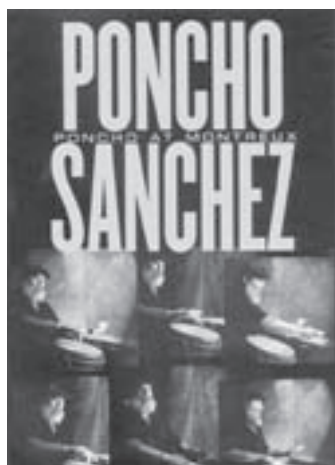
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instructional value as you watch one of the great conguero legends at work. This video is an eclectic mix of tunes from the traditional "Guaripumpe" to Cal Tjader's "I Showed Them," to James Brown's "Out of Sight" and Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man." Sanchez's band cooks with a burnin' horn section, a tasteful percussionist, and of course Sanchez's own colorful conga playing. Sanchez is joined on "I Showed Them" by vibraphonist Dave Samuels who plays an awesome solo.

This disc has quite a few extras, including short interludes between each track. Most of these features are interviews with Pancho or other members of the band, which contain anecdotal stories about each of the songs on the disc. There is also an interview with Pancho as he tapes up his hands in preparation for the performance. In this interview, he explains how he learned how to tape his hands from the great Mango Santamaria. *Pancho at Montreaux* has something for everyone as it is part concert, part instructional video, part history lesson and part documentary.

—Scott Herring

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES

The Buckets of Nantucket II—III
Mark D. Powers
\$25.00

Mark D. Powers
The "buckets" in the title are four plastic buckets and a rubber garbage can, which is used as a bass drum. This three-minute piece for "found" instruments is an easy percussion work for the younger en-

semble that can negotiate triplets and sixteenth-note passages in 3/4 time. No improvisation is required.
—Terry O'Mahoney

Bucketheads

Jane Boxall

\$15.95

HoneyRock

As the title implies, "Bucketheads" is a trio for three buckets. Also needed are cowbell, cymbal and woodblock. The tempo is quarter note = 120–200; therefore, the work would vary in length from approximately 2:00, at the slowest tempo, to approximately 1:00, at the fastest tempo. Each player uses a bucket upside-down on a snare drum stand and plays on the bucket's base with snare drum sticks. Occasionally the bucket is played on the side. Quarter notes and eighth notes are used throughout the work and run the gamut from unison playing to fugal playing to imitation.

"Bucketheads" is a clever composition for young performers. No member of the trio needs advanced technique, nor does anyone play in a solo capacity. This is strictly a "bucket brigade." It would be fun to do on a beginner's recital, or at a fast tempo on a regular recital as an encore.

—John H. Beck

Djammin'

Mark D. Powers

\$10.00

Mark D. Powers

This two-minute djembe duet is an easy, sixteenth-note based piece that offers beginning hand drummers a structured work and four-bar improvisation opportunities. Players are required to read a score, produce four distinct sounds, and understand basic djembe technique (no instructions about technique are provided).

—Terry O'Mahoney

Who Be You?

Mark D. Powers

\$15.00

Mark D. Powers

"Who Be You?" is an adaptation of an African dance rhythm from the Ewe people of Ghana. Scored for two cowbells, maracas, two congas, two toms and floor tom, this simple, one-minute percussion sextet could serve as an introduction to African drum ensembles for younger play-

ers or as a drum circle piece. It could also be extended by introducing improvisation or by omitting instruments to create different textures.

—Terry O'Mahoney

Clappercession

Jane Boxall

\$17.95

HoneyRock

This percussion quartet is based on interlocking ostinati. The composer has created melodic interest by employing foot stomps, leg slaps, handclaps, finger clicks, and tapping two fingers with the palm of the hand. Rhythms employed are quarter notes, eighth notes and their rests. The composer allows a wide range for tempo, stating that the suggested tempo is 140 to 200 mm, ideally 200. The piece is not difficult, but does contain syncopated rhythms, and the interlocking patterns will be a challenge for inexperienced players. This should be a fine piece for young ensembles, and should be a hit for audiences.

—George Frock

Quintessential

Jane Boxall

\$15.95

HoneyRock

This easy quintet is intended to be an introduction to 5/4 meter. Each player performs on a single instrument. The instruments include claves, tambourine, guiro, bongos and a frame drum. The frame part requires a player with a little more experience than the others, since three pitches are notated. The pitch changes are produced by altering finger pressure on the head.

Written at a tempo of 120–180 per quarter note, the parts are often repetitive, with ostinati-type patterns. The bongo part has more rhythmic variety than the other parts. The piece is written in a three-part form, with the middle section scored for handclaps and fingers in the hand. Even though the piece is written for young students, performers with more experience can benefit by working on this piece as well.

—George Frock

Stick Insect

Jane Boxall

\$15.95

HoneyRock

"For fun and for visual effects" are

the two primary reasons for performing this work for four percussionists who are to sit on a solid wooden floor and play on the floor with snare drum sticks. The piece should be a lot of fun to perform since it involves a special type of interaction among the players. From the audience standpoint, it provides entertaining visual effects—especially when the players strike each other's sticks, click their sticks high in the air, and lean forward and to the sides.

The work opens with 31 measures in an allegro 12/8 utilizing fairly simple rhythms. Followed by nine measures in 4/4 with the beat constant, the work then concludes with a final 18 measures back in 12/8. While only single strokes are used (on the floor and against sticks), considerable dynamic changes and accents give special interest to the piece.

The work, which comes with a clear score and directions as well as four separate parts, is best suited for younger players looking for a lighter work with audience appeal. By brightening the tempo, it might also be appropriate for more experienced groups.

—F. Michael Combs

Unsquare Dance

Jane Boxall

\$15.95

HoneyRock

This easy quartet for percussion is written in 6/8 meter. The score specifies four graduated pitched drums, with each player performing on a different accessory instrument (cowbell, temple block, ride cymbal and tambourine). The composer gives no specific tempo, stating that any tempo is acceptable, but the faster the better. In addition to the textures of the drums and accessory instruments, she also notates foot stomps and stick clicks. There are no technical requirements other than single strokes and shifting accents.

—George Frock

Mad Hatters

Jane Boxall

\$15.95

HoneyRock

Included in HoneyRock's Easy Ensemble Series for Percussion Ensemble, "Mad Hatters" is a quartet in which each percussionist plays a hi-hat and a woodblock. The



woodblocks must be graduated in pitch. Boxall's four "hi-hatters" exploit the capacity of their instruments to produce more than one sound by performing on both closed and open hi-hats. The use of stick clicks adds a visual as well as an aural component.

The opening bars, in which the entire ensemble plays unison eighth notes, establish a rhythmic framework that permeates most of the piece as players embellish an

incessant eighth-note "groove" with solo statements utilizing sixteenth-note patterns. (Rhythms used should all be familiar to high school percussionists.) These rhythmic embellishments present obvious opportunities for interactions between members of the quartet, such as antiphonal effects and the execution of patterns in which two, three, or all four players participate.

Credit Boxall with the creation of a piece featuring a very unusual instrumentation that is sure to capture the attention of a student ensemble. It is also quite effective musically, while remaining within the limitations imposed by the abilities of the young ensemble for which it is intended. Perhaps the composer would consider writing a sequel for more advanced players, in which more of the unique sound potential of the hi-hat would be exploited with opportunities for improvisation. It would also be desirable to extend the length of a piece that, in its present form, is quite short.

—John R. Raush

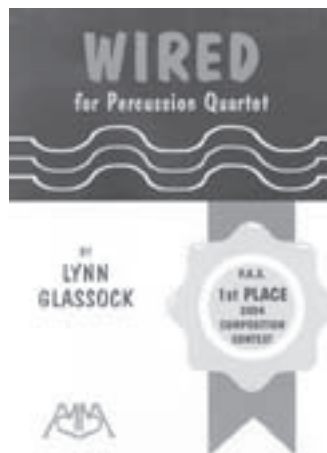
Wired

Lynn Glasscock

\$34.95

Meredith Music Publications

"Wired," was the winner of the 2004 PAS Percussion Ensemble Composition Competition and was premiered by the University of Kentucky Percussion Ensemble at PASIC 2004. "Wired" is a quartet using marimba, vibraphone, ten tom-toms and a variety of small instruments.



The opening section is a dialogue between the keyboard instruments and non-pitched percussion instruments. Following a brief interlude featuring conflicting subdivisions, a section of unison sixteenth notes begins. All four players are on tom-toms and bongos with syncopated, but coordinated, accents. The next section features an ostinato in the low tom, with short, accented bursts presented in the high toms and congas. This section is later expanded upon, with interlocking rhythms in all parts and accents passed around the ensemble. The work continues to develop the previous ideas, culminating in an extended section of syncopated, unison accented sixteenth notes, which bring the work to an exciting close.

The rapidly changing meters and cross-rhythms make this a challenging work for the collegiate percussion ensemble. The players and audience will enjoy this fine addition to the percussion ensemble repertoire.

—Scott Herring

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Left: Dane Richeson, director of percussion studies, conducts members of the Lawrence University Percussion Ensemble. Below: the group's second CD. (To preview, go to Lawrence's website.)

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Tigre Capiangos and the Sect of the Brujeria VI

Mark Saya
\$10.50

Three Morlocks or The Toys of Desperation VI

Mark Saya
\$7.50
Media Press

These two releases for percussion trio reveal the composer's interests in folklore and literature, and from a musical standpoint, his preference for an exotic instrumentation. Both pieces were originally movements from his second suite of percussion trios.

The "tigre capiango" is "a legendary being encountered in the midland provinces of Argentina," who is either a jaguar that can "transform itself into a man," or a man "who can take the form of a jaguar." The single-movement "Tigre Capiangos and the Sect of the Brujeria" was inspired by a description found in Bruce Chatwin's book *In Patagonia* of "a malevolent brotherhood of warlocks" with the power to change themselves into animals.

Saya's instrumentation will pique the interest of percussionists looking for new modes of expression. It includes a large tam-tam, large vibraslap, metal sheet, a micro-xylophone and micro-metallophone (both homemade, with 17 microtonal bars played on the floor from a kneeling position). Each player also uses two six-foot bamboo stamping poles struck on the conductor's podium.

The piece is set in one single, non-stop movement, sectionalized into three parts, plus a coda. It captures a primitive, ritualistic ambience. (The composer suggests performing the piece in near darkness to enhance its "ominous ritual aspect.") A basic eighth-note groove is maintained throughout, in a "primitive, urgent" setting at a tempo of a quarter note = 152. The score is characterized by changing meters with denominators of "8" including 21/8, 29/8, 37/8, 45/8, 53/8, and the last measure, 61/8. A climactic passage marked "violent, savage and raucous" is embellished with rapid sixteenth-note runs in the micro-metallophone.

Saya's "Three Morlocks or The Toys of Desperation" transports us to a future world described by H. G.

Wells, in which the Morlocks, a subterranean race, toil in darkness, working "intricate, malfunctioning machines." Once again, Saya draws upon an imaginative instrumentation used in a large setup, aka "the machine." It features found objects such as tin cans, chains, glass bottles and an automobile jack mounted "in, on, and around a metal and wood framework," played with an unusual assortment of implements such as chunks of rock and brick, brooms, hammers and crowbars.

A performance of this piece requires three players with the ambition and ingenuity to construct the large instrumental setup as well as the inclination and ability to act and follow a number of stage directions calling for a variety of emotional responses such as "looking startled and frustrated" and "kicking the machine in anger." (The composer suggests the possibility of adding a fourth, fifth or even sixth player.)

These two ensembles are examples of the sort of imaginative composition that contributed to the increase in significance of percussion music during the latter half of the 20th century. Either would make an excellent addition to the chamber music repertoire of an advanced collegiate ensemble.

—John R. Raush

MIXED INSTRUMENTATION

Duo – 2004 V

Henri Lazarof

\$16.95

Merion Music/Theodore Presser

"Duo – 2004" is written for a per-



cussionist and a harpist. Percussion instruments used in this ca.12-minute duet are vibraphone, glockenspiel, marimba, a maraca, claves, three woodblocks (small, medium, large), glass chimes, small, medium, and large triangles (the harpist plays the smallest), mounted castanets and a tambourine.

Lazarof takes full advantage of the opportunity to explore the interesting tonal parameters presented by the instruments he has assembled, adding color to a harp part that is colorful in its own right thanks to a harmonic vocabulary spiced with mild dissonances.

The first movement of this four-movement duo is scored for vibraphone and harp and is highlighted by a repeated progression of four chords stated in the first measure by the vibes, repeated in the harp, and then played by both instruments together to end the movement. The second movement, written for a maraca, marimba, claves, and woodblocks, features wooden percussion sonorities exclusively. (The percussionist plays the maraca with the left hand and the marimba with the right.) In the third movement, metal and glass timbres provided by glass chimes, vibes, glockenspiel and triangles are added to the sonority of the harp. One demanding requirement for the percussionist in this movement is the simultaneous performance of glockenspiel and vibes.

In the fourth and longest movement, the percussionist plays mounted castanets, tambourine, marimba, and vibes, using the latter to return to the four-mallet chordal progression that begins the first movement. Lazarof has created a solidly crafted work in which the percussion instruments are used tastefully and effectively. The piece should stir the interest of collegiate percussionists looking for chamber literature, especially those in music schools with advanced harp students.

—John R. Raush

PERCUSSION RECORDINGS

biNg bang plays Lesnik

Jeunesses Musicales Croatia Percussion Ensemble

Equilibrium



This new recording, produced by Igor Lesnik, contains four of his latest compositions performed by a group of select percussion students of Croatia. This Croatian ensemble was the winner of the PAS 2004 percussion ensemble competition, and Lesnik is President of the Croatian Chapter of PAS as well as head of the percussion program at the Music Academy in Zagreb.

Overall, the recording is of the highest quality and almost all instruments sound clear and true, with the exception of the timpani.

The first work is "Dwarfs," a large percussion ensemble work in a popular style based on the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale. Themes for this four-movement work were taken from a jazz group, and jazz chords are used throughout. The 20-minute work features excellent solo performances on vibes, marimba and timpani, and the spoken parts in the final movement add interesting variety.

"Homage A Ball" involves a primary soprano part, sung with incredible technique, but also spoken at times. The interpretation is a representation of Hugo Ball's life through religion, love, death and childhood.

"Concerto for Percussion and Percussion" is in three movements, each featuring a solo percussion instrument and each solo part performed by Lesnik. The opening movement features solo timpani and, although well played, the tone is a bit boomy. The vibraphone solo in the second, *adagio moderato*, movement is very well-played, and the final *presto* and *cadenza-finale*

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features excellent solo performance on drumset.

The final work, "Chamade Suite," is one of the more interesting pieces, utilizing four snare drums, bass drum and cymbals. The three-movement sextet is based on musical themes written as a series of military drum signals commissioned by the Croatia Ministry of Defense. The first movement, "cease fire," will remind the listener of more traditional military drumming, but the second movement, "taps," is in a swing style with lots of brush sounds. The final movement, "morning call," might more closely suggest "Connecticut Half-time," but it is clearly an inventive variation of traditional military drumming.

This recording, which features over 57 minutes of enjoyable percussion music, opens a door to new concepts of percussion ensemble literature as well as displays of excellent percussion playing.

—F. Michael Combs

Different Paths

Carlos Passeggi

Dutch Music Partners

This 14-track CD showcases the work of Argentinean percussionist/composer Carlos Passeggi. His composing/performing talents run the gamut from a tango-inspired suite ("Buenos Aires 2 Scenes") to a mixed-meter percussion ensemble work ("Different Paths"), African/Amazonian march ("Perchacareando"), body percussion piece ("Milonga Por 3 Guita"), and three-part percussion suite for plastic, glass and metal "found" instruments ("The Recycle Beat"). His tune "Coming Back" is treated to two versions—a melancholy vibraphone ballad and a saxophone "smooth jazz" version. The recording is generally very good, with two exceptions. The solo drumset and tape piece "Rooms and Shadows" is somewhat trite, and use of toy synthesizer gives "Argentine Song for a Little Princess" an annoying quality.

—Terry O'Mahoney

Iannis Xenakis

Psappha, Rebounds, Okho
Les Percussions chez Xenakis

Zig Zag Territoires/Harmonia Mundi USA

This excellent CD recording of three works by Xenakis is per-



formed by percussionists Pedro Carneiro, Mathew Rich and Stephen John Gibson. The first works, "Psappha" and "Rebounds," are for solo djembes, performed by Carneiro. "Psappha" uses a very special notation but appeals to the performer's inventiveness. The score includes six groups of instruments including membranophones and metal instruments. "Rebounds" consists of two separate pieces that may not be performed independently but the performer may choose the order in which they are played. Utilizing two bongos, three toms and two bass drums, the liner notes indicate that the work is founded on a process of gradual densification. "Rebounds B" utilizes five membranophones and five woodblocks positioned at relative pitches.

"Okho" is built on complex combinations of simple elements—a set of pre-defined sounds on the djembe based on the position of the hand on the drumhead and three modes for each of those positions. The result is six sounds associated with dynamics.

While the sound quality of this CD is excellent, liner notes indicated that side B is a DVD video of the making of the CD. This reviewer found only an error message when trying to play the DVD side.

—F. Michael Combs

Mallet Jazz

Tom Collier

Origin Arts

This recording of excellent fidelity features mallet-keyboardist Tom Collier with Emil Richards (marimba), Joe Porcaro (drums), Don Crusin and Mike Lang (piano), Dan Dean (bass) and John Bishop (drums). The CD includes nine new, original pieces for mallet jazz quartet—vibes, marimba, piano, bass and drums.

"Mallet Jazz," the first cut, is an up-tempo tune allowing Collier to

show his most creative improvisational skills. In "Eddie's Pad," Collier displays his excellent marimba technique together with his sensitivity to lush musical lines. It is nearly impossible to pick one tune as better than the other, but "Double Bars," with its Mancini-like groove, stands out, and "Mutso Futso," a major change in style, uses clarinetist William O. Smith to provide a special listening treat.

While all nine pieces on this CD captivate the listener, the final cut, "Pink Skies Over Carnaby," has got to be the most impressive—a work for only vibes and marimba featuring Collier at his best. From all the great musical control displayed on this CD, it would seem as if Collier must have an extra hand or two—and therefore deserves three thumbs up.

—F. Michael Combs

Marimba Sculpture

Katarzyna Mycka

Audite



On this CD marimba virtuoso Katarzyna Mycka is joined by Franz Bach, who has performed with her in many duo performances and recordings, and by Eckhard M. Stromer, who performs on the only trio performance, "Sculpture 2" by Rudiger Pawassar. Mycka and Bach perform as a duo on "3 Skizzen" by Mattias Schmitt, "Nagoya Marimbas" by Steve Reich and "Reflections on Japanese Children's Songs II" by Keiko Abe. Mycka performs alone on "Hurricane's Eye" by Leander Kaiser, "Variations over Evelyn Glennie's A Little Prayer" by Ney Rosaura, "Kazak Lullaby" by Keiko Abe and "Toccata" by Anna Ignatowicz.

Each composition is a musical experience within itself. Each one is musical, technically challenging, full of inspiration and quite listenable. No harsh attacks, disso-

nances, or unusual sounds—only full rich sounds filled with quality. Perhaps this is what the marimba was intended to be! Katarzyna Mycka knows her instrument and stays within its quality scope.

—John H. Beck

Musica per Due

Sole Nero

Equilibrium



"Musica per Due" is performed by Sole Nero, the piano and percussion duo of Jessica Johnson, piano, and Anthony Di Sanza, percussion. The duo is engaged in an extensive commissioning project resulting in many new works composed for them. This CD includes three of them: "Musica per Due" by Joseph Koykbar, "Crunch" by Joel Naumann and a set of pieces by Dave Hollinden, "Lead/Platinum." Also included on the CD is "Coil" by Evan House.

Each composition is unique and provides a palette of wide variety for the listener. "Coil" is an engaging work that spirals and grows like a life force. "Musica per Due" ("Music for Two") is a two-movement work with a brief meditative interlude. "Crunch" is a term coined by Jens Joneleit to describe a piece of new music that has a dissonant edge or some bite to it. "Lead/Platinum" has two contrasting ideas; "Lead" does not rely on rhythm and counting as its primary devices, while "Platinum" is a burst of restless rhythmic energy.

Sole Nero is an excellent percussion duo and has produced a CD of superb musicality and quality sound. They provide listeners with the full intent of the music.

—John H. Beck

The Passage

Andy Narrell

Heads Up International

Andy Narell's new CD features the



sounds of the French steel orchestra Calypsociation. The disc contains several of Narell's new works, as well as orchestrations of some of his older tunes for the entire steel orchestra. The arrangements are often complicated, but the intricacies never intrude on the overall groove, and Calypsociation handles each one effortlessly. As always, Narell's melodies are catchy and his solos are creative and memorable, especially on the title cut, "The Passage." On three tunes, the sound of the steel drums is complemented by the horn sounds of Michael Brecker (tenor sax), Paquito D'Rivera (alto sax) and Hugh Masekela (flugelhorn). The recording quality is life-like and is also available on a 5.1 surround sound Super Audio CD. *The Passage* is a must-have to anyone interested in steel band music.

—Scott Herring

Transmutations and Metamorphoses Michael Udow **Equilibrium**

This is a wonderful collection of percussion pieces from composers Mark Ford, Roshanne Etezady, Ney Rosauro and Dary John Mizelle. Performers include the University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble along with soloists Douglas Walter and Jeffrey Moore.

The CD opens with Ford's well-known "Stubernic," a marimba trio performed on one instrument by members of the University of Michigan Percussion Ensemble. Written in 1987, "Stubernic" has become a standard in the percussion literature.

"Feast or Famine" is a study in contrasts between marimba, performed by soloist Tomoko Azuma, and ensemble. Composer Etezady takes the listener through many moods, often creating an oriental flavor with the use of Japanese bowl gongs and temple blocks. Most striking is the relaxed pacing of the

music. It unfolds gracefully and naturally, moving seamlessly from one texture to the next.

The thematic material in "Concerto for Marimba with Percussion Orchestra" is described by composer Levitan as consisting "of short diatonic or pentatonic motives. As a cadential figure, all three movements share a diatonic scalar figure that descends from the dominant to the tonic." The result is a very contemporary but tonal-sounding work that is a lovely foil for the virtuoso solo marimba part. "Toccata and Divertimento for Vibes and Marimba" serves as an appealing contrast with its melodic lyricism that characterizes all of Rosauro's music. The themes are Brazilian with a strong reference to the jazz style.

The CD concludes with Dary John Mizelle's "Transmutations and Metamorphoses." This is a more abstract work. Both movements "contain highly condensed materials derived from the structure of SPANDA, a complex of 198 compositions with a coherent macrostructure lasting over 13 days.

'Transmutations and Metamorphoses' is the first time zone in 'Symphonies of Sound,' the first day of SPANDA."

Throughout the CD, the Michigan Ensemble exhibits flawless playing. This CD is an important documentation of the best in percussion ensemble literature.

—Tom Morgan

The Well-Tempered Marimba Filippo Lattanzi, marimba **DaD Records**

Marimba/Bach

Jean Geoffroy, marimba

Skarbo Production

I have been disappointed with performances of Bach on marimba in the past, but since hearing the latest extraordinary offerings from Filippo Lattanzi and Jean Geoffroy on CD I have been convinced of the efficacy and validity of these transcriptions and gained new confidence in the future of the genre for marimba. I find that I have rediscovered Bach and am overjoyed to hear the music anew and in a new light.

Lattanzi's recording includes "Aria," "Variazione I" and "Variazione IXI" from the "Variations," formerly believed to be too

devilishly difficult to be played convincingly on the marimba—a idea he dispels handily. In addition, the CD contains several pieces from the "Little pieces for Clavier," four two-part inventions, two pieces from "The Well-tempered Clavier, Book One," a four-part chorale (BWV244/62) and "Sonata No.1" (BWV 1001). The playing is elegant and technically brilliant with seamless and suppleness. He has a warm sound and the playing is solid, laced with well-conceived ornamentation.

I am particularly impressed with the beautiful recording quality of this CD, which was recorded in Santo Stefano church in Italy. The sound is lavish and warm, especially on the four-part chorale, with just enough reverberation to create the feeling for the listener of being in situ. I find the playing a bit less free, more disciplined than Geoffroy's, yet it retains a certain dignity and elegance I find engaging. The repertoire is quite different than the usual Bach Sonatas and Partitas, of which there are countless arrangements.

Audio buffs will be delighted with the information about the equipment that was used to make the Lattanzi recording. Also included in the booklet is a beautifully written essay about Bach by Giocchino DePadova and another about the specific music on the CD by Marco Albrizio, all in English as well as Italian and French.

When I think of the music of Bach I visualize stone sculpture such as the work of Michelangelo. I see the phrases carved, not thrown about as in an impressionist manner such as one might imagine in the music of Debussy as visualized in the art work of Sisley or Monet. Geoffroy chisels his phrases with an elaborate clarity and rhythmic energy while retaining the dance-like quality necessary to play each movement stylistically accurate.

The CD includes Cello Suites No. 2, 4 and 6. He brings new and stunning insights to these pieces. Like graceful prose, he plays with a sensitivity and conviction strong enough to satisfy even the staunchest historical performance advocate. At the same time he moves about the instrument with flawless alacrity (he plays cross grip while Lattanzi plays Musser grip). His playing is supple and

unselfconscious, demonstrating a clear understanding of the material—a combination of the intensity and fluidity necessary to play Bach. The music-making is free and complete with imaginative ornamentation born of familiarity with the music.

There is something innately proper about how Geoffroy plays the Preludes—with grace, direction and a freedom born of knowledge of the style. He defines and differentiates well the nature of each movement and does it without changing mallets, using a uniquely sensitive touch. Too often marimba players play each movement the same because they either don't realize how the movements differ or are afraid to express themselves—or don't know what to express. Geoffroy has a direct connection to the music and a conviction rarely seen when marimba players play Bach. I urge readers to seek out his two other CDs on the same label on which he plays the other three Cello Suites (DSK1991) and the Violin Partitas (DSK1944).

Neither player has any technical limitations, leaving way for the music to emerge with ease—and in the case of Geoffroy with a joy seldom found in marimbists. There was finally a musical breakthrough, outside of the technical ones, with piano in the late 1900s, and we can now see the light of real musicality emerging from the depths of what often is superficial technical proficiency on the marimba. These musicians will serve as catalysts for future marimba players who surely will play Bach with confidence and attention to stylistic details and with a historical perspective that other instrumentalists demonstrate. Anyone who has ever seriously asked whether Bach can be successfully played on marimba should pounce on these CDs.

—Michael Rosen

CORRECTIONS

In the December issue, arranger Ruben B. Daryan's name was misspelled in a review of "Suite V-Prelude" by J.S.Bach. In the February issue, composer Davu Seru's name was misspelled in a review of the CD *Percussion Music; Improvised*. We apologize for the errors.

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