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Scholarly Program Notes for Selected Percussion Repertoire

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SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES FOR SELECTED PERCUSSION REPERTOIRE

by

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A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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AN ABSTRACT FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

JAMES G. BEERS, for the Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance, presented on April 27, 2013, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: SCHOLARLY PROGRAM NOTES FOR SELECTED PERCUSSION REPERTOIRE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Mr. Ronald Coulter

This document contains in-depth, scholarly program notes on percussion repertoire selected for the Graduate Recital of James G. Beers. The selected pieces include *Different Drummers* by William Brooks, *Variations on Lost Love* by David Maslanka, *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II* by Elliot Carter, *Duet No. 1 for Electric Bass and Vibraphone* by James G. Beers and *Rebonds* by Iannis Xenakis.

The purpose of this document is to offer a better understanding of these pieces and their composers by providing biographical information, historical context, instrumentation, theoretical analysis, performance techniques and interpretive insight.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The author was exposed to a variety of musical styles and settings as a student attending Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Repertoire was selected to represent this diversity and include traditional classical percussion, world music, chamber music, improvisation, composition and theater. William Brooks' *Different Drummers* is an example of combining advanced snare drum techniques with theatrical elements, various forms of notation and self-composition. David Maslanka's *Variations on Lost Love* is a challenging piece for marimba in the neo-romantic style that offers advanced musical and technical challenges in four-mallet playing. Elliot Carter's *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II* is scored for a small chamber ensemble consisting of marimba, flute, and clarinet. The piece is a challenge because of its rhythmic complexity, demanding a high level of concentration within the ensemble. *Duet No. 1 for Electric Bass and Vibraphone* is this author's first composition and draws upon mbira music of Zimbabwe. Iannis Xenakis' *Rebonds* is a masterpiece in the solo multiple-percussion repertoire that presents challenges in reading, memorization, strength, and coordination.

CHAPTER 2

DIFFERENT DRUMMERS BY WILLIAM BROOKS

In 1988, composer William Brooks submitted four pieces for snare drum - *3 for 1, SILKSMITH, past tense,* and *March Peace* - to Stuart Saunders Smith for his collection of pieces for snare drum entitled *The Noble Snare*. Smith's goal was to publish a collection of legitimate contemporary snare drum solos that were, "worthwhile, meaning: music that attempts to make the musical world larger/richer."[1] In an article by Sylvia Smith, owner of Smith Publications and Stuart's wife, she stated that the inspiration for the collection came from the lack of works for the snare drum. She continues:

> Far from being a "non-pitched" instrument, the snare drum seemed to be full of pitches and full of possibilities…often what happens is that when drummers write drum pieces, you get a piece full of drum licks…So I invited primarily non-percussionist composers to write pieces, hoping they would have a new take on the snare drum.[2]

Smith ultimately selected *March Peace* for publication in volume 2 of *The Noble Snare*. In 1992, Brooks combined his four pieces into his own collection, *Different Drummers*. Although *Different Drummers* was never published, Brooks made note of its existence in the score for *March Peace*, stating, "this is only one possible realization."[3]

Brooks was born in 1943. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Mathematics at Wesleyan University in 1965. Brooks began to teach at University of Illinois in 1969 before earning a Master of Arts from the university in 1971. Brooks proceeded to teach at University of California at Santa Cruz in 1973 before returning to University of Illinois to earn a Doctoral of

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[1] Stuart Saunders Smith, personal interview with author, Carbondale, IL, November 8, 2010.

[2] Carrie Rose, "An Interview with Sylvia Smith On The Thirtieth Year of Smith Publications and Sonic Arts," *Percussive Notes* 42, no. 4 (September 2004): p. 76.

[3] William Brooks, *The Noble Snare: Compositions for the Unaccompanied Snare Drum*, vol. 2, Baltimore, MD: Smith Publications, 1998, 12-13.

Musical Arts in Composition-theory in 1976. He worked as a freelance composer, scholar, and performer before returning once more to the University of Illinois in 1987, where he was Associate Professor of Composition and Chair of the Composition-Theory Division. In 2000, Brooks accepted his current post at the University of York as chair of the Research and Finance Committees as well as professor of composition and experimental music traditions.[4]

Among Brooks' influences were Harry Partch, Herbert Brün, Marshall McLuhan, and George Crumb. Brooks was drawn to Partch's late works, which integrated large-scale theatrical elements such as singing, speech and dance, in addition to the playing of instruments. The same can be said for Brün, who, in addition to integrating text, music and theater, was also experimenting with generating unusual timbres.[5] Similar to Brün, Brooks frequently incorporated lyrics in his compositions. Interestingly, Smith was Brün's most notable student. Brooks saw Marshall McLuhan's study of media theory and popularization of the Global Village as a direct correlation to the integration of the art forms discussed. George Crumb's taste for unusual timbres drew Brooks to experiment with the timbral possibilities of the snare drum, using various extended techniques through various forms of musical notation to create these effects.[6]

John Cage was had a profound influence on Brooks' compositional processes and was notably his most influential composer.[7] Brooks' goal was to create music that cannot be adequately represented by a single performance or recording. He incorporates chance procedures through what he refers to as a game-like compositional structure in which the performer creates the work from a set of rules. Examples of such compositions include *Small Talk* for any four

[4] "William Brooks: Biography," Music, University of York, http://www.york.ac.uk/music/staff/academic/ william-brooks/ (accessed May 17, 2013).

[5] William Brooks, e-mail message to author, November 23, 2010.

[6] Ibid.

[7] "William Brooks: Biography."

unlike instruments, *Poem Piece* for voice as well as the *Different Drummers* pieces for snare drum. When asked how he creates ideas for his pieces, he stated:

> Ideas simply come to mind, randomly, as with a notion, and I work the details from there through a process of trial and error testing...this allows the creation of more than one final form where the performer must compose a realization. I don't want to create blind alleys; rather, I want performers to be enticed into a field of possibilities.[8]

It is for these reasons that Brooks was one of the many composers commissioned to write a snare drum solo for Stuart Saunders Smith's *The Noble Snare*.[9]

The first of the four pieces to be submitted to Smith was *3 for 1* and is the only piece in the collection that does not require self-composition by the performer. Brooks has sent seven copies *3 for 1* to interested persons including the author, making it the only piece from *Different Drummers* other than *March Peace* that has been viewed or performed[10] The number three is manifested by splitting the piece into three movements as well as by using three distinct timbres on the drum. Notes are written on three lines of staff, specifying sounds that are to be made on the surface of the head, the rim, and a rim shot.[11]

The two-page score differentiates the three movements by means of note heads with stems pointing either up or down. For the first movement, the performer is to play only the upward-stemmed notes "lyrically;" for the second movement, only the downward-stemmed notes are played "nervously;" for the third movement, the performer is to read both upward- and downward-stemmed notes. No expressive indication is given. Brooks states in the score that the movements may be played in order that must be pre-determined and that the performer has the

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[8] Brooks, e-mail message to author.

[9] Smith, personal interview by author.

[10] Ibid.

[11] **Rim shot:** a drum stroke that strikes the rim and the drum head simultaneously.

option not to perform all movements.[12]

3 for 1 is divided into groupings of dotted quarter notes, which Brooks said he did on purpose because he feels that the compound triple meter allows for internal groupings that help suggest other meters. Although this is not necessarily important to the phrasing of the piece, as there are no bar lines, it can help the performer execute the complex polyrhythms more accurately.[13] Seven copies *3 for 1* have been sent to interested persons, including the author. It is the piece other than *March Peace* to have been distributed.[14]

SILKSMITH is the second piece in *Different Drummers* and is the first to implement text in the compositional process. Using a dictionary and thesaurus, Brooks produced twelve words synonymous with or related to *silk*. He arbitrarily selected unrelated words by selecting the one closest alphabetically to the produced synonym.[15] Along with *silk*, the words s*iloxane, pinakotheke, remain, dorp, barrister, saloon, deliver, similarity, ducal, shenanigan, lay-up* and *barathea* were selected and placed into what Brooks calls "word clouds," words bundled into groups in different locations on the score.[16] Seven total word clouds exist.

The performer is the "silksmith" and is tasked with assigning a rhythm, timbral choices, physical gesture and inflection (described as attitude, envelope, theater) to each word.[17] The seven word clouds are separated into three groups. The words in each group are connected by one of three lines called “links.” Group I contains three word clouds that connect the words with

[12] William Brooks, *Different Drummers*, 1992.

[13] Brooks, e-mail message to author.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Brooks, *Different Drummers*.

[17] Ibid.

dotted links, indicating the performer should make a smooth transition between the two composed gestures associated with their respective words. Group II contains two word clouds that connect the words with dashed links, indicating the performer should choose either a smooth or abrupt transition. Group III contains two word clouds that connect words with solid links, indicating an abrupt transition. The links in the word clouds serve as a road map to the performer, the path of which should be selected ahead of time.

A performance is planned by linking together words as desired, moving freely between the dotted, dashed, and solid lines. Any chain of words must start with *silk* and may be terminated at any time. After following a path to a second word from silk, the performer may freely jump to that word in any group. No chain may be repeated and no limit is required. The links should be carefully planned and prepared for performance, rather than improvised. The performer may freely choose any aspect of the sound not determined by the rules, such as timbre, rhythm, and duration of the piece.

past tense is a single page of text that resemble stage directions of a play. The theatrical elements used in the piece are the same one would expect to find in contemporary theater; actors, costumes, lighting, choreography, props and a story. The story, a tale of a soldier, is combined with music by use of a military cadence played on a solo snare drum. Brooks stated that he chose these themes because he thought war to be "both horrible and fascinating."

> The image of the drummer more or less came to me. I was in my twenties during Vietnam and, while horrible, drove me to an interest in the World Wars. Drums drive soldiers into battle; they're there to make a cadence that forces a march. That a soldier would be trying to escape the drummer seemed a desperate, though admittedly melodramatic, act.[18]

[18] Brooks, e-mail message to author.

The piece begins with several pools of irregularly placed lighting should rising and falling throughout the performance, regardless of the actions of the performer. In the center of the performance space is an old, weathered, wooden cart with leather pulling straps that holds a solitary snare drum on a crudely constructed stand. The cart should groan and creak. Behind the cart is the drummer, wearing loose black clothing and a blindfold. The drummer begins an elaborate cadence, "quite long" and varying with each repetition.[19] After an improvised number of repetitions, a soldier enters wearing nineteenth-century infantryman's garb. The soldier begins pulling the cart, leaving the drummer behind and breaking off the cadence. The drummer seeks out the drum and cart, striking downward with sticks as if playing the cadence until making contact with the drum and re-establishing sound. The soldier continues to pull the cart throughout the remainder of the piece. These actions produce a distortion in the cadence, introducing varying lengths of silence as well as rapid timbral changes from the drum due to the sticks striking in random spots.

After a time chosen by the soldier the lights will begin to fade, leading to one of two endings for the piece. If the drummer fails to reach the drum before the lights are fully out, the performance ends in silence. If the drummer reaches the drum, the cadence resumes and continues in the darkness for a duration half as long as the piece to that point. In the latter scenario the cadence should gradually stabilize, simplify in rhythm and crescendo until only the use of single, plainly repetitive strokes are played as loud as possible. After the determined duration the drumming stops and the performers exit. The house lights are to come on abruptly, as bright as possible.[20]

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[19] Brooks, *Different Drummers.*

[20] Ibid.

The two endings represent life or death for the soldier. The snare drum has been used for military purposes since the thirteenth-century as a means of relaying commands to troops across long distances and demoralizing the enemy. Francis Markham, a seventeenth-century writer on military matters, describes the drum as being, "the very tongue and voice of the Commander."[21] In the first ending, the drummer's cadence is cut off abruptly after marching to a death on the battlefield. In the second, life is gained at the expense of sight as the drummer plays a new cadence into the darkness. "Not a cheery piece," according to Brooks.[22]

March Peace combines each of the compositional techniques used in the aforementioned pieces, doing so in a way that keeps the piece structurally connected, rather than unnecessarily busy. The piece combines self-composition through a set of rules, advanced snare drum technique and spoken text to create a technically and conceptually challenging solo. The score offers a set of instructions and units of rhythmic material from which to compose the piece.

Twelve units of rhythmic material exist in four groups of three units each, labeled 1-4A, 1-4B and 1-4C. Through a series of rules based on mathematical processes, the performer constructs a sequence of units which transform an initial "complex" (beginning with 1A, 1B, 1C combined) sequence into a final one (4C alone). Each group is notated with differences in meter, tempo, and timbre. The sequence is then notated into a score which is practiced and performed. The materials in Group 1 are in 4/4 time at a tempo marking of eighth note at 176 bpm and contains eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second note material. Group 2 is in 6/8 time at a tempo marking of eighth note at 110 bpm and contains dotted quarter, quarter, and eighth note material and introduces grace notes and rolls. Group 3 incorporates divisions of mixed meter (3/8, 2/4,

[21] James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History*, Revised Ed. (Westport, CT: The Bold Strummer, Ltd., 2005), 217.

[22] Brooks, e-mail message to author.

6/16, 2/8, 3/16, 3/8, and 5/16, respectively) at quarter note at 132 bpm and uses vocal syllables "din," "tak," "a," "na," "gha," "and," "ee," "lee," "one," "two," "la," "dong," and "dung" with eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second note subdivisions. Group 4 incorporates spatial notation where one inch equals one second and uses the spoken text "if a man hears a different drummer, let him step to the music which he hears" which is broken apart into syllables.[23]

The beginning of the piece must always start with 1A, 1B, and 1C played together and end with one unit from D. The use of repetition, addition, deletion, and substitution will carry the performer through the compositional process until the ending is achieved. Any number of these units, from twelve to zero, may be performed simultaneously, with zero being a silent unit. In performance, the score indicates the snares are on and the drum is partly muffled to produce two distinct timbres.[24] Brooks also allows for two separate drums to be used if desired. The spoken material introduced in units C and D should be spoken musically at a dynamic that balances with the drum.[25] Neither should be acted or inflected dramatically, and the text itself does not necessarily need to be understood; the sound takes precedence.

Because the pieces in *Different Drummers* may be played in any order, the author selected *past tense* to be the first. *3 for 1*, *March Peace* and *SILKSMITH* follow in order of most to least drums required, as *3 for 1* requires three, *March Peace* requires two and *SILKSMITH* only one. The author's performance of *past tense* begins with the drum cadence sounding in the hallway. The soldier begins to pull the cart into the performance space. The author combined drum rhythms from the American Revolutionary War, American Civil War and traditional Swiss fife-and-drum corps music as source material for the cadence. Issues with obtaining a soldier's

[23] Brooks, *Different Drummers*.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Brooks, e-mail message to author.

costume led to the decision that both performers dress in black attire. To further contribute to the theme of death, an additional costume change was made to have the drummer wear a black hood rather than a blindfold. The performance ended with the soldier exiting the space with the drum, leaving the drummer to wander in silence. As the hood was lifted, three snare drums were revealed to begin *3 for 1*.

Although rhythm, tempo, and playing area are specifically notated, the indications of character for the first two movements of *3 for 1* lend themselves to experimentation with timbre and physical gestures. To perform the first movement "lyrically," the author played a low tuned-drum with loose snares and large, barrel-tipped sticks to offer a full and warm sound with relaxed body motions. To play the second movement "nervously," the author played a high-tuned drum with tight snares and heavy sphere-tipped sticks to offer precise sounds to accommodate quicker rhythms. The body motions were abrupt and performed in a defensive position. Movement three was performed on a medium-tuned drum with sphere-tipped concert snare drum sticks.

The author's realization of *March Peace* was done so in order to allow all twelve units of material to gradually aggregate until, in the middle, all are sounding simultaneously. Units were subtracted through the remainder of the piece until one remains and fades to niente. Brooks' allowance of two drums helps create drastic changes in timbre. Because units are of different lengths and tempi, extra care must be taken in writing out the score. Employing proportional notation was useful to the author. Brooks even recommends learning the piece in this fashion in order to feel a stronger sense of pulse as the piece moves through time, rather than trying to construct highly advanced polyrhythms within a strict meter.[26]

[26] Brooks, e-mail message to author.

The musical gestures created for *SILKSMITH* were composed so each word was distinct in sound and character. This author used every word offered in the score, several of which were repeated to offer familiarity as a constant to show greater differentiation between the different links. The abrupt transitions between words connected by solid lines were interpreted by immediately changing from one to the other, whereas words connected by dotted lines were interpreted by placing two seconds of silence and stillness between words. Before returning to the "silk" gesture after each link is performed, a longer silence was taken to emphasize separation of links for smooth transitions.

Brooks' multi-faceted approach to the *Different Drummers* collection is fascinating in its representation of many forms of performance. By combining advanced snare drum technique with alternate notational systems, composition by the performer, spoken text and theatrical elements, he creates an environment where the performer free to explore the vast musical possibilities of the snare drum in music.

CHAPTER 3

VARIATIONS ON LOST LOVE BY DAVID MASLANKA

David Maslanka's pieces for winds and percussion are well known and performed throughout the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and numerous European countries.[27] His pieces are published by Carl Fischer, Inc., Kjos Music Company, the North American Saxophone Alliance, and Keyboard Percussion Publications and have been recorded on CRI, Mark, Crest, UMass, Novisse, Klavier, and Centaur Labels.[28] There is no professional recording of *Variations on Lost Love* available, and yet it has gained wide popularity and acceptance in the percussion world as among the most imaginative and original works for solo marimba.

Maslanka was born in 1943 and raised in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a former whaling and fishing town where his father was a brass and metal worker, and his mother was a housewife that had musical talent but no academic training.[29] Listening to her music records at home sparked Maslanka's interest in the clarinet, which he began studying at the age of nine in public school. Shortly thereafter he began composing in high school and then, formally, at Oberlin College Conservatory of Music under the direction of Joseph Wood.[30]

Along with studying conducting with Gerhard Wimberer at the Salzburg Mozarteum from 1963-1964, Maslanka earned a Bachelor of Music in Education from Oberlin in 1965. He furthered his education at Michigan State University from 1965-1970 where he studied composition with H. Owen Reed and theory with Paul Harder, earning Master of Music and

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[27] Darren Duerden, "The Unaccompanied Marimba Literature of David Maslanka," *Percussive Notes* 36, no. 3 (June 1998): 39.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Mark Camphouse, *Composers on Composing for Band*, vol. 2. (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2003), 197.

[30] Ibid., 198.

Doctoral of Music of Music Theory and Composition.[31] These years of formal training earned him immediate success as a teacher at several universities including the University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough Community College of New York. Maslanka began his career as a freelance composer in 1990 when he and his family moved to Missoula, Montana where they currently reside.[32] Maslanka works exclusively by commission and travels regularly to serve as a guest composer at universities, festivals, and conferences.

Maslanka's music is characterized by romantic tonal language and clearly articulated large-scale gestures.[33] Maslanka's particular treatment of these seemingly straightforward elements is the result of a personal philosophy of music and composition. He stated:

> Creative work finds its point and force through restrictions, so I am not in the least bothered by them…this process allows the overall sound of character of a piece to have a long incubation period.[34]

Maslanka further stated that over the last forty years he has tried to absorb every type of musical language and that it eventually led him to radically simplifying all elements of his music, a change that came as a response to the proliferation of musical and notational procedures that grew in the twentieth century.[35]

Maslanka believes that restriction leads to creativity. He follows up with the notion that

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[31] Camphouse, 198.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Paul C. Phillips, "Maslanka, David," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.siu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/42964 (accessed April 13, 2013).

[34] Camphouse, 201-2.

[35] Molly Cryderman-Weber, "David Maslanka's Works For Percussion Ensemble," *Percussive Notes* 48, no. 2 (March 2010): 5.

"when the possibilities are limitless, the mind boggles and shuts down."[36] The formal structure and triadic harmonies in Maslanka's music are rooted in his admiration of Johann Sebastian Bach's music and are the foundation of Maslanka's philosophy of restraint. To Maslanka, any composer who wishes to be "good" must at some point adhere to basic aspects of melody, counterpoint, harmony, rhythm, form, texture, and orchestration.[37]

Along with Bach, Maslanka cites Claude Debussy, Edgard Varèse and Dmitri Shostakovich as significant influences to his compositional style. Maslanka describes Debussy as "having the talent of pinning out a series of feelings and moods of nature through the subtle evolution of a single motive."[38] The dream-like, or floating, state that Debussy creates through his use of the whole-tone scale is evident in Maslanka's works, who often develops a single motive through scalar elaboration. Sparse orchestration, apparent in Debussy's music, is another technique Maslanka applies in his own music.

Another significant trait of Maslanka's music is his use of percussion instruments to create rich textures. He became infatuated with them upon hearing Edgard Varèse's *Deserts* in the early 1960s. He stated:

> This was an astonishing experience for me as a young student. It not only opened my ears to that unique sound world but got me thinking about percussion. Like other "one of a kind" composers, Varèse's music is riveting and compelling. The character of his sound is bracing and refreshing to my ears.[39]

Maslanka's symphonic and percussion ensemble music, in particular, has been known for its use of percussion. Maslanka noted, "The great emotional power that percussion instruments

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[36] Cryderman-Weber, 5.

[37] Camphouse, 207.

[38] Ibid., 213-14.

[39] Ibid., 214.

are able to portray makes them an integral voice in his music rather than a decoration or supporting role."[40] He wrote five pieces for percussion ensemble and two pieces for solo marimba. The percussion ensemble piece *Crown of Thorns* (1991), in particular, maintains a high level of recognition in the percussion world and features Maslanka's most distinguishable traits. Examples of these include chorales similar to those of Johann Sebastian Bach, non-conventional timbres and rhythms, arpeggiated triadic harmonies with dissonances leading to consonant resolutions and his treatment of thematic material.

Maslanka admired Shostakovich's instinct for scope, dramatic pacing, and sheer sustained patience and power. Maslanka states that Shostakovich is, "the direct expression model for my own symphonies and concertos…If I have a musical hero, it is Shostakovich."[41] The ability of Shostakovich to sustain the drama of his lengthy works throughout their entirety by means of space and musical gestures are evident in Maslanka's sound.

Variations on Lost Love was commissioned by the New York State Music Teachers Association in 1977 while Maslanka was on faculty at the State University of New York at Geneseo.[42] The committee chose marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens as the recipient artist, this work would be Maslanka's first attempt at composition for the marimba.[43] The work would be Maslanka's first attempt at composing for the marimba and would push the boundaries of four-mallet marimba technique inspired by Stevens' original approach to the instrument. Most notable among these techniques is Stevens' use of double lateral strokes, a rotary motion in the wrist that produces two successive pitches.[44] Further descriptions of his techniques can be found in his

[40] Camphouse, 214.

[41] Ibid., 215, 217.

[42] Duerden, 39.

[43] Ibid.

exercise book, *Method of Movement*. When Stevens began his training at the Eastman School of Music, he noticed, "The techniques I was using--the one-handed roll, rotary strokes, doing Baroque trills with one hand, two-part Bach inventions, things like that--got a lot of attention."[45]

According to Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love* is based upon the poem *Lost Love* by English poet Robert Graves. The poem describes "a person so distraught by lost love that he enters a state of hyper-awareness."[46] The poem reads:

His eyes are quickened so with grief,
He can watch a grass or leaf
Every instant grow; he can
Clearly through a flint wall see
Or watch the startled spirit flee
From the throat of a dead man.
Across two counties he can hear
And catch your words before you speak.
The woodlouse of the maggot's weak
Clamour rings in his sad ear,
And noise so slight it would surpass
Credence—drinking sound of grass,
Worm talk, clashing jaws of moth
Chumbling holes in cloth;
The groan of ants who undertake
Gigantic loads for honour's sake
(Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin);
Whir of spiders when they spin,
And minute whispering, mumbling, sighs
Of idle grubs and flies.
This man is so quickened with grief,
He wanders god-like or like thief
Inside and out, below, above,
Without relief seeking lost love.[47]

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[44] Leigh Howard Stevens, *Method of Movement,* 6th ed., (Neptune, NJ: Marimba Publications, 2005), 36.

[45] Lauren Vogel Weiss, "Leigh Howard Stevens." *Percussive Notes* 44, no. 4 (August 2006): 20.

[46] "David Maslanka: Biography," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/solo-and-chamber/variations-on-lost-love/ (accessed March 24, 2013).

[47] David Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love*, 2nd ed., Asbury Park, NJ: Keyboard Percussion Publications, 1983.

Maslanka incorporates similar compositional ideas in his second, and as of now only other, piece for solo marimba, *My Lady White* (1980). The piece also borrows material from a poem, this time from poet Geoffrey Chaucer, and also contains a theme followed by three movements.

His three variations, however, are not formal variations on the theme but are, rather, "emotional pictures;" a variety of moods, attitudes and feelings that arose from contemplating the poem.[48] Maslanka believes that, "although there are many minute programmatic sounds, the music does not create a parallel musical space. Some of these variations are quite sober, some mysterious and some quite the other, even approaching playful."[49]

Part I is the most straightforward variation. This movement is in B minor and stretches the roughly 1'45" theme into an expanded 4'45" movement through melodic and harmonic treatment. This is accomplished in part through the addition of grace note figures ranging from four to thirteen notes that are inserted between phrases. Chromatic motion, neighbor-tone resolutions, and trills add fullness to the theme, and repetitions of certain figures serve to delay cadential points. Harmonic support in the left hand allows for chords that are used to grow and fade in both dynamics and texture.[50]

Part II turns the theme into a driving sixteenth-note melody. In the range of moods that Maslanka discussed about the piece, this movement most accurately resembles a "tragic" beginning and moving to "light-hearted and hopeful" before deceiving the listener with an "eerie, fleeting" cadenza.[51] The rhythmic material in the first two-thirds of Part II consists entirely of constant sixteenth notes drawn from melodic content of Part I. From here the piece moves

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[48] Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love*.

[49] Duerden, 39.

[50] Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love*.

[51] "David Maslanka: Biography."

through a series of metric modulations over the course of three minutes that increases the tempo to "as fast as possible" ascending with whole-tone scale that slows in tempo into a relaxed chorale. The ethereal cadenza that ends the movement contains a scalar passage that spans the entire range of the instrument.

Part III is an eerie dance that harkens to the insects and other creatures from the poem, with the theme now quirky and disjointed.[52] The awkward introduction is achieved through syncopated rhythmic placement and extremely high tessitura, but gradually settles into a calm and playful character as rhythm simplifies. Maslanka draws upon abrupt changes in the tempo and tessitura of the instrument to emphasize different characters of the music. He also incorporates different timbral and rhythmic combinations to audibly portray what he calls a "musical sketch." The finale begins at measure 262 as a "fleeting" pianissimo motif that gradually increases in tempo, dynamic level and chromatic dissonance. After a brief coda the piece resolves on a gentle B-major chord, ending on a hopeful quality in contrast to the minor key in which the piece began.[53]

The technical difficulties presented in this work are astounding, even among literature that has appeared since its publication thirty-six years ago. On this subject, Maslanka suggests, "there is the need for the player to absorb and then go past the technical challenges of the work. These must become second nature so that the player is free to allow the music its freedom—to be truly light, or fierce, or deep, or playful as it wants to be."[54] Because of the rapidly changing pitches, often accompanied by two- or three-note harmonies and extremely fast tempi, sticking choices are among the first decisions a performer must consider. Problems with pitch accuracy,

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[52] Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love*.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Duerden, 41.

unevenness in sound production, physical endurance, memorization, and coordination are often the result of inefficient sticking. Due to the employment of four mallets within a predominantly monophonic texture, the sticking problems are challenging in the second and third movements.

Stevens made edits to the second edition of the piece that revealed his sticking choices, but these should merely be helpful suggestions.[55] Experimentation with alternatives is necessary to discover what will be most efficient for the performer. These choices should be decided upon long before the performance of any work, in order to allow sufficient time to obtain control and allow one to focus on interpretation. Certain musical elements that affect a sticking choice include tempo, dynamics, acceptable mallet placement, range of the phrase, and consciousness of melodic sequential material.[56] The occasional sacrifice must to be made between a comfortable choice and a technical one that more accurately represents the phrase.

Maslanka is particular about the speed and style of rolls used throughout the piece. He incorporates the non-traditional notation such as more- to less-densely barred sixteenth notes over a certain note length, representing an accelerando and decelerando of the roll speed. Maslanka at times indicates *ad lib* with tempo and trill speed.[57] Three different kinds of rolls are used: traditional rolls, where two mallets in each hand strike the bars simultaneously; double lateral rolls, where each mallet strikes a single pitch before the next and must be played extremely fast and relaxed as not to sound arpeggiated; and independent rolls, where each hand is rotating independently and simultaneously at different speeds.[58] The latter two require extensive practice in order to achieve proper execution, but the results offer a wide variety of

[55] Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love*.

[56] Jeff Miller, "Approaching Four-Mallet Sticking Interpretation in David Maslanka's Variations On Lost Love," *Percussive Notes* 24, no. 2 (January 1986): 17.

[57] Maslanka, *Variations on Lost Love*.

[58] Ibid.

textures to help create different moods in the roll sections.

On the subject of dynamics, Maslanka is clear in interviews that his dynamic levels should be interpreted as accurately and consistently as possible, noting that most performers he encounters in both solo and ensemble settings do not reach a "true" forte or piano. To facilitate extreme dynamics, Maslanka occasionally uses a special notehead that instructs the performer to play over the nodal point on the marimba bar–something that is generally avoided in common practice playing. Playing over the nodal point results in a sound in which the fundamental pitch is barely audible, accurately portraying the "ghostly" accompaniment in Part III.

Variations on Lost Love is viewed as a groundbreaking piece in the repertoire for its tonal beauty and stylistic diversity, combined with its musical and technical challenges. Maslanka's firm belief in musical traditions combined with modern music philosophies allow him to excel as one of the world's leading composers.

CHAPTER 4

ESPRIT RUDE/ESPRIT DOUX II BY ELLIOT CARTER

Elliot Carter was born in New York City on December 11, 1908. Carter won his first Pulitzer Prize in 1960 for his *String Quartet No. 2*; his second award was in 1973 for his *String Quartet No. 3*. Carter was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1963 and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1969. He received the National Medal of Arts in 1985 and the insignia of Commander of the Legion of Honor, awarded in 2012 shortly before his death at age 103.[59] A recording of his *Violin Concerto* won a Grammy Award for best contemporary composition in 1994, the same year he composed the piece discussed herein, *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II*. His *Eight Pieces for Four Timpani* (1949/66) is a standard in the percussion repertoire and his *Double Concerto* (1959-61) and the *Concerto for Orchestra* (1969) are among the most difficult works in orchestral literature.

Carter's development as a composer was sluggish and tortuous. The son of a wealthy lace importer, he never had to earn a living from his musical activity and was not particularly ambitious in his youth.[60] However, under the encouragement of Charles Ives, Carter studied at Harvard with Walter Piston and in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Later he taught at several American conservatories and colleges including the Peabody Conservatory, Queens College, Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell, and the Juilliard School.[61] Carter lists the rhythm of late fourteenth-century French music, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' use of hemiola and duple and triple meter, and Beethoven as early musical inspiration. Carter notes Stravinsky, Webern, and Ives alongside various Indian, Arabic, Balinese, and West African music as sources

[59] "PAS in Memoriam," Percussive Arts Society, http://www.pas.org/news/InMemoriam.aspx (accessed May 11, 2013).

[60] Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Late Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 268.

[61] David Cope, *New Directions in Music*, 7th ed. (Long Grove, IL : Waveland Press, 2001), 216.

of his rhythmic techniques, as well as "jazz of the thirties and forties that combined free improvisation with strict time."[62] He is particularly noted for his views on rhythm (metric modulation) and harmonic space. He composes very slowly, usually at the rate of one work every one or two years.

Carter's earliest compositions of the 1930s were neo-classical and considered by most to be "populist" in nature. Yet certain works revealed a degree of rhythmic and formal complexity as well as a concern for developmental processes that became increasingly important to Carter, and ultimately led him away from what he came to consider the "static repetitiveness" of neo-classicism. During the mid-1940s, Carter became interested in fashioning a more continuous, unbroken rhythmic flow, focusing especially on processes of gradual change and evolution. This led him to devise a new rhythmic technique called "metrical modulation," first employed in his *Sonata for Cello and Piano* of 1948.[63] Carter's contemporaries felt that meter conflicted with their ideas of freeing the constraints of melody, form, and rhythm. But rather than dispensing meter entirely, Carter stayed within a metered structure throughout his career.[64] Carter refers to this in his book, *Flawed Worlds and Stubborn Sounds*. He writes, "The result in my own music was, first of all, the way of evolving rhythms and continuities now called "metric modulation."[65]

Metric modulation is Carter's best known innovation.[66] The pulse is altered by taking some fractional subdivision (or multiple) of its total value and treating that as a new pulse of

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[62] Taruskin, 275.

[63] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 397.

[64] Cope, 201.

[65] Ibid., 39.

[66] Taruskin, 275.

different value (faster or slower, respectively); the result is a proportional shift in rate of pulse.[67] These ideas eventually led Carter to completely abandon the concept of movements as separate, self-contained units, treating them rather as parts of an ongoing structure in which one movement may be interrupted and replaced by another, only to return again. In his pieces, each instrument projects its own unique "behavior pattern," or "personification." The overarching shape is controlled by a process of transformation that is circular in nature.[68]

Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II (1994) is part of a trilogy containing *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux* (1985) and *Retrouvailles* (2000). Although not officially labeled a trilogy, similar compositional devices in all three pieces support this idea. These three pieces were dedicated to Pierre Boulez for his 60th, 70th, and 75th birthdays.[69] The four-note motive, B-flat, C, A, E, appears in all three pieces, which combines French and German spellings of the note names to spell out the name Boulez.[70] The first two pieces were written for flute and clarinet with the addition of marimba in *Esprit Rude/Espirit Doux II* as if they were an exploration of breathing and articulation (*esprit rude/esprit doux* translates to rough breath/smooth breath).[71] *Retrouvailles* is composed for solo piano.

Carter organizes the formal design of his compositions with polyrhythms composed through individual rhythms traveling through time at different tempi or subdivisions of the beat.

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[67] Morgan, 398.

[68] Ibid., 400.

[69] Claire Arthur, "Cooperation and Other Unifying Processes in Elliot Carter's *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux* Trilogy," (MA diss., University of British Columbia Vancouver, 2008), 1.

[70] Ibid., 2.

[71] Ibid., 1.

The rhythms were arranged so their cycles coincide exactly twice, at the beginning and at the end of the piece. The polyrhythms also guide this type of interaction.[72]

This interactivity is also emphasized through certain sets of intervals. Carter's systematic approach to pitch-class structures is well known, especially since the publication of his *Harmony Book,* in which he systemizes every possible combination of pitch classes, intervals, and chords within the twelve-tone system. The timbres of the instruments lend themselves well to personification, a technique that Carter uses frequently, as he tends to exaggerate the characteristic sound, or personality of each instrument. Carter is able to create the effect of the instruments conversing with one another.[73] Complex notions of time, finite combinatorial possibilities of various pitch configurations, and the potential for music to refer to human social interactions are the primary focal areas used to construct *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II.*

Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II (henceforth *Esprit II*) was written ten years after *Esprit I* and yet shares certain aspects of the former composition's structure and musical content. The addition of the marimba part to the scoring allows the ensemble to produce more complex harmonic structures and rhythmic processes through the marimba's ability to play chords. Because the instrument does not require breath to play, it instead mimics the *rude* and *doux* articulations by playing with hard and soft mallets, respectively. Marimbists will occasionally make use of two-tone mallets in order to account for the fast mallet changes.[74] The clarinet and flute create most of the melodic material, while the marimba's role is mainly accompanimental. The textures that arise from the instruments have an important effect on the creation of sectional

[72] Arthur, ii.

[73] Ibid., 4.

[74] Ibid., 43.

groups.[75] There are few expressive markings in the piece but idiomatic gestures are used quite frequently, namely the flutter-tonguing in the flute, the spectral tone of the clarinet, and the variation of staccato versus legato articulations in the marimba along with mallet changes. These, along with certain repeated tremolos and block chord voicings, provide a sense of coherence to the piece.[76]

Spanning the section divisions is a large-scale harmonic process. The piece first focuses on the creation of dyadic intervals. Carter gradually introduces trichords, tetrachords and hexachords.[77] The focus on the dyad is at the surface level of the music, as it is easily audible. Throughout a large segment of the piece all instruments remain within a single ATH (all-trichord-hexachord) pitch collection, {1,2,5,7,8,9}. Carter frequently makes use of pitch repetition that, when combined with the sparse textures of the marimba, offers a transparent sound.[78]

A single time signature change from 4/4 to 6/4 occurs at measure 65, lasting one measure before returning to 4/4, making the piece relatively easy to read when compared to other pieces by Carter. Because there is no written metric modulation on the page, each instrument reads in a different subdivision of the quarter note in order to produce the "personification" effect as well as the illusion of written tempo changes. The subdivisions of the pulse the instruments use are as follows: the flute plays in sixteenth-note quintuplets, the clarinet in eighth-note triplets, and the marimba in sixteenth notes. The total duration of the composition is determined by the completion of one full cycle of the long-range polyrhythm by the clarinet and marimba. The

[75] Arthur, 43.

[76] Ibid., 45.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

cycle is obscured because the marimba is silent at the first point of coincidence at their first coincidence point, and both are silent at the final point of coincidence (and only other) coincidence point, both are resting. Further confusion arises on the downbeat of measure 1 because the flute plays simultaneously with the clarinet, making it seem as if the flute has begun its cycle, although in fact, it is between pulses.[79] Finally, the flute aligns with the cycle of the clarinet and marimba on their final coincidence point at the end of the piece, building up to the "Boulez" motive. Because of the frequent use of sixteenth notes in the marimba it often does line up in other places with the other instruments, but Carter makes a particular effort to avoid simultaneous attacks elsewhere by having one of the instruments resting, or by holding a note by tying it across the barline. This produces a satisfying effect when the instruments do coincide.[80]

The form is broken into six sections that separate the *rude* and *doux* aspects of the piece. Carter gives performers the option of connecting *Esprit I* and *Esprit II* by substituting the first measure of *Esprit II* for the last measure of *Esprit I*.[81] Imitation is evident in the opening section of the piece, which begins with the flute and clarinet on a unison E5, followed by a long flutter-tongue D3 in the clarinet.[82] The flute mimics the clarinet's articulation a few seconds afterwards with a long F6, and both sustain their pitches until they are cut off by the sharp entry of the marimba playing a chord. This textural pattern continues until the first major change at measure 11. Additionally, four-note chords from the marimba sound consistently on every one of its slow pulsations, signifying the end of a group by completing the aggregate or an ATH. This

[79] Arthur, 47.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 45.

[82] **Scientific pitch notation:** a system for naming musical notes of the Western chromatic scale by combining a letter-name, accidentals, and a number identifying the pitch's octave.

predictability provides coherence to the piece and makes it the most approachable of the three instruments.[83] After the marimba's second chord in the middle of measure 5, it reiterates the same four pitches for the next two-and-a-half measures, until just after the downbeat at measure 8. Its rhythms are much shorter and more sporadic than those of the clarinet and flute, who each play through four long held notes as part of the imitation noted above. The four notes of each of the three instruments in this phrase combine to create a twelve-note chord, with each instrument assigned to a different {0,1,6,7} tetrachord.[84]

After a crescendo accompanied by an increase in rhythmic density, the texture reverts to the sparseness of the opening at measure 11. This sudden shift identifies it as the second major section and lasts through measure 19. Section 2 is also characterized by long, fast tremolos in multiple parts with soft mallets for the marimba.[85] Momentum begins to build when, at another pulse point, the marimba begins playing a tremolo while the flute changes pitch every seven sixteenth notes, creating a hemiola in the line. Near the end of this section, in measure 16, the flute and clarinet drop out entirely—a notable event due to its rarity in the piece. The marimba continues with a solo that covers all of the "non-Boulez" pitches, {D4, F4, G4, G-sharp/A-flat5, A4, D-flat/C-sharp5}, another ATH, that will be used again in the second and final phrase of this section, until the end of measure 19.[86]

Section 3, beginning at measure 20, is typified by a change from sustained tremolos to pointillistic material at a soft dynamic.[87] A quick staccato ascending perfect fourth in the flute is

[83] Arthur, 51.

[84] Ibid., 52.

[85] Ibid., 51.

[86] Ibid., 58.

[87] Ibid., 51.

immediately answered in the marimba with a descending major third, and then in the clarinet with a minor third, all with the same articulation and similar rhythms.[88] The marimba follows with a sudden burst of accented loud material, building to measure 21 before dropping out of the texture. The flute and clarinet continue with sparse, melodic staccato fragments until the marimba's sudden reentry in measure 25, marked by a change to hard mallets. The material becomes both immediately and briefly dense and loud to a point never again reached throughout the remainder of the piece. The marimba again drops out of the texture on the second pulse of measure 27. During the next eight measures, still with hard mallets, the marimba plays spaced chords with each stroke marking off a pulse of its polyrhythm, while the flute and clarinet, still imitating each other in contrary contours, alternate single pitches forming another ATH.[89] Through imitation, wide shifts in register and increased silence, this section is the most delicate and playful in the piece.

Section 4 begins at measure 35 with sporadic accompaniment with soft mallet from the marimba.[90] The flute and clarinet follow with alternating lines that form a composite melody. Each instrument passes the melody to the other, such that there is one connected melodic line that lasts to measure 53.[91] Gradually, the instruments overlap their ATHs rather than playing them independently, and the marimba becomes included in the process after a change to hard mallets that propels the piece to its final *doux* section and a quick change back to soft mallets.[92]

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[88] Arthur, 58.

[89] Ibid., 62.

[90] Ibid., 63.

[91] Ibid., 51.

[92] Ibid., 64.

Section 5 spans measures 53- 65 and features a combination of characteristics from previous sections.[93] At measure 53 an audible change in texture occurs as the clarinet begins a tremolo that the marimba imitates, changing pitch every seven sixteenth notes as in section 2. The flute takes over the melodic line over as an extended solo, moving through a series of long held notes. The instruments' roles are distinct but create unique harmonic structures.[94] At measures 56-57, all instruments switch briefly to a sparse, pointillistic texture recalling the third section, before resuming the fluttery texture heard in measures 53-55. This texture builds and finally dissipates after the immediate silencing of the marimba at measure 64. The clarinet and flute continue their ideas while the marimba, having the steadiest rhythmic material to this point, resorts to playing syncopated, single pitches, all of which fall between the subdivisions of its pulse, before resting for two pulses at the end of measure 65.[95]

Section 6, the coda, is marked by a measure of 6/4, the only measure in the piece not in 4/4 meter, as if Carter purposefully sets up disorder to emphasize its resolution.[96] The marimba resumes its slow chord pulsations, again every seven sixteenth notes, as the flute and clarinet pass along a tremolo that culminates in a cooperative dyad effort with unison rhythm and crescendo to measure 69.[97] Each instrument plays consecutive notes consisting only of their assigned subdivision of the pulse. Unison dynamics begin with fortissimo and immediate decrescendo to piano before a final crescendo to forte in measure 70. At this point, the pitch material spell the "B(o)UL" of Boulez. The cluster of rhythms is interrupted dramatically by a

[93]Arthur, 51.

[94] Ibid., 66.

[95] Ibid., 67

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

quarter note of silence, after which the piece ends with all three instruments playing unison fortissimo E5, or "E(z)."[98] This completes the long-range polyrhythm from the pitch on which it began in the first beat of the piece.

Although the underlying polyrhythmic structure and instruction of *Esprit II* are straightforward, the execution and interpretation of the music are slightly more difficult. No complicated metric modulations or frequent changes to the time signature exist, but the musicians must agree upon and physically communicate a strong sense of pulse. This role should be accomplished via the marimbist due to the relatively simple rhythmic content of the part. Furthermore, as mentioned, the sections are rarely dense in texture and are relatively long, allowing ample time to digest the various components which comprise them.[99] This permits the listener to more clearly perceive surface changes in texture and rhythm. Carter's precise notation of the elements that comprise the piece - namely rhythm, dynamics, articulation, and the *rude/doux* indications - offer difficulty for the musician. With such exact instructions, the performer must be diligent in exact emulation of the score. The written patterns themselves are the processes that allow for a sense unification and phrasing in the piece.[100]

Carter's view of himself as a "universalist" gave him a sense of responsibility toward music and its development, as well as new sense of purpose for his own life.[101] Carter noticed that while every imaginable kind of harmonic and timbral combination had been experimented with, rhythmic innovation had been, for the most part, unexplored and limited by the Western Classical music tradition. His music shows a preference for massive sonorities and combinations

[98] Arthur, 68.

[99] Ibid., 69.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Taruskin, 276.

of multiple textural layers, as well as a de-emphasis of thematic or motivic content in favor of the overall sonic effect. His primary interest was focus about, “the way each moment is being led up to and led away from."[102] Carter's choice to expand the concept of strict pulse, rather than abandon it, led to a system of proportional tempo relationships and a continued interest in experimentation with rhythm. Carter appears to have succeeded in these goals, as made apparent in *Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux II*.

[102] Morgan, 401.

CHAPTER 5

DUET NO. 1 FOR ELECTRIC BASS AND VIBRAPHONE BY JAMES G. BEERS

James G. Beers (b. 1987), the author, currently studies Percussion Performance at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC). After completing undergraduate studies in the same field in 2010, he worked as a freelance percussionist and educator while returning to SIUC for graduate school. The author's performance credits at SIUC include the SIUC Percussion Group, Southern Illinois Improvisation Unit, Wind Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, jazz bands, athletic bands, pit orchestras, various chamber groups and interdisciplinary collaborations. These experiences led to performances at Chicago's Orchestra Hall, Carnegie Hall, and major cities throughout China. The author presented alongside Ron Coulter and the SIUC Percussion Group at the College Music Society International Conference, ReVIEWING Black Mountain College 3 – John Cage's Circle of Influence Conference, Murray State University Athena Festival IV, Percussive Arts Society Illinois Day of Percussion, and Illinois Music Education Association conferences. Collaborations with Dame Evelyn Glennie, Stuart Saunders Smith, and Bolokada Condé are among his most influential musical experiences, but one in particular inspired *Duet No. 1 for Electric Bass and Vibraphone.*

Lawrence Millard of Makanda, Illinois, and several University departments brought Erica Azim to Carbondale for clinics and a performance of traditional Shona music from Zimbabwe.[103] Azim is a California native who fell in love with Shona mbira music when she heard it at the age of sixteen. She studied under Dumisani Maraire at the University of Washington for two years before deciding to travel to Zimbabwe to obtain *gwenyambira* status, which would allow her to

[103] Andrea Hahn, "SIUC to host 'Night of African Melodies and Songs," Saluki Times, http://www.news.siu.edu/2007/ 09/091907amh7110.html (accessed May 24, 2013).

play in traditional Shona ceremonies.[104] She was responsible for founding MBIRA, a non-profit organization that supports musicians and instrument makers in Zimbabwe. Azim continues to be a leading authority on the Shona mbira music of Zimbabwe.

The Shona mbira is a plucked idiophone comprised of twenty-two to twenty-eight thin metal keys, or tongues, attached to a wooden soundboard. The instrument contains rattles, most often made from bottle caps, shells, or beads, that are placed on the bottom end of the soundboard. The rattle adds richness to the clear tones of the tongues and is often described as wind, rain, or whispers that lull the listener into a relaxed state. Shona mbira music is built on a melodic and harmonic structure that is cyclical in nature. Each cycle is divisible into sections usually containing twelve, nine, or eight pulses.[105] Because of the cyclical nature of the music it is possible for one to hear any note of a song as the tonal center. The resultant patterns may be heard differently to individual listeners, so cycles are typically repeated several times before moving on to a new pattern.[106]

Duet No. 1 for Electric Bass and Vibraphone (2013) incorporates traditional Shona mbira music with Western compositional techniques and instruments. The vibraphone was selected as a substitute for the right-hand keys on the mbira; its timbre and sustain were factors in this decision. The electric bass was selected to substitute the left-hand mbira keys. The high register of the electric bass is blended with the low register of the vibraphone to create a blended timbre as a means of emulating mbira music.

The compositional process involved a combination of composition and improvisation. The open-form effect created from the cyclical nature of traditional Shona mbira music was

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[104] "Erica Azim," Erica Azim Web Site, MBIRA.org, http://www.mbira.org/ericaazim.html (accessed March 24, 2013).

[105] Michael B. Williams, *Learning Mbira: A Beginning.* (Everett PA: HoneyRock, 2001), 13.

[106] Ibid., 14.

implemented in various ways throughout the piece. Metric modulation, mixed meter, polyrhythms and unexpected use of space are among the compositional techniques used. Extended techniques are likewise used by the performers to obtain various sounds from the instruments. The electric bass utilizes the *hammer-on*, a technique performed by bringing a finger down on the fingerboard behind the fret to produce a legato-sounding pluck. This technique is used both to extend the melody and to create a separate voice due to the two opposing timbres. The vibraphone part utilizes different playing areas on the bars, changes in pedaling technique, and vibrato through use of the motor.

Duet No. 1 is marked in 4/4 time with a key signature of C minor. The piece is comprised of two large sections (Section 1 and Section 2) separated by a transition. These two sections are divided into smaller A and B sections that are connected with even smaller transitions. In essence, the piece is nearly symmetrical. Section 1 is a constant build of dynamics and rhythmic complexity to Section 2, which relaxes drastically. Each section represents a different musical style while integrating similar techniques in both. Section 1 lasts from measures 1-18, written in polyphony of the Western Classical tradition. The transitional material into Section 2 lasts from measures 19-22 and undergoes metric modulation and a change of tonal center through chromaticism. This new section combines themes from traditional Shona mbira songs *Kariga Mombe Yekare* and *Dangurangu* into an interlocking, cyclical pattern in the style of traditional Shona music.

Section 1A begins with a short introduction featuring a notated electric bass solo. The bass part is to be performed an octave higher than notated. The bass begins the introduction with a pattern of continuous arpeggiated eighth notes with occasional sixteenth notes and chords. This allows the bass to sound as two separate voices, serving the function of melody and harmony on

its own. It is suggested that the introduction be played freely, allowing for expressivity from the soloist before establishing a relaxed tempo of quarter note at 68 bpm at measure 5. The vibraphone, utilizing the motor on a slow setting, introduces its own two-voice material superimposed over the bass. Chords in Section 1 are pedaled throughout with a dynamic marking of piano. In measure 8, the two voices trade a four-note arpeggio, continuing the composite eighth-note line within a thinner texture.

A crescendo to mezzo forte leads into Section 1B (measures 9-18). Another four-measure phrase is created through richer chord voicings in the bass and new melodic embellishment in the vibraphone. Syncopation becomes a key factor and is apparent through the use of staccato markings and tied notes across weak pulses. Two measures of 5/4 are added, measures 10 and 12, to augment the line, a larger representation of the space heard in the syncopated melody. It is in these two measures that the listener experiences the first instances of sustained chords without rearticulation. The chord in measure 10 accounts for two pulses of sound while measure 12 is elongated for three pulses. The final portion of Section 1B is a four-measure phrase and two-measure extension that restates the previous material but condensed into six consecutive 4/4 measures, accomplished through diminution of the chords that existed in measures 10 and 12 and adding sixteenth-note material to the vibraphone line. The build in density is accompanied by a crescendo from measures 13-14 before its peak in register and volume, followed quickly by a decrescendo and less rhythmic activity in measure 15. The cadence at measure 16 reinstates the trade-off presented at the end of Section 1 and the vibraphone is instructed to slow the motor to no vibrato. These previous two measures are repeated one octave higher and one dynamic level softer, creating a quiet echo.

The transition from measures 19-22 introduces syncopated patterns resembling the

idiomatic sounds of Shona mbira music.[107] The bass and vibraphone move through chromatic and metric modulations while exchanging the melody of the line every two pulses, immediately picking up the pace of the piece. A surprising rhythmic change occurs in the final two beats where both performers split an eighth-note triplet with a decrescendo.

Section 2 begins in measure 22 and marks the beginning of the Shona section in an implied G minor.[108] The piece has shifted to a time signature of 12/8 where the eighth note is equivalent to the eighth-note triplet marked in the previous 4/4 transition. A cycle consisting of twenty-four eighth-note pulses, labeled 2A, is repeated an unprescribed number of times by the performers. Although marked in 12/8, the cycle could be felt and written in a number of groupings. The electric bass plays a floating supporting line consisting of eighth- and sixteenth-note patterns while the vibraphone plays a steady eighth-note melody on the nodal points of the vibraphone bars. Playing over the nodal points produces a thin tone that more closely resembles the tongues of the mbira than the general center playing area would. This effect is combined with no damping, which allows the notes to blur the line with the electric bass.

A cue is given after the desired number of repetitions has been performed to move to a transitional measure that leads into Section 2B. Measure 24 introduces the diminution of space with a measure of 9/8 meter, contrary to the elongation of space implemented in Section 1 through the use of 5/4 meter. The vibraphone introduces a motive over three eighth-note pulses that move up the scale over the next two repetitions. The bass enters in the next pulse with a syncopated counterpoint to the melody that descends stepwise. An added accelerando and

[107] Beers, *Duet No. 1 for Electric Bass and Vibraphone*.

[108] Ibid.

crescendo to forte leads to the second twenty-four eighth-note cycle labeled Section 2B.[109]

Section 2B is similar in form to the first two-measure repeated section. Rather than blending the sound through the legato articulations used to this point, both voices utilize staccato syncopated lines that rarely overlap and thus create a composite rhythm of steady sixteenth notes. The vibraphone moves away from the node to the center of the bars with dry pedaling. The sudden brightness of this new cycle contrasts the character of the earlier parts of the piece. A notable difference in this section is the first appearance of freely improvised material. After several repetitions, as before, the bass player is instructed to improvise over the written bass line.

After the electric bass completes the solo, a cue prompts the change to a second transition to material found in Section 2A. Once again referencing the augmentation of space in the 5/4 measures in Section 1, the second transition further shortens the space by existing within a 6/8 meter.[110] The vibraphone is the empty voice in this instance for the first three eighth-note pulses before responding in a similar manner as the bass in the first transition. Although the melodic content is similar, the texture is denser due to the maintained center-of-the-bar playing from the vibraphone at a louder dynamic than before. Two variations exist in this version of 2A. A change is made to the rhythm of the bass line to give it a bouncier feel while the vibraphone takes a turn at improvisation after several repetitions. The piece ends after a cue from the vibraphone to repeat the cycle one final time with a decrescendo to niente with a ritardando. The expected cadential root of G is sounded on the final downbeat, followed unexpectedly by the interval of ascending fourth, implying a tonal center of C Dorian.

Duet No. 1 is composed with the intention of conveying the unpredictable yet soothing nature of traditional Shona mbira music through subtle changes of timbre, rhythm, style and

[109] Beers, *Duet No. 1 for Electric Bass and Vibraphone*.

[110] Ibid.

pitch. To allow for smoothness of the electric bass material in the opening section, left-handed shifts can be eliminated at the top of extended arpeggios by utilizing the right hand by reaching over to *hammer* the top note. This technique is somewhat common for guitar players, but not for the electric bass. Traditional Shona musicians use improvisatory techniques based around variations to a part of a song. One variation consists of doubling or substituting notes in octaves.[111] Musicians may move from one part of a line to the next through ascending or descending stepwise motion. Rhythmic variation is possible by delaying points of resolution by sustaining certain notes. The deletion or repetition of notes creates a syncopated effect, as does accenting different parts of a line. Enough repetitions of the vamped and improvised sections should occur for the audience to absorb and explore the cycle. Although this author's performance utilized the aforementioned improvisational techniques, other forms of improvising may be used.

[111] "Erica Azim," Erica Azim Web Site, MBIRA.org, http://www.mbira.org/ericaazim.html (accessed November 5, 2013).

CHAPTER 6

REBONDS BY IANNIS XENAKIS

Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) was born to Greek parents living in Braila, Romania. His early interests included philosophy, mathematics, and music.[112] He lived for ten years near the Danube River before he moved with his family to Greece and obtained an education in Spetses.[113] Xenakis makes note of his interests by stating, "During my youth, I had the good fortune to meet a wonderful teacher who whetted my appetite for philosophy. I became very interested in math, science, and in particular, astronomy. After the war, I was reading Plato; from Plato, I became a Marxist because those tenets seek to re-establish mankind's harmony as well as a harmony between man and nature within a global ensemble."[114]

Xenakis entered the Athens Polytechnic School majoring in engineering while beginning to pursue music in earnest. These complementary interests–engineering and music–shaped his approach to composition. During his education, however, he became involved in the Greek Resistance of Axis forces during World War II. On January 1, 1945, he was badly wounded and blinded in his left eye.[115] His passion for music helped his recovery and led him to encounter Honegger, Milhaud, Varèse, and Messiaen in France in 1947. After one unsuccessful lesson with Honegger, who attempted to humiliate Xenakis, it was Messiaen who encouraged Xenakis to discontinue seeking tradition music lessons and to "just listen to music and compose."[116] In

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[112] "About the Piece: Rebonds by Iannis Xenakis," LA Philharmonic, http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/music/rebonds-iannis-xenakis (accessed May 27, 2013).

[113] David Cope, *New Directions in Music,* 7th ed. (Long Grove, IL : Waveland Press, 2001), 174.

[114] Iannis Xenakis and Sharon Kenach, ed., *Music and Architecture : Architectural projects, texts, and realizations,* The Iannis Xenakis Series, no. 1. (Hillsdale, NY : Pendragon Press, 2008), xvi.

[115] Cope, 174.

[116] Xenakis, xviii.

Xenakis' breakthrough work, *Metastaseis*, the composer unified architectural space and music. Another influence on Xenakis was conductor Hermann Scherchen, who worked with Xenakis on *Metastaseis*. He commented, "I am interested in your music because it is written by someone who comes from outside of the music world. But it's hard to find such a large orchestra." Later, Xenakis began to write for smaller groups of instruments.[117] His expertise in the various fields he pursued landed him a job as assistant to the architect Le Corbusier (real name Charles Jeanneret).[118] In 1958, Xenakis helped design the Philips pavilion at the Brussels Exposition that further developed his ideas on architecture, acoustics, and music; ideas he finds linked.[119] He taught at Indiana University in 1967-72, during which time he founded the Center for Musical Mathematics and Automation.[120]

Xenakis' works are the result of mathematical models often composed in part using computers, allowing for complex results.[121] It made sense for Xenakis to use these models due to the idea that mathematics and science are the most "impersonal and transcendent of truth-concepts."[122] He used probability laws, Markovian chains, game theory, group theory, set theory, Boolean algebra, Gaussian distributions, and golden number theory in order to create what he calls stochastic music.[123] In music, stochastic composition is generated through mathematical processes based on probability. The individual note is only one of a collection of complexly

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[117] Xenakis, xviii.

[118] Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Late Twentieth Centurty* (New York, NY : Oxford University Press, 2005), 77.

[119] Cope, 174.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music : A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York, NY : W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 161.

[122] Taruskin, 77.

[123] Cope, 174.

interacting notes, each with little weight or importance of its own. Yet, the overall structure is carefully calculated to produce a definite, predictable result.[124]

Xenakis' music typically contains thick textures with many diverse elements sounding simultaneously. Some of his works contain extended silences punctuated by apparently random sounds. His stochastic and mathematical approach to music is deeply rooted in indeterminacy in the compositional process, but not on the part of the performer. He uses traditional notation for predictable results, since he viewed indeterminacy on the page as "aimless and unintelligible."[125] Xenakis describes his concepts and procedures in his book Formalized Music:

> I originated in 1954 a music constructed from the principle of indeterminism; two years later I named it "Stochastic Music." The statistical laws of common sonic events, separated from their political or oral context. They are the laws of the passage from complete order to total disorder in a continuous or explosive manner.[126]

Taruskin makes a scientific analogy to describe Xenakis' music, referring to the notes as "musical molecules."[127] The composer adjusts the conceptual valves and thermostats, to which the musical molecules react according to universal scientific laws, thus translating the final music into a readily comprehensible outcome to those who listen sympathetically.[128] But despite the mathematical processes, Xenakis maintains that music has to dominate the composition and that math is only a tool that can be adjusted in the end for musical purposes.[129]

Xenakis composed the solo percussion work *Rebonds* between 1987 and 1989, and he

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[124] Morgan, 392.

[125] Taruskin, 78.

[126] Cope, 175.

[127] Taruskin, 79.

[128] Morgan, 397.

[129] Ibid., 392.

dedicated it to percussionist Sylvio Gualda. The composer wrote the following note:

> *Rebonds* is in two parts, *a* and *b*. The order of play is not fixed: either *ab* or *ba*, without a break. The metronomic indications are approximate. Part *a* only uses skins: two bongos, three tom-toms, two bass drums. Part *b* uses two bongos, one tumba, one tom-tom, bass drums, and a set of five wood blocks. The tuning of the skins and the wood blocks should extend over a very wide range.[130]

Rebonds a begins simply in rhythm and orchestration but undergoes elaborate developments to reach its conclusion. Development is triggered when an eighth-note rest is suddenly filled with sound at the movement's fourth pulse. Elaboration here is fundamentally rhythmic rather than textural. Both sections demand virtuosic agility and control.[131] A simple rhythmic figure starts the movement: two consecutive sixteenth notes played on the high bongo and the low bass drum. This figure is interrupted by the addition of a third sixteenth note in a figure that gradually works its way up and down the scale of drums.[132] This small change triggers an event that sets the rest of the movement into motion. By measure 5 the music contains a constantly flowing sixteenth-note pattern. In the next measure, however, the first polyrhythm, 2:3, is introduced, and the music again becomes denser.[133] These sudden points of change are important places to highlight for phrasing.

In the beginning, tension arises from the need to fill space.[134] But as the space is filled, the dense spots become the focal point with constant sixteenth notes remaining in the background. Accents in this movement also offer direction in phrasing, particularly when double accents are introduced nearly halfway through the piece. Polyrhythms begin to fill the space and

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[130] "About the Piece: *Rebonds* by Iannis Xenakis."

[131] Steven Schick, *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 205.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid., 211.

become more prominent, eliminating the linear motion that rules the earlier parts of the piece.

After maximum density of rhythm is achieved it quickly diminishes over the final six measures, leaving a series of grace notes and a final motive on the high bongo and low bass drum. The entirety of the music resides again in the foreground, but this time without the initial tension; the silence is welcomed.[135] Despite these analytical sections, the music does not sound sectional. In the end, *Rebonds a* is a long, single idea. The density and difficulty of the polyrhythmic material that Xenakis incorporates in *Rebonds a* makes it one of the most challenging pieces in solo percussion repertoire.[136]

Rebonds b is centered on two-part drumming that features juxtapositions of timbre, rhythm and texture.[137] Eventually, as Schick writes in his book *The Percussionist's Art* (2006), "the increasingly frequent and potent monophonic interpolations mount an attack sufficient to atomize the original material," transforming it into something entirely different.[138]
Rebonds b begins with a driving sixteenth-note rhythmic line in the right hand that is countered against a spaced melodic pattern in the left hand. Both parts suggest a predictable pattern but ultimately avoid repetition. In the right hand the steady line on the high bongo consists of two primary features. Grace notes appear on the first and third pulses of every measure and are overlaid with a non-repetitive accent structure. The accent pattern seems as if it will repeat on the second sixteenth note of each second pulse for example, but never continues the pattern for more than a few pulses. The order of notes and the accent pattern in the left hand remains the same, but variations in duration serve to change the sense of strong and weak pulses in the line,

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[135] Schick, 212.

[136] Ibid., 205.

[137] Ben Duinker: Research, "Xenakis: Thoughts on Performance and Structure," Ben Duinker, http://www.benduinker.com/html/text_block.php (accessed March 24, 2013).

[138] "About the Piece: *Rebonds* by Iannis Xenakis."

creating a "groove" based totality.

A series of recurring interruptions oppose the initial material. Each interruption is successively more powerful and acts as a "catalytic force" against the beginning section.[139] The first of these interruptions, at measure 8, consists of passage on drums lasting the duration of eighteen constant sixteenth-notes. The second interruption, at measure 16, also consists of constant sixteenth-notes but lasting twenty-eight notes. The third, at measure 30, utilizes a thirty-second note passage on the woodblocks. The fourth, at measure 43, continues the thirty-second note material but with a return to the drum voices. After every interruption, the initial material reasserts itself. Only after the fifth interruption at measure 54, which introduces rolls on the drums, does the initial material begin to allow the possibility of change. The piece then blends fragments of the opening material into the now-dominant monophonic music, combining wood and drum sounds.[140] Xenakis writes rolls that move between the woodblocks and drums, creating a constant sound that symbolizes the unification of the two sections. In the end, a unison figure combines drum and wood timbres.

Schick suggests that interpretation of the sections in this movement requires "a gradual turning up of the heat."[141] Although forte, one should be careful not to play the opening section too loudly. Schick believes forte can be redefined at an increasingly higher level over the course of the movement "to symbolize the battle for supremacy between the contrasting material; otherwise, the battle is over before the piece is truly under way."[142] Schick also comments about the physical performance of the piece and its relationship to the music, particularly as viewed

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[139] Shick, 206.

[140] Ibid., 207.

[141] Ibid., 208.

[142] Ibid., 209.

from the perspective of an audience member. The music in the introduction is neatly separated between two hands, producing a two-part physical gesture that accurately represents the characteristics of the two lines. This author utilized right-hand rebound strokes low to the bongo drum's edge while the left hand maneuvers across the remaining drums with solid rebound strokes, using a higher more aggressive motion for accents and a Moeller-stroke for the double accents. A gestural polyphony occurs: the right half of the body appears steady while the left half is active. As the piece progresses, the right and left sides of the body begin to unify until the physical gestures are centralized, physically representing unification of the material. These thoughts should be considered when deciding on positioning of the instruments for performance.

Xenakis himself comments on matters of instrument selection and dynamics in an interview from 1990. Although the interview focuses on Xenakis' percussion work *Psappha* (1975), the content is closely related to issues found in *Rebonds* and is worth considering in regards to its interpretation. Xenakis states that, generally speaking, he finds that percussionists neglect the quality of sound in his work.[143] Accents, in particular, serve as superimposed rhythmic patterns, creating melodies, and that perhaps he should have notated initial dynamic levels to be softer so that the accents may be heard even more.[144] When new sections seemingly occur out of nowhere, the audience is shaken from the material initially heard. If accents are too loud to begin with, these abrupt changes will have less of an effect.[145]

Xenakis' unique background in philosophy, mathematics and nature made him a visionary and offered a new perspective to music composition. *Rebonds* is a prime example of the use of mathematical compositional techniques to produce a natural sounding music. As

[143] David Yoken, "Interview with Iannis Xenakis," *Percussive Notes* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1990), 53.

[144] Ibid., 55.

[145] Ibid.

Schick so eloquently states in regards to the piece, "Strength is not brutality; intelligence is not weak; change is inevitable, but if you do things just right you can still remember where you came from."[146]

[146] Schick, 213.

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