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MODERN WORKS FOR PERCUSSION: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE AND ANALYSIS

by

Austin Browne

B.M., Southern Illinois University, 2021

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music

School of Music
in the Graduate School
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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Austin Browne

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Music

Approved by:

Dr. Christopher Butler, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 4th, 2023

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Austin Browne, for the Master of Music degree in Music, presented on April 4, 2023, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: MODERN WORKS FOR PERCUSSION: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE AND ANALYSIS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Christopher Butler

The purpose of this research paper is to present background material and analyze characteristics of eight pieces for solo and chamber percussion to determine their legacy in the developing percussion repertoire. The instrumentation of these works represents a diverse program reflective of a total percussion curriculum, including multi-percussion, snare drum, marimba, and timpani. Two pieces feature electronic accompaniment: one piece with playback track, and one with live electronics. The pieces performed are *Rebonds b* by Iannis Xenakis, *Thunder* by Joe W. Moore III, *The Whimsical Nature of Small Particle Physics* by Ben Wahlund, *Tchik* by Nicolas Martyniciow, *Burritt Variations* by Alejandro Viñao, *Cold Light* by Benjamin Finley, *Gardens* by Austin Browne, and *Catching Shadows* by Ivan Trevino.

These pieces were performed at my graduate recital on March 4th, 2023.

INTRODUCTION

This paper serves as the product of a master's percussion recital that was given on March 4th, 2023, fulfilling the requirements for the master's degree in percussion performance. All the works chosen for this recital are representative of modern works for percussion, with the oldest piece being written in 1987 and the newest in 2023. The repertoire spans the staples of the percussion realm, including works for timpani, concert snare drum, multi-percussion, solo marimba, and small chamber percussion works. Two works on the recital also utilized electronics: one with playback track and one with live manipulated electronics.

These works were all chosen based on different merits, including their advanced nature, and for their display and use of different compositional devices such as ostinato over changing rhythms, theme and variations, and advanced four-mallet techniques. The performance of these works demonstrates a complete percussion curriculum and a thorough understanding of instrumental performance at a high level, and we will examine the different characteristics that make these works worthwhile pieces in the percussion repertoire.

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CHAPTER 1

REBONDS b BY IANNIS XENAKIS

Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001) was a Romanian-Greek architect, composer and music theorist who composed over 130 works within his lifetime.¹ His life post-World War Two was spent in France studying with Milhaud and Messiaen while working as an architect with Le Corbusier. While most of Xenakis' works are for sound media, he has written a handful of percussion pieces including *Persephassa*, *Psappha*, *Okho*, and *Rebonds*.² These works are for a mix of solo and chamber percussion, with *Rebonds b* as the chosen movement for performance.

Rebonds was composed between 1987 and 1989 and was premiered by Sylvio Gualda in 1988 at the Villa Medici in Rome.³ It is a two-movement work for solo multi-percussion (*a* and *b*), and *b* is written for five drums and five woodblocks. The five drums include two bongos, a tumba, a tom drum and a bass drum.⁴ Instrument choice is important factor when performing this piece. The standardized instrumentation makes this piece more accessible for more institutions, and certain substitutions can be made. For example, a low-tuned quinto was used instead of a tumba based on the instruments owned by the school. Two low-tuned toms may be used as well to substitute a bass drum if one is unavailable. Another consideration to make is to use wood planks versus using woodblocks/temple blocks. There are specific instruments made for this

1. Brian Tinkel, "Rebonds by Iannis Xenakis: Pedagogical Study and Performance Analysis." (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2009), 11, https://shareok.org/bitstream/handle/11244/319306/Tinkel_ou_0169D_10249.pdf?sequence=1.

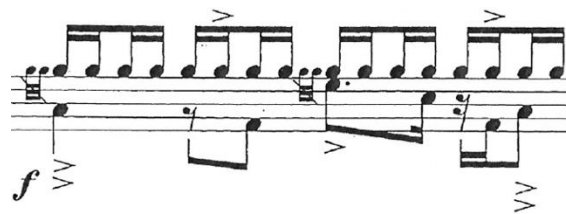
2. Brian Tinkel, "Rebonds by Iannis Xenakis: Pedagogical Study and Performance Analysis." (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2009), 12-15.

3. James Harley, *Xenakis: His Life in Music* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 173.

4. Iannis Xenakis, *Rebonds b* (Paris, France: Éditions SALABERT, 1991).

piece, however based on access the performer may choose to use temple blocks that can be mounted on a cymbal stand to reduce setup clutter.⁵ This piece is a quintessential example of staple percussion literature for many reasons. A central component of this piece is the ability to convey melody and accompaniment through rhythm, as all instruments used for this piece are not definite-pitched instruments. A way this is done within the piece is a high bongo ostinato of sixteenth notes that is an accompaniment to a five-note melody carried out by the left hand (see fig. 1.1). This melody is then shifted throughout the piece both shortening and lengthening as the piece builds, and the start of the repeated melody is indicated by a double accent. There are interludes on both the woodblocks and the drums, which also act as a mirror to each other building in complexity as the piece grows to the climax. The end of the piece starts with a five-note pattern in the woodblocks over a four-note pattern in the drums. This pattern occurs for 4 iterations before it switches to an eight-note woodblocks over six-note drums for five iterations. The last cadence ends with a split roll figure between the woodblocks and the drums to end the piece.⁶

Figure 1.1. Five-Note drum melody in *Rebonds b*.



5. This refers to a specific plank set manufactured by Rustic Percussion, offered in “tonal” and “atonal” options.

6. Iannis Xenakis, *Rebonds b* (Paris, France: Éditions SALABERT, 1991), 12.

Another quality that makes this piece worthwhile in the repertoire are the performance decisions and interpretations that must be made within this piece. For example, the drags found frequently through the piece have multiple options for interpretation: including alternating drags, fixed drags (all right-hand drags or all left-hand drags), or same hand drags (where the hand playing the pulse plays the drags as well). Another spot that requires interpretation is during the piece when a constant woodblock ostinato is meant to be played over a woodblock melody that is notated with rolls. A common interpretation of this section includes the right hand playing the ostinato pulse with the drags while the left hand plays fast single strokes of the noted melody.

Rebonds b provides the performer multiple challenges when learning the piece, however a successful performance demonstrates the skills gained through a comprehensive performance program. Due to a combination of all these qualities, it has cemented itself in the canon of percussion literature since its inception.

CHAPTER 2

THUNDER BY JOE W. MOORE III

Joe W. Moore III is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Texas Arlington. Before his current role, he has held similar positions at universities such as University of Louisiana Monroe, Benedict College, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and University of Texas at Brownsville. He earned his BM from the University of Central Florida, MM from University of South Carolina, and his DMA from Louisiana State University, with a minor in composition. Dr. Moore is also an avid performer, being a member of multiple percussion groups including Omojo Percussion, Ninkasi Percussion Group, 2x2 Percussion, and Dead Resonance.⁷ As a composer, Dr. Moore is published by many different publishers like C. Alan Publications, Alea Publishing and Recording, Percussion Music Europe, and Musicon Publications. He also self-publishes works that are available on his website.

Thunder was written for solo timpani in one day as a part of Dr. Moore's "Project Create" in 2013. The basis for this project was to compose a piece for an instrument based on the first comment of his Facebook posts each day. On June 26, Kathryn Erwin, a graduate student at the University of Kansas commented first and chose timpani.⁸ This work uses 4 timpani, and there are no tuning changes throughout the piece. The pitches used in ascending order are F, C, D, and G-sharp. The form of this piece can be described as ABA', with the first section spanning from measure 1 to measure 42, where the piece shifts suddenly to using different timbres for the

7. "Biography," Joe W. Moore III, accessed Mar. 14, 2023, <https://www.joewmooreiii.net/biography.html>.

8. Joe W. Moore III, *Thunder* (Greensboro, NC: C. Alan Publications, LLC, 2014), "Notes."

slower middle section. The piece then ends with a truncated A' section starting at measure 64.

This piece is an example of worthwhile percussion literature for many reasons. The timpani genre is comparatively underexplored when looking at the repertoire versus other percussion instruments. A reason for this is that the timpani are more looked at as an ensemble instrument rather than a soloistic instrument. There is evidence of this due to most of the repertoire timpanists encounter being orchestral excerpts rather than composed solo works. However, there has been effort to improve the amount and quality of literature available for solo timpani by composers such as Dr. Moore, employing new techniques to make the timpani more versatile. The technique specifically used in this piece is playing on the edge of the bowl, which results in a more metallic sound from the timpani. Dr. Moore is no stranger to using extended techniques in his timpani compositions, such as the use of glissandos and placing crotales on the timpani in his work *Grit*.⁹

Another quality of the piece is the rhythmic content. This piece consistently changes from duple to triple subdivisions, frequently within the same beat, as well as utilizing various quintuplet groupings to indicate a pseudo-accelerando within the music (see fig. 2.1). The frequently changing subdivisions require the player to move across the drums fluidly and quickly for this solo to be performed. The B section of this piece, while not as rhythmically dense as the first section, borrows some melodic aspects from the first A section and ends with a double stop section reminiscent of the introduction. The focus of this middle section is on the timbral shift created by the technique of hitting the head where it meets the bowl. The composer states: “The

9. Camila M. Bermúdez Ortiz, “The Multi-Percussionist: Practice Strategies and Performance Considerations” (master’s thesis, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2021), 5-8.

metallic sounds used in the middle portion of the work are meant to evoke the image of lightning in the audiences' mind upon listening.”¹⁰ This section starts with a forte downbeat at measure 42, and the rest of this middle section quickly retreats to a mezzo-piano/pianissimo until the return of the A' section at measure 64. The metallic sounds are also combined with regularly hit notes that further connect the concepts of thunder and lightning to the listeners.

Figure 2.1: Example of frequently changing subdivisions within *Thunder* (m. 33-35).



Thunder presents many challenges to the modern percussionist, including sound production, dynamics, and pulse. The combination of these factors reflects Dr. Moore’s work to elevate the genre of the timpani solo through a unique means of inspiration. Even though the work was composed quickly, it offers many opportunities for the performer to dig into the music and practice advanced concepts.

10. Moore III, *Thunder*, 2014, “Notes.”

CHAPTER 3

THE WHIMSICAL NATURE OF SMALL PARTICLE PHYSICS BY BEN WAHLUND

Ben Wahlund was born in 1977 and is a Grammy-nominated composer, performer, and educator. He currently holds the positions of Percussion Instructor at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois and Director of Percussion at College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. Wahlund received his master's degree in theory/composition and performer's certificate in percussion from Northern Illinois University and earned a bachelor's degree in music education and performance from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. Mr. Wahlund is published by many different companies, including C. Alan, Musicon, Bachovich, and HoneyRock Publications.¹¹

Whimsical Nature is a piece written for solo snare drum with an electronic backing track. This piece gets the material for the electronic backing track from the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) in Batavia, Illinois. Wahlund describes the inspiration for this piece leading back to when a friend who worked at Fermilab gave him a tour of the facility, and described the work they do at the lab recording collisions of atomic and subatomic particles. This piece is described as a suite of six quark flavors, plus a seventh section titled "collision" that combines elements found in the rest of the piece. This work is a prime example of a concert-rudimental snare solo, which the composer states draw influences from Masson, Delecluse, Pratt and Wilcoxon. The piece won second place at the Keystone Percussion Composition Contest in

11. "Biography," Ben Wahlund, accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://benwahlund.net/biography>.

2006.¹²

The piece is demarcated by rehearsal marks differentiating different sections, and each “flavor of quark” is represented in each section, except “charm,” which occurs in the “strange” section. There are six different quarks: top, bottom, up, down, strange, and cute. Quarks are the basic blocks of matter that make up protons and neutrons and can be grouped in three pairs: top and bottom, up and down, and strange and cute.¹³ The grouping of quarks within the piece also mimics the groupings of quarks in nature. Each quark can be defined by certain themes, such as in rehearsal mark “A” where quintuplet figures are the main thematic material in the section, as seen in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Quintuplet figures, reh. "A."

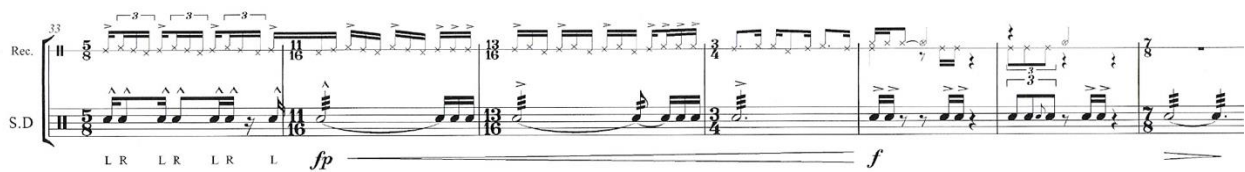
Figure 3.1 shows a musical score for rehearsal mark "A" titled "Top Quark" (1:22). The score is for Recorder (Rec.) and Snare Drum (S.D.) in 4/4 time. The Recorder part features a quintuplet of eighth notes in measures 15-16, followed by a quarter note in measure 17, and another quintuplet in measure 18. The Snare Drum part features a quintuplet of eighth notes in measure 15, followed by a quarter note in measure 16, and another quintuplet in measure 17. The score includes a rehearsal mark "A" and a tempo marking "mf".

12. Ben Wahlund, *The Whimsical Nature of Small Particle Physics*, (Everett, PA: HoneyRock Productions, 2007).

13. The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Quarks,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed Mar. 17, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/quark>.

This piece provides many worthwhile experiences for the modern percussionist. The first experience is playing with a static backing track. This experience is usually made slightly easier with the inclusion of a click track that the performer would listen to during performance, however there is not one included for this piece. There is an added layer of difficulty for the performer to keep internal time, listen to the material in the track, and read the score at the same time. There are a few ways the performer can adjust to make this piece easier to manage for a performance: one way would be for the performer to make a click track using notation software such as MuseScore, Sibelius, or Finale and import it into a digital-audio workstation (DAW) such as Ableton, Logic Pro, Reaper, or ProTools. The performer may bypass using notation software and create the click track through midi entry directly into the DAW. This gives the performer a better chance at aligning with the track, especially in sections where there is no consistent time going in the background.

Figure 3.2. Example of interaction between the solo and backing track within *Whimsical Nature*.



Another experience provided by this piece is that it is a concert-rudimental style piece with quickly changing time signatures. This piece contains time signatures such as 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 8/8, 9/8, 7/8, 5/16, 11/16, 13/16, 15/16 and 17/16. Much of the repertoire for concert-rudimental snare exists within the form of etudes from the likes of

Delecluse, Cirone, and Thompkins, however most of the etudes stay within one time signature or move between a few closely related time signatures. The difficulty of moving between time signatures and playing the material Mr. Wahlund presents is where this piece truly excels. The material in the solo is also very interactive with the electronic track and there are instances within every “movement” where the solo interacts to material presented by the track (see fig. 3.2). This piece is a quintessential example of a piece for snare drum and tape, and the quality of work from Mr. Wahlund has held up to modern works for snare and tape written in decade of the 2010’s. Every aspect of this piece has earned it a spot within the repertoire list of many percussionists.

CHAPTER 4

TCHIK BY NICOLAS MARTYNCIOW

Nicolas Martynciow was born in 1964 in Saint-Etienne, France. He began studying music at the conservatory in his hometown with Claude Giot, Philippe Boisson and Francis Brana at the Conservatoire de Créteil. Martynciow then graduated first place in percussion and chamber music at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris under Jacques Delecluse in 1990.¹⁴ Since 1995 he has also been the soloist with the Orchestre de Paris and has performed with famous conductors like Pierre Boulez, Valery Gergiev, and Paavo Järvi. As a performer, Martynciow holds international credits all around the world including Europe, the United States, Japan, China and other countries.¹⁵ He regularly plays with the chamber groups Sirbaoctet, Carpe Diem, adONF, and other solo musicians such as Eric Sammut, Marc Trénel, Eric Picard, and Vincent Lucas.

His compositions are published by Editions Gérard Billaudot and played worldwide. His compositions for percussion ensemble hold national acclaim, having been performed at the most prestigious concert halls in France. His solo compositions for snare drum *Impressions* and *Tchik* are held in high regard by both professionals and students and are performed regularly at competitions and recitals all over the world. He was professor of orchestral percussion in the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris from 2012 to 2018.¹⁶

14. “Biography,” Nicolas Martynciow, WordPress, accessed Mar. 19, 2023, <https://nicolasmartynciow.com/a-propos-nicolas-martynciow-percussions/>.

15. “Biography,” Nicolas Martynciow.

16. “Biography,” Nicolas Martynciow.

Tchik is a solo work for snare drum that was published in 2003. While the piece uses only one instrument, it adds extra layers by incorporating other implements, techniques and vocalizations for the performer to execute. The implements required to perform this piece are: one pair of snare drum sticks, one pair of timpani mallets, and one wire brush. This piece also uses various techniques to increase the difficulty, including a variety of different rimshots and rolls, playing with your fingers, playing with different implements at the same time and/or with vocal accompaniment, and borrows tambourine technique such as the finger roll in some sections of the piece as well.¹⁷ Due to the many different symbols in the notation, a key is provided for the performer that describes each symbol that is used during performance.¹⁸ A combination of all these factors and the caliber of Martyniciow's career make this work a standard of high-level snare drum literature.

The piece requires the player to switch implementations periodically through the piece, however the piece starts by having the performer use a pair of snare drum sticks. The piece begins with the snares on and various statements of 4:3 polyrhythms after one measure of quarter notes in 4/4 as seen in figure 4.1. The first timbral shift of the piece occurs in measure 74, which indicates for the player to turn the snares off before the beginning of the next section. The first implement change comes shortly afterwards in measure 85, where the player puts one stick down and exchanges it for a timpani mallet. In measure 91, the player drops the remaining stick and picks up the remaining timpani mallet, which is not used long as the player then switches to one timpani mallet and fingers in measure 94. The use of fingers in this section is unique, with few

17. Nicolas Martyniciow, *Tchik*, (Paris, France: Gérard Billaudot, 2003).

18. See "Appendix A"

this section is a rimshot with the fingers. The duet then changes from fingers/brush to brush/drumstick at measure 130, before switching back to two sticks at measure 155. The next contrasting passage occurs at measure 194 when it switches to solo voice and introduces a rhythmic passage that is then accompanied by constant sixteenth notes in the fingers. The final snare section with sticks lasts from measure 218-262, and the “coda” section that begins at measure 263 begins with a restatement of the theme before dying away at soft sixteenth note rhythm. The final bars are interplay with snare drum rim clicks with vocal “tchiks” before the piece ends in a whisper. The piece also employs many timbral shifts requiring the performer to turn the snare wires off and on during the performance, even using it as a technique to get a sound out of the drum.

The rapidly changing landscape offered by Martyniciow in this composition is a wonderful display of the sonic possibilities of the drum, and even offers a look into the realm of snare drum pieces accompanied with voice, either electronically, such as *Stop Speaking* by Andy Akiho or *An Hour of Change* by Shaun Tilburg, or acoustically. This piece is recital-caliber, and twenty years after its publication it has earned a spot as a staple in the developing percussion repertoire.

CHAPTER 5

BURRITT VARIATIONS BY ALEJANDRO VIÑAO

Alejandro Viñao was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1951. He started studying composition with Russian composer Jacobo Ficher in his hometown before moving to Great Britain to study at the Royal College of Music in 1975. In 1988, he earned his doctorate in composition from City University in London. Ever since he finished his studies, he has resided in London, and earned citizenship in the UK in 1990. His compositions have earned international acclaim and has won multiple prizes at festivals around the world and played at prestigious festivals like the Tanglewood Festival and the London PROMS. He has been commissioned by groups such as IRCAM, MIT in the US, GRM in France, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.¹⁹

His work is characterized by using rhythmic structure to demarcate form, as opposed to melodic structure writing. Viñao has written works for a diverse portfolio of performers from solo and chamber percussion to choral works, chamber orchestra, and symphony orchestra, even an opera and musical theater work.²⁰ The percussion world has been quick to adopt his works, and he has been continuously putting out masterwork-level works for percussion as far back as 1993 with the Marimba Concerto. Marimbists all over the world have been quick to standardize his solo and small chamber works such as *Khan* and *Burritt Variations*, *Riffs*, *Book of Grooves*, and *Water*. His two solo marimba works, *Khan* and *Burritt Variations*, are theme and variation pieces for marimba that have been standardized in competitions and advanced recitals since their

19. “Biography” Alejandro Viñao, accessed Mar 19, 2023, <https://www.vinao.com/Biography.html>.

20. “Catalogue of Works” Alejandro Viñao, accessed Mar 19, 2023, <https://www.vinao.com/Catalogue%20of%20Works.html>.

The first characteristic of this work that gives it merit is the constant change of time signature that the performer must navigate. The groove of this piece is notated through the inclusion of tenuto markings throughout, allowing for easier identification of highs and lows in the piece. Viñao uses the groove to dictate the time, rather than the other way around of letting the meter dictate the groove. The piece uses too many time signatures to list, from standard signatures like 4/4 and 12/8 to signatures like 3/16, 9/16, and 15/16 that make this piece a game of metric equivalencies the performer must flawlessly navigate while presenting the musical material. The pitch material of the theme is also manipulated through the variations, with the original theme pitch set being G-A flat-B-F and moved around to pitch sets like F sharp-G-B flat-E, and F-G flat-A-E flat, as seen in figure 5.2. The theme is further fragmented and shifted throughout the variations for the performer to bring out through the piece.

Figure 5.2. Examples of transposition of main theme throughout *Burritt Variations*.



Another challenging quality of this work is the constant polyphony and separation of voices required to accurately depict this piece. Viñao frequently uses each hand as its own voice, and in some cases even each mallet is a different voice, making this piece more pianistic in thought while the performer conveys the voicing with mallets. One example of this polyphony can be found towards the end of the first variation where the left hand and upper mallet in the right hand are setting a constant eighth note pulse while the inner mallet on the right hand plays the theme over the pulse. This polyphony can also be seen in variation four where each mallet in the right hand is treated as a separate voice and the main theme is fragmented and played in octaves by the left hand. Another layer of difficulty presented in this work are the occasional mismatched crescendos and decrescendos. One example of this occurs in variation seven where one hand performs dynamic changes at different rates and sudden shifts in dynamics between hands.

Figure 5.3. Example of polyphony in *Burritt Variations*.



CHAPTER 6

COLD LIGHT BY BENJAMIN FINLEY

Benjamin Finley is listed in his available biographies as the Assistant Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Percussion at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. Upon further research, he no longer holds that position which is currently held by Dr. Nicholas Meyers.²² Finley received his doctorate in percussion performance from the University of Texas at Austin and has held positions at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma and Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. His compositions are published through Tapspace Publications. Some of his other works include *Evergreen* and *The Ghosts of Bonneville* for solo marimba, *Pulse Theorem* for multi-percussion duet, and *Blade* for solo multi-percussion.

Finley describes the title of the piece as a name used to describe a day in the winter of the western United States. He describes the scenery as “clear skies with a low hanging sun, dry, crystalline air, and a swift crosswind.” *Cold Light* was written in 2011 “during an especially snowy week in January” for Kelsey Creed who premiered it with the East Central University Percussion Ensemble later that April.²³ *Cold Light* is written for solo 5.0 octave marimba and percussion quartet, with marimba (5.0 octave required), vibraphone, glockenspiel, and drumset. Along with the mallet instrument or drumset, each part has a corresponding “Native American drum” while the drumset part calls for a small chamber bass drum. The glockenspiel part requires a high drum, vibraphone a medium drum, and marimba a low drum as well as a triangle.

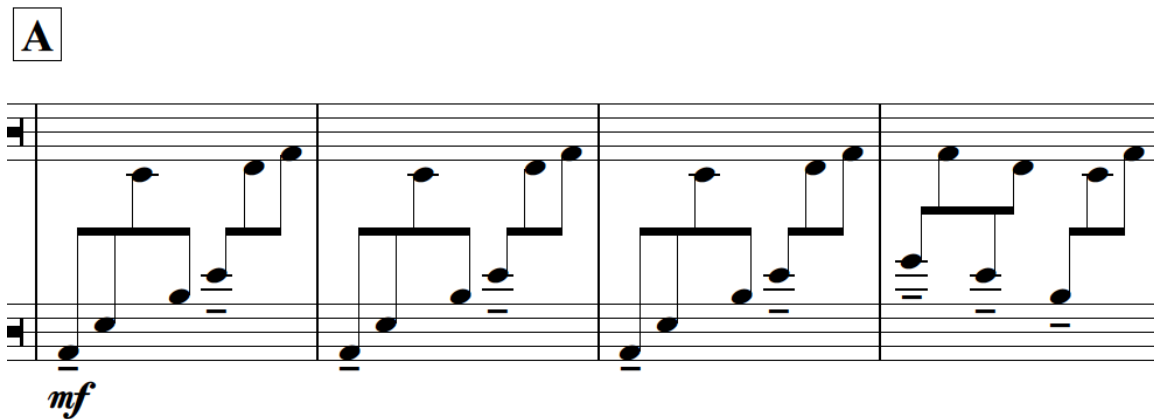
22. “Directory: Nicolaus Meyers” East Central University, accessed Mar. 21, 2023, <https://www.ecok.edu/directory/nicholaus-meyers>. and “Benjamin Finley” Tapspace Publications, accessed Mar. 21, 2023, <https://www.tapspace.com/benjamin-finley/>.

23. Benjamin Finley, *Cold Light* (Portland, OR: Tapspace Publications LLC., 2013) “Program Notes.”

For this performance, some adjustments were made on the drum choice and assignments: the vibraphone and glockenspiel player used a quinto and conga drum, the marimba player used a mounted bass drum, and the drumset player used their floor tom during the drum-heavy sections.

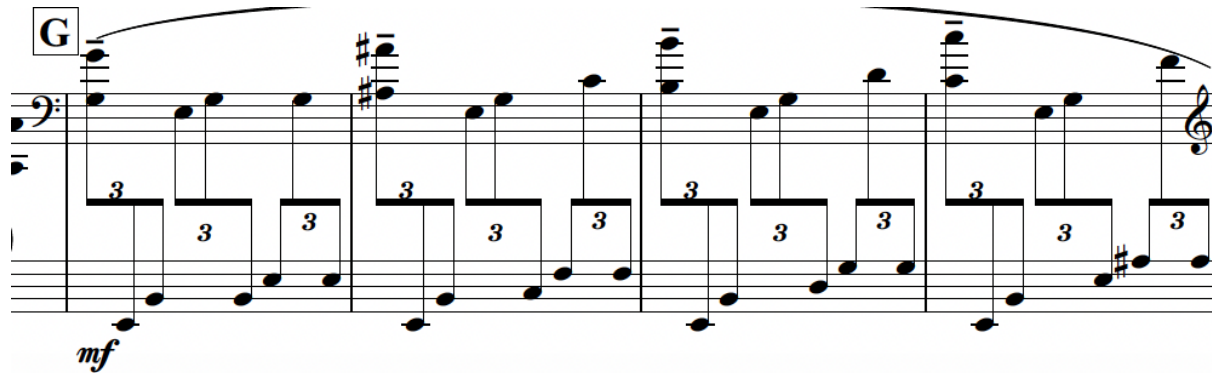
The piece is very bright, and tonally in A Lydian. The piece opens in 7/8 with very atmospheric intentions with the drumset playing time on the cymbals, the vibraphone player rolling and Amaj7 chord, and the glock player playing an ambiguous melody before the solo marimba comes in with the main 7/8 theme (see fig. 6.1) that is seen throughout the piece. The player then teases the following 3/4 ascending theme before the introduction ends at measure 21, signaled by the addition of the snare drum cross-sticks and slightly thicker texture, with the addition of the ensemble marimba. This opening section centers around these 7/8 and 3/4 themes that are sometimes augmented by the addition of octaves within some of the measures. At rehearsal letter B the groove intensifies, and the theme is varied and extended into 10/8 and 7/8 bars before a fractured return of the ascending 3/4 theme leading into rehearsal letter C, which is a drum interlude for the quartet and a rest break for the soloist. Rehearsal letter D shows what initially seems to be a return of the opening theme in C-sharp minor before quickly morphing into a brand-new theme we will call theme two. This theme winds its way through many different time signatures, with the main melody being in the right-hand octaves from measures 127 to 150.

Figure 6.1. 7/8 solo marimba theme



Rehearsal letter E acts as an interlude to the piece where the texture changes dramatically back to a sparser atmosphere reminiscent of the opening measures. The solo marimba has a punctuating right-hand ostinato in F-sharp octaves while the left-hand plays melodies underneath it. The quartet in this portion just plays sparse chordal figures and the glockenspiel plays atmospheric eighth-note lines. Rehearsal letters F and G are a soloist feature in this piece, with rehearsal letter F containing fast lateral octave licks in some measures, and letter G has fast lateral triplet figures that lets the soloist shine (see fig 6.2). Rehearsal letter H is almost an exact replica of rehearsal letter B until the last measure transition into letter I, which is the outro based on the ascending 3/4 octave theme, and the piece ends with a short ascending octave theme and the piece ends on F-sharps and C-sharps in various octaves.

Figure 6.2. Rehearsal Letter “G” solo line.



This piece has many attractive qualities that make it a worthwhile piece in our repertoire, including the extensive use of the octave position with rapid mallet interval shifts, balancing a flurry of odd and different time signatures including 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 10/8, 2/2, 3/4, and 5/4. The last defining quality of this piece are the contained virtuosic licks and passages that are characteristic of Ben Finley’s works on marimba: fast lateral passages. The first quality that will be discussed is the rapid changing of time signatures through this piece. This is not only a difficult task for the soloist but as well as the ensemble while keeping the groove alive. The licks contained in the piece are an attractive aspect for aspiring percussionists, and the fast lateral strokes and extensive use of the octave position will leave the player with skills that will greatly benefit their playing of different repertoire in their career. While this piece offers all these great aspects for percussionists to take away, it also provides the soloist invaluable experience of playing with an ensemble in that capacity. Finley has succeeded in writing a valuable piece in the repertoire that provides interest for the listeners.

CHAPTER 7

GARDENS BY AUSTIN BROWNE

In the spring of 2023 when finishing my master's degree, I took a group study class with my professor and fellow studio members on composing for percussion and electronics. The class focused on creating a new work for percussion and either live electronics or playback track. My classmates and I premiered our pieces on a guest artist recital during that semester. The first part in the process of creating this piece was choosing the instrumentation to bring ideas to fruition. The gear used for live sound (microphone, interface, cables, stands, and speakers) were borrowed from Southern Illinois University. The software's used to create this piece are owned by myself for this performance, including Ableton Live and ClyphX Pro. I had recently received the MidiFighter Twister²⁴ as a gift and wanted it to be central to the piece I had to create for the class. Instrumentation for this piece is flexible and can be performed for 1+ pitched instruments.

The inspiration of this piece came from my life growing up in suburban Chicago. My father always insisted on having a pair of wind chimes in our yard, and the idea of wind chimes are what inspired the piece. It is meant to invoke imagery of a warm summer day sitting on the deck, listening to wind chimes and birds around you. The pitch set for this piece is recommended as any pentatonic scale, as that is the scale wind chimes are commonly tuned to, however the performer may choose any pitch set that they like. All melodic ideas used for the loops are meant to be atmospheric and create a wash of wind chime-like sounds. For this performance, the work was performed using a marimba, glockenspiel, wood block, and fidget spinner. The piece starts

24. The MidiFighter Twister is a midi-control module that can be used with workstations such as Ableton and Logic to control different parameters within the software and is manufactured by DJTechTools.

with the performer creating a soundscape, in this case with the fidget spinner and reverb plugins. There are 8 loop slots for the player to record material into. The first 5 loops are made using the marimba, with the first two being low, sustained pitches with glock attacks at the beginning of the loops. The remaining three marimba loops were upper register ideas, with two chromatic loops, one high and one low, being used to add some sonic color to the piece. The last three loops available were glock and woodblock loops, where the performer plays atmospheric passages reminiscent of wind chimes, stacking these sounds to create a second soundscape.

This piece was constructed in Ableton Live 11 using different track groupings, effects, and plugins to make the piece work. The other biggest influencer for this piece was from ClyphX Pro, which is a scripting software that allows for control of Ableton like automation, but in more powerful ways. ClyphX was used to arm tracks and activate effects throughout the piece, specifically activating the vocoder to trigger bird noises at the end of the piece and arm the microphone that is responsible for recording the soundscape at the beginning of the piece. The piece uses a combination of free and stock plugins that are available through Ableton Live. The stock vocoder was used, and the reverb used is the Supermassive Reverb from Valhalla DSP.²⁵ The stock Ableton looper was used as well to create the soundscape at the beginning of the piece.

The piece would not exist without the MidiFighter Twister. This piece of gear is a small box with 16 encoders that are midi-mappable objects and can control different parameters of the software. The encoders have both press and turn functions, and for this piece all the encoders are used to manipulate certain aspects. The top two rows of four encoders (eight total) are meant for launching and stopping loops when pressed, and the knobs are rotated to manipulate the track

25. Valhalla DSP is a company that produces sound effect plugins to be used in DAW software such as echo, reverb, and delay effects.

volume for the loops. The third row of encoders only utilizes the press function and are used to launch four scenes that are the road map of this piece: the first scene starts the session and makes sure the microphone is off. Scene number two arms the microphone to create the soundscape, the third scene arms all the loop tracks for recording, and the fourth scene activates the vocoder, fading in the bird sounds which are triggered by the loops that are still playing. The last row of encoders serves two functions: two knobs control the looper functions, and two control master volumes. One knob is a record button into the looper, and the knob next to it will clear the content of the looper. The third knob controls the volume of the beginning soundscape, and the last knob is used as a master volume control. The two knobs controlling volume need to be set before the piece starts.

This piece is worthwhile in the percussion repertoire for the use of advanced mallet techniques and live effect manipulation. The piece opens with a sustained one-handed roll in the left hand, while the right hand holds a glockenspiel mallet for the initial attack and presses or turns the loop knob while the left hand is still rolling. This level of coordination must be developed for a seamless opening to the piece. This piece also allows artistic expression for each performer through the task of mixing the recorded loops after all the loop slots have material recorded into them.²⁶ The performer may choose to highlight different aspects of their loops and they have that control through their manipulation of the recorded material. The hardware used to create this performance is also up to the performer. This piece is performable using hardware that has pads and/or encoder dials if there are enough to control all parameters of the piece.

Composing a piece for percussion and electronics presented many challenges and hurdles

26. Contact the author for the score.

to overcome and was a rewarding experience to be able to compose and perform this piece. This piece has helped me gain a deeper understanding of the software and hardware used and has helped me better understand the growing confluence of technology and music. This piece can be used as a framework for other performers to make their own or it can be replicated as closely as possible, resulting in a wide variety of interpretations and possible variations.

CHAPTER 8

CATCHING SHADOWS BY IVAN TREVINO

Ivan Trevino is a Mexican American composer, percussionist, writer and arts advocate that was born in 1983. Trevino has composed over 70 works so far, with most being for solo or chamber percussion, except for his recently released his work for wind band, *Run to the Light*. His music is widely played around the world, so far being played on five continents and in 25 different countries. Trevino is currently Lecturer in Percussion at University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches with percussionist Tom Burritt, and co-directs the Eastman Percussion Festival, a summertime event hosted by the Eastman School of Music where Trevino holds a master's degree from. Trevino is also an avid writer and performer, hosting his own blog and is a member of the cello rock group Break of Reality.²⁷

Catching Shadows was written by Trevino in 2013, as a marimba duet for himself and his mentor Michael Burritt. Trevino has also arranged the piece for a percussion sextet that uses two marimbas, two vibraphones (+glockenspiel), and two percussion players (cajon, high hat, cymbals). The instrumentation required for the duo are one 5.0 octave marimba and one 4.5 (or 4.3) octave marimba, giving the player access to the low A-flat in the marimba 1 part.²⁸ Many different factors make this piece worthwhile in the percussion repertoire: including the use of advanced four-mallet techniques, interaction and collaboration with the other player, and approachability of this piece for outside listeners. The form of this piece can be described as ABA' with the first A section lasting from measure 1 to measure 106. The B section lasts from

27. "Bio," Ivan Trevino, accessed Mar 21, 2023, <https://ivandrums.com/bio/>.

28. Ivan Trevino, *Catching Shadows*, (ivandrums.com, 2013), "Title Page."

measure 107 to measure 141. The last A section goes from measure 142 to measure 218.

The A section is comprised of multiple themes and ideas, with the first theme, the sixteenth note theme, lasting from measure 1 to measure 54. The next theme, “rock chorus” starts in measure 55 with a powerful bass theme in the marimba two part. This theme features a lot of sixteenth note interplay between the parts, with each part filling in gaps in the other part to sometimes create a fluid sixteenth note line. At rehearsal letter D at measure 79, the “rock theme” is replaced with a dotted sixteenth note figure shared by both marimbas until rehearsal letter E, when the second half of the first theme returns briefly before the offset sextuplet double lateral figure at measure 94. At rehearsal letter F many things happen: the tempo slows into a middle ballad section, the time signature changes to 12/8, and marimba two introduces triplet-based chordal motion before marimba one joins over the top with a dotted eighth note melody, introducing duple vs triple rhythmic ideas between both players. At rehearsal letter G, the marimba one player switches from duple-based ideas to a triplet-based idea that outlines the larger beats in the measure. Rehearsal letter H starts the final section of the piece, where the original idea is reintroduced in 12/8. The last section of the piece differs from the first section starting at rehearsal letter J when marimba one introduces a lateral octave motive that switches to double vertical octaves in measure 179. Rehearsal letter L reintroduces the double lateral sextuplet motive this time moving around the keyboard, before an eight-measure outro of the original theme to end the piece that starts at measure 210.

In terms of mallet technique, this piece uses all different types of marimba strokes, including lateral, vertical, and independent strokes for the performer to master. The opening of this piece utilizes independent strokes for these opening motives between marimba one and two. Lateral strokes are used throughout the piece but are the focus in measures 94 to 101 in the offset

sextuplet theme shared by both marimbas. Double vertical strokes are utilized mainly in the marimba two part during chordal movement through the piece, however marimba one does use double vertical octaves towards the end of the piece.

Figure 8.1. Double vertical motive marimba 2.



Figure 8.2. Double lateral motive marimba 1



When playing in a chamber setting, there will undoubtedly be collaboration between performers, however the collaboration is a central part of this piece as melody and accompaniment parts emerge and converge throughout the work. The opening motive in this piece transfers back and forth between marimba one and two, with the marimba one part starting the melody and marimba two finishes the phrase before the next iteration starts in marimba one. The purpose of these parts is very clearly lead/accompaniment; however, the accompaniment

part still has enough valid musical material for a performer to learn. This can be seen as an homage to the original pairs love of rock music and could be thought of as the same kind of relationship between lead and rhythm guitarists.²⁹ Another similar section of lead/accompaniment occurs within rehearsal letter G, where marimba one has triplet-based figures, and marimba two has chordal voicings until measure 136 when they briefly join in with triplet figures outlining the larger beats within the measure. These frequent back and forth moments between the parts make this piece highly interactive for both players.

Trevino describes this piece as “rock tune” for marimba players, and everything about the piece backs that up: the harmonic content, the relationship between the players, as well as the atmosphere created by the piece. Even when regarded as a rock song, *Catching Shadows* still proves it has multiple worthwhile aspects for the advanced percussionists to learn and perfect to give an immersive performance.

29. Trevino, *Catching Shadows*, 2013, “Program Notes.”

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APPENDIX A

Tchik Notation Key**LIST OF TERMS AND SIGNS**

speak the rhythms in a normal tone of voice, or mumbling them at periods articulating as clearly as possible.

voice

center of head

on the edge

on the rim

OR

OR

Snare drum

Playing near the edge is compulsory only when notated as above. When not specified, the drummer is free to play as he chooses.

STICKS :

stick on stick

Rimshot :

normal : striking the head and the rim in the same time.

bossa nova : crossed rimshot

Jazz : put the head of the stick on the head and strike it with the other.

Drumrolls :

detailed : 2 strokes per hand

buzz : more than 2 strokes per hand

one hand buzz

1 double on the first 16th note

2 doubles on the first 8th note (like a Ra of 5)

FINGERS :

normal : play near to the edge (unless otherwise specified), with one or more fingers per hand according to the nuance.

rim shot

roll : rub the head with one finger (as on a tambourine)

BRUSHES :

measured back and forth brushing motion with one hand. Arrows indicate the direction of the motion of the brush.

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