

**AN EXAMINATION OF
INNOVATIVE PERCUSSION WRITING
IN THE BAND MUSIC OF FOUR COMPOSERS:
VINCENT PERSICHETTI - SYMPHONY FOR BAND
KAREL HUSA - MUSIC FOR PRAGUE 1968
JOSEPH SCHWANTNER - AND THE MOUNTAINS RISING NOWHERE
MICHAEL COLGRASS - WINDS OF NAGUAL**

**A thesis submitted to the
Division of Graduate Studies and Research
of the University of Cincinnati**

**in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

in the College-Conservatory of Music

1993

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this examination is to show that *Symphony for Band* by Vincent Persichetti, *Music for Prague 1968* by Karel Husa, *and the mountains rising nowhere* by Joseph Schwantner, and *Winds of Nagual* by Michael Colgrass are among the best examples of works which represent advances and achievements in Twentieth-century percussion writing for band. The examination of each work consists of a brief profile of the selected piece, an evaluation of its percussion instrumentation requirements, and discussions pertaining to the motivic, coloristic, textural, and where applicable, harmonic uses of the percussion writing in each work.

To narrow the focus of the examination, seven factors are considered: the specificity of the percussion requirements, regarding both instruments and timbres; the use of traditional percussion instruments; the use of new or unusual percussion instruments; the use of new playing techniques; new sounds created by combining traditional instruments with new playing techniques; interesting textures created by combining percussion with brass and/or woodwind instruments; and the use of percussion in the compositional process.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this examination is to show that the four pieces selected are among the best examples of works which represent advances and achievements in Twentieth-century percussion writing for band. It will be demonstrated that these four works have contributed to the improved status of percussion writing in band composition.

The professional community of band conductors has rated these works to have high artistic quality. As part of an extensive survey by Jay Gilbert¹, twenty band directors were nominated by their peers as outstanding musicians in the fields of conducting and wind literature. These conductors were then asked to evaluate a total of 1205 compositions for band/wind ensemble and rate them according to each composition's "Serious Artistic Merit." The four works examined in this thesis were rated in the top ten percent of the survey by all twenty evaluators:²

<i>Music for Prague 1968</i> -----	100%
<i>and the mountains rising nowhere</i> -----	98%
<i>Winds of Nagual</i> -----	94%
<i>Symphony for Band</i> -----	93%

¹Jay W. Gilbert, "An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit: A Replication and Update" (D.M. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1992).

²Gilbert, 151–152.

To narrow the focus of the examination, the following factors are considered:

1. the specificity of the percussion requirements, regarding both instruments and timbres
2. the use of traditional percussion instruments
3. the use of new or unusual percussion instruments
4. the use of new playing techniques
5. new sounds created by combining traditional instruments with new playing techniques
6. interesting textures created by combining percussion with brass and/or woodwind instruments
7. the use of percussion in the compositional process

Each chapter consists of a brief profile of the selected work, an evaluation of its percussion instrumentation requirements, and discussions pertaining to the motivic, coloristic, textural, and where applicable, harmonic uses of the percussion writing in each work.

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INTRODUCTION

Not until the twentieth century, as a result of work by a rather limited number of far-sighted composers, did the percussion section include the myriad of instruments and apparatus necessary to produce the great variety of color and effects required in modern music.³

As the Twentieth century draws to a close, it is evident that the percussion section has been the dominant family of experimentation and growth in instrumental music.

Twentieth-century orchestration has demanded a dominant role from the instruments of percussion. Succeeding years have witnessed an ever-increasing use of the normal percussion instruments, together with a desire on the part of composers to exploit the possibilities of unusual devices and novel instruments. The combination of these facets has exercised considerable influence on creative orchestration, to the extent that with many modern composers the majority of percussion instruments are often indispensable ingredients to the tone palette of their orchestrations.⁴

No other group of instruments has demonstrated greater potential for communicating new musical ideas and sounds. String, woodwind, and brass instruments had, for the most part, reached their maturity by the turn of the century. The percussion section alone remained an essentially untapped source of colors.

Igor Stravinsky, through his prominent use of percussion in such early works as *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), *L'Histoire du Soldat* (1918), and *Les noces* (1923), paved the way for a new perspective in percussion writing⁵. Béla Bartók expanded the variety of percussion sounds available using traditional instruments in the *Piano Concerto No.1* (1926), *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936), and *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937).⁶

³Edgar B. Gangware, "The History and Use of Percussion Instruments in Orchestration" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1962), 247.

⁴James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and their History*, rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 412.

⁵Frederick Fennell, *Time and the Winds* (Kenosha, Wisconsin: Leblanc Publications, 1954), "The percussion section of the orchestra became the fourth section of the orchestra, its masterful use by Stravinsky contributing considerably to this landmark in music's history and establishing the battery as an individual element in symphonic music."

⁶Blades, 413-415.

John Cage and Edgard Varèse, through works such as *First Construction (in Metal)* (1939) and *Ionisation* (1931), were among the first composers to write exclusively for the percussion ensemble. Their compositions featured the widest variety of instruments ever used, new combinations of percussion sounds that created unusual textures, and new compositional techniques.

During the first half of the century many important composers contributed to the growing body of literature for the band; however, few of their works can be regarded as innovative in their writing for the percussion section. These include the *First Suite in E-flat* (1909) by Gustav Holst, *English Folk Song Suite* (1924) by Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Theme and Variations, Op. 43a* (1943) by Arnold Schoenberg, *Suite Française* (1945) by Darius Milhaud, and *Symphony in B-flat* (1951) by Paul Hindemith.

The percussion section was not considered an essential part of the band's instrumentation, being used sparingly for reinforcement or minimal effects. This limited perspective can be seen in some early books and articles which dealt with the subject of percussion in the band. Erik Leidzén, for example, stated that ". . . [percussion instruments] are mainly rhythmic and have little or no harmonic influence on the music . . ." ⁷ In his book "The Concert Band," Richard Franko Goldman noted:

The band percussion is, of course, functional in origin; the drums beat rhythm for marching or for various calls connected with military ceremonies. The survival of these functions in the concert band tends to produce something of an overabundance of percussion in the performances of nonmilitary music. The idea of noise as a desideratum in band music persists; and it is of course undeniable that the percussion instruments are useful in this respect. ⁸

However, Goldman continued:

That they are useful in many other respects, and that the effectiveness of their use sometimes increases in inverse proportion to the quantity of noise produced, is a thought worth considering. ⁹

⁷Erik Leidzén, *An Invitation to Band Arranging* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser Company, 1950), 85.

⁸Richard Franko Goldman, *The Concert Band* (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1946), 145.

⁹*Ibid.*

Composers became increasingly familiar with the extensive collection of instruments at their disposal and the vast array of timbres that were possible between wind and percussion instruments. In addition to traditional instruments, new or unusual instruments such as the string drum, chains, Indian drum, sleighbells, pitched gongs and tam tams, and siren, were included in the ensemble. Edgard Varèse, through his early compositions for winds and percussion such as *Hyperprism* (1923), *Intégrales* (1925), *Ecuatorial* (1934), and *Déserts* (1954), was a pioneer in the use of percussion for its timbral possibilities.¹⁰ Percussion instruments were used for their exotic qualities by Olivier Messiaen in his *Couleurs de la Cité Céleste*, (1963), *Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum* (1964), and *Oiseaux exotiques* (1956), which features virtuosic writing for the xylophone and glockenspiel. Leslie Bassett incorporated the percussion section into the band's fabric of colors in his three works for band: *Designs, Images and Textures* (1966), *Sounds, Shapes, and Symbols* (1978), and *Colors and Contours* (1984). Warren Benson helped to expand the role of the percussion section in the band through pieces such as the *Symphony for Drums and Wind Orchestra* (1963), *The Leaves are Falling* (1966), and *The Passing Bell* (1933).

Reginald Smith Brindle, in his book *Contemporary Percussion*, has aptly stated that “. . . percussion instruments have come to take a dominating part in today's music. Percussion timbre is now the basis of 'contemporary sound'.”¹¹ Percussion has, indeed, become an integral part of the contemporary band. Composers continue to rely on the percussion section as a seemingly unlimited source of colors and textures. This has, however, been an evolving process. It has taken a long time for composers, writing for band, to shed the stereotypical “side drum, bass drum, cymbals” concept of percussion instrumentation. It is the present writer's opinion that the four works presented in this thesis represent the most important contributions to the development of percussion writing in band composition.

¹⁰Glenn Watkins, *Soundings: Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 249.

¹¹Reginald Smith Brindle, *Contemporary Percussion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970; reprint, 1975), 1.

CHAPTER 1

Vincent Persichetti - Symphony for Band

In 1955 Clark Mitze, Director of Bands at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, commissioned Vincent Persichetti to write an eight-minute piece for an ensemble composed primarily of winds, but “not necessarily for band.”¹ Persichetti began work on the music and, shortly afterwards, informed Mitze that the “piece” had grown into a full four movement symphony. On April 16, 1956 the *Symphony for Band* was premiered at the Music Educators National Conference convention in St. Louis with Mitze conducting the Washington University Band. Although the piece at first received a lukewarm reception, it has since been hailed as a masterpiece of the band’s repertoire.

It is music of glowing substance enriched by the craft of a master ... it is its extraordinary experience as music that brings the ultimate reward to those who listen, play, or conduct.²

The Symphony’s percussion writing is considered to be one of the many interesting aspects of the work.³ The use of the percussion section to present important thematic material was exceptional for its time, as was the exactness with which Persichetti wrote for percussion.⁴ This included the suggestion of specific sticks or mallets and explicit striking areas on the instruments. Morris speculates⁵ that these ideas could be attributed to Persichetti’s possible awareness of an article by Frederick Fennell on percussion writing,⁶ which sought to acquaint composers and conductors with a widening variety of percussion instruments, sticks, mallets, and scoring techniques.

¹Donald Alan Morris, “The Life of Vincent Persichetti, with Emphasis on His Works for Band” (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1991), 198.

²Frederick Fennell, “Vincent Persichetti: Symphony for Band,” *BD Guide* 1 (September/October 1987), 4.

³Joe Barry Mullins, “Three Symphonies for Band by American Composers” (Ed.D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1967), 199.

⁴Sterling Cossaboom, “Compositional and Scoring Practices for Percussion in Symphonies Written for Concert Band: 1950–1970” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1981), 92–93.

⁵Morris, 202.

⁶Frederick Fennell, “A Modern Use of Percussion,” *Modern Music* 23 (Winter 1946).

Persichetti's score calls for three percussionists:

Percussion 1—timpani (at least three), suspended cymbal

Percussion 2—three snare drums (soprano, alto, tenor), tom tom, suspended cymbal, triangle, tambourine

Percussion 3—bass drum (horizontal position), tenor drum, suspended sizzle cymbal, xylophone

There are a number of interesting aspects to this percussion scoring. The assignment of three percussion players is not notable or unusual, but the number of instruments to be played by each percussionist is. Composers up to this period generally wrote for a minimum number of percussion instruments in their works for band, eliminating the need for percussionists to play two or more instruments. As a result, in addition to expanding the number of sounds available to the percussion section, Persichetti's use of multiple instruments for the individual players gives the percussion music a uniformity and cohesiveness. In the Symphony all three players are assigned to their specific instruments. As percussion writing became more complex composers, out of necessity, needed to be concerned with the many logistical problems inherent in the expanding percussion section. In assigning Player 2 three snare drums, Persichetti specifically requires drums with a relative range of soprano, alto, and tenor, implying that the choice of instruments and the tuning of each be considered carefully. Player 3 is required to play the bass drum with the heads parallel to the floor, indicating that Persichetti considers the bass drum to be a member of the "scale" of unpitched drums, not merely a timekeeper. Finally, Persichetti scores for instruments that, except for the sizzle cymbal and tom tom, had typically been found in the band's percussion section.

Two important characteristics of the percussion writing are clear: 1) rhythmic motives initially presented by the percussion section in the first movement's Introduction (mm. 1–20) are recalled and developed throughout the entire symphony; 2) the percussion section has special importance as an expanded source of new colors and effects. Unique timbral combinations occur within the percussion section itself as well as in combination with brass and woodwinds. It is interesting to note how often musical events, melodic lines, and homorhythmic chordal passages are colored with subtle shades of percussion.

MOTIVIC USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The opening of the Symphony (Introduction) presents extremely active and restless music in the percussion section. What at first appears to be a series of random or unorganized sounds is actually the initial presentation of five rhythmic motives that will be used in all four movements of the Symphony (Example 1-1).

Example 1-1 First Movement, measures 1–20

The image displays a handwritten musical score for the first movement, measures 1–20, focusing on the percussion section. The score is divided into five systems, each highlighting a specific rhythmic motive:

- Motive 1:** Circled in the first system, appearing in the Timp. I and 3 Snare Drums parts.
- Motive 2:** Circled in the first system, appearing in the Tenor Drum part.
- Motive 3:** Circled in the first system, appearing in the Timp. I and 3 Snare Drums parts.
- Motive 4:** Circled in the second system, appearing in the 3 Snare Drums and Tenor Drum parts.
- Motive 5:** Circled in the second system, appearing in the 3 Snare Drums and Tenor Drum parts.

The score includes various percussion parts: Timp. I, Timp. II, 3 Snare Drums (Shards off), Timp. Sticks, Bass Drum (head up), Tenor Drum, and Bass Drum. Dynamics range from *mp* to *f*. The score is marked with measure numbers 10 and 20.

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The manner in which these motives are presented reveals two special qualities in Persichetti's treatment of the percussion section. Each motive is presented with a melodic contour and texture not commonly associated with membrane percussion instruments. Additionally, each percussion part functions in two ways: as an independent unit, and in combination with the others. Listed below are the rhythmic structures of the five most significant motives that are used and developed in the percussion instruments (Example 1-2).

Example 1-2

Motive 1 

Motive 2 

Motive 3 
(a) (b)

Motive 4 
(a) (b)

Motive 5 
(a) (b)

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These motives, initially presented by the percussion section in the Introduction, provide the material for all of the percussion music. In fact, many of the Symphony's themes are based on percussion music from the Introduction. All motives appear both as accompaniment to thematic events and as solo presentations with or without wind accompaniment. They are almost always presented in their original rhythmic form, but are usually accompanied by a variation in instrumentation. Specifically, the development of these motives is timbral, with an emphasis on shifting colors rather than on any other developmental technique or gesture. The motives appear rhythmically as they had in the Introduction, but the instrumentation and context change regularly. These changes vary among a solo percussion instrument, a

family of instruments (membranophones, idiophones), a combination of families, or in combination with brass and/or woodwinds. The assignment of primary material to the percussion section was a calculated choice made by the composer, who stated, “The percussion plays a dramatic part—a very strong part—in the piece.”⁷ Interestingly, there is evidence that the horn’s opening motive (the Symphony’s important “source motive”) was added after the percussion ideas were completed.⁸

The development of motives begins immediately as the xylophone introduces the A theme at the beginning of the Exposition (*Allegro*) in measure 21 of the first movement. The theme’s rhythm is based on a varied form of a motivic fragment heard in the snare drum in measure 1. “They’re trying to play the theme, but I didn’t write [the A theme rhythm] ... You have kind of a facsimile getting ready for it.”⁹ Only three pitches, however, are used in the presentation—B^b, E, A—the same tritone and a perfect fourth used by the timpani in the Introduction. Three snare drums accompany this statement (Example 1-3).

Example 1-3 First Movement, measures 21–24

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⁷Earl H. Bruning, Jr., “A Survey and Handbook of Analysis for the Conducting and Interpretation of Seven Selected Works in the Standard Repertoire for Wind Band” (D.A. dissertation, Ball State University, 1980), 328.

⁸Morris, 203. “In the first movement [Persichetti’s] sketches reveal that the opening Adagio section was carefully worked out, beginning with the percussion parts and the ascending scale in the low brass. The horn motive was not a part of the initial musical idea, but was added later.”

⁹Bruning, 328.

The xylophone is exploited for its tone color and range without literally presenting the melodic line. It only hints at the true thematic presentation of the pitches of the clarinet's theme but provides, along with the three snare drums, only the rhythmic outline. This treatment of the xylophone and three snare drums illustrates a percussion writing technique that is used throughout the Symphony: non-pitched instruments (or pitched instruments that are functioning in a "non-pitched" manner) imitate the contour of a genuine melodic phrase and assume the characteristics of that line. This phenomenon is described by H. Owen Reed and Joel Leach in their text on percussion scoring:

The instruments of indefinite pitch can usually only simulate pitch contour; but [they] have an uncanny way of absorbing pitches when doubled with instruments of definite pitch. They seem to be definite-pitched when imitating or repeating a previously stated motive by a pitched instrument ... The awareness of these pitch differences ... makes it possible to write melodically for the indefinite-pitched percussion instruments.¹⁰

Unaccompanied in measures 173–200, three snare drums briefly restate the rhythmic motive of the A theme. This false recapitulation is striking in that it uses only non-pitched percussion, similar to the scoring of the first appearance of the A theme in measure 21. As heard earlier Persichetti uses the snare drums to simulate the theme, this time without the xylophone. The actual Recapitulation begins at measure 220 with a return to the hint of the A theme, heard again in its original instrumentation (xylophone, three snare drums, and timpani), but with different pitches in the xylophone and timpani. This coincides with the change in the return of the A theme, which is presented one whole-step higher in the flute.

¹⁰H. Owen Reed and Joel T. Leach, *Scoring for Percussion and the Instruments of the Percussion Section* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), 130–131.

The rhythmic structure of the first movement's A theme is also used in the fourth movement as the basis for its A theme. The Introduction begins with an exposition of this theme in the woodwinds and ends at measure 35 with an imitation in the percussion. The three snare drums imitate the theme's contour and character through the use of their relative timbral range and a roll to simulate the neighboring-tone figure (Example 1-4).

Example 1-4 First Movement, measures 35–38

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The transformation of a motive into a full-fledged theme is also evident in the expansion of Motive 2, first presented in the timpani (measure 11), into the second movement's hymn theme—"Round Me Falls the Night."¹¹ The motive is displayed in the first measure as two quarter notes that begin each of the hymn's phrases. Following the initial presentation of the first phrase, the bass drum answers in imitation, complete with tremolos on beats two and three to simulate the sustained halfnotes.

Motives are sometimes presented as miniature themes that are subjected to timbral development. For example, from measures 114–119 percussion activity accompanies the long timbral changes in the rest of the band, leading to the Development section at measure 120. The rhythmic motives used are those first presented in the timpani part in the Introduction—Motive 4 (measure 7). Note the difference in color between the two presentations of the motive (Example 1-5).

¹¹Vincent Persichetti, *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year, Op. 68* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Elkan-Vogel, 1956).

Example 1-5 First Movement, measures 114–155 and 118–119

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Each solo presentation is developed through changes in color, contour, and articulation while the motive itself remains the same rhythmically. Furthermore, this use of Motive 4 as thematic material foreshadows the appearance, in the fourth movement, of a theme based on that motive. The xylophone and triangle (played with snare drum sticks) present what Persichetti calls a “parody”¹² of the trumpet call in measures 116–119 (Example 1-6).

Example 1-6 Fourth Movement, measures 116–119 and 120–123

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¹²Persichetti, “Symphony No. 6 for Band,” *Journal of Band Research* 1 (Fall 1964), 18.

In a number of instances motives or fragments of material from the Introduction appear as accompanimental figures, with variations in timbre and context. In the second movement the timpani and bass drum offer harmonic support and rhythmic motion to the hymn (measure 5) by utilizing material taken from the timpani music in measures 15–16 of the Introduction. The tenor drum and bass drum immediately imitate this descending timpani motive. The function of the original motivic material is transformed from a gesture of power and force into a gentle accompanimental motion. Persichetti, in the third movement, uses a complete presentation of Motive 3 in the percussion (measures 47–48) as a transition to a restatement of the B section’s primary theme. Note that the trombones, euphonium, and tuba reinforce the bass drum line. The material for this transitional music is taken from the timpani-three snare drums-tenor drum-bass drum presentation of Motives 1 and 3 in measures 3–4 of the Introduction.

Several motives are sometimes combined and used as material for independent percussion music. In the first movement, for example, motivic fragments are used as accompaniment in the percussion section for an extended section of the Development (measures 176–200). Motives 1 and 5b are developed through a variety of timbral and texture changes. This percussion activity provides counterpoint to the band’s extensive development of the first phrase of the A theme. Another example occurs in the fourth movement where the percussion is featured as a solo section with band accompaniment (measures 148–205). Persichetti describes this music as “A *leggiero* development [featuring] fleeting percussion music accompanied by light woodwinds then muted brass.”¹³ Far from fleeting, the percussion section presents motives from the entire symphony, which include Motives 1, 4a, 5b, new material from the Introduction, and variations of the A themes from the first and fourth movements. Also, two timpani events—a syncopated motive (measures 279–280 and 287–288), and a forceful statement of Motive 2 (measures 248–249)—are suggested in music first presented in the three snare drums and suspended cymbal.

An interesting use of motives as solo thematic material in the percussion section occurs at the end of both the first and fourth movements, where solo motivic presentations are accompanied by sustained chords in the band. In the final measures of the first movement, for example, the percussion present several motives above the sustained ensemble, including Motives 1 and 2, the A theme rhythm dis-

¹³*ibid.*, 20.

placed in time (measures 289–290), and a portion of a cymbal motive taken from measure 20 of the Introduction. The definitive two-note motive first heard in the timpani and tenor snare drum in the concluding measure of the Introduction is presented in the timpani and soprano snare drum to bring closure to the end of the movement. At the conclusion of the fourth movement the band sustains a twelve-note chord (measures 291–297) while the timpani and bass drum present Motive 3 and two statements of the first movement’s A theme.

COLORISTIC USE

The imaginative use of conventional instruments, and the requests for specific sticks and mallets, are the most innovative aspects of the Symphony’s percussion writing. Few composers had been so explicit in their requirements for percussion colors, and in the techniques needed to produce them, especially in works for band. One of Persichetti’s important contributions to percussion writing was to go beyond the normal band scoring practices for conventional percussion instruments—timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, and bells—and create new sounds that allowed the percussion section to develop as an important source of color to the band composer.

New percussion colors are created by combining traditional instruments and sticks with unusual playing techniques or striking areas. For example, two types of suspended cymbals are used in the piece—a standard cymbal, and a sizzle cymbal, whose distinctive sound is produced by metal rivets placed in holes drilled around the circumference of the instrument. A variety of beaters are used on the cymbals, including snare drum sticks, the head and the handles of timpani sticks, and wire brushes. Both snare drum sticks and the handles of timpani sticks are made of wood, producing a clear and articulate attack on the cymbals [since the shafts of most timpani mallets in 1956 were made of wood, it is reasonable to assume that Persichetti meant a wood stick]. The soft end of the timpani mallets, used for tremolos and occasional single notes, produce a round, less articulate sound and are especially effective. This stick choice is confusing, however, in the fourth movement (measures 135–136) where the rhythm indicated would be difficult to execute using soft-headed sticks. There are also explicit instructions to play on the edge and near the bell of the conventional cymbal. The diffuse sounds pro-

duced using the edge (the thinnest area of a cymbal) have a delicate, yet brilliant color. The thickest area of a cymbal, the bell, produces a more focused, “quasi-pitched” sound.

The use of three snare drums, and the carefully chosen use of “snare on” and “snare off,” produces an interesting variety in color. The types of sticks requested include conventional wooden snare drum sticks, the heads of timpani sticks, and wire brushes. The timpani sticks, usually used when the snares are turned off, allow the instrument to produce a full, resonant sound. The wire brushes, typically used in drum-set performance, produce a light, brittle sound. Two additional techniques Persichetti calls for are muffling the snare drum, in which a handkerchief is placed on the drumhead away from the playing area, resulting in a sound that is less resonant, and playing on the rim of the drum with the handles of timpani sticks. Snare drum and timpani sticks are also used for the tom tom.

The tenor drum and bass drum are played with the head of timpani sticks, the handles of timpani sticks (on the rims of both drums), and snare drum sticks. The tenor drum also uses hard timpani sticks. Snare drum sticks are used exclusively for the tambourine and triangle. The tambourine, placed on a felt-covered table, is played on the head like a drum. No specific requests for mallets are made for the xylophone, leaving that choice to the percussionist. Additionally, the choice of timpani mallets is left to the percussionist, with two exceptions where Persichetti asks for wire brushes and “hard sticks.” The extent to which Persichetti exploits the percussion section for variety can be seen in the Development section of the fourth movement. Between measures 148–192 Persichetti calls for nine of the above combinations of sticks and/or striking areas.

TEXTURAL USE

A variety of textures are created using percussion instruments alone, and in combination with brass and woodwinds. One such instrument is the xylophone. Persichetti exploits the instrument’s wide range and the potential it has for coloring portions of a melodic line. Only on rare occasions is it used to double any melodic passage note for note. In the first movement the xylophone provides a heterophonic version of the A theme simultaneously with its second true presentation in the flute, oboe, E^b clarinet, alto saxophone, and alto clarinet (measure 33). The xylophone’s counterpoint is rhythmically indepen-

dent of the thematic line in the woodwinds and features leaps and skips that display its agility as a keyboard instrument. The xylophone is featured in a special way, highlighting only portions of the upper woodwind line (measures 53–56). This use of the xylophone enhances the melodic line in a way that is more interesting than if the entire melody was simply doubled (Example 1-7).

Example 1-7 First Movement, measures 53–56

The image shows a musical score for measures 53-56. It consists of five staves. The top staff is for Piccolo (Picc.), which is mostly silent. The second staff is for Flute I and II (Fl I & II), with the instruction 'leggiero' written below it. The third staff is for Oboe I and II (Ob I & II), also with 'leggiero' written below it. The fourth and fifth staves are for the Xylophone (Xylo). The xylophone part plays a melodic line that mirrors the upper woodwind lines, starting with a forte (f) dynamic and moving to mezzo-piano (mp) by the end of the measures. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

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Similarly, this use of the xylophone is also evident later where it first functions as an inverted pedaltone (measures 77–79), then serves to highlight and imitate the upper woodwind line (measures 80–83). This economical scoring demonstrates that Persichetti was primarily interested in the color the xylophone could contribute to a melodic line.

Throughout the opening of the fourth movement the xylophone provides an accompaniment that functions alternately as an aggregate of the flute and oboe motives, and as an embellishment of the contrapuntal fabric in the upper woodwinds (measures 1–10). An interesting aspect of the xylophone’s use here is that its tessitura intermingles with those of the flute and oboe—the lower register the xylophone produces a bright, crisp sound with a fullness that is lacking in its highest register. This approach is used in a similar manner later in the movement where the xylophone vacillates between the trumpet line and the upper woodwind line, doubling the trumpet I and II (measures 251–253) and the piccolo, oboe, and clarinets (measures 253–258). The xylophone’s “common timbre” brings a cohesiveness to this section of music which features five textures contrapuntally throughout the band.

The xylophone is used with subtlety in combination with several thematic presentations. In the fourth movement the xylophone complements the clarinet presentation of the D theme (measures 104–107) with short rhythmic interjections. It colors the melody, highlights certain key notes in the clarinet I and II parts, and provides rhythmic counterpoint to the theme. Later in the movement the xylophone complements the whole notes in a solo trumpet line (measures 184–189) with an eighth-note rhythm on a static A^b pitch. Doubling the trumpet pitch one octave higher, the rhythmic pattern of the xylophone adds interest and motion to the whole notes, shaping the direction of the tones with a crescendo on the first note and a diminuendo on the second.

The xylophone and timpani are combined in the first movement (measures 224–225) for a distinctive timbre: the xylophone, playing a rhythm on a static G, forms a perfect fifth with the C on the high timpano. In this register the timpani have the quality of a tom tom. Few composers have chosen to exploit this timbre, possibly because this high register does not possess the fullness and depth usually associated with, or expected of, the kettledrums. Persichetti, however, expands the range of the timpani by using all registers equally. This exploitation of the upper register is also evident in passages in the fourth movement on high B^b (measures 13–23 and 38). The upper register of the timpani, as a result, forms a timbral link between its lower register and the non-pitched membrane instruments. In a sense, this use of the timpani is comparable to the scoring for the three snare drums, tenor drum, and tom tom.

The timpani are used in a manner similar to that of the non-pitched percussion in which they simulate the contour of a melodic line. In the third movement a timpani solo, beginning in measure 37, rhythmically consists of three forms of Motive 1. As they accompany the ensemble, the timpani complement the contour of the woodwind and saxophone line and add rhythmic vitality to the syncopated figure in the clarinets and euphonium (Example 1-8).

Example 1-8 Third Movement, measures 37–42

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The unpredictable use of the timpani as a bass voice is demonstrated in the Introduction of the fourth movement where the timpani double the euphonium, tuba, and clarinet III (measures 21–24). Only the timpani varies its intervals, falling a minor seventh from E^b to F , rather than rising one whole step as the other instruments do. As a result the F is given more weight in the overall line. As the passage continues, the timpani alone provide the B^b pedal tone. Then when the tuba and euphonium enter, the timpani doubles each of their notes (F , E^b) adding depth and uniformity to their staccato quarter notes. Finally, as the horns join the tuba and euphonium for two measures of rhythmic accompaniment, Persichetti unexpectedly leaves the timpani out.

New textures are created by non-pitched percussion instruments to add variety to instrumental accompaniments. In the first movement, for example, Persichetti writes for an interesting textural combination of alto snare drum (played on the rim with wooden sticks) paired with legato woodwinds, playing identical rhythms (measure 40). This passage is made aurally interesting through the use of two contrasting elements, legato versus staccato, and the unique choice of color in the snare drum. A fresh percussion timbre is introduced as rhythmic accompaniment to the canonic presentation of the A theme in the trumpets and cornets (measure 135). A tambourine, laid on a felt-covered table (with the head up, played with snare drum sticks), doubles the third statement of the theme. The sizzle cymbal (played with timpani sticks) is added to complement the tambourine's gentle metallic sound. Two distinctive traits of

this scoring are worth noting: 1) this accompaniment only occurs at the third entrance of the theme, drawing particular attention to this statement; 2) the balance between the tambourine and sizzle cymbal must be clearly heard. This imaginative scoring requires both percussionists to be sensitive to the others' sounds. The two metallic sounds are delicate and difficult to balance. In a similar accompaniment four measures later, the word "stop" is specifically indicated at the end of the sizzle cymbal roll so that its timbre will be distinguished from that of the suspended cymbal, which is played with the handles of timpani sticks. This experimentation with metallic sounds is also evident in the third movement (measure 55) where percussion again accompanies the woodwinds as the music approaches a false return to section A (measure 62). A new percussion combination, a suspended cymbal played with a yarn mallet and sizzle cymbal played with wire brushes, joins the accompaniment at measure 55. These two textures, combined with the brilliance of the tambourine, create a blend of metallic sounds that add a refreshing variety to the accompaniment (Example 1-9). Note how the cymbal sounds complement each other and, at the same time, engage in a miniature dialogue with the tambourine.

Example 1-9 Third Movement, measures 55–60

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The lilting, folk-like quality of the music at the opening of the third movement gives way to the B section (measure 27). The martial feeling in this sudden shift to the 2/4 time signature is complemented by the addition of percussion. The pedal note C in the timpani supplies the only sustained note for the first two measures while the tambourine (played on a felt-covered table with snare drum sticks) and the bass drum/tenor drum (both played with snare drum sticks) accompany the eighth/two sixteenth rhythm in an alternating pattern. This alternation of timbre corresponds with the changes in instrumentation throughout the band on beats 1 and 2 of the opening measures of this section.

Another new percussion sound, a triangle played with a snare drum stick, colors the flute, piccolo, and E^b clarinet line in the middle of the B section. This distinctive percussion timbre is commonly heard in the music of Béla Bartók (*Piano Concerto No. 1, Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*). Its use throughout this passage is sparse and aurally unpredictable. The specific use of the triangle is similar to the use of the xylophone in an earlier passage. In this instance the triangle first colors the reiterated woodwind pitches that occur on consecutive eighth-notes, then freely highlights and imitates the upper woodwind obbligato.

One particularly interesting aspect of the percussion writing is the use of the bass drum and tenor drum. These non-pitched instruments (already used effectively in the first movement as substitutes for pitched instruments) offer support as bass instruments and provide rhythmic motion against sustained tones in the brass and woodwinds. These scoring techniques are also used effectively in Persichetti's three chorale preludes for band: *So Pure the Star* (1962), *Turn Not Thy Face* (1966), and *O God Unseen* (1984).

The percussion instruments are capable of being imitated, as well as being imitators. The fourth movement begins with an introductory presentation of the A theme in the upper woodwinds accompanied by suspended cymbal, three snare drums, and xylophone. In reference to the light, staccato quality the composer desired from the woodwind music, Persichetti once suggested that they play like snare drum brushes, "It's like a soft shoe dance."¹⁴

¹⁴Bruning, 331.

Persichetti uses percussion instruments to direct attention to, or provide contrasts in, melodic or thematic presentations in the brass or woodwinds. The snare drum's timbral possibilities, for example, contribute additional textural variety through an imaginative use of sticks, articulations, and playing areas. In the fourth movement (measure 17) the change to wire brushes in the soprano snare drum part complements the change in texture to *grazioso* in the lower woodwinds and saxophones. Another example occurs in the fourth movement where the only snare drum flam (single grace note) in the entire work appears (measure 70). The flam has been a staple of the snare drum's repertoire of articulation and it is unusual for it to be used with such discretion. Here, as is always the case, a flam aurally adds fullness to a note. However, the brass chord it accompanies is articulated in a contrary manner (quarter note, staccato, accented). The tenor snare drum provides an interesting textural addition in the final portion of the movement where it accompanies the trumpet III and the upper woodwinds and xylophone (measures 251–257). As the snare drum doubles the trumpet line it is played normally. However, as it shifts to the woodwind theme, the tenor snare drum displays a sudden change in the accompanying texture with the direction to play "on the rim" when it doubles the xylophone and upper woodwinds. Finally, another change of texture that matches the band's can be seen in the fourth movement where the soprano and alto snare drums play sixteenth/dotted eighth rhythms against the three quarter notes of the band (measures 274–275). The snare drum figure, like the flam noted earlier, adds depth and fullness to the band's contrary articulation of short, accented jabs. The sizzle cymbal on the second quarter note of each measure adds a small variation to this statement of the A theme.

HARMONIC INFLUENCE

Harmonically, Persichetti occasionally avoids using the timpani in stereotypical ways, such as providing the root of a chord. In the second movement, for example, the timpani, on G (measure 15), supply the third of the e minor chord while the timpani's E provides the fifth of the A major chord on beat one of the next measure. In this case the timpani add harmonic support and momentum to the extension of the hymn's second presentation. Harmonic support is also provided by the timpani just a few seconds later. Note, though, that Persichetti does not just double one bass instrument, such as the

euphonium, bass clarinet, or baritone saxophone. The pitches chosen, B, E, and G, function in different ways harmonically. The B in measure 26 is the tonic note of the dominant chord. In the next measure the E is, first, the fifth of the A minor seventh chord (only one other instrument has the fifth—clarinet II), then the tonic of E. The two G's function as the third of the chord, reinforced by the euphonium, baritone saxophone, bassoons, and bass clarinet. Then E returns as the tonic note. The movement ends with a cadence in E minor in the woodwinds, with an open fifth of D-A superimposed below in the brass and timpani. In an unusual choice of color and balance, the tuba D is doubled in the final measure by the timpani one octave higher. In the Coda of the third movement (measure 115–end) the timpani are featured as an inner bass voice, reinforcing the harmonic movement in the trombones, euphonium, and tuba. At the very end the simultaneous C and G in the timpani add color to identical notes in the tuba and euphonium which sound one octave lower. Incidentally, since the C and G are played together, it is noteworthy that the perfect fifth is one of the few intervals on the timpani that speaks well and is clearly heard.

SUMMARY

The percussion writing in the *Symphony for Band* represents the most innovative and progressive writing for the percussion section in band composition for its time. Persichetti's originality includes new colors, fresh textural combinations of percussion, woodwinds and brass, and the prominent use of percussion to present and develop primary thematic and motivic material. Non-pitched membrane percussion instruments are used to suggest or imitate pitched melodic material. Fresh colors and textures are created through the use of specific sticks, mallets, and striking areas. The xylophone is used to highlight only portions of melodic lines, provide heterophonic counterpoint to primary themes presented in the woodwinds and brass, and, on occasion, function as a non-pitched instrument. The timpani function as an independent bass voice, developing motivic material, unifying disparate elements in the low woodwinds and brass, and providing interesting and unusual harmonic support.

CHAPTER 2

Karel Husa — Music for Prague 1968

In May 1968 Dr. Kenneth Snapp, conductor of the Ithaca College Concert Band, commissioned his colleague Karel Husa to write a piece for the group's scheduled performance at an M.E.N.C. convention the following January.¹ Husa, in the meantime, had been following the events surrounding the tremendous political upheaval occurring in his native Czechoslovakia.

In late August 1968, the composer decided that he would compose a piece that would be dedicated to the city of Prague. At first the work was to be about the beauty of his native city, which Husa left in 1946. But the tragic events that culminated in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia determined that the piece would have a darker meaning:

As I watched day and night [to televised news broadcasts], I was thinking about that beautiful city where I grew up, and all that it means to me. I was so concerned for my sister and family still in Prague ... I decided then that I would write a piece for Prague and what it stands for. I also thought about that wind ensemble [at Ithaca College], with the full brass section and all that power. I decided that my work would be for the winds.²

Completed in October 1968, *Music for Prague 1968* was given its official premiere on January 31, 1969, in Washington, D.C. during the National Convention of the Music Educators National Conference. Following its initial success, the work has since become one of band literature's most popular works.³

¹Donald Malcolm McLaurin, "The Life and Works of Karel Husa with Emphasis on the Significance of His Contribution to the Wind Band," (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1985), 100.

²McLaurin, 100–101, interview with Karel Husa.

³According to Gilbert's survey, *Music for Prague 1968* is one of only four works to receive a 100% evaluation.

Husa's approach to percussion writing has been one of curiosity and imagination:

The combination of wind and brass instruments with percussion fascinated me and the unexplored possibilities of new sounds and combination of instruments have attracted me for some time.⁴

There are incredible sounds and possibilities still hidden in the percussion and for this reason I am excited and am writing for it.⁵

The percussion writing in *Music for Prague 1968* is an excellent example of this fascination with percussion. The Instrumentation page of the score clearly shows how extensive Husa's percussion requirements are:

Chimes

Marimba

Vibraphone

Xylophone

Timpani

Three antique cymbals (pitched C, E, & B)

Three triangles (small, medium, and large)

Three suspended cymbals (small, medium, and large)

Three tam tams (small, medium, and large)

Snare drum (preferably two or three for additional players to double specific passages)

Three tom toms (small, medium, and large)

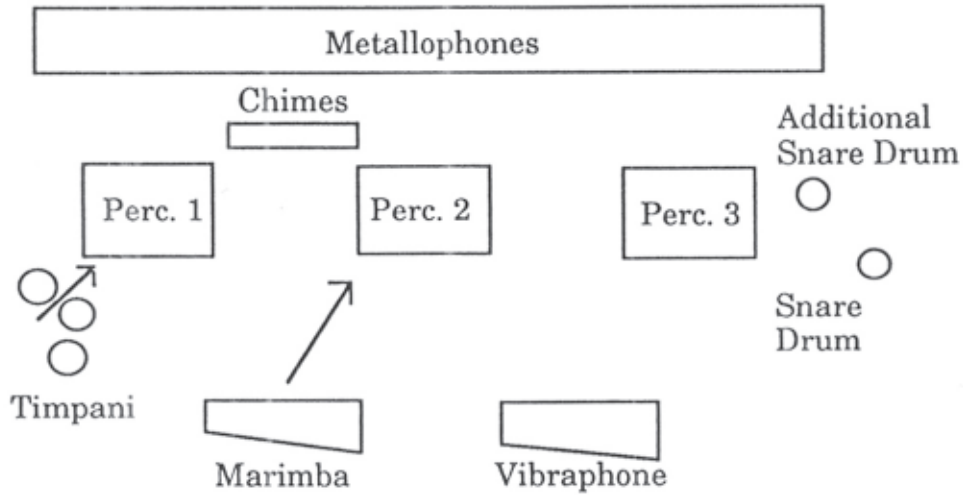
Bass drum

A preliminary glance at the score reveals several interesting aspects concerning the percussion parts. Many of the non-pitched instruments are divided into three sizes—small, medium and large, resulting in an expanded timbral range. The percussion parts, including timpani, are printed together in one part (score form), enabling the players to see all of the percussion parts at once. A diagram of a suggested

⁴Karel Husa, "Notes on 'Music for Prague 1968,'" *College Band Directors National Association, Proceedings, Sixteenth National Conference* (Austin, Texas, 1971), 178.

⁵Karel Husa, "Some Thoughts on Percussion," *Woodwind World, Brass and Percussion* 14 (June 1975), 40.

arrangement of instruments is included in the score. In reference to the latter point, Husa explains that, “I have always tried to figure out the time for moving from one instrument to another and for this reason suggest in the score a set-up arrangement for the percussion.”⁶



Finally, the following performance notes for the percussionists are also provided in the score:

For this work in general, and specifically for Movement III (*Interlude*) for percussion ensemble alone, the suggested arrangement is advisable, with antique cymbals, cymbals, triangles and tam-tams spread across the playing area to the rear of the ensemble.

As indicated in Movement III, *each* of the players should have access to *all* of the metallophones; there are no ‘special’ assignments for individual players.

⁶Ibid., 29.

A minimum of five players, including the timpanist, is required. In the *Interlude*, the timpanist is assigned to the general ensemble.

In the event that six or more players are available, the following reinforcements should be made in order to produce the greatest possible effect:

- III (*Interlude*), last measure:
Double or triple the snare drum crescendo.
- IV (*March*), letter V, first repeat:
Double or triple the snare drum crescendo.
- IV (*March*), letter V:
Two players striking the chimes for the strongest possible sound.

The percussion in *Music for Prague* is used for the presentation and development of primary motivic or thematic material, and to highlight and color motivic events throughout the band. Textural effects include interesting combinations of percussion with brass and/or woodwinds, and a variety of solo percussion timbres. A four-movement work, the following discussion will focus on materials contained in the first, second, and fourth movements (titled *Introduction and Fanfare*, *Aria*, and *Toccata* respectively). The third movement, *Interlude*, is scored for solo percussion section and will be analyzed in detail separately.

MOTIVIC USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The work's opening motive, heard in the timpani, is from an old Hussite religious song "Ye Warriors of God and His Law." Motives used throughout the work are drawn from the first two measures of this song. The idea of using timpani to state the motive may have been influenced by a similar idea used in the "Tabor" movement of *Ma Vlast* by another Czech composer, Bedrich Smetana.⁷

The timpani state the exact pitches of the hymn's first measure, but present a distorted version of the second measure in order to preserve the tension of ascending and descending movements,⁸ —E^b and C^o are used in place of what would be the hymn's E and C (Example 2-1).

⁷Byron Adams, "Karel Husa's 'Music for Prague 1968': An Interpretive Analysis," *The Instrumentalist* 1 (October 1987), 20.

⁸Husa, *CBDNA Proceedings*, 179.

Example 2-1



first two measures of original hymn

transposed and distorted

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The timpani's presentation of the first two measures of the hymn is fragmented, as seen in the opening of the work (Example 2-2).

Example 2-2 First Movement, measures 1–5

MUSIC FOR PRAGUE 1968

for Concert Band

I. Introduction and Fanfare

KAREL HUSA

Adagio (♩ = ca 52)

Piccolo (dir)

Flutes

Oboes

English Horn

Bassoons
Contrabassoon

E♭ Clarinet

B♭ Clarinets

E♭ Alto Clarinet

B♭ Bass Clarinet
B♭ Contrabass Clarinet

E♭ Alto Saxophones

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

E♭ Baritone Saxophone
(or E♭ C♭ C♭)

B♭ Bass Saxophone

Adagio (♩ = ca 52)

B♭ Trumpets

F Horns

Trombones

Baritone (dir)

Tubas (dir)

String Bass

Chimes
Murmura
Vibraphone

Timpani

Percussion

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This is indicative of the fact that the motives that make up the hymn phrases are consistently used in this isolated manner throughout the piece. For example, portions of both measures appear in the timpani part throughout the *Introduction* (measures 1–34).

At letter **A** the marimba hints at the forthcoming brass fanfare at letter **C** with a thirty-second note motive played *p* with medium sticks on low E. As the *Fanfare* begins, a violent timpani interjection links the trumpet presentation of the *Fanfare* motive (which is derived from the hymn's half-step intervallic content) with that of the horns, trombones, and baritones. This single gesture in the timpani consists of the second measure of the hymn in diminution. In response to the trombone presentation of the *Fanfare* motive (measure 53), the timpani imitate with a statement based on the second, then first, hymn phrases in diminution. Later the timpani restate the first and second hymn phrases. The first rhythmic motive is then fragmented and presented in augmentation as the music winds down to the fermata (measure 99). Timpani continue to echo the hymn's second phrase with solo notes on C that decrease in dynamics from *pp* to *pppp*. They also provide accompaniment for the piccolo as it ends the movement with material from the Introduction. In one of its most powerful presentations, the hymn is stated by the timpani at the climax of the work in the fourth movement (Coda—letter **S**). Three varied statements of the hymn occur in the timpani (measures 503–508), played *ff* played with “hard sticks,” initially accompanied by soft unison D's in the flutes. This dichotomy of *pppp* flutes and *ff* timpani was conceived by Husa as a symbol of “. . . the idea of more and more people from afar joining this warrior on the drum and uniting in the song.”⁹ The climax of the piece occurs at letters **T-V** with a *fff* unison declaration of the first four measures of the hymn, interrupted momentarily by a brief reiteration of the *Toccata* opening rhythm (measures 513–514). Interestingly, the timpani are not included in the statement of the hymn's third and fourth measures (measures 514–517)—the only appearance of these measures in the work.

A hymn motive is presented in fragmentation by the timpani in two measures (203 and 205) at the opening of the fourth movement. This motive, a transformation of the C[♭]-D-E[♭] timpani motive from the first movement, is immediately imitated by the trumpets in inversion (measures 204–212), eventually becoming an A theme motive. The xylophone states the A theme which was first heard in the clarinet (measures 215–220), but with several variations. The xylophone presentation features wide skips, a

⁹Ibid., 182.

characteristic that is practical only on keyboard instruments. The written pitches of both the clarinet and xylophone lines are identical, which means that the actual xylophone pitch sounds an octave and one whole step higher than the clarinet, which is in B^b. Additionally, the xylophone varies metrically and rhythmically from the clarinet statement. The timpani extend the clarinet material (measure 221) by imitating the A theme—this serves to introduce the second statement of the theme in the clarinet and bass clarinet. The timpani then provide counterpoint to the A theme using hymn fragments played *p*.

The second movement, “Aria,” is based on a twelve-tone row and prominently features the vibraphone and marimba. Programmatically, the entire percussion section is important in that, according to Husa, “The role of the percussion instruments is to express anguish, obsession.”¹⁰ Equally important is the fact that the marimba and vibraphone are used to present the primary tone row and its permutations throughout the movement,¹¹ including the “macro row” that functions as a ‘pedal’ throughout the piece”¹² (Example 2-3 a, b, c).

¹⁰*ibid.*, 181.

¹¹A discussion of Husa’s use of serialization (including *Music for Prague 1968*) can be found in Lawrence W. Hartzell, “Karel Husa: The Man and His Music,” *Musical Quarterly* 62 (January 1976), 93–104.

¹²Husa, *CBDNA Proceedings*, 180.

Example 2-3a Second Movement, tone row



Example 2-3b Second Movement, initial row presentation, measures 1–8

A musical score for measures 1-8 of the initial row presentation. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Tubas, Marimba, and Vibraphone. The second system includes Baritone, Tubas, Marimba, and Vibraphone. The score includes various performance instructions such as *f*, *dim.*, *sonore*, *mf*, *f marcato*, *motor off*, and *ma marcato*. It also includes stickings and malletings for the percussion instruments.

System 1 (Measures 1-8):

- Tubas:** Measures 1-8. Notes: G4 (1), A4 (2), B4 (3), C5 (4), B4 (5), A4 (6), G4 (7), F#4 (8). Dynamics: *f* (1), *dim.* (2-3), *mf* (4), *f* (5), *dim.* (6-8).
- Marimba:** Measures 1-8. Notes: G4 (6), A4 (7), B4 (8), C5 (12), B4 (3), A4 (4), G4 (5), F#4 (8). Dynamics: *f marcato* (6-8).
- Vibraphone:** Measures 1-8. Notes: G4 (2), A4 (3), B4 (4), C5 (5), B4 (9), A4 (10), G4 (11), F#4 (6,7). Dynamics: *mf ma marcato* (2-4).

System 2 (Measures 9-12):

- Baritone:** Measures 9-12. Notes: G4 (9), A4 (12), B4 (9), C5 (etc.). Dynamics: *f* (9), *dim.* (10-11), *mf* (12).
- Tubas:** Measures 9-12. Notes: G4 (9), A4 (12), B4 (9), C5 (etc.). Dynamics: *mf* (9), *f* (12).
- Marimba:** Measures 9-12. Notes: G4 (9), A4 (2), B4 (6,7), C5 (8), B4 (9), A4 (12), G4 (1), F#4 (2), E4 (3), D4 (5). Dynamics: *f marcato* (6,7).
- Vibraphone:** Measures 9-12. Notes: G4 (11,10), A4 (12), B4 (1), C5 (4), B4 (5), A4 (10), G4 (11). Dynamics: *mf ma marcato* (11,10).

Example 2-3c Second Movement, Macro Row

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The vibraphone (with medium sticks and motor off) and marimba (medium hard sticks) state the row twice, with the added tuba notes. Wide ranges and leaps are characteristically used and there is no regularity in the choice of instrument. The row is subsequently used freely, with halfstep motives characteristic to the Hussite song presented in the marimba and vibraphone.

For the next twenty measures (116–136), the marimba and vibraphone present the row in its prime form, P-7, in a variety of ways. Notes are sometimes repeated, left out, change octaves, or appear again later before the row is completed. For example, after the first two complete row presentations (measures 108–112), a third begins in the vibraphone. The row is varied in two ways: the C° and D° in the marimba are immediately repeated an octave higher, and the ninth pitch, E, does not appear.

Another version of P-7 continues, again with two variations: the grace note B^b , which is not the second pitch of the row, is imagined to have been sustained from the previous measure, and the real

second pitch, A^b, appears as A-natural. The marimba and vibraphone present a total of eight variations of P-7 up to letter J (measure 137).

The “macro row” begins its retrograde at letter J, initiated by the vibraphone and marimba. Both instruments play the B^b and B-natural (pitches 11 and 12) and are joined by the horns playing the first pitch of the “macro row” retrograde. The vibraphone and marimba begin a development section (measure 137) using fragments of the row. The rhythmic figures used in the percussion (and later in the flutes, clarinets, and oboes) are reminiscent of the Hussite hymn’s main rhythmic motive.

The vibraphone and marimba resume their presentations of varied forms of the primary row (measure 159), now using the retrograde form to the end of the movement (R-7). Six presentations appear from this point, each with variations including missing or repeated pitches. Also, two pitches from the “macro row” are prominent in the marimba and vibraphone. On one occasion the marimba echoes the second pitch of the row, A^b, on beat two after its initial appearance in the piccolo, flute, and E^b clarinet on beat one (measure 163). In another instance the vibraphone doubles the clarinets and oboes in the presentation of the third pitch, G^b (F[∞]) (measure 167). In the concluding four measures the marimba presents R-7 (minus the initial B), accompanied by a variation of the row in the vibraphone and a unison E in the clarinets and saxophones.

COLORISTIC USE

Husa’s attention to detail for producing special color in the percussion section is reflected in the specificity of the instruments, sticks, and mallets required in the music. Most percussion sounds require the percussionist to choose a particular stick or mallet, a specific instrument size, or an exact playing area on an instrument. At the beginning of the work, the timpani color is distinct—*coperti* (literally “covered” =muted)—and *ppp*. This muffling of the head gives the drums a drier sound with less tone and more percussive impact. The rhythm, at *ppp*, is also more articulate. Later, in measure 38,¹³ the

¹³For the purpose of analysis, all measures have been numbered 1–525 from the beginning of the work to the end. Rehearsal letters A–V (there is no letter U) are used for reference as they apply to specific measures.

instruments are “uncovered” (*nat.*) and played with hard sticks. The sound is fuller, with more resonance from the drum head, but still articulate and forceful.

The keyboard mallet instruments—vibraphone, marimba, and xylophone—feature the widest variety of colors by the choice of mallets. The vibraphone uses soft, medium, and hard yarn sticks, and hardest plastic sticks. It is played either with the pedal down (*ped.*), allowing the metal bars to ring for a sustained tone, or with the pedal up (*secco*), for a dry, staccato sound. Husa also calls for a vibrato tone (*motor on*), in which an electric motor turns small fans inside the vibraphone’s resonators, causing a fluctuation in the tone. Similar mallets are used for the marimba, including medium, medium hard, very hard, and hardest yarn sticks, and hardest plastic sticks. Note the subtle differences in the choice of yarn mallets, which produce varying degrees of tone and articulation, depending on the register of the instrument. One example early in the first movement has a rhythmically active line on E and E^b in the lower register of the marimba (measures 15–17). Medium yarn sticks are articulate but, at the same time, do not produce a great deal of surface noise from the wooden bars. However, the note is in a darker range of the marimba which tends to provide more percussive sound than pitch (particularly in combination with other instruments). The choice of xylophone mallets, while not as extensive as the vibraphone and marimba, is equally explicit—very hard and hardest sticks.

Traditional tam tam sounds are obtained from the three instruments by striking them with a heavy padded mallet. Additionally, the medium and large tam tams are “softly scraped with a triangle stick,” producing a harsh, metallic sound by dragging a metal beater across the front surface of the instrument. The range of colors available from the suspended cymbals are obtained through the use of three sizes of instruments—small, medium, or large; a variety of sticks—wooden sticks, soft, medium, and hard yarn sticks; and specific striking areas (at the edge). Portions of the tom tom and bass drum parts also contain exact stick requirements—hard felt timpani sticks in the tom toms, and soft or hard sticks in the bass drum.

TEXTURAL USE

An interesting balance of color between percussion instruments and various woodwind or brass instruments is achieved through the use of a “timbral link” in the percussion writing. By means of this technique a percussion instrument blends two or more dissimilar timbres by doubling each part. For example, in measure 13 the vibraphone’s D^b highlights and colors the dynamic climax of the second flute’s flutter-tongued C[∞]. At the same time the vibraphone also reinforces the half-step dissonance between the flute and clarinet by doubling the C of the clarinet. Additionally, the direction for the vibraphone to play with “soft sticks, motor on” gives all three instruments a distant, ominous quality (Example 2-4).

Example 2-4 First Movement, measures 12–13

The image shows three staves of musical notation for measures 12 and 13. The top staff is for Flute 2, the middle for Clarinet 1, and the bottom for Vibraphone. The Flute 2 part has a first ending bracketed over measure 13, with dynamics *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The Clarinet 1 part has dynamics *ppp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *mp*, and *f*. The Vibraphone part has the instruction "soft sticks, motor on" above the staff and "let vibrate" above a note in measure 13, with a dynamic of *mf*.

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There is another way the vibraphone provides a link. With the pedal down to sustain all pitches played, the vibraphone plays all pitches present in the ensemble, providing another timbral link (measures 326 and 327). All notes used in the ensemble (except for E^b) are included in the vibraphone music, which is sustained for several measures.

The xylophone functions as a timbral link in two instances. At letter **C** in the fourth movement (measure 250) the tremolo on high G contrasts with the piccolos and E^b clarinet. The xylophone ends the roll by doubling the second and fourth, then the first and third trumpet notes, and finally the English horn entry. The xylophone acts as a common timbre between the upper register of the piccolos and the lower register of the English horn. The same condition occurs at letter **K** (measure 368) again. In another instance the xylophone functions again as a timbral link in measures 259–263, where interjections of the B^b-A eighth-note motive reinforce and color the accents of the accompaniment figure in the English horn, bassoons, E^b, alto, and bass clarinets. The octave leaps in the xylophone part also add interest to an otherwise static line.

This use of the xylophone demonstrates one of the distinctive aspects of Husa's writing for keyboard percussion—the exploitation of the wide ranges available on the marimba, vibraphone, and xylophone, and the characteristic leaps and skips that are possible on all of the keyboard percussion instruments. These instruments often double or highlight melodic lines and motivic events that feature a wide instrumentation.

Access to the complete score would unveil many additional examples, a few of which are detailed as follows. The marimba reinforces the first notes of motivic presentations (measures 57 and 59), then participates in the motivic fragmentation of the brass motive (measures 62–65). Timbrally it blends with the contrabass clarinet and saxophone ostinato, but its presentation is distinctive from the static woodwind line in that it jumps octaves three times (covering a range of four octaves), adding variety to the texture. The marimba roll on C (the instrument's highest note) extends the oboe trill (measure 412), and emphasizes the D[◊]-E harmonic interval of the oboes by playing it melodically (measure 416). At the same time, in measures 416–423, the marimba imitates the *Fanfare* motive, restating and extending it in four octaves. As the music grows in momentum toward the climactic arrival at letter **S**, the xylophone highlights this motive in three different octaves, bringing an interesting change of color to an otherwise static line. It also begins the D[◊]-E-D[◊] pattern with the timpani (measure 481) but quickly shifts in order to double the piccolo and flutes (measure 485). Finally, the unison rhythmic motive from the opening of the fourth movement appears again as the music reaches the climax of the piece (measure 492). It is supported this time by the xylophone, doubling the unison F's two octaves apart.

In a number of instances the percussion section is responsible for beginning or completing motivic development in the brass and woodwinds through the use of initiating or concluding gestures. For example, a single vibraphone note (D), supported by the flutes and clarinets, initiates the trumpet's dramatic imitation of the *Fanfare* motive (measure 65). Another example has the large tom tom activating each group of eighths in the accompanimental ostinato figures in the low woodwinds and string bass (measures 332–335). The chimes initiate an imitative section in the trumpets based on a transformation of the same motive, with the vibraphone and marimba coloring subsequent motivic statements (measure 388). The chimes sound again (measure 393) to signal an inversion of the instrumental sequence used in the previous motivic presentation. Gradually this motive spreads to the woodwinds as the chimes, vibraphone, and marimba continue to accent the first note of each fragment. At letter **B** in the fourth movement (measure 232) the xylophone roll on C doubles the clarinet I and oboe in pitch. Simultaneously it imitates clarinets II, III and the E^b clarinet dynamically. The xylophone crescendos to *mf* (measure 234) where then it doubles the first note of each imitative fragment in the clarinets. Finally, it initiates the low G[°] trill in clarinet III and bass clarinet. Using an effective concluding gesture, the marimba and vibraphone abruptly end the imitation of the *Fanfare* motive present in the horns, using two different textures: 1) with both instruments playing A^b, the two thirty-second notes in the low range of the marimba oppose the single sixteenth-note of the horns in the completion of the ostinato; 2) the vibraphone reinforces this ending with a sustained A^b, but also initiates the trombone octaves in measure 74 (played enharmonically as G[°]). The marimba in measures 18–20 is also used in an interesting way as its ascending line of eighth-notes “extinguishes” the sustained notes in the clarinets and ends with an imitation of a motive from the preceding flute solo that serves to introduce a new trumpet texture (Example 2-5).

Example 2-5 First Movement, measures 18–20

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Husa obtains interesting textures by combining percussion with brass and/or woodwinds, and juxtaposing contrasting timbres with similar articulations. At Letter **D** in the first movement (measure 44) the marimba and vibraphone color each trumpet entrance in the measure with imitative, yet distinctive, articulations. Consider that the marimba and vibraphone each contribute to the variety of color using two different textures:

1. the marimba doubles each trumpet entrance with identical rhythms, at the unison:
 - beat 1- sixteenth-notes match Trumpet I and II rhythms
 - beat 2- thirty-second notes match fluttertongue
 - beat 3- single eighth-note attack matches half-note
 - beat 4- tremolo matches sustained forte-piano attack
2. the vibraphone reinforces each entrance with long, sustained tones, one octave lower in pitch.

A curious aspect to this percussion scoring is Husa's direction that both marimba and vibraphone be played with "hardest plastic mallets." Care should be taken in interpreting this direction literally, as plastic mallets may damage the bars of either instrument, particularly on the marimba. Very hard rubber mallets, or sticks with phenolic nylon balls are possible substitutes that would best approximate the desired sound and not risk damage to the instruments. The xylophone, in the fourth movement at letter **C** (measure 250), combines with the piccolos and E^b clarinet to form a colorful texture on high G that provides accompaniment to the trumpet imitation of a timpani motive. Each instrument uses a different rhythm to create this texture: xylophone with a tremolo, piccolo with sixteenth-notes, and E^b clarinet with eighth-notes. In a colorful passage where non-pitched percussion instruments are used melodically (measures 349–388), three tom toms highlight and imitate accompanimental sections of ostinato, then engage in a brief canon with the clarinets and saxophones.

There is an interesting use of *glissandi* where the timpani blend into a B^b pedal of the low brass and slowly begins to rise in pitch and dynamic, culminating with the ensemble's unison F climax. The F lasts for two measures, extending the arrival aided by the piccolo, flute, and E^b clarinet, before returning (again by *slow glissando*) to the original B^b pitch (measures 148–155).

Percussion accompanies the trumpets in the initial presentation of the *Fanfare* (first movement, letter **C**) with small, medium, and large suspended cymbals struck with wooden sticks at the edge. Striking the cymbal in this area produces higher partials, as opposed to hitting closer to the center where lower partials would make the cymbal sound less brilliant. Three tam toms are struck to accompany the second fanfare entrance in the horns, trombones, and baritones (measure 39). Note that this change of percussion color complements the change in orchestration between the two fanfare presentations—trumpets and cymbals, low brass and tam toms. A suspended cymbal (measure 69) colors the dissonant F[♯]/G dyad in the horns. The direction to play "At edge" indicates that Husa wants the cymbal to match the brassy timbre of the horns.

At letter **G** of the first movement, a sixteenth-note ostinato begins in the three tom toms. Instead of simply writing sixteen notes per bar for all three drums, Husa disperses single sixteenth-note rests throughout the three lines, giving the music a restless or nervous excitement. This is accomplished through the use of a rhythmic canon, beginning in the large tom tom, then imitated in the medium tom tom one eighth later and in the small tom tom three eighths later (Example 2-6).

Example 2-6



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An interesting example of economical percussion scoring occurs in the final measures of the piece (measures 520–525). Husa’s use of the percussion section is subtle and restrained, with a unison statement of the hymn phrase in the timpani—the final notes colored by the chimes, a fragmented presentation of the previous section’s “Martial” motive in the snare drum, and a vibraphone tremolo and large suspended cymbal roll coloring the final unison E.

THIRD MOVEMENT — “INTERLUDE”

The third movement, unique in that it is scored for percussion alone, is one of the finest examples of solo writing for the percussion section in all of band literature. Programmatically the music represents Husa’s portrayal of “. . . the quiet night, but the sort of quietness before an explosion or storm.”¹⁴ Each of the percussion sounds—the snare drum, metallic instruments (antique cymbal, triangle, suspended cymbal, tam tam), and vibraphone—depicts an element of this anticipated storm. The metallic percussion instruments represent the sound of bells.

The idea is symbolic; Prague is called the “city of hundreds of towers” and its magnificent bells have rung through centuries during critical times of its existence.¹⁵

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁵Husa, *Woodwind World, Brass and Percussion*, 28.

The snare drum represents the “occupant” or threat, characterized by its menacing, and militaristic quality,¹⁶ while the vibraphone suggests the voices of the people “growing increasingly agitated.”¹⁷

Although the instrumentation is extensive and the music is very complex, the percussionists’ assignments are logical and well-planned, as seen at the beginning of the score (Example 2-7). Husa specifications for the placement of the percussion instruments is equally well thought out:

Here I should also like to mention why I recommend in the Preface of the score that percussion instruments are spread as much as possible around the ensemble; it gives the necessary space effect. On the other hand, if all percussion is put in a small area, all sounds come out from one direction and much too close. This also was my reason for dividing the antique cymbals, triangles, cymbals, and tam-tams among the players and not to give each player the same kind of instrument. The idea was to have these instruments (as well as chimes, vibraphone and marimba) as bells of Prague coming from the city as well as from surrounding hills. I have used the E and B antique cymbals because many orchestras own them due to the fact that Debussy [sic] uses them in the “Afternoon of a Faun.” The C has been chosen to match the E and B.¹⁸

¹⁶Adams, *Instrumentalist*, 21.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Husa, *CBDNA Proceedings*, 181–182.

Example 2-7 Third Movement

III. Interlude

Misterioso (♩ = 63-66)

snare off covered

mezzofortissimo

Snare Drum	
1	Small Antique Cymbal (preferably B*) Small Triangle Small Suspended Cymbal Small Tam-tam
2	Medium Antique Cymbal (preferably C*) Medium Triangle Medium Suspended Cymbal Medium Tam-tam
3	Large Antique Cymbal (preferably C*) Large Triangle Large Suspended Cymbal Large Tam-tam
VibraPHONE	

The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the initial entry of the percussion instruments. The second system features more complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic shifts. The third system continues the intricate percussion writing, including glissandos on the triangle and specific mallet techniques for the vibraphone.

Example 2-7 (continued)

The musical score consists of five systems, each with five staves: S.O. (Solo Oboe), 1 (First Clarinet), 2 (Second Clarinet), 3 (Third Clarinet), and Vib. (Vibraphone). The score includes various performance instructions and dynamics:

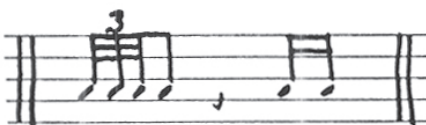
- System 1:** S.O. has a circled 'O'. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*.
- System 2:** S.O. has a circled 'O'. Vib. has instructions: "start fast, progressively slow down to", "non dim", and "gliss = Triqt beater". Dynamics include *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*.
- System 3:** S.O. has instruction: "take off cover". Vib. has instructions: "dim.", "poco", "a", "poco", "not necessarily in tempo". Dynamics include *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*.
- System 4:** S.O. has instruction: "shares on". Vib. has instruction: "vibrato". Dynamics include *f*, *mp*, *fff*, *fff*, *vibrato*.
- System 5:** S.O. has instruction: "one to three S.O. help the run here, starting *p*, sempre cresc until sound affacco is nearly unbearable". Dynamics include *fff*, *fff*, *fff*, *fff*, *fff*.

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The snare drum is to be played “covered, snares off” (a cloth is placed on the batter head to eliminate any ringing—the player can either play on the cloth itself or fold it away from the playing area). It begins *Misterioso*, with a *ppp* dynamic. In fact, the entire dynamic range up through letter **N** is *pppp–mp*. This is a virtual cadenza for the percussionist.

Throughout this cadenza the snare drum plays in a quasiimprovisatory manner, but the motives that make up the solo are rhythmically precise. Two of these motives are used almost exclusively from letters **N–P** (Example 2-8):

Example 2-8



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The snare drum maintains a *pp* dynamic from measures 179–192. In measure 191 the player is directed to “take off cover” and allow the drum to resonate. The change in timbre is heard immediately.

The roll in measures 192–193 is *ppp* with a crescendo to *f*. The snares are to be turned on at letter **P**—the dynamic is now *mf* with a continual crescendo to *ff*. The music in this second cadenza (measure 195) begins with motives from the first cadenza, followed by an extended development of the triplet motive played backwards. The twelve-note motive first heard in the first cadenza is now presented at its most powerful sound—*ff*, with snares on (in contrast with its first appearance as *pppp*, covered, with snares off). This is followed by a roll, sustained with a fermata and a crescendo to *fff* (Husa requests that one to three players join the snare nearly unbearable.)

An interesting aspect of the snare drum part is that the music appears to turn around on itself at letter **O**, the central point of the movement. With a difference of one eighth rest, the music from measures 182–185 is played as a palindrome of events in measures 186–189—not backwards, as it has been described in other analyses (Example 2-9).

Example 2-9 Third Movement, snare drum, measures 182–189

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation for a snare drum. The top staff contains measures 182 through 185. It begins with a 4/4 time signature and a *pp* dynamic marking. The notation includes several triplet patterns and sixteenth-note runs. The bottom staff contains measures 186 through 189. It starts with a circled letter 'O' in a box, followed by a 4/4 time signature and a *pp* dynamic marking. This staff also features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs, mirroring the style of the top staff.

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The metallic percussion music begins at letter **N**. The apparent randomness of the sounds is actually a carefully planned series of rhythms, dynamics, and timbres that is played backwards beginning at letter **O**. The aggregate rhythm of all three parts, from letter **N** through measure 185, is presented in its retrograde from letters **O–P** with only two minor exceptions. The dynamics assigned to the rhythms are also presented in retrograde, but with seven variations from the original. The timbre is also treated in a similar manner. The retrograde of the instrumentation is based on the technique of “mirror writing,” where the middle line of the part belonging to player 2 is used as an axis. The focal point of this retrograde presentation is letter **O** (Example 2-10 a, b).

Example 2-10a

Rhythmic and Dynamic Inversion Chart

MEASURES 177-185

MEASURES 186-194

MEASURES 186-194 (RETROGRADE VERSION)

The image displays three staves of musical notation. The first staff is labeled 'MEASURES 177-185' and contains a sequence of rhythmic and dynamic markings. The second staff is labeled 'MEASURES 186-194' and contains a similar sequence. The third staff is labeled 'MEASURES 186-194 (RETROGRADE VERSION)' and contains the same sequence of markings as the second staff, but in reverse order. The markings include various rhythmic values (e.g., quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes) and dynamic markings (e.g., p, mp, mf, f, ff).

Example 2-10b

Timbral Inversion Chart

PERCUSSION 1

Small Antique Cymbal

(SAC)

Small Triangle

(ST)

Small Suspended Cymbal

(SSC)

Small Tam Tam

(STT)

PERCUSSION 2

Medium Antique Cymbal

(MAC)

Medium Triangle

(MT)

Medium Suspended Cymbal

(MSC)

Medium Tam Tam

(MTT)

PERCUSSION 3

Large Antique Cymbal

(LAC)

Large Triangle

(LT)

Large Suspended Cymbal

(LSC)

Large Tam Tam

(LTT)

PERCUSSION 1

SAC LTT

ST LSC

SSC LT

STT LAC

PERCUSSION 3PERCUSSION 3

MAC MTT

MT MSC

Neither the rhythms or pitches used in the vibraphone solo are serialized. The rhythmic structure of the music is based on three motives or gestures that have occurred earlier in the piece:

-the swelling dynamics used throughout this movement are reminiscent of the swelling motives heard in the woodwinds in the first movement's Introduction.

-the wide leaps are characteristic of the piccolo and flute solos from the beginning and ending of the first movement.

-the saturation of half-step material, used as a single interval or in the gesture of a single note expanding in both direction by a half-step, recalls the “Fanfare” motives in the first movement.

The pitches are subordinate to the intervals they outline. The most prominent intervals are seconds and sevenths. As mentioned above, wide skips are a dominant feature of the melodic line.

Although the precisely-notated music has an “improvisatory” or random character, only two small sections are literally played in an improvisatory manner. In measures 188–189 special notation is used to indicate a tremolo that is played fast-to-slow (“*start fast, progressively slow down to. . .*”). Three measures later (measure 192–193) the bracketed music is played “*not necessarily in tempo.*” Note that vibrato is added at letter **P** (the vibraphone’s motor is turned on) after the D and G are struck, and remains on for the final note, F. This last vibraphone pitch, the same pitch that begins the final movement, “TOCCATA,” functions as a link between the two movements.

SUMMARY

The percussion writing in *Music for Prague 1968* helps solidify the percussion section’s prominence in band composition. By employing a larger assortment of instruments Husa dramatically enlarges the timbral palette of the percussion section, strengthening its role in the compositional process. Percussion presents and takes part in the development of the work’s primary motivic and thematic material. Keyboard percussion instruments, which include the marimba, vibraphone, chimes, and xylophone, are used idiomatically for their agility and wide ranges. Several types of non-pitched instruments—tom toms, suspended cymbals, tam tams, and triangles—are used in small, medium, and large sizes in order to expand each instrument’s range of color. Specific sticks and mallets are suggested for most instruments to produce distinct colors or textures. Texturally, percussion is used in combination with woodwinds and/or brass to initiate or conclude motivic development, and to form a “timbral link” between varieties of instruments.

CHAPTER 3

Joseph Schwantner — and the mountains rising nowhere

Composed in 1977, *and the mountains rising nowhere* was Joseph Schwantner's first work for wind ensemble. It was commissioned by Donald Hunsberger and the Eastman Wind Ensemble, funded in part with a Composer Fellowship Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.¹ The premiere performance took place at the 1977 National Conference of the College Band Director's National Association.²

The title of the work is taken from a poem written by Carol Adler:³

arioso bells
sepia
moonbeams an afternoon sun blanked by rain
and the mountains rising nowhere
the sound returns
the sound and the silence chimes

Schwantner, commenting on the relationship of poetry and his music, stated,

I enjoyed reading and writing poetry as a boy, and find that poetic ideas often produce musical ones. I like the rhythm, texture, flow, and tension created by the imagery poetry evokes and often find musical parallels. Many of the titles of my works come from poems, as is the case with *and the mountains rising nowhere*, a title taken from a line of poetry by the American poet, Carol Adler. The publisher included her poem on the score cover and the first page of the score so conductors would better understand the association between her poem and the music.⁴

¹Cynthia Folio, "An Analysis and Comparison of Four Compositions by Joseph Schwantner: *and the mountains rising nowhere*; *Wild Angels of the Open Hills*; *Aftertones of Infinity*; and *Sparrows*," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1985), 21.

²Jeffrey Renshaw, "Schwantner's First Work for Wind Ensemble," *The Instrumentalist* 45 (January 1991), 30.

³Carol Adler, *Arioso* (Markesan, Wisconsin: Pentagram Press, 1975).

⁴Renshaw, "Schwantner on Composition," *The Instrumentalist* 45 (May 1991), 16.

In composing his first work for wind ensemble, Schwantner chose to draw upon the vast array of percussion instruments and “. . . write a work where the percussion section would be on an equal footing with the woodwinds and brass.”⁵ The choice of instruments is significant in that it displays two distinctive stylistic traits of Schwantner’s music—color and texture. Folio points out that the composer’s use of crotales, vibraphone, tubular bells, tam tams, and wind chimes are fine examples of “his fondness for sounds which ‘hang in the air.’”⁶ The percussion section of *and the mountains rising nowhere* consists of:

Percussion 1—vibraphone, bell tree, timbales, 3 tom toms, 2 suspended cymbals (small & medium), tam tam (contrabass bow required for area playing vibraphone and tam tam)

Percussion 2—marimba, glockenspiel, water gong, bass drum, 2 suspended cymbals (small, medium), 2 triangles

Percussion 3—vibraphone, xylophone, 4 tom toms, bass drum, 2 suspended cymbals (small, medium), 2 triangles (contrabass bow required for arco playing of vibraphone)

Percussion 4—glockenspiel, tubular bells, water gong, 2 triangles, 2 suspended cymbals (medium, large) (also plays vibraphone of percussion 1, and tam tam of percussion 5)

Percussion 5—xylophone, crotales (chromatic set, mounted), bass drum, tam tam, 4 tom toms, 2 suspended cymbals (large) (also plays tubular bells of percussion 4; contrabass bow required for arco playing of tam tam and crotales)

Percussion 6—4 timpani

Although not part of the percussion section, “glass crystals”—wine glasses containing water whose sounds are produced by rubbing a finger around the rim of the glass—are also used in the work, played by four oboists. These instruments, along with the bowed percussion effects, were used by Schwantner in a number of his earlier works. These include *Elixir* (1974; glass crystals, bowed crotales), *Canticle of*

⁵Folio, 21–22.

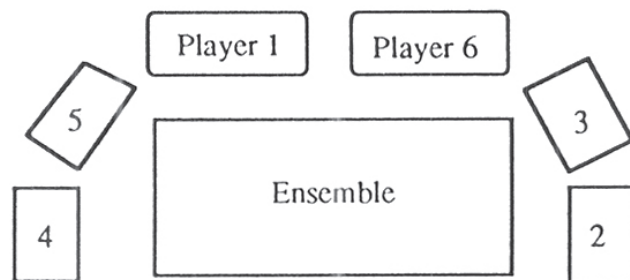
⁶Ibid., 4.

the Evening Bells (1975; glass crystals, bowed crotales, bowed vibraphone), and *Wild Angels of the Open Hills* (1977; glass crystals, bowed crotales).

The placement of the six players should be well-planned since a great deal of space is needed for the large number of percussion instruments required to perform the piece. An appropriate set-up can be determined by considering some of the pragmatic aspects of the scoring:

- 1.) The instruments required take up so much room that it will be necessary to place the percussion section around the entire ensemble (surrounding the group in a “U” shape).
- 2.) Players 1, 4, and 5 share instruments and need to be together.
- 3.) Water gongs are visually, as well as aurally, interesting and should be placed to the outside of the ensemble.

Suggested placement of the six percussionists:



MOTIVIC USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Percussion instruments are used to present or develop compositional material in two ways: 1) to present motives whose only source is the percussion section; 2) to vary and develop motives initially presented the piano or glass crystals. Both pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments play an important part in this process, through the exposition of primary material and as an integral part of the piano’s motivic presentation and development. The first six of these motives are identified on the first page of the score (Example 3-1).

Example 3-1 First page of score

to Carol Adler

and the mountains rising nowhere

1977

Joseph Schwantner

Duration about 11 minutes

The score is written for a large percussion ensemble, including glass crystals, triangle (tri.), tom-toms (tom.), timpani (timp.), snare drum (sna.), and cymbals (cym.). It features six distinct motives, each highlighted with a hand-drawn shape and labeled as MOTIVE 1 through MOTIVE 6. Motive 2 is specifically labeled 'sempre tenuto' and has a duration of 35 measures. Motive 3 is 10 measures long, Motive 4 is 5 measures, Motive 5 is 12 measures, and Motive 6 is 12 measures. The score is marked with a 4/4 time signature and a tempo of ♩ = 80. The overall mood is 'ominous, foreboding'. A descriptive text box in the center lists: arioso, bells, sephia, moon beams, an afternoon sun blanked by rain, and the mountains rising nowhere. The sound returns, the sound and the silence, and chimes. There are also performance instructions such as 'specially depress all keys between indicated pitches, then apply "sustentivo pedal"', 'strike small gong or tam-tam, then slowly lower into a tub of water. Maintain sound after gong is lowered.', and 'P.B. Same as in C.'. The score includes various musical notations like dynamics (pp, pp-p, p, mf, f, sf, sfz, sfz sf, sfz sfz), articulation (acc, marc, sforz), and phrasing.

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The Introduction opens with the initial presentation of Motive 1, played by the membrane instruments of players 1, 3, and 5, and accompanied by the piano. The pianist is instructed to silently depress all keys in the lower register of the piano, allowing the strings to vibrate sympathetically with the percussion attack. “This explosive opening brings the percussion and piano into the foreground immediately, forecasting the important role which they are to play.”⁷ The motive appears consistently throughout the piece, functioning structurally as a preparation to four other sections. For example, Motive 1 completes Section 1 and, at the same time, prepares Section 2 with a rhythmic variation played by four tom toms, bass drum, and timpani (measure 7). In a very subtle gesture the timpani present a “reminder” of Motive 1 as an introduction to the piano presentation of Motive 4 (measures 27–28). Motive 1 is then expanded and developed where eight tom toms, three bass drums, and timpani present nine fragments based on that motive (measure 37). Players 3 and 5 imitate the texture of the original motive, each using four tom toms and bass drum. The timpani and bass drum present multiple rhythmic figures using only one instrument. Each fragment is played faster and louder than the previous one until the two timbales and three tom toms of player 1 are added to the one-second anacrusis into Section 4 (measure 38). Next, the timpani introduce Section 6, combining elements of Motive 1 with rhythmic material developed throughout the ensemble in Section 4 (measures 51–52). Employing all twenty membrane instruments in its final appearance, Motive 1 is developed as a climax to the end of Section 9 (measures 129–133) and as an introduction to the Coda (measure 134).

Two vibraphones and piano first present Motive 2a (measure 9) accompanied by two water gongs. Three climactic presentations of Motive 2a in the vibraphones, glockenspiels, crotales, and piano (measures 27, 30, 33) are juxtaposed with staccato presentations of B^b octatonic material in the vibraphone 1, marimba, and xylophones. The motive is reintroduced in Section 5 by the marimba, oboe, and English horn in its A^b transposition (measure 72), followed by two presentations in the marimba and piano which initiate the brass chorale (measure 85). The concluding gesture of the piece is a final presentation of Motive 2a, with the original pitches, in the vibraphones, glockenspiels, crotales, and piano.

⁷Ibid., 23.

In several isolated instances, percussion is used to present or highlight new presentations of motives. For example, the timpani extend and develop the triplet figure from piano's second presentation of Motive 3a (measure 42), leading to a full-scale motivic development in the ensemble as a climax to Section 4. Two vibraphones, glockenspiel, two scraped suspended cymbals, piano, and woodwinds present the A^b transposition of Motive 5 (measures 54–57). A similar instrumentation of vibraphones, glockenspiels, 2 triangles, piano, and upper woodwinds present transposed version of Motive 6 based on B^b dorian scale (measure 52). Material for the quasiimprovisatory music in the two xylophones and marimba (measure 120e) is taken directly from "Arioso" material in the piano (measure 120d).

At one point a rhythmic "Heartbeat" motive is presented by the timpani, gradually becoming the dominant musical material through an elongated crescendo, from *pp* to *ff* (measures 64–90). Then a rhythmic ostinato is established in the timpani and three bass drums as an expansion of the "Heartbeat" motive. Brief interjections, recalling the "Heartbeat" motive, are presented by two tam tams and piano, the latter played by striking as many keys as possible with both forearms (Example 3-2).

Example 3-2 percussion and piano, measures 91–96

The musical score for Example 3-2, measures 91-96, is presented in a multi-staff format. The piano part (pno) is shown at the top, with a tempo marking of 4/4 and a tempo of 108. The percussion part (perc.) is shown below, with a tempo marking of 4/4 and a tempo of 108. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (pp, ff), articulation (>), and performance instructions like 'perc.: brutale con forza' and 'l.v. sempre'. The score also includes a section for two tam-tams and two bass drums, with a tempo marking of 4/4 and a tempo of 108. The score is divided into measures 91-96, with a section for measures 91-96 and a section for measures 97-100.

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As Folio points out, all variations of the rhythmic motive, whether in $\frac{6}{16}$ or $\frac{5}{16}$, have accents on beats 1, 2, and 4 outlining the initial rhythmic motive.⁸ Five forms of the motive—labeled a, b, c, d, e in Example 3-5—are used from measure 92 to the end of the section (Example 3-3).

Example 3-3

Pattern: A B A C A D B E measures 92–99
 A B A C A D B E measures 100–107
 A B A C A D B E measures 108–115

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⁸Ibid., 55–56.

COLORISTIC USE

Traditional instruments are combined with new playing techniques to create some of the most innovative percussion colors in all of band literature. The “water gong,” for example, is a tam tam which is struck and lowered into a tub of water, lowering the pitch. Its sound is sustained by playing a roll on the instrument with yarn mallets. Schwantner specifies in the musical notation whether the instrument is to be lowered or raised. “Bowed” instruments, such as the vibraphone, crotales, and tam tam, are played by dragging the hair of a well-rosined contrabass bow across the edges each instrument, producing a sustained, high-pitched sound. A sustained effect on the suspended cymbal is obtained by scraping the rough surface of the cymbal with a thin piece of metal, such as a triangle beater, nail file, or coin.

Schwantner is much less explicit regarding mallet or stick choices than Persichetti or Husa, requesting specific mallets only twice in the piece, both times in the vibraphone part—measure 1 (four soft mallets) and measure 8 (medium soft mallets). In measure 1, each vibraphone performs glissandi with the specific indications “with four soft mallets, motor off-*sempre*” [the score does not indicate *ped.*, but should be implied as *l.v.* is indicated at the end of the glissando. According to the notation, the left hand plays a glissando on all flatted notes (starting on the high E^b and ending on low G^b) and the right hand plays a glissando on all of the natural notes (beginning on low F and ending on high F.) This unique technique of performing a glissando provides a different effect from the conventional technique of dragging a mallet across all of the natural notes from low to high. The use of four mallets is unusual, as the glissando can normally be executed with two, but produces a fuller and louder sound. Finally, a timpani rim shot, performed by using the handle of a timpani stick and simultaneously striking the head and rim, obtains a dry, forceful cracking sound to match the *secco* clusters in the keyboard instruments (measures 1–5).

TEXTURAL USE

Textures of percussion alone are created through the use of traditional percussion sounds, the newer percussion colors, and a combination of both. An interesting textural contrast occurs in measures 27–36, where the staccato color of wooden keyboard instruments—two xylophones, marimba—with secco vibraphone, alternate with those of sustained metal keyboard instruments—two vibraphones, two glockenspiels, and crotales. The brilliant, ringing quality of the metal keyboard instruments is later used to highlight a unison rhythm (measure 126). The tubular bells take the place of a glockenspiel and contribute to an interesting texture. An economical use of the glockenspiel is featured in measures 54–57, where it colors the motivic triplet figure in the vibraphone I part, adding interest to the line without literally doubling every note.

Percussion colors, combined with brass, woodwind, or piano events, offer some of the most intriguing textures in the work. Non-pitched percussion instruments are used extensively for a wide variety of accompanimental textures. A rich crescendo effect is achieved (measure 40) with tremolos on ten suspended cymbals and timpani, adding intensity and brilliance to the ensemble's dynamic climax on beat five. This color is particularly effective as it accompanies the dramatic horn *portamento*. In measure 1, six triangles highlight the third note of the triplet figure in the piano. Note that the triangles are played *f*, while the piano motive is marked *p*. One of the unique percussion textures heard in any band work also occurs in measure 1, where two bowed tam tams and two water gongs (*gliss. down*) color the presentation of the Motive 3 "bell chord" in the piano. Another interesting effect using the water gong occurs later where six flutes imitate the ascending and descending glissandi (measure 120). At cue G in the same measure, two suspended cymbals, tubular bells (on one pitch, C[♭]), four triangles, and tam tam accompany the presentation of Motive 3 in the piano. Schwanter achieves a colorful effect with the triangles and tubular bells by notating a fast-to-slow reiteration of attacks, coupled with a rapid diminuendo from *ff* to *pp*.

Percussion keyboard instruments are used frequently to highlight motivic events or isolated motivic fragments, and color individual notes or sonorities. One example has two xylophones reinforcing the unison E's of the piccolos and flutes at the completion of the transposed version of Motive 3a (measure 41). Another highlighting effect has the fortissimo xylophone D^b/E^b dyad initiate the sustained

sfz-pppp clusters in the trumpets, trombones, and piano in measures 53 and 56. This texture is enhanced by the additional color from the bowed vibraphones (Example 3-4).

Example 3-4 measures 53–55

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 53-54) includes staves for strings (str. m/le) and bowed vibraphones (vib.). The second system (measure 54) includes staves for woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon) and percussion (snare drum, tom-tom, cymbal, triangle, xylophone, mallets). The third system (measures 54-55) includes staves for woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon) and percussion (snare drum, tom-tom, cymbal, triangle, xylophone, mallets). The score is marked with various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions.

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By examining the complete score one would discover additional highlighting or textural enhancement examples. Several crisp, staccato improvisatory-like figures in the two xylophones and marimba imitate similar events begun by the whistlers, creating a contrasting texture with the sustained aura of the glass crystals and the smooth quality of the *quasigliss*. In the flutes (Cue E, measure 120). At cues B, C, and D the distinctive textures of two bowed vibraphones and bowed crotales complement the whistling in the brass and the *bisbigliando* effect in the flutes and clarinets (measure 120). Another example combines the brilliance of the metal keyboard percussion instruments with piano, providing a sharp contrast in texture as the *sffz* cluster in the two vibraphones, glockenspiel, tubular bells, and crotales abruptly cuts off the preceding brass and woodwind extension of Motive 3a (measure 43). Contrarily, a similar combination of instruments—two vibraphones, two glockenspiels, two triangles, and piano, all played *ppp*—creates a warm, delicate texture during a presentation of the A^b transposition of Motive 5 (measure 56). Using a technique in which “one main line is carried by one instrument while others highlight the texture by doubling and sustaining certain notes,”⁹ two vibraphones, glockenspiel, tubular bells, and crotales are incorporated into a texture with the piano and six flutes Schwantner defines as “shared monody” (measures 127–129).

The piece ends with a shimmering effect using two vibraphones, two glockenspiels, crotales, and piano (measure 134). Although each instrument presents a similar pattern of pitches, Schwantner creates this interesting texture using two variations: 1) the C[∞] left out of the glockenspiel motives are heard in the piccolos and flutes; 2) the crotales play the same notes as the other instruments, but in a disjunct pattern (as opposed to the steady ascending line of the actual motive).

⁹Ibid., 5.

HARMONIC USE

The keyboard percussion instruments, and occasionally the timpani, present or reinforce important tonal centers in the piece. The initial B tonality is presented and sustained by the vibraphone, marimba, two xylophones, tubular bells, and timpani, whose percussive tone clusters contain pitches from the B aeolian scale (minus A) previously established by Motive 2 (glass crystals) and Motive 3 (piano).

Several percussion instruments, including two glockenspiels, crotales, marimba, two xylophones, vibraphone I, and piano (using notation that directs figures to be played as fast as possible) present eleven figures consisting of B octatonic material, highlighting the conflict between octatonic and aeolian tonalities—the latter presented as recurring forms of Motive 2a (measures 12–36). Also, the vibraphones, glockenspiel, tubular bells, and crotales prolong the piano's transposed presentation of Motive 3a (measure 41), through an harmonic configuration of the motive. Simultaneously, the timpani continue to reinforce the home tonality of B.

Another harmonic contribution is found in the tremolos of vibraphones and marimba which support harmonic shifts of B^b Dorian, B^b Harmonic Minor, f Harmonic Minor, to the climactic presentation of A^b Aeolian by two vibraphones (measures 60–87). Similarly, bowed vibraphones, bowed crotales, and tubular bells support harmonic shifts of transposed Motive 6 material in the piano (measure 120 a, b, c, d).

SUMMARY

The percussion scoring in *and the mountains rising nowhere* brings an unprecedented new dimension to band composition. The use of new playing techniques to create new colors from traditional percussion instruments is one of the most significant innovations of Joseph Schwantner's percussion writing. Bowed instruments, including tam tams, vibraphone and crotales, and the water gong bring imaginative sounds and textures to the ever-growing percussion section of the band. Percussion also plays an important role in the compositional process. Both pitched and non-pitched instruments present and develop primary motivic material throughout the work. Percussion also highlights primary and developmental material presented in the piano, functioning as a textural extension of that instrument. Finally, by employing a large variety of keyboard percussion instruments, striking contrasts of texture are achieved through the juxtaposition of wood vs. metal, staccato vs. sustained, and high-pitched vs. low-pitched.

CHAPTER 4

Michael Colgrass — Winds of Nagual

Winds of Nagual was commissioned by the New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble with funds from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, and was premiered in Jordan Hall in Boston on February 14, 1985 with Frank Battisti conducting. This programmatic work, subtitled “A Musical Fable for Wind Ensemble on the Writings of Carlos Casteneda,” is based on Casteneda’s fourteen-year apprenticeship with a Yaqui Indian sorcerer, don Juan Matis. The music for *Winds of Nagual*, Colgrass’ first work for wind ensemble, was adapted from the composer’s *Tales of Power* (1980), a solo piano work based on the same programmatic material.

Two important aspects of Colgrass’ background make his percussion writing in *Nagual* particularly effective: his rich repertoire of compositions which prominently feature percussion, and his experience as a professional percussionist. A considerable number of Colgrass’ compositions, especially early works, are written either for percussion instruments alone or for percussion prominently featured with other instruments or ensembles. This extensive collection of music includes:

Six Unaccompanied Solos for Snare Drum (1957)
Three Brothers (1953) for nine percussionists
Fantasy- Variations (1973) for seven percussionists
Chamber Piece for Percussion Quintet (1954)
Inventions on a Motive (1969) for four percussionists
Rhapsodic Fantasy (1965) for fifteen drums and orchestra
Variations for Four Drums and Viola (1957)
Concertino for Timpani and Brass (1953)
Chamber Music (1954) for four drums and string quintet
Chant (1954) for vibraphone and chorus
Deja Vu (1977) for four percussion soloists and orchestra

Colgrass’ expertise in writing for percussion is coupled with his experience as a free-lance studio player and orchestral percussionist. The musical sensitivity and imagination he relied on as a player—to choose appropriate percussion sounds to match musical events in an ensemble setting—directly influ-

enced his own percussion writing, as did his knowledge of the unlimited choices of instruments, sticks, and techniques available to create specific colors or textures.

It took me many years to realize that being a percussionist, and thinking texture in a percussion section.... was one of the most powerful influences in my orchestrating and my textural writing as a composer.¹

This percussionist influence is evident in the specific instructions for the types of instruments, sticks, and mallets needed to obtain the sounds desired. In the *Six Unaccompanied Solos for Snare Drum*, for example, the score specifies the types of sticks to be used, the portions of the stick that are used to strike the drum, and the various areas of the instrument that are to be struck. In the *Variations for Four Drums and Viola*, the drums are pitched, requiring retuning with each variation. Colgrass describes how to construct single-headed instruments that can be tuned chromatically by turning them on a base, tightening or loosening the drumhead. The requirement for this type of new instrument eventually lead to the invention of the Roto-Tom. The percussion instruments required for *Winds of Nagual* include:

- Parsifal bells
- vibraphone
- crotales
- chimes
- xylophone
- marimba
- bass drum
- 3 gongs
- 4 large suspended cymbals
- 3 large pairs of crash cymbals
- 1 pair of 8" crash cymbals
- 5 cowbells
- 5 temple blocks
- bongos
- timbales
- snare drum
- tenor drum
- field drum
- 4 timpani

¹Michael Colgrass, taped responses to author's written questions, December 29, 1992.

Although there are a considerable number of percussion instruments required for the work, they are only used sparingly. Colgrass discreetly employs the percussion for added color and texture, only relying on the large number of instruments as a resource from which to choose sounds.

MOTIVIC USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The percussion section's role in the process of motivic presentation and development is much smaller than in the other three works in this study. The crotales can clearly be identified as an integral component of the opening theme (measures 1–14). While not doubling every rhythm and note of the opening theme in the E^b clarinet, they outline the pentatonic scale upon which the theme is based—D E G A C (Example 4-1).

Example 4-1

First page of score

WINDS OF NAGUAL

MICHAEL COLGRASS

Quasi recitativo **The Desert** *poco meno mosso* (rit.)

♩ = 72 (but freely)

3 Fl. (dfl Picc.)
3 Fl. (dfl Alto)
Eb Cl.
Bb Cl.
Bb Bs. Cl.
Eb Contra.
Alto Cl.
Bb Contra.
Bass Cl.
Cbn.
Sopr. Sax.
Alto Sax.
Tpts. (Whisper mutes)
Corns.
Flugel Horn
Hrn.
Tbn.
(Bell)
2 Euph.
2 Tuba.
2 Contra-basses.
Celeste (Piano)
Harp
5 Perc. (Crotales (Plastic Xylo sticks))
Timp.

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Also, added notes—A against G^b on opening grace note, added C[◊] in measure 7, and A^b in measure 9—result in atonal clashes, providing material for motivic development later in the piece. Fragments of this version of the theme are presented later by the crotales and E^b clarinet (measures 28, 50, and 532–533). Another variation of the primary opening theme is heard in the Parsifal bells, piccolos, E^b clarinet, and soprano saxophone (measures 209–211), where the theme’s initial motive is briefly developed and extended.

In the section entitled “Carlos Dances,” the vibraphone is an aggregate of the alto flute and alto saxophone in the presentation of the lyric variation of Carlos’ theme. Later, during the same variation (measures 320–333), the vibraphone and flute I present an extended version of the same varied theme. The sixteenth-note motive first presented in the trombones (measure 28) is reintroduced in the timpani (measures 274 and 277), imitated in the horns (measure 281) and, in a final concluding gesture to “Carlos exerts his will,” imitated and extended by the trumpets, trombones, and piano (measure 291). Finally, as the B^b clarinet plays a variation of Carlos’ theme, the Parsifal bells (with medium rubber mallets) and vibraphone (with yarn mallets) double the theme in the second half of the phrase.

COLORISTIC USES

Colgrass, like Schwantner, relies on the keyboard percussion more than any other family of instruments in the percussion section. Specific types of mallets are often suggested by the composer to create the variety of sounds required. The vibraphone part, for example, calls for a number of different mallets, including soft yarn, hard rubber, $\frac{3}{4}$ hard rubber, and large timpani sticks. The choice of timpani sticks is curious in that these sticks do not produce a full sound on vibraphone bars (measures 161 and 304). The request does, however, provide a clue to the quality of sound the composer wants from the instrument. In addition to using the timpani sticks, the vibraphone is also played with the “slowest motor on,” producing a smooth, undulating tone. The xylophone is played exclusively with plastic mallets, while the marimba utilizes soft yarn mallets and small bass drum beaters—another request that, while seemingly impractical, indicates the full, rounded sound Colgrass desires. Plastic and medium hard rubber mallets are used on both the Parsifal bells and the crotales. Parsifal bells, a specific model of

orchestra bells once manufactured by the J. C. Deagan Company, are equipped with resonators that enhance the tone of the instrument. In “Genaro satirizes Carlos” the marimba plays a four-mallet tremolo accompaniment that is folk-like in nature (measures 118–125). The unique tone color, characteristically Mexican, is obtained with soft yarn mallets for the most tone and least surface noise possible from the marimba. The chimes, at the end of the piece, are played with soft padded hammers to create the impression of distance and to enhance the “fade” effect required in the score. The specificity of stick choices extends to most of the non-pitched percussion instruments as well, including medium hard rubber mallets on the cowbells and temple blocks, brushes on the cowbells, bongos, and timbales, and wooden sticks on a “very large suspended cymbal.”

The specific request for a particular model of instrument, such as the Parsifal bells, is another indication of how clear Colgrass wishes to be in terms of an instrument’s desired color. For one set of crash cymbals, the score asks for “small 8 in. crash cymbals—preferably K. Zildjians—A. Zildjians are not crude enough.” In the production process K. Zildjian cymbals are handhammered, while A. Zildjian cymbals are turned on a lathe. As a result of these differing manufacturing procedures, A. Zildjian cymbals tend to produce an abundance of high overtones when struck, creating a brilliant sound, whereas K. Zildjian cymbals produce a relatively small amount of high overtones, producing a lower fundamental sound. The K. Zildjian instruments, therefore, are more capable of approximating the “cheap sound” desired by the composer.²

Finally, the requests for particular types of instruments also extends to the materials used for certain percussion instruments. In the percussion parts to *Nagual*, Colgrass specifically requests that all drums be equipped with animal skin heads, rather than conventional plastic heads. Calfskin heads, according to the composer, provide a deeper, fuller sound than plastic and are usually a prerequisite for the membrane instruments he writes for.³ In fact, he consciously avoids writing for tom toms, rationalizing that most have plastic heads on them. Instead, he typically writes for bongos, congas, and field drums that usually have calfskin heads, and for snare drum and timbales that, even if they have plastic heads, are tight enough to avoid a tubby or flabby sound.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

TEXTURAL USES

Interesting textures are created by combining two or more percussion sounds. Two chime players, using soft padded hammers (measures 583–587), create the impression of distant, random bell sounds by performing two rhythmically independent lines. This event is initiated by the stopped horns. In two sections of the piece (measures 105–108 and 128–131) the field drum, tenor drum, snare drum, bongos, timbales, temple blocks, and cowbells imitate “little beings scurrying around”⁴ through the use of brushes and specific stickings. Rather than performing passages with an alternate, hand-to-hand sticking (R, L, R, L, R, L, etc.), creating a predictable pattern of loud-soft-loud-soft-loud-soft, Colgrass suggests an erratic, unpredictable sticking (L, R, R, L, R, L, etc.) which creates a rougher texture. At the final climax of the work (measures 573–574) four suspended cymbals (18", 20", 22", and 24" in size) and three gongs (small, medium, and large) are used as non-pitched melodic instruments to simulate the contour of figures in the keyboard percussion instruments. A comic effect is obtained at “Genaro, clowns for Carlos” (measure 84) with five suspended cowbells and five temple blocks, played by one percussionist in accordance with a note in the score—“The cowbells and temple blocks must be adjacent in two rows, like the keyboards of a harpsichord, with the cowbells on the higher level.” Both sets of instruments are graduated from low to high pitch—cowbells are notated on staff lines, temple blocks on spaces—and played with medium hard rubber mallets.

Combinations of percussion with brass and woodwinds provide a number of colorful and innovative textures. The first section (“The Desert”) begins with crotales highlighting and subtly coloring the E^b clarinet melodic line (measures 1–14). The crotales outline the shape of the clarinet’s melodic contour without literally doubling each note. As the passage continues, Colgrass carefully matches a metal keyboard percussion instrument with a solo woodwind instrument. For example, the vibraphone colors the B^b clarinet entrances, the Parsifal bells are identified with the piccolo, and the chimes form a texture with the soprano saxophone. Each pair of instruments functions in a manner similar to the crotales and E^b clarinet (Example 4-2).

⁴Ibid.

Example 4-2 measures 19–22

The image displays a musical score for measures 19 through 22. The score is arranged in a system with ten staves. From top to bottom, the instruments are: Piccolo (Picc.), Eb Clarinet (Eb Cl.), Bb Clarinet (Bb Cl.), Soprano Saxophone (Sop. S.), Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.), Trumpets (Tpt.), Percussion (Pans, Bells), Crotales (Crot.), Vibraphone (Vibra), and Chimes. Measures 19, 20, and 21 show various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines across the woodwinds and saxophones. Measure 22 features a prominent brass section with the instruction 'Metal ff st. mutes' and a complex rhythmic pattern. The percussion instruments provide a textured accompaniment throughout the measures.

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Programmatically, the brilliant timbres of the metallic percussion instruments, combined with the upper woodwinds and trumpets with metal straight mutes in measure 22, produce a feeling of uncomfortability or agitation. This tension is also created by the complex series of independent rhythmic lines in each part. Additionally, Colgrass uses the percussion—here and in measures 568–569, and 574—to blend all groups of instruments together, creating a “textural splash” where individual instruments are essentially “invisible.”⁵ Gong tremolos are used for an interesting effect as they highlight the peaks of the ascending brass glissandi (measures 271–272, and 274–275). All three gongs are used, providing additional color and variety to the texture.

⁵Ibid.

The technique of matching identical pitches with contrasting rhythmic patterns is used in several instances. In measure 62, the Parsifal bells, crotales, and vibraphone duplicate entrances in the piccolo, flutes, and celesta (Example 4-3).

Example 4-3 measure 62

The image shows a musical score for measure 62. At the top, it is marked '62' and '♩ = 66'. The score includes staves for Piccolo (Picc.), Flutes (Fl. I, II, III), Parsifal Bells, Crotales, Vibraphone (Vibra), and Celesta. The Piccolo and Flutes play a dotted half note. The Parsifal Bells and Crotales play a dotted half note with the instruction 'Plastic'. The Vibraphone plays a dotted half note with the instruction '3/4 hard rubber'. The Celesta plays a dotted half note. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

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The bells (with plastic mallets) double the piccolo at the unison, the crotales (with plastic mallets) present the pitches of flutes II and III with a slight rhythmic variation, and the vibraphone (with 3/4 hard rubber mallets), after extending the E of the celesta, doubles the flute I with the B grace note and adds an interesting texture to the high C with four sixteenth-notes against the flute's dotted halfnote. A similar texture is heard in between the flute and Parsifal bells (with medium rubber mallets) in measure 72, and in measures 209–210 where the bells highlight the piccolos, E^b clarinet, and soprano saxophone. According to the composer, "A percussion instrument becomes a kind of extension, in my mind, of other instruments."⁶

⁶Ibid.

A section which Mathes describes as “Rapid, quiet dissolution in ascending, dovetailed scales,”⁷ has the non-pitched percussion instruments participate in an interesting texture where they imitate the fragmented scalar passages in the woodwinds (measures 128–138). Specific stickings are suggested for the initial fragments. The section ends with a long, ascending chromatic flourish leading to “Genaro disappears,” initiated by the percussion instruments functioning as an extension of the woodwind instruments’ range (measures 156–160). The rhythmic fragments begin in the snare, tenor, and field drums, lead to the bongos and timbales, cowbells, then move through the contrabassoon, E^b contralto clarinet, B^b clarinet, soprano saxophone, flute, piccolo and harp, and end with a single pianissimo A on the Parsifal bells.

The vibraphone (with large timpani sticks and slowest motor on), harp, and celesta blend to form a colorful texture at “Carlos Stares at the River and Becomes a Bubble” (measure 161). The combined timbre is smooth and mellow, with the feeling of time being suspended as each instrument presents independent, yet precisely-notated, lines. Later, in measures 304–310, the vibraphone functions as a “timbral link,” doubling the two independent lines of the alto flute and alto saxophone and forming a homogeneous timbre. The randomness of the rhythmic flow is due to a precisely-controlled placement of exact rhythmic fragments (Example 4-4).

⁷James Mathes, “Analysis: *Winds of Nagual* by Michael Colgrass *Journal of Band Research* 1 (Fall 1987), 6.

Example 4-4 measures 304–310

The image shows a handwritten musical score for measures 304 through 310. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes three staves: Alto Flute (Alt. fl.), Alto Saxophone (Alt. sax.), and Vibraphone (v. bra.). Above the first staff, the tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 88$ and the piece is titled "Corlar dance". Performance instructions include "solo esp.", "p", and "senza vib.". The second system continues the three staves, with the instruction "Imp. stroke, senza pedale" written below the vibraphone staff. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

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Another interesting accompaniment texture occurs where the marimba joins the harp to provide an independent rhythmic texture for the soprano saxophone solo (measures 335–370). The marimba, with “small bass drum beaters,” is played an octave lower than written in a register that is dark, mellow, and resonant. As in the previous example, the marimba and harp provide rhythmic ambiguity through precisely-notated, independent lines.

SUMMARY

The percussion writing in *Winds of Nagual* displays two prominent influences on Michael Colgrass' compositional style—his background as a professional percussionist, and his extensive experience as a composer of works for percussion. The large array of percussion instruments required for the work, and the request for specific sticks, mallets, and instruments, demonstrates the use of the percussion section as resource for a variety of colors and textures. Percussion instruments are used as a binding element, blending with woodwind and brass instruments to form cohesive, unified textures. Keyboard percussion instruments play a substantial role in the creation of these textures. Non-pitched percussion instruments are employed sparingly, to imitate motivic figures and highlight woodwind and brass events.

CONCLUSION

The percussion section's role in the band has experienced tremendous growth in the second half of the Twentieth century, from merely providing rhythmic pulse and sound effects, to becoming an integral part of the compositional process. The four works examined in this thesis exemplify the increasingly important role percussion has come to assume in the band. These selected compositions—*Symphony for Band*, *Music for Prague 1968*, *and the mountains rising nowhere*, and *Winds of Nagual*—represent a maturation and sophistication in the development of percussion writing techniques through four means:

1. the expansion of the number of instruments used
2. new colors obtained from percussion instruments
 - a. use of traditionally uncommon instruments
 - b. new playing techniques
 - c. new combinations of percussion instruments
3. new timbres obtained by combining percussion sounds with woodwind and brass instruments
4. the inclusion of percussion as an integral part of the compositional process

Each work utilizes a large variety of instruments, both in new types of instruments and through the expansion of traditional instrumental families, as seen in *Music for Prague 1968*, where three sizes of tom toms, cymbals, triangles, and tam tams are used. The percussion section is the greatest source of new colors and textures through the creation of new sounds on individual percussion instruments, as in the use of bowed gong, vibraphone, and crotales in *and the mountains rising nowhere*, and through imaginative combinations of percussion, woodwinds, and brass as heard in the opening section of *Winds of Nagual*. Percussion is used for the exposition of primary musical material and is prominently featured in the development of motives and themes, as demonstrated in the *Symphony for Band*. Additionally, nonpitched percussion instruments are used for the presentation of motivic and thematic material and often assume the characteristics of melodic instruments through the imitation of melodic contours.

Each work displays the composer's thorough knowledge of percussion instruments and the sounds produced by various combinations of sticks and mallets. Furthermore, there exists a respect for

the ability of percussion to present important compositional material on its own, and to function as an equally-important group of instruments on a level with the woodwinds and brass. These works have raised the standards and expectations of the percussion section, and clearly serve as a benchmark in the advancement of percussion writing in band composition.

It is hoped that this thesis will allow composers, conductors, and performers to better understand the percussion writing techniques used in these four masterpieces, and to gain a fresh perspective of, and appreciation for, the potential of the percussion section in the contemporary band.

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