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TEXTURES: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO PAUL LANSKY'S WORK FOR
TWO PIANISTS AND TWO PERCUSSIONISTS

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TEXTURES: A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO PAUL LANSKY'S WORK FOR
TWO PIANISTS AND TWO PERCUSSIONISTS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	2
Purpose.....	2
Need for Study.....	3
Limitations of Study.....	5
Methodology.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
Bartók and the Sonata.....	7
Other works for Two Pianos and Percussion.....	9
Paul Lansky and Textures.....	11
Orchestration.....	12
Percussion in Chamber Music.....	14
CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....	16
CHAPTER THREE: PAUL LANSKY.....	23
CHAPTER FOUR: TEXTURES ANALYSIS.....	26
Movement I – Striations.....	36
Movement II – Loose Ends.....	52
Movement III – Soft Substrates.....	64
Movement IV – Slither.....	74
Movement V – Granite.....	82
Movement VI – Points of Light.....	91
Movement VII – A flutter, On Edge.....	99
Movement VIII – Round-Wound.....	110
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY.....	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	122
APPENDIX A.....	126
APPENDIX B.....	127

Table of Figures

Figure 0.1. Instrumentation. Textures by Paul Lansky, page 2.....	29
Figure 0.2. Setup Diagram.....	30
Figure 0.3. Setup Diagram for Bartok Sonata.....	31
Figure 1.1. Both raised and lowered versions of scale degrees 6 and 7 in use, mov. 1 mm. 1-2.....	37
Figure 1.2. Multiple rhythmic layers, mov. 1 mm. 30-32.....	39
Figure 1.3. Ostinato in from percussion 2 added to the texture, mov. 1 mm. 51-53.....	41
Figure 1.4. Abrupt change in texture and meter, mov. 1 mm. 63-64.....	42
Figure 1.5. Hocketed ostinatos from percussion 1 and 2, mov. 1 mm. 75-76.....	43
Figure 1.6. Hemolia created between the percussionists' and pianists, mov. 1 mm. 39-40.....	49
Figure 1.7. Exercise for challenging rhythms in movement 1.....	49
Figure 1.8. Additional exercise for movement 1.....	50
Figure 1.9. Sticking diagram for ostinato on wooden slats.....	51
Figure 2.1. Opening five measures of "Loose Ends", mov. 2 mm. 1-5.....	53
Figure 2.2. Octave displacement in glockenspiel and piano 1, mov. 2 m. 17.....	54
Figure 2.3. Further use of octave and rhythmic displacement, mov. 2 mm. 22-23.....	55
Figure 2.4. Sequence of ascending major thirds, mov. 2 mm. 53-57.....	55
Figure 2.5. Chromaticism within the meandering gesture, mov. 2 mm. 38-39.....	57
Figure 2.6. First drum pattern, mov. 2 mm. 22-23.....	59
Figure 2.7. Second drum pattern, mov. 2 mm. 30-32.....	59
Figure 2.8. Third drum pattern, mov. 2 mm. 33-35.....	59
Figure 2.9. Final drum pattern, mov. 2 m. 37.....	59
Figure 2.10. Percussion 2 playing vibraphone and woodblocks simultaneously, mov. 2 mm. 77-79.....	60
Figure 2.11. Polyrhythmic texture spread across the ensemble, mov. 2.....	61
Figure 2.12. Exercise for Percussion 1.....	62
Figure 2.13. Additional exercise for Percussion 1.....	63
Figure 3.1. Arpeggios from percussion and piano 1. Textures by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 7-8.....	65
Figure 3.2. Presentation of the primary theme in "Soft Substrates", mov. 3 mm. 21-23.....	66
Figure 3.3. Primary theme continued. Textures by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 24-26.....	66
Figure 3.4. Final five measures of "Soft Substrates." Textures by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 56-60.....	68
Figure 3.5. Cascading 32nds from pianos 1 and 2. Textures by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 m. 47.....	69
Figure 3.6. Half cadence hammer blows. Textures by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 33-35.....	72
Figure 4.1. Keyboard percussion rolls paired with piano ostinato, mov. 4 mm. 13-17.....	75
Figure 4.2. Hocketed rhythmic ostinatos throughout the ensemble, mov. 4 mm. 23-27.....	78
Figure 4.3. Build up to the percussion cadenza, mov. 4 mm. 53-57.....	79
Figure 4.4. Sticking diagram, mov. 4 mm. 58-61.....	80

Figure 4.5. Sticking diagram continued, mov. 4 mm. 62-65.....	81
Figure 4.6. Sticking diagram continued, mov. 4 mm. 66-69.....	81
Figure 4.7. Sticking diagram continued, mov. 4 mm. 70-73.....	81
Figure 5.1. Example of the “siren motif,” mov. 5 m. 16.....	84
Figure 5.2. Orchestration of various percussion instruments, mov. 5 mm. 24-25.....	86
Figure 5.3. Sample of “Granite” chord progression, mov. 5 mm. 5-10.....	87
Figure 5.4. Harmonic acceleration with arpeggiation, mov. 5 m. 61.....	88
Figure 6.1. Opening three measures of “Points of Light,” mov. 6 mm. 1-3.....	92
Figure 6.2. IV7 to V7 harmonic progression, mov. 6 mm. 24-26.....	93
Figure 6.3. Marimba adds 16ths and ensembles shifts to G major in m. 47, mov. 6 mm. 45-47.....	94
Figure 6.4. Piano 2 and both percussionists align with similar melodic material, mov. 6 mm. 51-54.....	95
Figure 6.5. Octave displacement in piano 1 and 2, mov. 6 mm. 70-72.....	96
Figure 6.6. Brief alignment between both pianists, mov. 6 mm. 76-77.....	97
Figure 7.1. Opening five measures of “A flutter, On Edge,” mov. 7 mm. 1-5.....	100
Figure 7.2. First use of a “fluttering motif,” mov. 7 mm. 17-20.....	101
Figure 7.3. Overlapping iterations of the “fluttering motif,” mov. 7 mm. 21-23.....	102
Figure 7.4. Similar rhythm and shape between percussion 1 and piano 2, mov. 7 m. 37.....	103
Figure 7.5. New “fluttering motif,” mov. 7 m. 43-45.....	104
Figure 7.6. Piano 2 ostinato, mov. 7 m. 74.....	106
Figure 7.7. Percussion 1 ostinato, mov. 7 m. 74.....	106
Figure 7.8. Percussion 2 ostinato, mov. 7 m. 79.....	106
Figure 7.9. Rhythmic pattern from marimba and drums, mov. 7 mm. 59-60.....	107
Figure 7.10. Sticking diagram for percussion 1’s drum pattern.....	108
Figure 8.1. Overlapping ostinatos, mov. 7 mm. 6-7.....	110
Figure 8.3. Repeating melodic pattern from the vibraphone, mov. 8 mm. 60-61.....	115
Figure 8.4. 32nd not arpeggios on the marimba, mov. 8 m. 53.....	116
Figure 8.5. Ostinatos and 32nds combine to usher the ending of the movement, mov. 8 mm. 74-75.....	117

ABSTRACT

In Paul Lansky's 2013 work for two pianos and two percussionists, *Textures*, the two percussionists are presented with challenging technical passages and asked to transform otherwise mundane sounds into effective music. This document will examine these particular challenges and provide solutions to facilitate accurate performance. Additionally, pieces for two pianos and two percussion instruments, beginning with Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, represent an important turning point in the art form of percussion. As composers in the twentieth century took note of both the sonic and expressive capabilities of percussion, as demonstrated by Bartok in the *Sonata*, began to utilize the percussionist frequently in chamber music. This document aims to recognize and discuss the historical significance of works for two pianos and two percussion instruments while also serving as a resource for future performances of Paul Lansky's *Textures*. It is the goal of this document to demonstrate that the elevation of percussion performance in the twentieth century is due in part to works written for two pianos and two percussionists. In addition, that trajectory of this innovation is continued and embraced by Paul Lansky in his work *Textures*.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the unique challenges present in the percussion parts of Paul Lansky's piece for two pianos and two percussionists, *Textures* (2013). This study aims to 1) create a performance guide for percussionists seeking to perform *Textures* optimally, 2) provide a theoretical analysis of *Textures* and 3) serve as a resource for those interested in works for two pianos and two percussionists. The combination of multiple pianos and percussion in a chamber music setting emerged in the twentieth century, beginning with Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937). Since then, many composers have been inspired by the Bartok *Sonata* Sz. 110 to compose works for the ensemble type. Lansky has written several works for percussion that have garnered attention from the percussion community. While Lansky is not himself a percussionist, his writing for percussion pushes the boundaries of the artform forward while remaining grounded within idiomatic practices and is therefore worthy of study. In addition to the technical nuances of Lansky's percussion music, the composer utilizes the wide spectrum of sounds and timbres available through percussion.

While the complexity and technical demands of music for percussion grew throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, so too did the music for two pianists and two percussionists. Thankfully, there are resources available for percussionists interested in playing Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* and George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening*. However, such a resource does not exist for *Textures* and many other works for two pianos and two percussionists. The goal of this study is to engage with Lansky's nuanced musical

language, particularly concerning his treatment of percussion. Through the examination of Lansky's rhythmic and sonic language in the work, I aim to demonstrate how the percussionist is elevated to equal status among their pianist peers in *Textures*.

Need for Study

While discussions on the evolution of percussion as an art form exist in academic circles, percussion ensemble and solo literature are often the center of attention. The works for two pianists and two percussionists are no less valuable and warrant serious attention. Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* was strikingly innovative, particularly with the orchestration and musical demands of the two percussion parts. Not only did Bartok include detailed instructions regarding the implements (sticks/mallets) he specified for certain instruments, but he also outlined the intended performance practice. In addition, the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* required each percussionist to play multiple instruments. While Bartok was not the first to ask a percussionist to play more than one instrument at a time, the number of instruments that he required is significant: timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, snare drum, tam-tam, and xylophone. Bartok even included instructions on the intended layout of these instruments, as several were shared between players, and there were also considerations for communication with the pianists. In the years that followed, many other composers took up the challenge and wrote numerous works for two pianos and two percussionists. However, because of the logistical challenges that many of these works present, performances of them are not particularly common. Despite this, some dedicated musicians regularly perform and commission new works for two pianos and two percussionists. One such example of this led to the creation of *Textures*. Discussion of this music could potentially lead to more frequent performances.

While both Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* and George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening* have received attention from academics, many other works for two pianos and percussion have not. By comparison, *Textures* by Paul Lansky is a newer addition to the genre and, like many of its contemporaries, incorporates a large collection of different percussive sounds and instruments. The piece also asks the percussionists to play a far greater volume of material and act as an equal rather than an accompanist to the pianists, as is more the case in Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*. Paul Lansky has written pieces for percussion and chamber works that include percussion over his career. Many of these works, *Threads*, *Springs*, *Patterns*, *Travel Diary*, *Idle Fancies*, *Hop*, and *Three Moves for Marimba*, are frequently performed by percussionists around the world. *Textures*, however, is Lansky's only work for two pianos and two percussionists.

As with any piece of music, a thorough performance requires more than just the precise execution of the notes and rhythms placed on the page by a composer. Engaging with the larger structure of a work can help performers better understand the art they are engaging with. *Textures* is no different. Although the primary focus of this study will not be a theoretical analysis, a partial analysis will be necessary to provide musicians the full context for a successful performance. Beyond that, understanding the evolution of the genre is an important factor for musicians of all types, and for those who set out to play a piece for two pianos and two percussion, the goals should be no different.

There has been no academic writing dedicated to *Textures*, as with many works for two pianos and percussion. Despite the genre's impact on how composers write for percussion and the increased inclusion of percussionists in chamber music from the twentieth century to the

present, the majority of these pieces that have gone without academic study. In an effort to bring attention to these works, I aim to begin by analyzing Lansky's use of percussion in *Textures*.

Limitations of Study

While portions of the document will feature theoretical analysis, the focus of the research and study of the piece is on the timbre, orchestration, and performance challenges of the two percussion parts. Because of this, some elements of the piece will not be discussed with the same depth as others. References to the piano parts will be included; however, the depth will be limited. While the piece would not be complete without the contributions that the two pianos provide, the focus of this study will be framed around the two percussionists. At times, when the pianos are relevant to the structure of a movement, the orchestration of the piece, or a particular performance challenge, discussion of the piano parts will be included where necessary. In addition, because the performance guide portion of the study focuses specifically on percussion, discussions of technique and performance practice will center on the percussion parts. Finally, while historical and theoretical aspects of this study are important to both the research and performance of *Textures*, this document is not intended to be a comprehensive resource for either. Discussions of the history of works for two pianos and percussion, and the theoretical analysis of *Textures*, are present to provide context for the performance guide.

Methodology

The study of *Textures* included in this document engages with the performance aspects of the percussion parts and the work's musical structure. A comprehensive guide to performing the

piece cannot be complete without both an analytical and “hands-on” approach. To understand the technical and physical requirements of the percussion parts, I have taken the time to learn about the individual parts and their unique demands. In addition to performing the notes on the page, studying the setup and arrangement of the battery of percussion instruments has been imperative. Lansky requires that the percussionists in *Textures* can navigate a large setup of multiple instruments and implements. Analysis of the score alone cannot provide the performer with the full context. Therefore, developing my own performance interpretation through physical action is necessary to understand the challenges and nuances that an accurate performance must address.

While the sample size of the piece's recordings is limited, there is still variation in how different groups approach its challenges. Some differences are related to setup and instrumentation: the positioning of the percussionists relative to the piano players, and which instruments the players choose to include in their setup. Other considerations include the choice of implements or mallets the performer makes. Discussions of this are limited to publicly available video performances on the internet. Given the importance of these decisions, I have taken the time to investigate the choices other percussionists have made in performing *Textures*. After all, a successful performance of the work lends itself to a well-curated soundscape, with instrument and mallet choices certainly being key components.

To provide future musicians with a thorough performance guide, I have also sought to understand the historical relevance and theoretical framework of *Textures*. By seeking out other repertoire written for two pianos and percussionists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, potential influences of Lansky can be found. Lansky has himself said that the Bartok *Sonata* inspired him to write *Textures* and explore the “sonic possibilities” that the instrumentation

potentially offered.¹ In addition, my own research has led me to another piece that utilizes a similar harmonic language to *Textures* and potentially influenced Lansky. Concerning the theoretical study of the piece, a harmonic and structural analysis has been crucial to understanding the role of the percussionist.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Bartók and the *Sonata*

Although the main focus of this research is on Paul Lansky's 2013 work *Textures*, the piece is unsurprisingly influenced by a history of music written for two pianos and percussion. In addition, because there is no academic writing available on Lansky's *Textures*, research into the history of the genre becomes much more crucial. Beginning with the Bartók *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* in 1937, there are a few notable works that have greatly guided my research into Lansky's *Textures*.

By far the most writing on a work for two pianos and percussion is attached to the first major piece of the genre. J. Kent Williams provides an excellent entry into the piece with his 1979 article in *Percussionist* titled "A Survey of Writings on Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion."² Contained in the article are summaries written by Williams on several essays dealing with various aspects of the *Sonata*. Topics range from historical information about the

¹ Hammer/Klavier. *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*. CD. *Spotify*. Yale University, Connecticut: Bridge Records, 2013.

² J. Kent Williams, "A Survey of Writings on Bartoks Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," *Percussionist* Volume 17, no. 1 (Fall 1979).

premiere to a brief analysis of the piece's themes to a discussion of the organization of tonal centers throughout the three movements. There is, however, less information specifically on the percussion writing. Thankfully, three other resources cover this topic fully.

Ronald Fink's 1994 article in *Percussive Notes*, "Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion: The Percussion Part" details how Bartók constructed the percussion parts in the piece.³ Paul Jasionowski's 1995 dissertation, *Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion: The Percussionist's Perspective*, also dives into the demands of the two percussion parts and their historical implications.⁴ Fink's article functions more as a succinct performance guide while Jasionowski's dissertation is a comprehensive study of Bartók's percussive ingenuity (in addition to discussions of performance practice). Jasionowski also addresses the various ways the performers have constructed the percussion setup, including the diagram in Bartók's score and the setup described in Fink's article. In addition to the research compiled in his dissertation, Jasionowski also interviewed legendary percussionist Saul Goodman in a 1995 *Percussive Notes* article "An Interview with Saul Goodman about the Bartók Sonata."⁵ In the interview, Goodman recounts his experience premiering the piece in the U.S. with Bartók and his second wife, Ditta Bartók. Goodman provides unique insight into how the parts should be played, based on his experience with Bartók's own interpretation. Goodman also details a few of the piece's particular challenges, namely the moment when a pair of crash cymbals must be handed off between players.

³ Ronald Fink, "Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion: The Percussion Part*," *Percussive Notes* Volume 32, no. 6 (December 1994)

⁴ Paul John Jasionowski, "Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion: The Percussionist's Perspective*," California State University, Long Beach, 1995

⁵ Paul John Jasionowski, "An Interview with Saul Goodman about the Bartók *Sonata*," *Percussive Notes* Volume 32, no. 2 (April 1994).

In addition to *Sonata*, Bartók included percussion in his other works and is well regarded for his innovation in the art form. In Carolyn Corder Valiquette's 2000 dissertation, "The Use of Percussion in the Music of Béla Bartók: Works from 1926 to 1945", the scope of analysis is greatly expanded.⁶ In it, Valiquette explores the timbral qualities in the percussion writing in Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, *Concerto for Orchestra*, three Piano Concertos, and *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*. Valiquette notes that Bartók often included instructions on which implements a player should use and how to use them. Malcolm Gillies also details the significance of Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* in an article from 2000.⁷ While Gillies is not primarily concerned with Bartók's implementation of percussion in the piece, the wealth of discussion on a work that includes percussion indicates an evolutionary turning point for the art form, of which Bartók is a key contributor.

Other works for Two Pianos and Percussion

Bartók's increasingly complex requirements for percussion instrumentation, as well as his use of the instruments, greatly inspired future generations of composers. In 1974, George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening* premiered and cemented its place as another important work in the history of music for two pianos and percussion. While the piece is not explicitly reminiscent of Bartók, Crumb was undoubtedly inspired by the *Sonata* and thought that other composers should write for the ensemble. Michael Kingen's 1993 dissertation, "The Influence of Béla Bartók on the Symmetry and Instrumentation in George Crumb's *Music for a Summer*

⁶ Carolyn Corder Valiquette, "The Use of Percussion in the Music of Béla Bartók: Works from 1926 to 1945" University of Northern Colorado, 2000.

⁷ Malcolm Gillies. "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta: Bartók's Ultimate Masterwork?" *International Journal of Musicology* 9 (2000): 289–301.

Evening”, details the influence that Bartók had on Crumb.⁸ Kingen’s 2002 Percussive Notes article *The Influence of Bartók on Crumb’s Music for a Summer Evening* provides a more condensed version of his analysis.⁹ Kingen carefully uncovers the connections between the two pieces and how Bartók inspired Crumb. The concepts of pitch symmetry and instrumentation are crucial topics that Kingen addresses.

From here, there is very little writing specifically on works for two pianos and percussion. However, research into how some of these composers approach percussion in their other pieces has been a helpful avenue for research. In 2009, Maslanka completed his contemplative work, *This is the world we know, the world of air and breathing and sun and beating hearts*. While there has not been any writing on the piece yet, background information provided by Maslanka on his website gives important context to the piece.¹⁰ Maslanka describes the work as an “interior set of tone poems for a two-piano, two-percussion ensemble.”¹¹ *This is the World* is a programmatic work of 5 movements, each with individual inspirations, but the overall feeling of the work is one of “quiet awe at the nature of our world, both the planet on which we live and the amazing web of life that it supports.”¹² Additional insight specifically into Maslanka’s writing for percussion is found in a 2021 interview in Percussive Notes conducted by Michael Varner.¹³

⁸ Kingan, Michael Gregory. "The Influence of Bela Bartok on Symmetry and Instrumentation in George Crumb's "Music for a Summer Evening" with Three Recitals of Selected Works of Abe, Berio, Dahl, Kessner, Miki, Miyoshi, and Others." Order No. 9401150, University of North Texas, 1993.

⁹ Kingen, Michael. "The Influence of Bartok on Crumb’s ‘Music for a Summer Evening’” *Percussive Notes* Volume 40, no. 4 (August 2002).

¹⁰ David Maslanka, “This Is the World We Know, the World of Air and Breathing and Sun and Beating Hearts,” David Maslanka, May 25, 2020.

¹¹ David Maslanka, “This Is the World...” 2020

¹² Maslanka, “This is the World...” 2020

¹³ Michael Varner “David Maslanka Talks About His Works for Percussion ‘Beating on a drum with a stick disturbs the universe in a very interesting way’.” *Percussive Notes* Volume 49, no. 4 (August 2021)

Another important milestone for the genre is Steve Reich's *Quartet* (2013). In Steve Reich's own words: "Quartet, when mentioned in the context of concert music, is generally assumed to mean string quartet... In my case, the quartet that has played a central role in many of my pieces (besides the string quartet) is that of two pianos and two percussion."¹⁴ Insight into Steve Reich's other music and how percussion has influenced his compositions can be found in Daniel Tones' interview with Russell Hartenberger in a 2007 article titled "The Music of Steve Reich: An Interview with Russell Hartenberger."¹⁵ Hartenberger is a member of the acclaimed percussion group Nexus and assisted in the composition and premiere of Reich's *Drumming* in 1971.

Paul Lansky and *Textures*

In the same year as Reich's *Quartet*, Paul Lansky completed his composition for two pianos and two percussion, titled *Textures*. Lansky was inspired by the Bartók *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, but thought that the instrumentation "begged for scoring that brings the instruments to the edge of their respective sonic potentials".¹⁶ Following this philosophy, each movement of *Textures* is built around combinations of timbres with the two pianos and the percussion instruments. Again, there is no writing currently available on the piece, but there is other scholarly research into his percussion quartet, *Threads*. Stefan Ice's 2012 dissertation titled "The Percussion Quartet: A Chronological Listing and Performance Guide of Six Selected

¹⁴ Steve Reich, "Quartet, by Steve Reich," YouTube, January 12, 2019,

¹⁵ Daniel Tones, "The Music of Steve Reich: An interview with Rusell Hartenberger." *Percussive Notes* Volume 45, no. 4 (August 2007)

¹⁶ Hammer/Klavier. *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*. CD. *Spotify*. Yale University, Connecticut: Bridge Records, 2013.

Works” analyzes a few important works, including *Threads*.¹⁷ In another analysis of *Threads*, Gordon Hicken discusses recurring rhythmic, orchestrational, and structural components of the in his 2013 dissertation, “Unifying Elements of Paul Lansky's *Threads*.”¹⁸ Some of the same orchestrational techniques and timbral idiosyncrasies found in *Threads* can also be found in *Textures*. Therefore, Ice’s dissertation offers helpful insight into Lansky’s approach to percussion writing. Another critical resource is Eric Jason Willie’s dissertation, “Primary Compositional Characteristics in the Instrumental Music of Paul Lansky as Demonstrated in ‘Hop’.”¹⁹ *Hop* is a 1993 work for marimba and violin. In Willie’s dissertation, the manner in which Lansky pairs the marimba with another instrument is a vitally important topic and is relevant to the analysis of *Textures*. There is also a discussion of Lansky’s unique third-stream-esque blend of jazz and classical styles.

Orchestration

As indicated earlier, a portion of the analysis of Lansky’s *Textures* will involve the orchestration techniques used by the composer. Without requiring the two pianists to employ any extended techniques, Lansky is able to utilize the instrumentation of the two percussion parts to enhance the textural themes of each movement. For instance, Lansky calls for both glockenspiel and crotales, two pitched metal instruments with similar but distinct timbres. Depending on the situation, Lansky will sometimes use both and other times just one. Because of the importance of

¹⁷ Stefan Patrick Ice, "The Percussion Quartet: A Chronological Listing and Performance Guide of Six Selected Works" The University of Oklahoma, 2012.

¹⁸ Gordon Hicken, "Unifying Elements of Paul Lansky's *Threads*," The Florida State University, 2013.

¹⁹ Eric Jason Willie, "Primary Compositional Characteristics in the Instrumental Music of Paul Lansky as Demonstrated in “Hop” (1993)," University of North Texas, 2010.

texture and timbre in the piece, reviewing texts on orchestrational techniques for percussion has been crucial to understanding Lansky's decisions.

In Ton de Leeuw's 1961-1962 book, *Music of the Twentieth Century (later translated into English)*, timbre is noted as a crucial component in the construction of music. De Leeuw also noted that as musical styles evolve throughout history, so do the orchestrational techniques of composers. While the great musical minds of the early twentieth century were not unified in their musical style, many composers' treatment of timbre changed; "the sound that had once been blended now became divided."²⁰ It would seem that composers were looking for sounds that contrasted with one another, and percussion became a perfect conduit for that desire. Prior to the twentieth century, the incorporation of percussion in Western classical music was limited.²¹ While the timpani were regularly used in orchestral repertoire, other instruments such as triangle, tambourine, cymbals, snare drum, and bass drum were used only occasionally, and their use was often limited in scope. Donald Grantham and Kent Kennan's book *The Technique of Orchestration* explores both the timbre and use of a multitude of percussion instruments, both pitched and unpitched.²² While the text is primarily concerned with the orchestration of sound in a symphonic setting, the information remains relevant to the interpretation of *Textures*. In addition, Grantham and Kennan's discussion of the uses of percussion instruments indicates how twentieth-century composers writing works for two pianos and two percussion would have approached the arrangement of timbres.

²⁰ Ton de Leeuw, *Music of the Twentieth Century: A Study of Its Elements and Structure*. Amsterdam University Press, 2005. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n27q>.

²¹ Adam Carse, *The History of Orchestration* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2012).

²² Kent Kennan and Donald Grantham, *The Technique of Orchestration* (Upper Saddle River, N.J., New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002).

Percussion in Chamber Music

In addition to research specifically related to the works at the focus of this study, the historical context was crucial for assessing the value of various sources. In particular, the development of Percussion usage in chamber music in the twentieth century is especially relevant. Not only was the Bartók *Sonata* an important milestone for percussion, but Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat* catapulted the instrument into serious chamber music. Stravinsky's requirement of the percussionist to play multiple instruments with a delicate touch while navigating the setup was a unique challenge at the time.

While the implementation of percussion in the symphonic orchestra and in chamber music is primarily a phenomenon of the twentieth century and onward, the obscure composer Ferdinand Kauer (1751-1831) can be seen as a precursor to said development. According to Rey M. Longyear, "Ferdinand Kauer must be considered a pioneer in percussion writing through his introduction of new timbres and effects into the orchestra and even into chamber music."²³ In addition to his extensive use of percussion (most notably the xylophone) in orchestral works, Kauer also employed percussion in chamber music. Kauer's *Sei Varizioni* combines "violino piccolo, zither, xylophone, and bassoon."²⁴ An unusual combination, but Kauer has the xylophone double the bassoon in thirds and leads the second variation. Kauer's incorporation of percussion foreshadows the development seen in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, almost all of Kauer's works were lost in a flood in 1830.

In Thomas Siwe's book *Artful Noise*, the author discusses the early adopters of percussion in the twentieth century. A notable contributor was Edgar Varese, who is often

²³ R. M. Longyear, "Ferdinand Kauer's Percussion Enterprises," *The Galpin Society Journal* 27 (May 1974): 2–8, <https://doi.org/10.2307/841748>

²⁴ R. M. Longyear, "Ferdinand Kauer's Percussion Enterprises"

thought of as the “father of percussion ensemble music” due to his 1931 work of the same kind, *Ionisation*.²⁵ Siwe also discusses works by Milhuad, Stravinsky, Cage, Chavez, and others. Two notable pieces that are relevant to this research are George Antheil’s *Ballet Mécanique* (1926) and Alexander Tcherepnin’s *Sonatina for Timpani and Piano* (1939). Tcherepnin’s *Sonatina* comes only two years after the Bartok *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* and explores some of the same sonic pairings (timpani and piano). *Ballet Mécanique*, originally written for “sixteen mechanical pianos, percussion, and film,” was inspired by the increased presence and reliance on machines in industrialized society.²⁶ After the first performance in 1926, the piece went through multiple revisions prior to the most commonly performed version in 1953 that paired four pianos (not mechanical) with a large percussion ensemble. Another resource that has provided insight into pieces that pair percussion and piano is Maurice Hinson and Wesley Roberts’ book *The Piano in the Chamber Ensemble*.²⁷ In it, Hinson and Roberts provide a catalogue of many works for piano and other instruments. Pieces for two pianos and two percussion listed in the book have been included in the catalogue found on pages 24-31 of this document (see appendix).

James Blades’ book *Percussion Instruments: and their Histories* is an enormous text containing valuable historical data for all aspects of percussion.²⁸ Blades also analyzes how twentieth-century composers, especially Stravinsky and Bartók, began to utilize percussion more effectively. Another resource covering this topic is a 1967 article in *The Percussionist* (a predecessor to *Percussive Notes*) titled *A Survey of Compositions Written for the Percussion*

²⁵ Thomas Siwe, *Artful Noise: Percussion Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 29.

²⁶ Thomas Siwe, *Artful Noise: Percussion Literature in the Twentieth Century* (2020)

²⁷ Maurice Hinson and Wesley Roberts, *The Piano in Chamber Ensemble: An Annotated Guide*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2021).

²⁸ James Blades *Percussion Instruments: and Their Histories*, Amersham, Buckinghamshire: Kahn & Averill, 2021.

Ensemble.²⁹ In the article, Rosen articulates the influence that Stravinsky and Bartók had on other composers through their writing for percussion and praises their innovation. Additional historical context was found in Richard Taruskin's *The Oxford History of Western Music*.³⁰

Specific research into Paul Lansky and *Textures* is slim. However, through analysis of Lansky's work and the context provided by other pieces for two pianos and two percussionists (and writings about said pieces), the hope is to further the discussion of the genre. In this study, I also wish to bring *Textures* into the light that the pieces by Bartók and Crumb have received.

CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, composers vastly increased the quantity and complexity of percussion in their works. Mahler, Ravel, Stravinsky, and Bartok are all excellent examples of this trend. In the symphonic works of these composers, the percussion section was effectively expanded to include an increased variety of instruments. With this expansion often came the need for more players and a more significant role within the ensemble. However, these new opportunities were still limited to orchestral percussion. Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* (1918) was a major turning point in the history of the percussive art form. Not only was this a chamber work by a major composer with an engaging percussion part, but it also required a single player to perform multiple instruments. In the words of Michael Rosen, "Stravinsky opened the eyes of composers to the soloistic capabilities of

²⁹ Michael Rosen, "A Survey of Compositions Written for the Percussion Ensemble." *Percussionist* Volume 4, no. 2 (January 1967).

³⁰ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western music*, New York, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012.

percussion.³¹” In the years following, many composers followed suit: George Antheil with *Ballet Mécanique* in 1924, Henry Cowell with *Ostinato Pianissimo* in 1934, and, of course, Edgard Varèse’s *Ionisation* (1929-1931). In 1937, Bartok’s *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* introduced a new ensemble type that would inspire future generations of composers with the pairing of two pianos and two percussionists.

The *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* was premiered by Bartok himself, along with his second wife, Ditta Pásztory-Bartok, on piano and with percussionists Fritz Schiesser and Philipp Rühlig in early 1938. For the American premiere in 1940, the Bartoks were joined by Saul Goodman and Henry Deneke on percussion.³² The piece is split into three movements. The first movement is the longest of the three and is structured similarly to a traditional sonata form. The second movement is in A-B-A ternary form and is characterized by eerie, haunting melodies. The third movement brightens the mood with a dance-like character that features the xylophone with the opening theme.

Before this, Bartok was already known for his innovative writing for percussion. In his first *Piano Concerto* (1926), Bartok writes for “four suspended cymbals of different size” and even includes specifications for different beaters.³³ In the sonata, Bartok does the same. For instance, each player is asked to play multiple instruments, with different implements and techniques. Triangle is sometimes played with a standard metal beater or, other times, with a stick, and the cymbals are played with a timpani mallet, stick (tip and butt), and with a thin metal beater. Bartok’s requirement of pedal timpani is also a notable development. Despite still being a

³¹ Michael Rosen, “A Survey of Compositions Written for the Percussion Ensemble,” *Percussionist* Volume 4, no. 2 (January 1967)

³² J. Kent Williams “A Survey of Writings on Bartok’s Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion,” *Percussionist* Volume 17, no. 1 (Fall 1979)

³³ James Blades, *Percussion Instruments: And Their Histories* (Amersham, Buckinghamshire: Kahn & Averill, 2021). p. 413

relatively recent invention, the machine-tuning mechanism on the timpani gave the player much greater control over the drums' pitch. More importantly, it was the speed at which the drums could now be tuned. With this technology available, Bartok writes several glissandi in the timpani part as well as several rapid tuning changes. Another interesting quirk of the Sonata is that the two percussionists are often required not only to share instruments but also to assist one another in transitioning between instruments.

Although it took some time, the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* eventually inspired other composers to utilize the timbral combination. One such work is Bruno Maderna's *Concerto per due pianoforti e strumenti* (1948). Although the piece also adds harp and celeste alongside percussion, and most of the musical content is given to the two pianists, Maderna was undoubtedly influenced by Bartok's *Sonata*. For one, the harmonic language is very similar, and Maderna's use of unpitched percussion towards the end of the piece is reminiscent of the punctual character found in the *Sonata*. Maderna's emphasis on mallet percussion is also notable and follows a trend of exploiting pitched percussion instruments alongside their battery and auxiliary cohorts.

The next piece for two pianos and two percussionists does just that. Luciano Berio's *Linea* (1973) completely forgoes the use of timpani, snare drum, bass drum, or any auxiliary instruments and condenses the instrument list to one vibraphone and one marimba. Berio was a prolific Italian composer best known for his orchestral work *Sinfonia* and the series of virtuosic solo pieces that highlight extended techniques on different instruments, *Sequenza*. In *Linea*, Berio begins with a simple melodic pattern that gradually expands and unravels throughout the piece. Unlike most other works for two pianos and two percussionists, the percussion setup for this piece is quite simple, only requiring marimba and vibraphone in addition to the pianos.

Despite the simplicity of the instrumentation, Berio gives the mallet parts a far more significant role than in previous works. In *Linea*, the percussionist is not just adding color, but a crucial component of the process of the piece. Also, instead of relying on a large selection of percussive instruments for textural variety, Berio allows the musical content itself to create a diverse sonic palette. From this piece forward, a common trend emerges in works of this genre. It becomes typical for percussion parts in these pieces to center around a marimba or vibraphone (or other combinations of keyboard instruments), even if other battery or auxiliary instruments are added.

Skipping ahead briefly in time to a work that uses nearly the same instrumental construction and thus relies on pitch content, natural timbres, and syncopated rhythms from the combination of piano and percussion: Steve Reich's *Quartet* (2013). In Steve Reich's own words: "Quartet, when mentioned in the context of concert music, is generally assumed to mean string quartet. In my case, the quartet that has played a central role in many of my pieces (besides the string quartet) is that of two pianos and two percussion."³⁴ *Quartet* follows the Sinfonia form also found in Reich's other works *Electric Counterpoint* (featuring an ensemble of electric guitars) and *Mallet Quartet* for two marimbas and two vibraphones. An interesting departure from most other pieces on this list is that the percussion setup here is considerably smaller, only requiring 2 vibraphones. Reich also balances the amount of playing time evenly amongst each player. Rather than having the work primarily feature the 2 pianists with percussion accompaniment, each player actively contributes to the overall texture. *Quartet* was dedicated to the percussionist Collin Currie and premiered by the Colin Currie Percussion Group.

Going back to the 1970s, and just one year after *Linea*, George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening* was premiered. Crumb was an American composer and an active voice in the

³⁴ Steve Reich, "Quartet, by Steve Reich," YouTube, January 12, 2019

avant-garde world of classical music in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This is a major work by a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer. This piece is the third installment in a four-part collection. *Makrokosmos I* and *Makrokosmos II* are both written for solo piano, and each contains 12 short character pieces based on the 12 Zodiac signs. *Makrokosmos IV* is written for 2 pianos. The piece was premiered by Gilbert Kalish and James Freeman on piano and Raymond DesRoches and Richard Fitz on percussion. In stark contrast to the Berio, *Music for a Summer Evening* features an enormous percussion setup and requires numerous extended techniques and alterations to both the piano and the percussion instruments. The piano players are asked to emphasize the percussive nature of their instrument by striking, plucking, and scraping the piano strings, as well as actually playing percussion instruments (guiro, kalimba). While Crumb was certainly inspired by Bartok, particularly in his use of percussion, Crumb utilized the instrument to a far greater extent than Bartok was able to in the *Sonata*.³⁵

In 2009, David Maslanka's powerful work *This is the World* brought both sensitivity and grandeur to the genre. The piece was commissioned by the University of North Carolina and premiered by the CanAm Piano duo and percussionists Lance Drege and David Steffens. Maslanka describes the work as an "interior set of tone poems for a two-piano, two-percussion ensemble."³⁶ *This is the World* is a programmatic work of 5 movements, each with individual inspirations, but the overall feeling of the work is one of "quiet awe at the nature of our world, both the planet on which we live and the amazing web of life that it supports."³⁷ Maslanka

³⁵ Michael Kingen, "Influence of Bartok on Crumb's Music for a Summer Evening" *Percussive Notes* Volume 40 no. 4 (August 2002)

³⁶ David Maslanka, "This Is the World We Know, the World of Air and Breathing and Sun and Beating Hearts," David Maslanka, May 25, 2020

³⁷ Maslanka, "This is the World..."

utilizes the vibraphone and marimba alongside a battery of orchestral percussion instruments such as bass drum, snare drum, tam-tam, etc.

Today, there are primarily two major chamber groups that champion and dedicate themselves to works for two pianos and two percussionists. Yarn/Wire is a particularly prolific group that formed in 2005 and has been the genre's eminent voice since then. “Yarn/Wire is a new music quartet dedicated to the promotion of creative, meaningful live musical experiences in the US and abroad.”³⁸ Yarn/Wire is especially dedicated to furthering the repertoire by commissioning, premiering, and recording many new works for the ensemble. They have released ten albums of new music since 2010. Although they are dedicated to new music, Yarn/Wire still includes classic works like Bartok's *Sonata* and Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening* in their performances. The “new kid on the block,” so to speak, is the icarus Quartet. The group formed in the late 2010s but has achieved rapid success, including their 2022 record, *Big Things* (named after the Michael Laurello piece of the same name).

It is not difficult to see the appeal of the pairing of piano and percussion together. From the sonic perspective, both instruments have similar mechanisms of sound creation. There are thousands of different percussion instruments from around the world and they each have their own nuanced methods of performance, however a great deal of them revolve around the process of two objects colliding. Often this done by an mallet, stick, or other implement striking an object. Although this process is sometimes hidden, the piano functions in a similar fashion with the felt hammers, once trigger by the pressing of a key, striking the wires or strings inside the piano. While the piano is one instrument and percussion is many, that shared process for the

³⁸ Yarn/Wire. “About.” Yarn/Wire. <https://www.yarnwire.org/about>.

creation of sound leads to timbres that are often complimentary of one another. That connection is what makes this ensemble type so compelling for composers and audience members.

For performers, the elements of timbral connection is of course relevant. However, there are also pedagogical benefits. For percussionists, so much of our development is centered around precision. Some of that is due to the nature of the instruments that have a clearly defined attack and a fast decay requiring careful rhythmic alignment amongst performers. It is also often the case that percussionists spend a great deal of practice time devoted to technical exercises and mechanics rather than individual expression. Collaborating with musicians of different instruments provides the opportunity to explore avenues of expression that can at times go unexplored. On the other hand, pianists may find the benefit in performing *Textures* in particular because of the challenging rhythmic demands not commonly found in their repertoire as noted by Larry Weng of the iQarus Quartet:

“Pianists [we] spend a lot of time alone, and we kind of have our own sense of what time is... what rhythm is. And so when we are put into a context where everything has to be just right, it’s different level of commitment of understanding what everyone else around you is doing.”³⁹

³⁹ iQarus Quartet “iQ & A, Ep. 3: ‘Textures’” YouTube, May 20, 2020

CHAPTER THREE: PAUL LANSKY

Paul Lansky, born in 1944, began his music career studying composition and french horn at Queens College in New York City as an undergraduate student.⁴⁰ Lansky later decided to focus on composition, studying at Princeton University with Milton Babbitt and Earl Kim. Lansky would eventually join the Princeton University faculty in 1969, where he remained until retiring as the “William Shubael Conant Professor of Music.”⁴¹ While some musicians establish themselves with acoustic music before “going electric,” despite their fans' protests, Lansky’s career went in the opposite direction. Lansky was a pioneer of early computer music and was the primary developer for Cmix, an early computer music programming language.⁴² His first and possibly most influential work, *mild und leise* (1973), a reference in both title and content to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, garnered considerable attention for its innovation in the field of computer music.⁴³ The piece was composed using an IBM mainframe computer at a time when it was the only computer on the Princeton campus and was operated with punch cards.⁴⁴ Despite the painstaking process, Lansky’s work found its audience. *Mild und leise* would eventually find its way into the mainstream when the English rock band Radiohead sampled an excerpt of the piece in the track *Idioteque* on their album “Kid A.”

For several decades, computer and electronic music remained the focus of Lansky’s creative output. *Idle Chatter* (1985) and *Table Talk* (1991) showed Lansky’s continued push for innovation and his unique lexicon of sounds. In the 1990s, Lansky began branching out into acoustic compositions featuring live performers, including pieces like *Hop* (1993) and *Shameless*

⁴⁰ Simon Morrison, “Biography,” Paul Lansky: 45 years, 2014

⁴¹ Simon Morrison, “Biography,” Paul Lansky: 45 years, 2014

⁴² Daniel J Wakin, “Paul Lansky, a Pioneer in Computer Music, Unplugs ,” The New York Times, August 3, 2008

⁴³ Simon Morrison, “Biography,” Paul Lansky: 45 years, 2014

⁴⁴ Paul Lansky, “My Radiohead Adventure,” Paul Lansky, inceton University, Accessed March 13, 2026.

Sarabande (1997). By the mid to late 2000s, Lansky had completely shifted gears to acoustic composition, citing in a 2008 interview with the New York Times that he was “done” with computer music and was “interested in writing for real people at this point.”⁴⁵

In some ways, it is not surprising that the conduit for Lansky’s awakening to acoustic music was percussion. While Lansky had composed for percussion before with *Hop* in 1993, written for the marimba and violin duo Marimolin (Nancy Zeltsman and Sharan Leventhal), the percussion quartet, Sō Percussion, is potentially responsible for igniting the spark that led to a great number of works for percussion. In a conversation between Sō Percussion and the composer regarding a work by Lansky that featured percussion-like sounds, *Idle Chatter Junior* (1999), the quartet mentioned that they wanted a similar piece written for real people. Although Lansky claimed that he “didn’t know anything about writing for percussion, to which their response was something like, ‘On the contrary, you’ve been doing it for years on the computer.’”⁴⁶ Lansky would go on to say this about the similarities of sonic potential between computer and percussion music:

“On the machine you work with spectral balance, envelope, timbre difference, etc. In the percussion world this near infinitude of possibility is matched by the vast potential among percussions’ families of woods, metals, mallets, skins, etc. To make matters even more interesting there is no guarantee that one doumbek will sound just like every other, or that there is a standard for cowbells.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Daniel J Wakin, “Paul Lansky, a Pioneer in Computer Music, Unplugs”

⁴⁶ Thad Anderson, “A Conversation with Composer Paul Lansky,” *Percussive Notes* Volume 48, no. 3, May 2010

⁴⁷ Hammer/Klavier, *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*, CD, *Spotify* (Yale University, Connecticut : Bridge Records, 2013)

His marimba solos, *Three Moves for Marimba* (1998), and the percussion quartet *Threads* (2005) among many other works are frequently played. The instrument setup in *Textures* is foreshadowed by his 2007 percussion duet, *Travel Diaries*, which he wrote just a few years earlier. In it, Lansky anchors each percussionist's setup around two keyboard instruments: player 1 on vibraphone/glockenspiel and player 2 on marimba/crotales. Similarly, Lansky surrounds these keyboard instruments with an assortment of drums, auxiliary instruments, and a collection of "found object" instruments at the performer's discretion. In *Textures*, Lansky also centers the assortment of percussion instruments around two keyboard instruments: this time, player 1 has marimba/glockenspiel, and player 2 has vibraphone/crotales. These combinations will become more relevant in later discussions on orchestration. At the time of writing, this is the complete list of works for percussion⁴⁸:

- **Metal Light** (2017) for solo vibraphone and small percussion set
- **Five Views of an Unfamiliar Tune** (2016) solo percussionist and chamber orchestra
- **Springs** (2016) for percussion quartet
- **Textures** (2013) 2 pianos, 2 percussionists
- **Spirals** (2013) for solo marimba
- **Touch and Go** (2012) for percussionist and wind ensemble
- **Patterns (in wood and metal)** (2011) for mallet quartet
- **Partita** (2011) for guitar and percussion
- **Horizons** (2009) piano, 'cello, percussion (vibes, toms, toys)
- **Pandemonium**, (2009) Three pieces for steel drums
- **Idle Fancies** (2008) six preludes for marimba with small percussion set
- **Comix Trips** (2008) for chamber ensemble (fl,ob,cl,bsn,perc,piano,vla,bass)
- **Songs of Parting** (2006), Baritone, Percussion
- **Travel Diary** (2007) for two percussionists
- **Minor Alterations** (2005), for el. gt, vln, bsn, drumset
- **Threads** (2005) , for percussion quartet
- **Three Moves for Marimba** (1998)
- **Six Years Ago, Monday** (1996) for Marimba, Violin, Tape

⁴⁸ Paul Lansky, "Compositions" Paul Lansky. Princeton University. Accessed March 13, 2026.

CHAPTER FOUR: *TEXTURES* ANALYSIS

Textures, by Paul Lansky, was written in 2013 for the group Hammer/Klavier, which includes percussionists Svet Stoyanov and Gwendolyn Dease, with Thomas Rosenkranz and Michael Sheppard on piano.⁴⁹ Rather than deciding on a specific texture that each movement was meant to evoke, Lansky found the “focus for a movement once its texture and musical ecology became clear.”⁵⁰ Despite the evocative title of the piece and each movement, there is no extra-musical narrative. Lansky has composed programmatic music before, but Lansky says his music “tends toward the dramatic side rather than the narrative.”⁵¹ On the other hand, describing *Textures* as absolute music may not be correct either. Each movement is centered around certain concepts, but the naming of the movements came after the creation of the actual musical material. They exist somewhere between programmatic and absolute music. Like the movements themselves, some titles are more grounded while others are more abstract. The striking connections between the titles and the music itself provide context for the audience, silhouetting the intangible.

Lansky was inspired by the Bartok *Sonata for 2 Piano and Percussion*, but thought that a piece for two pianos and percussion “begged for scoring that brings the instruments to the edge of their respective sonic potentials.”⁵² Using his experience refining timbre in computer music, Lansky combines the piano's textural capabilities with his lexicon of percussion sounds. Through this Lansky is able to elevate the percussionists as an equal to the pianist. Where previous works of the genre still held the pianist on a higher pedestal. Lansky calls for a very large array of

⁴⁹ Hammer/Klavier, *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*, CD, *Spotify* (Yale University, Connecticut : Bridge Records, 2013)

⁵⁰ Hammer/Klavier, *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*, CD

⁵¹ Joel Hoffman, “The Rumpus Interview with Paul Lansky,” *The Rumpus*, June 2, 2022

⁵² icarus Quartet, “Textures by Paul Lansky,” YouTube, June 16, 2022

percussion instruments, including marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel, crotales, and a suspended cymbal, along with four drums, seven wooden sounds of different varieties, and four metal sounds. Lansky refers to the non-keyboard instruments by their instrument-family names: metal, wood, and skin. While he offers suggestions for specific instrument choices for each group, the final decision is intentionally left to the performer.

Lansky's writing for percussion in *Textures* synthesizes the approaches of previous composers to the genre. Bartok's treatment of percussion, while innovative, still mostly maintains the percussionist as accompaniment to the pianist. Crumb on the other hand, certainly elevates the status of the percussionist but relies on extended techniques and an enormous collection of instruments to push the boundaries of performance. Berio, on the other hand, recognized the potential of the marimba and vibraphone as both companions to the piano but also as arbiters of thematic content on equal standing to the piano. Lansky blends these approaches together in *Textures*. The percussionists do utilize a wide variety of instruments from multiple families but remain centered around the marimba and vibraphone that have become pivotal to the percussionist in the 20th century. In addition, while performing more accompanimental material where necessary, Lansky gives important thematic material to both percussionists frequently. The potential of the percussionist therefore becomes less about a catalogue of extended techniques but centered around their mastery of pitched and unpitched instruments, as well as their ability to combine expressive performance with tight rhythmic precision.

While Lansky often uses consonant harmonies, he often does not orient them with a sense of tonality. On the other hand, movements five and eight have clear tonal centers with varying degrees of dissonance. There isn't a consistent system for pitch organization. However, even when working outside of a tonal structure, Lansky still tends towards harmonies built around

diatonic scales. There is also evidence of influence from Jazz music in the harmonic language used in *Textures*. Harmonies often include a great deal of added tones, with major or minor seventh chords being much more than a simple triad. Additionally, dominant chords are often treated with altered pitches and/or are left unresolved. For instance, in movement six, G major is the tonal center; however, a lowered scale degree seven is a regular occurrence without resolving the resulting dominant tension. All of the added color, paired with the complex orchestration, makes for a compelling piece of music.

For the “woods” given to percussion 2, wood 1-4 is suggested by Lansky to be a “mix of temple blocks, wood blocks, etc,” while the slats 1-3 are merely a selection of wooden slats or planks left up to the performer's discretion.⁵³ Percussion 1 has the addition of “metal” and “skin” instruments. The “skin” instruments are drums or membranophones. For skin 1-2, Lansky suggests “midrange Toms, low and high, not too boomy,” and for skin 3-4, he suggests “two different skins with a ‘twang,’ dumbek, timbale, conga, djembe, etc.” Percussion 1 also utilizes 5 “metal” instruments. Metals 1-2 are to be “two different pitches, mid-range, almglocken, agogo bells, etc,” and metals 3-4 are “two different pitches, metals with more ring than metals 1 and 2, perhaps something like bell plates, i.e., with longer decay.”⁵⁴ The final metal instrument is a suspended cymbal. Lansky does not provide any specific directions or suggestions on the character of the suspended cymbal.

In figure 0.1 the instrument requirements and notational arrangement provided in the score can be seen. The permission to use images from the score for *Textures* such as figure 0.1 and others in this document was obtained by agreement with the publisher, Carl Fischer. For additional information, see Appendix A.

⁵³ Paul Lansky, *Textures*, (Carl Fischer 2018)

⁵⁴ Paul Lansky, *Textures*, (Carl Fischer 2018)

Instrumentation

Percussion 1

	Metal 1	Metal 2	Metal 3	Metal 3	Suspended Cymbal
Metals	two different pitches, mid-range Almglocken, Agogo bells etc.		two different pitches, metals with more ring than metals 1 and 2, perhaps something like bell plates, i.e. with longer decay		
	Skin 1	Skin 2	Skin 3	Skin 4	
Skins	midrange Toms, low and high, not too "boomy"		two different skins with a "twang" dumbek, timbale, conga, djembe, etc.		

Glockenspiel

Five Octave Marimba

Marimba

Percussion 2

	Wood 1	Wood 2	Wood 3	Wood 4	Slat 1	Slat 2	Slat 3
Woods	mix of temple blocks, wood blocks etc.						
Crotales	one octave, chromatic						
Vibraphone							

Figure 0.1. Instrumentation. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, page 2⁵⁵

Lansky does not include a recommended setup diagram or any information of that nature in the score. However, based on the performance videos available online, it seems common practice to place the two piano players behind the percussionists. This is particularly interesting, as the percussion section of an orchestra is traditionally almost always at the back of the ensemble. Placing the percussion section behind the rest of the ensemble is done for a variety of reasons: timing within the ensemble, dynamic balance between sections, and, since percussion typically requires the performer to stand while playing, placing the percussion section towards

⁵⁵ Paul Lansky, *Textures*, (Carl Fischer 2018)

the front would block other performers from the audience's view. The practice, while not standard or required, is still common in chamber music that includes percussion.

When playing with grand pianos, most groups will angle the pianos in a “V” shape, with the pianists' backs almost facing each other. In front of the pianos, the percussionists then utilize the space created by the piano angle (figure 0.2).



Figure 0.2. Setup Diagram

It is unclear how this particular arrangement of instruments emerged as the preferred method for ensembles performing the piece. It is possible that an early performance of the piece by the icarus Quartet on youtube led others to follow. It is atypical, although more common nowadays, for percussion instruments and percussionists to be placed at the front of a setup or in front of other musicians. This is done to prevent some percussion instruments from overpowering the rest of the ensemble. In addition, because percussionists generally stand when performing and can block the audience's view of other musicians placed behind the percussion

setup without careful planning. While contemporary composers tend to break that mold, Bartok proposed that exact style of setup in the *Sonata*. In figure 0.3, the placement of percussion 1 and 2 behind the pianists can be seen. Similar to how the genre and percussion has progressed since Bartok, so has the variety of potential setups.

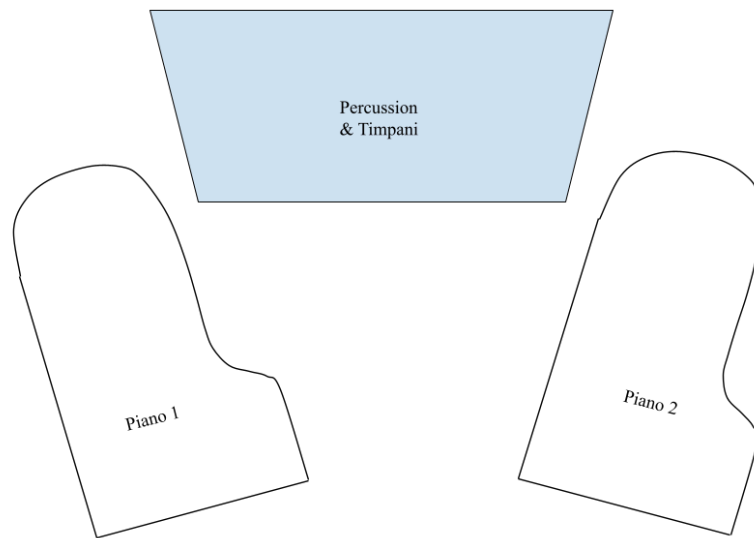


Figure 0.3. Setup Diagram for Bartok *Sonata*

With the placement of personnel established, the percussionists must now decide how to arrange the multitude of instruments included in the piece. Each player's setup is centered on their “large” keyboard instrument: for percussion 1, the marimba; for percussion 2, the vibraphone. In contrast with the pianos, the marimba and vibraphone should be parallel so that the players can face each other directly. Despite Lansky not including any setup instructions in the score or parts, there seems to be a consensus among musicians that the vibraphone should be placed on stage right, with the marimba on stage left. This positioning also allows all members of

the ensemble to visually connect when necessary during a performance. Engaging in this practice will help with cohesion during challenging rhythmic passages, ensure that difficult entrances are executed successfully, and enhance the expressive collaboration between musicians.

In addition to the vibraphone and marimba, each player also has an additional keyboard instrument: glockenspiel for percussion 1 and crotales for percussion 2. From the performer's perspective, both the glockenspiel and crotales should be positioned next to the accidentals of the marimba/vibraphone. It is also important that the crotales and glockenspiel are set up slightly higher than the marimba and vibraphone. Doing so will help facilitate simultaneous performance and maneuverability between instruments. Because of the setup requirements, percussion 1 will likely need to use either a height-adjustable glockenspiel or a "box glock" that can be placed at an adequate height on an X-style keyboard stand.

Percussion 2's remaining two instrument considerations are the "woods" as Lansky refers to them. As mentioned previously, two unpitched wooden timbres are featured in the percussion 2 part. There is the option of woodblocks or templeblocks for woods 1-4, in contrast to the less refined sound of slats 1-3. With careful space management, a performer should be able to fit all seven of these items onto one or two trap tables. If the performer chooses to use a set of temple blocks that can be mounted on a stand, they could use the additional space on the trap table for larger, lower-pitched slats. That being said, woodblocks may prove to be a more effective choice than templeblocks, as the former have a slightly sharper articulation that cuts through the texture more effectively. An additional option would be to use Japanese piccolo woodblocks, which are even brighter than standard orchestral woodblocks. Another bonus is that piccolo woodblocks are smaller than standard woodblocks, which would save space and likely allow the performer to keep all wooden objects on a single table.

The other consideration in the “woods” family of sounds is the slats. Slat are essentially planks of wood cut to specific lengths, widths, and depths. They are typically an inch thick, but vary in length and width depending on the desired slat pitch. When using multiple slats, one usually curates a graduated set of planks that vary in pitch but match in timbre. A variety of implements can be used; however, a rubber or plastic mallet (or hard vibraphone/marimba mallet) is the most common choice. Slat are not utilized as often as woodblocks, for instance, but are becoming a more common staple of the contemporary percussionist's arsenal. For example, some performers opt to use slats instead of woodblocks or templeblocks in Xenakis’ works for solo percussion, such as *Rebonds b* and *Psappha*. Many composers are also taking notice and outright requiring them in their pieces, as Lansky has in *Textures* and his percussion quartet *Threads*. Here is what Lansky had to say about slats in the performance notes for *Threads*:

“Sō [percussion’s] wood slats are made of walnut. They differ in width and length, but each is about 1” thick. The pitch is dull and undefined, creating a raw, aggressive sound (wood on wood) for the more intense movements. They are meant to contrast with the round, “orchestral” sound of the woodblocks or temple blocks.”⁵⁶

Additional information regarding the construction and tuning of wooden slats can be gleaned from Colin Campbell’s blog on the Third Coast Percussion website. One key principle to remember when cutting planks is that the shorter/smaller the slat, the higher the pitch. Colin cautions that when cutting multiple pitches/planks, always start by cutting the biggest plank

⁵⁶ Paul Lansky, *Threads*, (Carl Fischer, 2006)

(lowest pitch) so that “when (not if) you cut off too much,” the plank can still be used.⁵⁷ Included on their website tuning and measurement guide compiled by Colin that shows the optimal plank length for multiple pitches from F#3 to C#7:

Percussion 1 also has some additional instruments that require attention. Firstly, Lansky calls for four metal sounds and divides them into two pairs of instruments. For metals 1-2, Lansky suggests either almglocken or agogo bells. Some potential substitutes could be Thai nipple gongs or Chinese opera gongs placed on a trap table (not suspended) with some form of muffling, such as a towel or egg-crate foam. It is important that, while these first two metal sounds have some resonance, they have a shorter decay than metals 3-4 do. For metals 3-4, Lansky suggests bell plates and emphasizes that whatever the player chooses should ring for longer than metals 1-2. In their video recording available on YouTube, icarus Quartet uses a combination of nipple gongs and bell plates.⁵⁸ The last metal sound is a suspended cymbal. Lansky does not provide any specific information regarding the sound quality or size of the cymbal. My recommendation is to use a thin cymbal with a “washy” sound that won’t overpower the rest of the ensemble.

Finally, to complete the percussion 1 setup, we must discuss the “skins.” Lansky suggests using medium concert toms for skins 1-2 and “two different skins with a ‘twang’” such as dumbek, timbales, congas, or djembe, for skins 3-4. While this provides a plethora of options, the specific timbre Lansky is seeking here is unclear, as the suggested instruments for skins 3-4 have decidedly different character. Many performers seemingly ignore the suggestions and opt for either a combination of bongos and concert toms or simply a set of 4 concert toms. In fact,

⁵⁷ Colin Campbell, “Colin’s Corner: Wood Slats,” web blog, *Third Coast Percussion* (blog), October 3, 2018

⁵⁸ icarus Quartet, 2022.

out of all of the video recordings available online at this time, most groups use one of those two options, instead of the dumbek, timbales, congas, or djembe that Lansky suggests.

Mallet choice is an extremely important aspect of percussion performance. Most professionally successful percussionists often spend a great deal of time experimenting with mallet choice and strive to find the perfect mallet or implement for any given situation. For a piece like *Textures*, where there is heightened importance on color and timbre, a successful performance must involve a deep interrogation of mallet choice. That said, because the requirements of each movement are not uniform, discussions of mallet choice will be movement-by-movement. However, it should be noted that across many of the movements, a common challenge that's found is holding multiple kinds of mallets at once.

When playing literature for marimba or vibraphone that requires 4 mallets, it is common to use a graduated set of mallets. Instead of using 4 identical mallets, a graduated set uses mallets with different hardness levels to ensure that each register has an implement suited to its needs. The low-register bars on a marimba, for instance, speak clearly and with the most resonance when struck with a soft or medium-soft mallet. Softer marimba mallets typically have an extra layer of rubber wrapped around the core and/or more yarn than medium or hard mallets. Using that same soft mallet on the higher register of a 5.0-octave marimba will result in a lack of clarity and additional unwanted noise from the instrument's frame.

A particular challenge that Lansky poses to the two percussionists is requiring the performers to play multiple instruments simultaneously. In percussion 2, for instance, the steady quarter-notes are performed by the combination of vibraphone, crotales, and the three wooden slats. Each instrument requires a unique approach to achieve the best sound for any given situation. By splitting the performer's attention across multiple instruments, it is substantially

more difficult to maintain that level of sound production. If handled properly, the benefit of this, given that these instruments have drastically different timbres, is that it creates the illusion of more than two percussionists. Thus, a fuller texture is provided. Lansky applies this technique throughout the piece, contributing to a rich texture despite requiring only four performers.

Finally, for ease of communication, when discussing a hypothetical scenario around the performance of *Textures*, the performers for the percussion 1 and percussion 2 parts will be referred to as “percussion 1” and “percussion 2”, respectively.

Movement I – Striations

Analysis

The Oxford English Dictionary defines striation as “one of the set or system of striae” that frequently form “fine parallel lines.”⁵⁹ As the title of the first movement suggests, there are many layers to its construction. Many of these elements also evoke the textural anomaly referenced in the movement's title. Lansky frequently supports melodic content with stacks of fourths and fifths moving in parallel motion. There is also considerable rhythmic and orchestrational layering. For instance, there is often a pair of hocketed ostinatos that move along like parallel striations across the pages of the score. Additionally, larger sections within the movement are often not directly connected, and Lansky frequently moves abruptly from one musical idea to another.

While there is a key center that can be observed at the beginning and end of the movement, it would be misleading to assign a major/minor/etc designation to the movement. In the first two measures, both C major and minor are implied (figure 1.1). In the following

⁵⁹ Oxford English Dictionary, “striation (n.), sense 2.a,” December 2024

measures, this ambiguity is continued with the almost simultaneous use of $E^{\sharp}$ and $E^{\flat}$. Lansky's use of pitch percussion helps to show the key center as the glockenspiel, crotales, and vibraphone begin the work with a C-pedal. Piano 1 confirms a key center of C, while Piano 2 is less committed and meanders around the tonic. Piano 2 even opens the movement with an appoggiatura of B-C and continues to wander thereafter. This meandering motif given to piano 2 is utilized and altered throughout the first movement. Different iterations of the motif vary in rhythm, key, and even articulation.



Figure 1.1. Both raised and lowered versions of scale degrees 6 and 7 in use. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 1 mm. 1-2

Another prominent characteristic that Lansky employs is the hocketed rhythms between both the piano and percussion voices. This will be a recurring compositional technique that appears in almost all the movements of *Textures*. Percussion 2 and Piano 2 both perform steady quarter notes while Percussion 1 and Piano 1 complete the sonic landscape with their upbeats. Interestingly, Piano 2 is given more complex melodic content, paired with the stability of its quarter-note rhythm. Piano 1, on the other hand, has the less stable 8th note upbeats, while its melodic content is comparatively stagnant.

Letter A marks the first cadential moment of the movement. This event is not cadential due to a tonal resolution, as the C dominant 7th chord with an added 9th over a F pedal does not provide a harmonic conclusion. Rather, the cadence is realized by the halting of the rising melodic contour in the piano voices and the evaporation of syncopated rhythms (except for the eighth note upbeats in percussion 1). Whatever harmonic resolution reached in the first two measures of letter A is undercut by the sudden modulation to E $\flat$ minor in m. 19. At m. 19, piano 1 brings about the return of the meandering motif; this time presented with staccato sixteenth notes.

In the first sixteen measures, Lansky presents a cycle of building and then dissipating tension, repeated until the conclusion of this process is reached at letter F. At letter F, we find a five-bar phrase characterized by its sustained intensity. This same phrase is repeated two other times (three times total) in the first movement. Aside from changes in the percussion parts, each of the three times this theme returns is almost an exact repeat of the others. The first two iterations of this phrase occur at letter F, and H are in E $\flat$ minor, while the final occurrence at letter L is transposed to D minor.

The image shows a musical score for a percussion ensemble and two pianos. The instruments listed on the left are Mtl. (Mellophone), Glock. (Glockenspiel), Wds. (Woodwinds), Crot. (Crotales), Vib. (Vibraphone), Pno. 1, and Pno. 2. The score is marked with a 'D' in a box at the top, indicating a specific section. The dynamics are marked 'pp' (pianissimo) for the Glockenspiel, Woodwinds, and both pianos. The notation shows complex rhythmic patterns, including staccato 16th notes for the piano right hands and a slower repeating 4-note motif for the piano left hands. The percussion instruments have various rhythmic patterns, including dotted quarter notes for the crotales and a five-note motif for the glockenspiel.

Figure 1.2. Multiple rhythmic layers using a combination of B $\flat$ - C - D $\flat$ - E $\flat$ - F. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 1 mm. 30-32

As mentioned earlier, throughout this movement, Lansky layers multiple voices and sounds on top of one another, often requiring the percussionists to play multiple instruments at once and, at times, creating the illusion of more than four performers. At letter D (figure 1.2), while the right hands of both piano players are busy with a barrage of staccato 16th notes, the left hands are moving in canon with a much slower repeating 4-note motif (B $\flat$ - D $\flat$ - E $\flat$ - F). Piano 1 begins in m. 31 and Piano 2 follows a bar later in m. 32. The rhythm of this motif being ♩ means that the pattern will reset every six beats or measure and a half since we are in 4/4. During this time, percussion 2 outlines a B $\flat$ minor chord on crotales with its own repeating four-note pattern. In percussion 1, however, Lansky places a five-note motif on the glockenspiel that is almost the same as the left-hand piano pattern (B $\flat$ - C - D $\flat$ - E $\flat$ - F). This pattern is presented with dotted quarter notes, creating rhythmic dissonance and foreshadowing Lansky's

later use of 4:3 polyrhythms. Lastly, the 16th notes in the right hands of piano 1 and 2 are also built off of repeating patterns. Piano 1 has a simple 4-note grouping, while piano 2 has a 5-note grouping. To summarize, the texture of these five measures is essentially scaffolding, constructed from multiple layers of conflicting and complementary, repeating rhythmic patterns.

In m. 38, Lansky continues building in intensity by emphasizing groupings of three sixteenth notes (as opposed to groupings of 4). This is again done with interlocking rhythmic patterns given to the percussionists in mm. 38-42. Lansky uses the brightest sounds at his disposal here, drawing on all the metallic instruments in the percussion setup. The two pianos provide a sparse accompaniment, with complementary and contrasting rhythmic patterns that also recall the C-pedal from earlier in the movement.

The key center abruptly shifts to E $\flat$ minor at letter F, subverting expectations established by the C-pedal that's been maintained across the ensemble in the previous seven measures. One could argue that the main melodic line at letter F given to piano 1 is a variation of the meandering motivic gesture seen earlier in the movement. However, the line here is much more active, with more leaps and a much wider range of pitches. It is also doubled at the octave for additional emphasis. While the percussion served as the voice driving towards the arrival at letter F, the roles are reversed, with the pianos as the focal point, supported by the percussionists.

After a short interlude from mm. 48-51, Letter H provides almost an exact repeat of Letter F. The only difference is the addition of the wooden slats played by percussion 2. (figure 1.3)

The image shows a musical score for measures 51-53. The staves are labeled Mtl., Glock., Wds., Crot., Pno. 1, and Pno. 2. A box labeled 'H' is above measure 52. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics. The dynamics 'f' and 'f sub.' are indicated. The score is for measures 51-53.

Figure 1.3. Ostinato in from percussion 2 added to the texture. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 1 mm. 51-53

At letter I, Lansky again moves key centers to D, but with material returning from the opening of the movement. This time, there is a pedal on D natural, with the same meandering gesture as before. The orchestration in the percussion section is slightly different as Lansky omits the wooden idiophones.

The change to a compound meter at letter J is as abrupt as any key or mode change could be (figure 1.4). The switch to 12/16 contrasts heavily with the surrounding material. The emphasis of the dotted 8th note in particular draws the listeners attention and makes the return to 4/4 in m. 67 more satisfying.



Figure 1.4. Abrupt change in texture and meter. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 1 mm. 63-64

Thankfully, there is also a modulation to C minor here in addition to a delightful orchestrational anomaly. For the two piano players, there is a sudden register shift in the right hand to play above the treble-clef staff. For added brightness, Lansky brings forward the metallic keyboard timbres of the glockenspiel, crotales, and vibraphone to the foreground. At measure 67, Lansky brings back the simple 4/4 and returns to the key of D (major this time with some modal mixture). But for those four measures, it's almost as if he takes the audience to an entirely different piece.

At m. 67, the ensemble begins to build to another explosive moment akin to letter F or H. At m. 70 both piano voices add additional layers of voices by once again stacking fourths and fifths. Piano 2 adds the last two layers in the left hand in m. 73 and 74 before both pianists drop

out entirely in m. 75. In the ashes left by the pianos' absence at letter K are the quiet tinkering sounds from percussion 1 and 2 (figure 1.5)



Figure 1.5. Hocketed ostinatos from percussion 1 and 2. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 1 mm. 75-76

The rhythmic counterpoint put on display at letter K comes from two 4:3 polyrhythms. The first is a pairing between crotales and glockenspiel, where the crotales are given the downbeats and the glockenspiel is given dotted eighth notes that are reminiscent of the compound meter mentioned earlier. The second pairing is given to the two sets of idiophones (woods and metals); however, in this instance, the polyrhythm begins on the upbeat on 1 of each measure.

After the interlude, the pianos return at letter L with great intensity. Lansky repeats the same chaotic material from letter H, this time in the key of D. Once the last utterance of the intense five-bar phrase, Lansky once again suddenly shifts gears at letter M. The C-pedal returns, as does the meandering gesture, this time played by both pianos; one in eighth-notes and one in

sixteenth-notes. To close out the movement, the same B-to-C appoggiatura that began the piece is given to the vibraphone in mm. 87-95. The glockenspiel is awarded with the final notes of the movement, maintaining the C natural drone.

Performance

In movement I, the first percussion part uses only the glockenspiel, suspended cymbal, and 4 metal sounds (at the performer's discretion). Mallet selection for percussion 1 in this movement is dependent on the instrument choice for metals 3 and 4. For the glockenspiel, a hard plastic, brass, or aluminum mallet will provide the timbral contrast necessary to project without overpowering the rest of the ensemble. Alternatively, one could hold two contrasting glockenspiel mallets in one hand. By holding a medium plastic mallet and an aluminum mallet in one hand, the performer can vary the color of sound to suit the needs of a given situation. Similar to a woodwind player changing reeds for optimal sound, however, the percussionist can make the change much easier on the fly.

If the performer opts for bell plates (or something similar) as the composer suggests, then using two hard glockenspiel mallets would be beneficial. However, if the performer instead chooses to use Chinese opera gongs or nipple gongs as the icarus Quartet does in their recording, using a drumstick or mallet shaft in the right hand and a plastic mallet in the left hand would be the best choice.⁶⁰

Percussion 2 uses all the instruments in its setup (crotales, vibraphone, 4 woods, 3 slats) throughout movement I. For the crotales, a hard plastic mallet is ideal. A brass or aluminum mallet could be viable, but may have a timbre that is too sharp, contrasts too heavily with the rest

⁶⁰ icarus Quartet, 2022.

of the ensemble, and is challenging to sustain at a piano dynamic. It would also be beneficial for both percussionists to consider choosing the same mallets for crotales and glockenspiel in certain passages. For vibraphone, a medium-hard cord mallet will provide clarity without being too overpowering or thin.

Finally, for the 4 woods and 3 slats, a rubber mallet or a cord mallet, typically used for vibraphone, is ideal. The goal in choosing a mallet should be to find a balance between tone and attack.

If the player is using the setup suggested earlier in this document (figure 0.2), then there are two potential iterations of mallet order that can be utilized:

- Version A
 - Mallet 1 - Medium-hard rubber
 - Mallet 2 - Medium cord (vibraphone) mallet
 - Mallet 3 - Medium cord (vibraphone) mallet
 - Mallet 4 - Hard plastic mallet
- Version B
 - Mallet 1 - Hard plastic mallet
 - Mallet 2 - Medium-hard cord (vibraphone) mallet
 - Mallet 3 - Medium-hard cord (vibraphone) mallet
 - Mallet 4 - Hard plastic mallet

There are costs and benefits to both versions. Version A gives the performer greater agency to find the optimal sound for different situations through multiple mallet changes in the first movement. Version B, on the other hand, requires no mallet changes but potentially sacrifices sound quality for ease of performance. While the difference between the two may not seem apparent, it essentially boils down to a question of mallet choice for the slats and wood instruments. If the performer prefers the timbre of a rubber mallet on wood, then they would be better suited to pick version A. Using a vibraphone mallet on the slats and wood instruments, as

demonstrated with version B, could also work as long as the mallets were suitable for both the vibraphone and wood instruments.

If using version A, percussion 2 must make several mallet changes during the first movement. These changes are quite challenging because they must happen quickly, and all except one occur while the performer is playing.

The first change occurs in m. 27. There is a brief pause in action for the left hand of percussion 2 from beat 1 of m. 27 to beat 2 of m. 28. In those five beats, the player must drop their inside mallet, exchanging the vibraphone mallet for a hard plastic mallet (or something else suitable for crotales). Although this mallet change technically is not needed until measure 38, it is the only opportunity for the swap to occur without omitting notes. Percussion 2 should already have a crotales mallet in their right hand; however, the change in m. 27 is necessary because of the registers in which Lansky writes the vibraphone and crotales lines in m. 38. With the crotales in its lower octave and the highest possible pitches on a standard vibraphone being utilized, the player would have to cross their arms quite uncomfortably to perform the notes accurately without changing mallets in the left hand. The resulting mallet order should now be:

- Mallet 1 - Medium-hard rubber mallet
- Mallet 2 - Hard plastic mallet
- Mallet 3 - Medium cord (vibraphone) mallet
- Mallet 4 - Hard plastic mallet

Similar to the first, the second mallet change occurs while one hand rests and the other plays in m. 51. In this instance, however, it is the left hand that strikes one of the wood instruments while the right hand swaps its vibraphone mallet for a medium-hard rubber mallet. This rubber mallet should match the outside left-hand mallet (mallet 1). This will allow the

passage on the slats at letter H to sound even from hand to hand. The new mallet order should now be:

- Mallet 1 - Medium-hard rubber mallet
- Mallet 2 - Hard plastic mallet
- Mallet 3 - Medium-hard rubber mallet
- Mallet 4 - Hard plastic mallet

The next change occurs in m. 57, where the entire ensemble drops out for 2 beats of silence before reentering at letter I. In this spot, percussion 2 will want to swap the rubber mallet in the mallet 3 position back to a cord mallet. Thankfully, Lansky gives the performer a bit of space to change mallets. For many percussionists, however, quickly swapping implements in complete silence can be even more daunting and difficult than doing so while playing. The performer should spend some time practicing the change without making any unwanted noise that might disrupt the tension that Lansky develops in this passage. This change is necessary to avoid crossing arms during the crotales + vibraphone passage at letter J. The last two mallet changes at m. 74 and m. 86 are repeats of the same process for the second and third. Swapping mallet 3 to a rubber mallet when playing slats and back to a cord mallet for the closing vibraphone statement at the end of the movement.

Aside from the specific selection of mallets, percussion 2 has some additional considerations in movement 1 that are not shared by percussion 1. Firstly, from the very start of the movement, percussion 2 is often required to play three instruments at once, each requiring different mallets for effective performance. With the crotales, vibraphone, and slats/woods each needing different implements, the performer will need to use a 4-mallet grip. While playing multiple instruments at once, it can be challenging to ensure that each one is played with appropriate velocity. Secondly, the varied construction of the instruments and the materials of the

mallets used to strike them require that the player alter the speed of their stroke for each instrument. For example, the velocity needed to play a vibraphone note at forte would be far too loud if the same motion were applied to crotales with a hard plastic or brass mallet. Therefore, percussion must take into account the change in velocity between both of the mallets in their right hand as they maneuver from crotales to vibraphone. While both percussionists in *Textures* must keep this in mind throughout the piece, the first instance of this challenge is assigned to percussion 2 in the first movement.

Even rhythmic interpretation and consistent timing are necessary for a successful performance of the first movement. From the very start, even spacing between the downbeats from percussion 1 and upbeats from percussion 2 is crucial to support the rest of the ensemble. There is very little room for expressive pushing and pulling on the tempo in this instance. Until letter E, maintaining even rhythmic interpretation should not be particularly challenging. At Letter E, sixteenth notes become the primary subdivision for the percussion section. Measures 36-37, in particular, require percussion 2 to hold their sixteenth note upbeats evenly. In a performance situation, it can be helpful to think of the broader rhythmic context rather than placing each individual note in this context. In other words, the performer should internalize the downbeats rather than try to follow every 8th note played by percussion 1.

In m. 38, as the meter shifts to $\frac{3}{4}$, the grouping of the sixteenth notes also changes. While the pianos remain in a simple meter, albeit with some syncopation, the two percussionists emphasize the dotted 8th note with groupings of three sixteenth notes (figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6. Hemolia created between the percussionists' and pianists. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 1 mm. 39-40

The challenge, of course, emerges as each percussionist renders only a piece of the puzzle. It is the combined efforts of both performers that bring about a steady line of the sixteenth notes. Percussion 1 is given (♩ ♩) while percussion 2 is given (♩ ♩). In context, ensuring an even rhythmic interpretation between both players may prove difficult. Isolating the relationship between the two rhythmic patterns in rehearsal will be key to a successful performance (figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7. Exercise for challenging rhythms in movement 1

Letter J also offers percussion 1 an even more difficult challenge. While percussion 2 is given the same ♩ ♩ rhythmic pattern, percussion 1 only plays the first downbeat of each measure while still playing the same awkward upbeat sixteenth note rhythm. The tendency among many musicians is to wait too long between upbeats, resulting in falling behind the tempo and the rest of the ensemble. The best way to conceptualize this ostinato is to count the rhythm like triplets (one-la-li) and simply remove the downbeat and third partial (-la-). Thankfully, percussion 1 can use the first downbeat of each measure as a checkpoint (figure 1.8).



Figure 1.8. Additional exercise for movement 1

In the m. 42, Lansky inserts a tutti rest for the ensemble right before the first climax of the first movement at letter F. On its own, it's not anything of note. However, there is a discrepancy in interpretation between the two professional recordings of *Textures*. The icarus Quartet includes the rest in the performance on their 2022 album⁶¹ however, the first released professional recording of the piece by Hammer/Klavier in 2014⁶² omits the rest entirely. It is possible that the omission was an editing error; however, it is more likely a deliberate choice by the ensemble based on tempo. Hammer/Klavier's recording of the first movement averages around 98-100 bpm, while the icarus Quartet plays the movement slightly faster at around 108-112 (which is technically closer to Lansky's written tempo of ♩= 108). Because of the slower

⁶¹ icarus Quartet, 2022.

⁶² Hammer/Klavier, 2014.

tempo, the rest likely led to too much space between the last note in m. 42 and the downbeat of F. Given that Hammer/Klavier commissioned the piece and collaborated with Lansky for the recording, future performers of this piece should recognize both interpretations as acceptable.

Both letter H and letter L feature the wooden slats played by percussion 2. In both sections, percussion 2 is given a rhythmic pattern that functions as a hemiola (figure 1.9). Rhythmically, both patterns are the same, with the only difference being the specific notes used. For both of these passages, using double strokes will be most ideal. However, it is also possible to weave in single strokes and combine the two techniques. Occasionally, one of the double strokes will begin with a double stop where both hands play simultaneously (notated with a B for “both” in the sticking diagram). This pattern is reminiscent of the hybrid rudiment “flam-five” commonly found in high-level marching percussion repertoire. It is recommended to practice this rudiment to improve in-context performance. In addition, playing double-strokes with mallets (as opposed to sticks) while utilizing a four-mallet grip can be quite challenging. Normally, a successful double-stroke relies on harnessing the natural rebound between implement and playing surface. In this situation, however, that rebound is severely limited. To ensure clarity, performers should focus on matching the volume of the second note of the double-stroke to the first.



Figure 1.9. Sticking diagram for ostinato on wooden slats.

Recap

In the first movement of *Textures* by Paul Lansky, the title *Striations* is reflected through layered musical textures, including parallel motion in fourths and fifths, hocketed rhythms, and overlapping ostinatos. The movement emphasizes the contrast between stability and fragmentation, with abrupt shifts between ideas and sections of the piece. Although C natural is clearly centered through the use of pedal tones, the harmonic language remains ambiguous, frequently blending major and minor elements. This is also the first occurrence of the “meandering” motif that most often appears in piano 2 but weaves its way through the ensemble continuing the trend of ambiguity. Before Lansky highlights the marimba and vibraphone later on in the piece, *Striations* centers around the glockenspiel, crotales, and some vibraphone. The first movement also requires some difficult mallet changes for both percussionists. Maneuvering through this aspect of performance requires planning and fast but delicate execution.

Movement II – Loose Ends

Analysis

Despite Lansky’s insistence that his works are largely not programmatic, it is not too difficult to find connections between the music and the titles of many of the movements in *Textures*. The question for *Loose Ends* is how Lansky is interpreting the title as it relates to the composition. Or, considering the order in which they were created, it may be more apt to ask what is the essence of the piece that informed Lansky’s choice of title. There seem to be two possible interpretations. Either the audience is in observance of these disparate ideas that have yet to completely coalesce, like “loose ends” in a narrative, or the piece is about something that was once whole but is now disjointed, like a piece of string that is frayed on one end. Either way,

the core theme that is reflected in the musical content is separation itself. This manifests in a few different ways.

Displacement is a frequently used compositional technique in the 2nd movement. In the first section of the movement, octave displacement turns what would have been mostly stepwise chromaticism into disjointed figures characterized by large leaps. The second statement of the movement is one such case (figure 2.1). In m. 4, the sequence of F# - G# - E - D - C# - C $\flat$ - B - F# is realized in three different ways. Lansky juxtaposes the uncoupling with the opening gesture in m. 1 and the vibraphone rolls beginning in m. 5. It is not merely the inclusion of displacement, but its pairing alongside stability that makes the technique more impactful.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Glockenspiel, Marimba, Vibraphone, Piano 1, and Piano 2. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 114. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows the first five measures of the piece. The Glockenspiel and Marimba enter in measure 1 with a piano (pp) dynamic. The Vibraphone enters in measure 5 with a piano (pp) dynamic. The Pianos enter in measure 1 with a piano (pp) dynamic. The score illustrates the use of displacement and octave displacement techniques.

Figure 2.1. Opening five measures of “Loose Ends.” *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 1-5



Figure 2.2. Octave displacement in glockenspiel and piano 1. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 m. 17

Rhythmic displacement is also used to show disconnection. At first, in m. 17 Lansky presents another chromatic figure that has been displaced by multiple octaves and also adds another rhythmic layer with piano 1's 16th notes (figure 2.2). Not only is each pitch played twice, but the reiteration is itself displaced by an octave. Lansky escalates this process in mm. 22-23 (figure 2.3). Here, not only are the octave displacement and 16th note echo present, but piano 2 adds another layer of echoes from the 16ths in piano 1, delayed by one 16th note. Interestingly, mm. 22 and 23 are repeats of the same pitch sequence, but each instrument is given a different rendition of the sequence in each measure. Lansky also greatly expands the range of octave displacement in these two measures, with the lowest at E1 and the highest at A $\flat_7$. Much like with the first instance of displacement in m. 4, the chaos of mm. 22-23 is followed by closed suspended harmonies in the vibraphone and piano 2, and 16th note scales in piano 1 in mm. 24-25.

Figure 2.3. Further use of octave and rhythmic displacement. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 22-23

Figure 2.4. Sequence of ascending major thirds. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 53-57

In *Loose Ends*, Lansky does not seem to conform to a specific system for harmonic and pitch organization. While not overtly saturated with dissonance, the second movement is

noticeably more jagged than the first, and there is no firm key center. That being said, an atonal structure like a 12-tone row or recurring pitch-class sets are not present. Lansky seems to be more guided by gesture and color rather than following a formal canon. Interestingly, Lansky uses consonant harmonies outside of their typical context. For instance, letter F features a succession of major triads played by marimba, vibraphone, and piano 1 (figure 2.4). The tonal centers that normally inform the use of these triads are absent, leaving a repeating sequence. The interval between each chord is often a major third that is reminiscent of a whole-tone scale. After the first rise up the keyboard in the first six chords, the process resets for the next five chords, then four. Even the repeats of each iteration of the pattern distinguished by an abrupt change in register are reminiscent of the octave displacement used earlier in the movement. The nebulous character of the harmonies is coupled with the rhythmic structure of the pattern that disregards the meter. Lansky adds onto the disjointed theming of the second movement with the harmonic and rhythmic untethering in this passage. The succession major triads motif returns at letters G and H with slight variation.

Despite the presence of disconnection in movement two, there are some elements from the first movement that return in *Loose Ends*. The meandering gesture that wove its way through *Striations* lives on in movement two with some slight differences. In *Loose Ends*, the gesture is often realized with greater chromaticism and 16th notes rather than 8th notes. Of course, there is chromaticism that is often hidden by octave displacement, but there are also times when it is presented unabridged. At letter D, piano 1 circles around F - G $\flat$ - G $\sharp$ - A with a repeating 16th note pattern. Occasionally percussion 2 will echo the gesture with A - B $\flat$ - B $\sharp$ - C maintaining the interval of a third between the two voices (figure 2.5).

The image shows a musical score for measures 38 and 39. The staves are labeled Skns., Vib., Pno. 1, and Pno. 2. The Skns. and Vib. parts play a meandering chromatic line. Pno. 1 and Pno. 2 play a parallel motion of 4ths and 5ths.

Figure 2.5. Chromaticism within the meandering gesture. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 38-39

Also returning from the first movement, not only are there instances of harmonies built on 4ths and 5ths, but they are often used with parallel motion. At letter A, the use of quartal harmony and the parallel 5ths in mm. 15-16 contrasts distinctively with the pointillistic dissonance that surrounds it. The final climax of the movement at letters J and K falls in line with the theme of disjunction spearheaded by a nauseating combination of polyrhythms. However, amid this disarray, the pianos make their mark with a parade of harmonies, primarily composed of stacks of 4ths and 5ths. Lansky jumps around these chords with seemingly random and often distant intervals. At letter K, piano 2 begins to echo the chords with 16th-note arpeggios, using the same displacement technique as before. This bombastic conclusion is the perfect encapsulation and synthesis of all of the elements that characterize *Loose Ends*. The movement closes with both pianos playing a meandering gesture separated by a fifth and moving in parallel motion.

Performance

In movement 1, Lansky emphasizes the glockenspiel and crotales alongside the metal and wood instruments. In movement 2, the vibraphone and marimba become prominent. In mm. 5-11, percussion 2 must minimize the contact sound of the mallets on the bars during the rolls on the vibraphone. Each roll should be played without emphasis to contrast with the staccato articulation from the rest of the ensemble. Unfortunately, it is not viable for percussion 2 to simply use a soft chord or yarn mallet in this instance, as the need for shorter articulation arises at letter A without the opportunity to change mallets. Therefore, the performer may want to use the crown of the mallets to eliminate the attack as much as possible. Percussion 1 should make similar considerations for the roll on F# in the first three measures.

Movement two provides the first use of the drums, or “skins” as Lansky refers to them, in the piece. Based on the performance practice observed in available video recordings at the time of writing, the most common instrument setup consists of two concert toms and a set of bongos. The toms are used for “skins 1-2,” and the bongos for “skins 3-4” (Figure 0.1).⁶³ Ideally, the four drums should be arranged in two rows of two as opposed to a single line of the four drums. The two concert toms will form the bottom row closest to the performer, and the bongos form the top row. In addition, the drums should be arranged so that the lower tom and bongo drums are on the left side with the higher drums on the right (figure 0.2). This setup will enable the performer to navigate through the demands of the score.

The drums should be played with medium or medium-hard rubber mallets rather than drumsticks, as might be expected. The rubber mallets will provide a rounder articulation, particularly on the bongos, due to the increased surface area of the spherical mallet head. This

⁶³ Paul Lansky, *Threads*, (Carl Fischer, 2006)

will also allow for the drums to blend more effectively with the rest of the ensemble. In addition, these same rubber mallets can be used for many of the passages on marimba in *Loose Ends* that require refined articulation. However, at letter E, it would be advantageous to switch from mallets to hands or fingers to avoid overpowering the pianos and vibraphone.

The majority of the material played on the drums in movement two are rhythmic ostinatos. While some of these patterns can be challenging, most of the difficulty can be alleviated by using double strokes, particularly with the right hand. For instance, the patterns in mm. 22, 31, and 33 can all be easily navigated using double strokes when two notes are repeated on the same drum (figure 2.5, 2.6, 2.7).

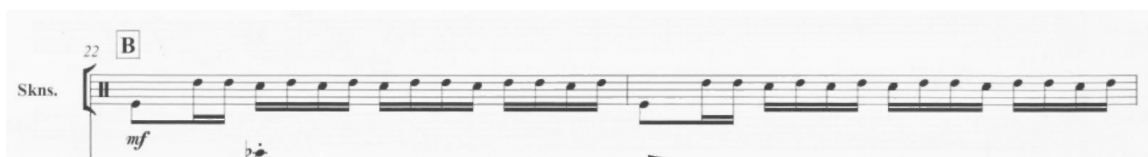


Figure 2.6. First drum pattern. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 22-23



Figure 2.7. Second drum pattern. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 30-32

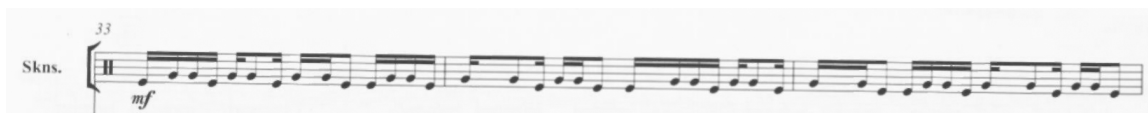


Figure 2.8. Third drum pattern. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 33-35



Figure 2.9. Final drum pattern. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 m. 37

The sticking for the pattern at the letter D is slightly more involved but follows the same principle of using double strokes (figure 2.9). Percussion 1 should play the notes on the toms (bottom two lines) with their left hand and the notes on the low bongo (middle space) with their right hand. The result should be a repeating sequence of LLR. The challenge is that a double-stroke across multiple drums is significantly more difficult than on one. Percussion 1 must ensure to maintain even velocity for both notes as they move laterally across the drums. Additionally, the performer may want to move their playing zone to the inside edge of both toms to facilitate the sweeping motion better and maintain the pianissimo dynamic.

Percussion 1 is also not alone in dealing with double strokes. In mm. 78-83, percussion 2 similarly must use left-hand double strokes across multiple woodblocks while the right hand is occupied with the accented vibraphone notes (figure 2.10). In this case, the technique is not quite the same because percussion 2 will be using a 4-mallet grip in their left hand. With a hard rubber or medium plastic mallet in the mallet 1 position, the performer should utilize as much of the natural rebound as possible, but may need to apply additional force to bring out the second note of the double. While the process is different, the end goal should be the same: even volume and rhythmic placement.

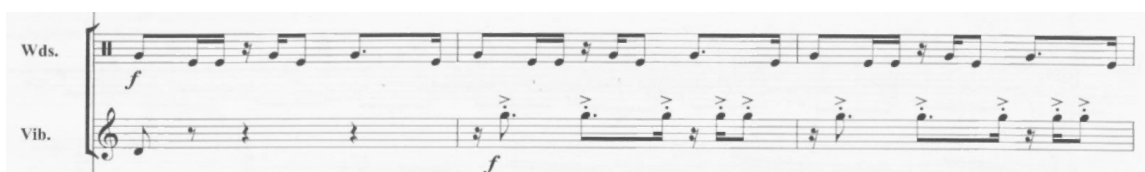


Figure 2.10. Percussion 2 playing vibraphone and woodblocks simultaneously. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 77-79

Letter F requires both percussionists to split their attention between their pitched and non-pitched instruments, similar to an organist playing on multiple manuals. While the notes on

metals and woods remain static, the contour of the material on the keyboards has several large leaps. Considering this, it may be beneficial for both percussionists to perform this passage without looking at the non-pitched instruments. This passage at letter F would be best performed by percussion 1 with rubber mallets, as mentioned earlier, to match the staccato articulation of the vibraphone. For the same reason, percussion 2 should avoid using the sustain pedal on the vibraphone.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'Textures' by Paul Lansky, measures 84-86. The score is for four instruments: Maracas (Mar.), Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The Maracas part (top staff) features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and quintuplets, marked with a 'J' in a box. The Vibraphone part (second staff) also features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and quintuplets. The Piano 1 part (third staff) features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and quintuplets. The Piano 2 part (bottom staff) features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and quintuplets. The score is in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and quintuplets, spread across the ensemble.

Figure 2.11. Polyrhythmic texture spread across the ensemble. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 2 mm. 84-86

Potentially the most volatile passage of *Loose Ends* is between mm. 84-98. It is chaotic, and there is a lot of intense material from both pianists that can be difficult to follow for both the audience and musicians. While the percussionists are comparatively static, with similar, repeating ostinatos, the combination of percussion 1's triplets and percussion 2's quintuplets makes for a dizzying soundscape (figure 2.11). Both ostinatos are based on the three-note pattern

of C - B ♭ - A. For both players, these three notes are realized across multiple octaves, with the right hand playing the top line and the left hand the bottom. Part of what makes this pattern so challenging is that the hands are out of sync with one another. While percussion 2's left hand begins with and continues repeating B ♭ - C - A, their right hand plays C - B ♭ - A. Percussion 1 has the inversion of this, with their left hand playing C - B ♭ - A and right hand playing A - C - B ♭. Practicing one's hand independence with and without consideration for the rhythm will be crucial to a successful performance of this passage. For percussion 1, however, there is one final layer of difficulty to consider.

With the basis for the rhythmic ostinato built around a three-note pattern, repetitions of said pattern using quintuplets in this case result in a return to the downbeat every two measures. Whereas percussion 2 returns to the downbeat every two beats, percussion 1 must be comfortable maneuvering through no-man's land. What's fascinating is that Lansky has constructed two 5:3 polyrhythms here. One is obviously between the direct combination of the triplets and quintuplets from both percussionists. The second emerges from the repetitions of percussion 1's pattern that emphasizes every third 8th-note quintuplet (figure 2.11). Percussion 1 should get comfortable with this polyrhythm as it provides much-needed context for their ostinato in mm. 85-98. After mastering the pattern in figure 2.12 and adding the 16th-note quintuplets similar to figure 2.13, adding the pitches will be less challenging.



Figure 2.12. Exercise for Percussion 1

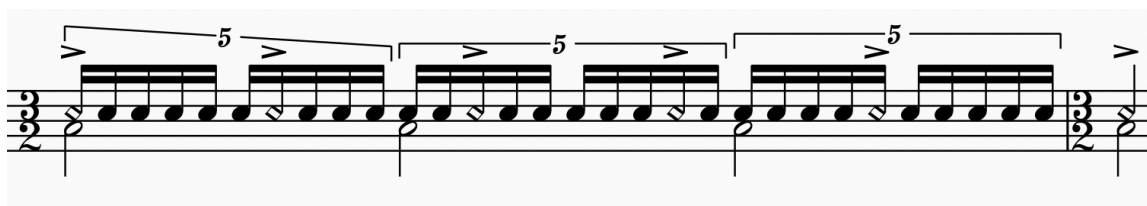


Figure 2.13. Additional exercise for Percussion 1

Recap

Loose Ends is centered around the concept of displacement. This is manifested in both the pitch content of the movement as well as the rhythmic language used by Lansky. This concept is clear from the opening few measures as Lansky takes a simple chromatic and stepwise melody and alters it through octave displacement, leaving jagged and unpredictable leaps. A similar technique is applied to rhythm, as Lansky often layers delayed echoes and offset patterns so the music feels out of sync with itself. Even within all this fragmentation, there are some threads holding things together. For instance the wandering and chromatic “meandering” motif returns here, but in a more distorted form. There are also moments of more stable harmony, like parallel fourths and fifths, but they tend to appear briefly before breaking apart again. By the end, everything comes together in a kind of controlled chaos. Dense polyrhythms, wide leaps, and layered harmonies all collide, creating a climactic closing section that feels intentionally overwhelming. The movement ends with a final gesture that still feels unresolved, staying true to the idea of “loose ends” that never quite tie together.

The second movement is the first to emphasize the vibraphone and marimba in a trend through that continues through the rest of the piece. In addition, the “skins” make their first appearance and both percussionists are frequently asked to utilize double strokes to get through the challenging rhythmic patterns provided by Lansky. The movement also features a passage

with a chaotic polyrhythmic texture that will require dedicated rehearsal time. Performers of the percussion 1 part will want to spend time breaking down the difficult quintuplet pattern both at and away from the keyboard.

Movement III – Soft Substrates

Analysis

A substrate is “a thing which underlies or forms the basis of another; a foundation.”⁶⁴ The third movement, *Soft Substrates*, the concept is applied to the soft bowed vibraphone notes that provide a layer upon which the rest of the piece rests. The bowed vibraphone also serves as the glue between different sections and is featured at the beginning and end of the movement. The pitches of these notes are frequently the root of whatever harmony the rest of the ensemble is presenting. In an interesting change of pace, Lansky goes from a fragmented approach to pitch organization in the second movement to apparent tonal centers in the third. And often, it is the bowed vibraphone that serves as the guiding light for said structure.

While the movement opens with a B $\flat$ on the vibraphone, Lansky hints at A $\flat$ being the tonal center. Lansky also does not make a major or minor distinction, as crotales and glockenspiel play both C $\flat$ and C $\sharp$. Measure 7 includes a sudden shift in tonality with an arpeggiated Eb⁷ chord from the marimba and piano 1 (figure 3.1). The return to A $\flat$ in m. 8 provides clarity with the added support of the bowed vibraphone. The Eb⁷ chord is notable because of the tritone relationship between Eb and A natural. Traditionally, a tritone substitution performs a dominant function because the “active interval of the tritone in any dominant-seventh

⁶⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, “substrate (n.), sense 1,” December 2025

chord is shared by another dominant-seventh chord whose root is a tritone away.”⁶⁵ However, in this case, the Eb⁷ does not resolve as expected. That being said, Bb and G at the end of the m. 7 both have some pull to A natural, thus the resolution in m. 8 still feels satisfying. Within the arpeggio, Lansky once again adds the minor third of the harmony, Gb, and its enharmonic equivalent F#. While the Gb and F# function as passing tones to G natural, the character lent by the addition showcases a potential influence of the Jazz idiom on Lansky.

The image displays a musical score for measures 7 and 8 of the piece 'Textures' by Paul Lansky. The score is written for a multi-instrument ensemble. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Mtrls. (Maracas):** Measures 7 and 8 are marked with rests.
- Glock. (Glockenspiel):** Measures 7 and 8 are marked with rests.
- Mar. (Maracas):** In measure 7, there is a *pp* (pianissimo) arpeggiated pattern. In measure 8, there is a *mf* (mezzo-forte) arpeggiated pattern.
- Crot. (Crotales):** Measures 7 and 8 are marked with rests.
- Vib. (Vibraphone):** Measures 7 and 8 are marked with rests.
- Pno. 1 (Piano 1):** Measures 7 and 8 feature complex arpeggiated patterns, with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking in measure 8.
- Pno. 2 (Piano 2):** Measures 7 and 8 are marked with rests.

The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings (*pp*, *mf*). The arpeggiated patterns in the maracas and piano 1 are particularly prominent.

Figure 3.1. Arpeggios from percussion and piano 1. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 7-8

The centering of A natural continues through a dizzying flourish of 32nd notes from both pianos. Once the harmonic and rhythmic dissonance dissipates in m. 16, the bowed vibraphone reveals an A natural pedal tone supported by the glockenspiel and crotales. At letter C (m. 21),

⁶⁵ Nicole Biamonte, “Augmented-Sixth Chords vs. Tritone Substitutes,” Music Theory Online, June 1, 2008

Lansky presents the primary theme of the third movement. It is unusual for the primary theme to not occur until a little over a minute into a three and a half minute piece of music. However, the material beginning at m. 21 forms the basis for the bulk of the music that follows and is repeated and altered multiple times.

Figure 3.2. Presentation of the primary theme in “Soft Substrates.” *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 21-23

Figure 3.3. Primary theme continued. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 24-26

The presentation of the primary theme at letter C begins similarly to a sentence, containing a basic idea in mm. 21-22 and a repetition of said idea in mm. 23-24 (figure 3.2 and 3.3). Percussion 1, playing the marimba, is given the main melodic material that defines the primary theme. In contrast to the lyrical marimba line are the staccato ostinatos from pianos 1 and 2. There is one minor rhythmic variation of the basic idea in mm. 23, 24, and 25 with a change from consistent 8th note triplets to a dotted 8th note triplet + 16th note triplet on the first beat of each measure. Aside from this, mm. 23-24 and 25-26 are clear repetitions of the initial basic idea. The harmony at letter C is still centered around A natural. Lansky also provides more clarity with the C natural ostinato from piano 1, indicating A minor, despite the marimba melody avoiding the distinction altogether. In fact, the emphasis of scale degrees 2, 4, and 7 in the marimba alludes to a modal approach rather than the conventional treatment of A minor. Measures 23-24 reharmonize the primary theme in Gsus⁷ without making a major or minor distinction before returning to A minor in mm. 25-26.

Measure 27 begins like another reharmonization of the basic idea; this time with B minor in m. 27 and F#⁷ in m. 28. However, the phrase breaks down into generic arpeggiation of F#⁷ that continues to build before concluding with what seems like a half cadence in m. 35. The expected resolution of the climactic cadence in m. 35 is evaded m. 36 as Lansky moves in reverse through the circle of fifths with a return to the primary theme in C# minor. As before, the repeating of the basic idea changes comes with a harmonic change; this time, Bsus⁷. In m. 40, as Lansky moves towards a cadential event similar to before, the marimba line breaks down into a B melodic minor scale in octaves, juxtaposed by F# minor from the pianos. B minor wins out with the climax that Lansky has been building to in mm. 43-44, which is centered around a B melodic minor scale starting on scale degree 2 (dorian flat-2).

Figure 3.4. Final five measures of “Soft Substrates.” *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 56-60

The final utterance of the primary theme in A minor emerges at m. 48 (letter G). In m. 52, Lansky brings back the Eb⁷ arpeggiation from the beginning of the movement. Despite this, the glockenspiel and crotales continue to maintain an A natural drone, emphasizing the tritone relationship. Beneath all these layers is the bowed vibraphone, which drones on a B natural from m. 52 until the end of the piece. The sound of the vibraphone, however, is not even audible until m. 57 with the arpeggios from the piano's subside (figure 3.4). The incongruous conclusion is compelling because it is unclear which element is out of place. The movement begins with a B natural on bowed vibraphone, so it is not unreasonable for the composer to cyclically return to that motif. It would also not be unreasonable for the A natural to be the “right” answer, given its pervasiveness in relation to the primary theme and throughout the movement. B natural also served as the catalyst for disrupting the primary theme’s static progression in mm. 27 and 40;

could it perform a similar role in mm. 57-60? Even with the clear structure found in *Soft Substrate*, Lansky still leaves room for ambiguity.

The last point of interest is Lansky's manipulation of rhythm and meter in the third movement. With Lansky's predominant use of 8th note and quarter note triplets, the 4/4 time signature abandons the simple quadruple metric pattern. Instead, a combination of compound quadruple and simple triple meters is emphasized. Of particular note is Lansky's use of hocketed ostinatos that accompany the primary theme that blur the line between both meters (figures 3.2 and 3.3). Lansky also uses rhythmic dissonance and density in juxtaposition with contrasting material. For example, before the final presentation of the main theme in m. 48, there is a three-measure transition that concludes with a polyphonic avalanche of 32nd notes, 16th notes, and sextuplets (figure 3.5). The drastic change in rhythmic density and dynamic in m. 48 draws attention to the change in character.

Figure 3.5. Cascading 32nds from pianos 1 and 2. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 m. 47

Performance

Since the bowed vibraphone plays such a critical role in the structure of *Soft Substrates*, percussion 2 must consider their bowing technique as important as with any other mallet. The performer may choose either a cello or a double bass bow, depending on their preference. An appropriate amount of rosin should be applied to the bow string in order to increase the amount of friction between the vibraphone bar and the bow string. Attempting to bow a vibraphone without enough rosin can lead to too much noise and not enough of the desired pitch. The angle of the bow string in relation to the edge of the bar is also important to consider. Preparing the bow at a 90-degree angle, with the bow string perpendicular to the vibraphone, is ideal. While it is possible to bow at different angles, 90 degrees will provide the best results and a clear fundamental.

Where other pieces with bowing may be difficult because of the fast transitions between notes, the foremost challenge Lansky presents is bowing a single note for long stretches of time. In order to continuously bow on a vibraphone, one must be able to smoothly alternate between an up-bow and a down-bow motion. In this instance, the performer should try to use as much of the bow string as possible. To prevent unwanted dynamic changes, the performer should also maintain an even rate of speed in their bowing motion. When the performer reaches the end of their bow, release from the bar and gently reapply pressure after changing direction to avoid disrupting the bar's sustained ringing. If necessary, percussion 2 can also plan to change direction at the same time as another sound is occurring, to hide a defect in the sound.

Finally, the performer should carry out mallet changes with their right hand without affecting the bowing motion of their left hand. If possible, it is considerably less difficult to manage the switches from accidental to natural pitches in mm. 31-40 by using two bows (one in

each hand). The transition from holding 4-mallets one beat four m. 47 to needing a bow in one's left hand on beat one of m. 48 with essentially no time to make this change can be frustrating. One potential solution is to strike an A natural with a mallet, then switch to a bow during the pitch's natural decay, making sure to apply the bow string before too much sound has dissipated. Alternatively, the performer could play m. 47 with just the right hand, utilizing their wrist rotation with mallets 3 and 4.

Between the two professional recordings of *Textures* available at this time, there are some notable differences in interpretation in the third movement that may be of note to future performers. Firstly, there are differences in instrument choice between Hammer/Klavier and the icarus Quartet, as showcased in the opening of the third movement. Based on the audio, Hammer/Klavier seems to have chosen a smaller cymbal, possibly a splash cymbal.⁶⁶ In contrast, icarus went with a traditional suspended cymbal mounted on a gooseneck stand, which can be seen in their video production of the piece.⁶⁷ The benefit of the icarus Quartet's choice is the blend of the overtones of the cymbal with the low B natural from the vibraphone. There is also a discrepancy between the choice of metal instrument in mm. 4-6. The icarus Quartet opts to use a triangle for the three notes in mm. 4-6.⁶⁸ The triangle is used only for these three measures and is an extra addition beyond the four metal sounds required by Lansky, which are used elsewhere in the piece.

In mm. 31-35, there is a long cymbal roll intended to accompany the rising tension from the pianos and ultimately leading to the cadence in m. 35 (figure 3.6). The cymbal roll is also interpreted by Hammer/Klavier as a rhythmic tremolo, playing steady 16th notes (likely with the

⁶⁶ Hammer/Klavier, *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*, CD

⁶⁷ icarus Quartet, "Textures by Paul Lansky," YouTube, June 16, 2022

⁶⁸ icarus Quartet, "Textures by Paul Lansky," YouTube, June 16, 2022

shaft of a marimba mallet) instead of a traditional cymbal roll.⁶⁹ Not only does the icarus Quartet perform a traditional suspended cymbal roll, but the cymbal is also cut off on beat 1 of m. 35 instead of continuing through the measure as indicated in the score. Given Hammer/Klavier's close collaboration with the composer during the recording of the piece, and that it is the first of its kind, their interpretation may be more in line with Lansky's wishes. However, the icarus' Quartet's interpretation more effectively builds to the climax of the passage and allows for the vibraphone to be the main focus of attention after the rest of the ensemble cuts off in measure 35.

Figure 3.6. Half cadence hammer blows. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 3 mm. 33-35

The marimba is featured heavily in the third movement. Percussion 1 should begin the movement with three yarn mallets and one medium-hard plastic mallet. If the performer chooses to incorporate a triangle into the setup, à la icarus Quartet, striking both the triangle and the glockenspiel with the plastic mallet will be ideal. If using one of the metal 1-4 sounds, percussion 1 should find a mallet that provides the maximum sustain. Depending on the choice,

⁶⁹ Hammer/Klavier, *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*, CD

one of the marimba mallets may even be a potential option. Because percussion 1 is required to play on a wide range of the marimba, using a graduated set of yarn mallets may be necessary. More articulate mallets will likely be needed for mallets 2, 3, and 4, but a softer bass mallet in the first position will be best to bring out the full richness of the low marimba.

Lastly, both percussionists must carefully align the attacks of the glockenspiel and crotale notes at the beginning and end of the movement. Since those moments are incredibly exposed, ensuring perfect vertical alignment is very important (figure 3.4).

Recap

The third movement of *Textures* allows the two percussionists to become critical contributors to the primary thematic material of the music. The bowed vibraphone, played by percussion 2, is the foundational layer of which the title, *Soft Substrates*, alludes to. On the other hand, the movement's main thematic material is given to percussion 1 on the marimba. In both of these instances, Lansky highlights the sonic capabilities of both instruments and confirms their importance in the artform of percussion and to the genre. Other key elements of the movement are the harmonic language used and Lansky's manipulation of meter. While the third movement is more grounded than its predecessor, Lansky plays with this sense of center by introducing unexpected harmonies, like the Eb7 chords that don't resolve in a typical fashion but still feel connected through shared tones and color. The treatment of these colors is relevant to the influence of Jazz on Lansky's harmonic language. Regarding meter, Lansky's pervasive use of eighth-note triplets with changing emphasis maintains forward momentum.

With the bowed vibraphone being such an important element of the movement, the treatment of said extended technique is obvious. The goal is to produce a smooth, sustained tone,

which depends on proper use of rosin, bow angle, and consistent motion. Since the movement often requires holding a single note for a long time, the performer must be able to smoothly changing bow direction without disrupting the sound. At times, percussion 2 may even time bow direction changes to coincide with other sounds to hide any imperfections. For Percussion 1, while the playing is more conventional, the material is just as important. The performer will also want to consider their mallet choice careful to allow for a clear tone across the instrument.

Movement IV – Slither

Analysis

The connection of the movement title to the musical content is surprisingly clear in *Slither*. Where movement three dealt with moments of placidity, Lansky slides and weaves through movement four. One of the defining characteristics of movement four is the ascending and descending progressions of rolled chords from the marimba and vibraphone. The percussionists literally have to physically shift up the instrument to reach every chord properly, not to mention the sonic shape of the rolls gradually climbing higher and higher. It is, of course, important for the percussionists to avoid accenting or altering roll speed when changing chords to maintain a smooth line. The earliest example of these rolls occurs in mm. 14-19 (figure 4.1).

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Marimba (Mar.), Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The Marimba and Vibraphone parts consist of rolls of chords, starting at measure 13, marked 'pp' and 'cresc.'. The Piano parts feature an oscillating 16th-note hocketed ostinato, with Piano 1 marked 'cresc.'.

Figure 4.1. Keyboard percussion rolls paired with piano ostinato. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 mm. 13-17

Alongside the marimba and vibraphone rolls, the pianos accompany with an oscillating 16th-note hocketed ostinato, which is also an important element of this movement. Alternating every measure, one piano plays 8ths while the other plays 16th note upbeats. A slight agogic accent emerges because of the overlap of the ostinatos on beat one of each measure. Also noteworthy are the intervals used in the piano rhythmic pulses. A continuous stream of seconds waves its way through move three from mm. 1-92. The interval is always utilized within the ostinato seen in figure 4.1 with two, three, or all four players. The frequent use of the second doubles as both a rhythmic motif and a building block for harmonic structure.

Clusters of seconds inform the harmonic language of the first two-thirds of the fourth movement. The dissonance of the clusters is mitigated by their context within diatonic scales. In figure 4.1, for example, the harshness cluster of seconds in the pianos is diminished by the F^{maj7} chords in marimba and vibraphone. In the aggregate, the F Lydian mode emerges, omitting scale degrees 2 and 6. The combination of clusters of seconds is also used to convey another aspect of the sliding gesture related to the movement's title. In mm. 72-91, Lansky incorporates four layers

of clusters, one played by each performer, while also continuing the rhythmic ostinato from earlier in the movement. The collection of clusters center around the Dorian mode. Beginning with F# Dorian in mm. 72-73 and sliding down chromatically to F natural Dorian in m. 74, E Dorian in m. 75, and D# Dorian in m. 76. The chromatic cascade continues until m. 87 with Ab (G#) Dorian, where Lansky reverses direction but maintains the clustered ostinato. Lansky's synthesis of musical elements is particularly striking in this passage.

The texture that has remained uninterrupted since the beginning of the movement is entirely changed in m. 92. Gone are the clusters of seconds and hocketed 16th notes. In their absence, the percussionists return to their ascending line of rolled chords, and the pianos follow suit with rising 16th scales. In the four measures preceding this drastic change, Lansky begins to incorporate 16th note scales into both piano parts. The inclusion of these scales acts as the pivot for the textural modulation in m. 92. Although the change still feels meaningful, Lansky provides continuity between the two sections.

Although the majority of movement four is built around pleasant-sounding harmonies, it would be inaccurate to suggest that they are functioning within a diatonic framework. Instead, Lansky is guided more by color and gesture. In fact, Lansky also frequently uses incorrect or contradictory enharmonic equivalents. For example, in mm. 33-40, the two piano ostinatos are built around the C# dorian scale. The marimba and vibraphone unquestionably align harmonically; however, Lansky consistently gives the percussionists Ab and Eb rather than G# or the D# echoed by the pianos. Another example in mm. 59-62 contains F#, A#, Bb, and Gb, despite clear signs that the passage is centered on B minor. While this could be an editing error, there are too many examples of it to be missed. On the other hand, it is more likely an indication

that Lansky is not concerned with key centers but is merely using the color and harmonies resulting from diatonicism without the shackles of tonality.

Performance

Slither is neither the first nor the only movement of *Textures* to incorporate rolls on the marimba and vibraphone. However, in no other movement is the technique so essential to the character of the music. Typically, when playing rolls on keyboard instruments, percussionists might seek out a softer mallet with loose yarn wrapping in order to eliminate as much attack as possible. However, except for mm. 14-19, switching mallets is not ideal as there is no time to change, and the surrounding passages require mallets with harder articulation. Despite the disadvantage, there are some potential solutions to help alleviate the challenge. One possibility is to use the crown instead of the center ring of the mallet typically used. The crown is the top part of the yarn or cord mallet. By angling the mallet downward, one can strike the bars with the crown, offsetting the amount of articulation given by the core of the mallet. Another option is to utilize the “ripple-roll” technique.⁷⁰ When using 4 mallets, the standard roll involves alternating double vertical strokes, with each hand striking with both mallets simultaneously. The ripple-roll uses the same alternating hand motion but separates each mallet stroke with double lateral strokes. The resulting sticking should be either (1243) or (4312) with the outside mallet striking first in either hand. Alternatively, the performers may opt for a (1234) sticking to match the ascending contour of the chords. By using the ripple-roll, the speed of articulation is doubled. With both percussionists utilizing this technique, the additional strikes hides the individual attack

⁷⁰ Leigh Howard Stevens, “Rolls and Notation” *Percussive Notes* (Fall 1980)

of each mallet creating a smooth sustained sound similar to how a buzz roll functions on a snare drum.

Lansky also demands that the percussionists move up and down the instrument while rolling. Whether using standard or ripple rolls, both percussionists should consider body/foot placement, chord changes, and roll speed and evenness. When changing chords, it is best to avoid accenting notes or deviating from the established roll speed. Any divergence can be distracting and disruptive. Additionally, when playing a series of ascending or descending rolls across the marimba, percussion 1 should always maintain a body position centered on the register they are playing. Failing to do so can lead to awkward hand placement and/or a failure to hit the correct playing zones on the bars.

The image displays a musical score for four instruments: Glockenspiel (Glock.), Crotales (Crot.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves. The first system (measures 23-26) is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic, and the second system (measures 27-30) is marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Glockenspiel and Crotales parts consist of continuous eighth-note rolls. The Piano 1 part features a steady eighth-note ostinato in the right hand, while the Piano 2 part has a similar ostinato in the left hand. The score is written in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Figure 4.2. Hocketed rhythmic ostinatos throughout the ensemble. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 mm. 23-27

By this point, Lansky's propensity for repeating and/or hocketed rhythmic patterns should be apparent, and the fourth movement is certainly no exception. As the textural backbone to the first two-thirds of the movement, performers should be comfortable switching between 8th notes

and 16th note upbeats. In some cases, such as percussion 1 in mm. 23-27, only playing the 16th upbeats is required (figure 4.2). It would be beneficial for percussion 1 and 2 to match mallets in this passage. Even with the natural timbral differences between the respective instruments, using the same mallets will support the effect Lansky has created.

53

Mar.

Vib.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

pp

cresc.

pp

cresc.

pp

cresc.

pp

cresc.

80

Figure 4.3. Build up to the percussion cadenza. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 mm. 53-57

Throughout *Textures*, Lansky elevates the percussionist to an equal position amongst their pianist counterparts. To aid in this goal, *Slither* features an incredibly virtuosic soli for marimba and vibraphone from mm. 59-72. Lansky builds up to this moment in mm. 54-58 with a repeating rhythmic pattern on marimba (figure 4.3). The pattern is set in $\frac{7}{8}$ but superimposed over the $\frac{3}{4}$ meter emphasized by the oscillating piano ostinatos. There are two potential sticking schemes available to percussion 1. With the right hand playing the double stops, percussion 1 can use either mallet 2 alone or a combination of mallets 2 and 3 for the figures between the double stops. The simplicity of using only mallet 2 can be challenging because of the movement

between manuals and the speed of the rhythm. Attempting to use both mallets 2 and 3 will require fast movement from the right hand. Considering both options, percussion 1 will also need to ensure that a pianissimo dynamic level is achievable with the chosen sticking.

The soli begins in the m. 59 as Lansky slides down from C minor to B minor and unleashes a torrent of 16th notes. There is no repeating pattern in either the marimba or vibraphone parts; in fact, the unpredictability of the contour feels improvisatory. While there are moments of interaction between the two percussionists, like the addition of double stops in mm. 65-66, each line operates independently from the other. Included in figures 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 are the recommended stickings for both the vibraphone and marimba parts from mm. 59-71. The stickings listed are not the only possible interpretations, and performers should experiment to determine their personal preference. Dashes between sticking numbers have been added to indicate double or triple laterals and for improved readability. The 8th notes on the vibraphone in m. 72 should be played with the right hand to facilitate the left hand changing mallets for the woodblock in m. 73.

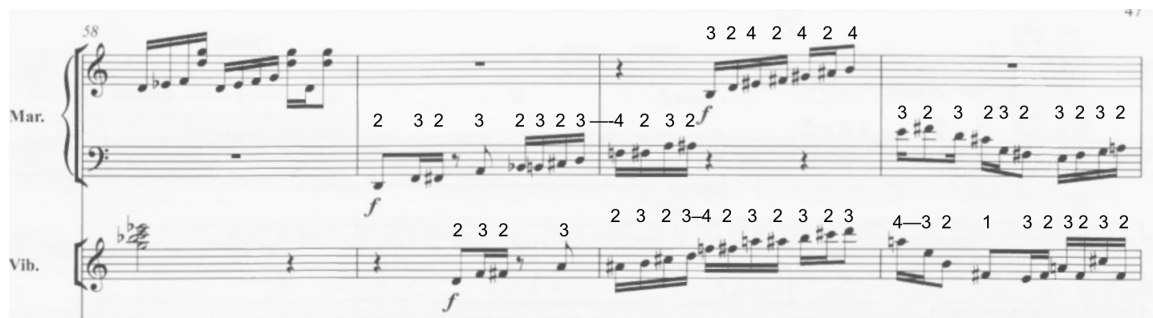


Figure 4.4. Sticking diagram. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 mm. 58-61

Mar. 

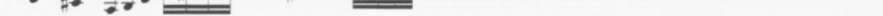
Vib. 

Figure 4.5. Sticking diagram continued. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 mm. 62-65

48

66

Mar.

R 2 2 R 2 3 2 R 2 3 F 4 2 3 2 3 2 3 2-1 3 2 3

Vib.

L 3 2 R 2 3 2 3 L 3 R 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2

sempre f

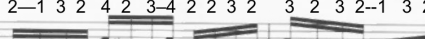
sempre f

Figure 4.6. Sticking diagram continued. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 66-69

70

Mtls. 

Mar. 

Wds. 

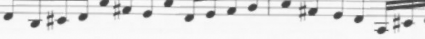
Vib. 

Figure 4.7. Sticking diagram continued. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 4 mm. 70-73

Recap

Despite the *Textures* being a non-programmatic work, according to Lansky, *Slither* is another example of title and content finding common ground. With the lack of extra-musical narrative, Lansky allows the music itself to become narrative. The music itself is characterized by the abundance of hocketed rhythmic ostinatos and major-seventh chords. Harmonically, the music often feels colorful and fluid rather than strictly tonal. Lansky builds textures out of note clusters that fit loosely within modes, creating a sense of direction without locking into a clear

key. Often, these clusters will slide downward, reinforcing the slithering character suggested by the title. Later in the movement, there's a noticeable shift in texture. The dense, interlocking patterns drop away, and the music opens up into rising scales in the pianos alongside the returning rolled chords in the percussion. Even though this feels like a drastic change, it emerges naturally out of what came before.

Rolling on vibraphone and marimba are important elements of performance for the percussionists movement four. With changing mallets not being feasible it is up to the players' approach to rolls to maintain a smooth and unblemished texture. It is for this reason that many performers may consider using a "ripple roll" despite the difficulty of the technique compared to the standard roll that uses alternating double-vertical strokes. In addition to rolls, movement four features an extended soli for both percussionists on marimba and vibraphone. This section will greatly challenge most performers and using the sticking diagram provided is highly recommended.

Movement V – Granite

Analysis

In *Granite*, rhythmic dissonance becomes a key compositional tool for Lansky. Lansky uses polyrhythms both as a texture and as a means of sonic resolution. For instance, the triumphant arrival at letter G is satisfying not just because of the melodic and harmonic content from the pianos, but also because of the evaporation of rhythmic dissonance from the previous four measures. When the commotion of mm. 36-39 evaporates at letter G, the space that is left allows for the melody from piano 1 to truly flourish. In other uses of rhythmic dissonance, Lansky will overlap several hocketed and polyrhythmic patterns, only to remove one layer,

revealing an interaction previously unheard. An example of this can be found in the first 8 measures of movement V. One might first be drawn to the 4:3 polyrhythm between the marimba of woodblocks in mm. 1-4. However, in measure 5, once the woodblocks are gone, we are left with a 9:2 polyrhythm between the marimba and the glockenspiel.

The other defining feature of *Granite* is the captivating harmonic progression that serves as a primary theme of sorts for the movement. The main progression in the fifth movement is as follows: Amaj, Fmaj, Gmaj, F#7, Ebmaj, Abmaj, Dmaj, Bb7, Cmaj, Ab7, D7, Dbmaj, C7, Ebmaj, Dmaj. Quite complex and lengthy. When this progression presents itself, it always closes on D major, and in fact, the movement ends after settling, somewhat, on D major. However, one would be hard-pressed to adequately assign Roman numerals to these harmonies. When listening, one doesn't have the chance to know what key the piece is in, if there is one, until the fifteen-chord progression has resolved. The movement between the harmonies is unpredictable, and there is no repeating pattern to be gleaned. Despite the whimsical character of the progression, it is orchestrated clearly in its first and last appearances. The chords are vertically aligned with repeated half-notes in mm. 9-10 and mm. 13-15.

Combining layers of sound can be dangerous. With more sound occurring, the texture can become thick, and the intricacies are often lost. Lansky is very intentional about balancing these proportions. In movement five, when presenting the main harmonic progression in mm. 9-15, piano 1 and vibraphone allow their sonorities to continue ringing for the full duration of the beat. Piano 2 and marimba, on the other hand, end their resonance early, leaving the piano 1 and vibraphone to shine through. Lansky has piano 2 play its part of the chords as staccato quarter notes in contrast to the half notes of piano 1. Although the marimba part is written as half notes, the nature of the instrument is such that the sound will quickly decay to leave room for

vibraphone and piano (while also preventing the staccato punches of piano 2 from sounding too abrupt). Notably, the instruments that are allowed to continue ringing are higher in register, while the low sonorities are kept short. The result is a full, rich sound that does not become too heavy or overwhelming.

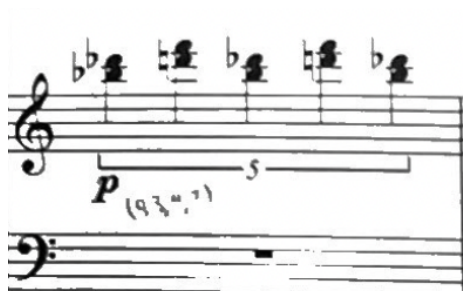


Figure 5.1. Example of the “siren motif.” *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 5 m. 16

In m. 16, Lansky introduces a new element, while also interrupting the chord progression and preventing it from reaching its D major conclusion (figure 5.1). Two oscillating minor thirds with a pitch-class set of (0,3,4,7) enter the texture in the second piano part. In addition to its pitched dissonance, Lansky ensures even more uneasiness by setting the quintuplets against the steady eight-note pulse. The nebulous rhythm, combined with the harsh dissonance, resembles the siren of an ambulance or a police car. When the harmonic progression returns in m. 19 the siren motif continues. The resulting combination creates the measured chaos woven into the fifth movement, reminiscent of an urban soundscape.

The siren motif returns several times in the rest of the fifth movement. In m. 23, the two sets of minor thirds are realized in separate parts and in a 3:2 polyrhythm. Its next appearance in m. 46 is orchestrated in the same manner except in a 6:5 polyrhythm this time. Coupled with the 16th notes in both percussion parts, the resulting 6:5:4 polyrhythm is true mayhem. The siren motif gets the last laugh and closes out the movement unaccompanied in the glockenspiel (mm.

69-74). Despite the rest of the ensemble settling onto a comfortable D major chord in m. 70, the glockenspiel does not subside.

Granite, for the most part, can be comfortably categorized as a ternary form. Although it doesn't subscribe to the conventions of key center, there is thematic material that appears at the beginning of the movement, subsides for a while in the middle, and then returns to close out the movement. The A section lasts from mm. 1-39 and contains two repetitions of the main harmonic progression. The first iteration of this progression occurs in mm. 9-10, 13-15, and 19-21; broken up by unpitched percussion and the siren motif as discussed before. Lansky returns to the progression in mm. 27-35 without interruption. However, rather than direct repetition, Lansky adds florid thirty-second-note embellishments in both piano parts, which connect the seemingly disparate harmonies and are reminiscent of Baroque counterpoint. After the ensemble predictably arrives on D major in mm. 34-35, Lansky spends the next four bars transitioning to the B section with a D pedal and the polyrhythmic cacophony that permeates the movement.

The B section (mm. 40-53) is characterized by a new chord progression that only appears once and is unfortunately short-lived. Rather than the chaos and unpredictability that is found elsewhere, the first four bars of the B section are rhythmically stable and triumphant in character. Alongside new harmonies, Lansky adds driving percussion and a fanfare-like melody in the piano part. This is tragically short-lived as the rest of the B section mostly serves as a retransition back to A' in measure 54. This transition once again features fast thirty-second note runs and rhythmic dissonance.

On a first listen, one might not catch the return of the primary chord progression at letter J (A'). The harmonies are concealed by more thirty-second notes and arpeggiation. The only

guiding light offered is the unadorned melodic line in the glockenspiel. The sharp bell sound cuts through the ensemble and clearly outlines the chord progression. Lansky provides one last iteration of the progression in mm. 64-70. In the final presentation, percussion 1 echoes the melody from piano 1 with sixteenth note pulses. There still remains the careful balance of sustained sound from piano 1 and percussion 2, while piano 2 keeps its lower register harmonies short. The movement closes with the eerie siren call from the glockenspiel.

Performance

One of the challenges found in both percussion parts is that Lansky often requires performers to play multiple instruments simultaneously, typically in conflicting rhythmic patterns. A common example of this technique is to have player 1 metals and drums with player 2 on crotales, plus another unpitched instrument (figure 5.2). Or really any of the pitched instruments in conjunction with one or more unpitched instruments. The resulting texture makes it sound as if there are three or four percussionionists rather than two. Lansky often uses this effect to deepen the depth of sound and contribute to the already established theme of rhythmic dissonance in this movement.

The image shows a musical score for four percussion instruments: Mtls. (Metals), Skns. (Skins), Wds. (Woods), and Crot. (Crotales). The score is for measures 24 and 25. Mtls. and Skns. have complex rhythmic patterns with triplets. Wds. has a similar pattern. Crot. has a simpler, more melodic line.

Figure 5.2. Orchestration of various percussion instruments. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 5 mm. 24-25

The challenge for the performer is to ensure that the at-times cacophonous texture does not lead to performance errors. Creating a plan for certain passages will be essential to a successful performance. Letter H, for instance, is particularly volatile. The two pianists are engaged in competing rhythms that will likely be difficult to follow. Both percussionists play different repeating 16th-note patterns. The vibraphone line in percussion 2 should be used as a guiding light, of sorts, to maintain tempo, especially with the subito piano and m. 48, making the listening environment even more difficult. While the marimba pattern in percussion 1 also uses consistent 16th notes, the grouping of said notes emphasizes dotted 8th notes and may not yield as effective results.

Figure 5.3. Sample of “Granite” chord progression. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 5 mm. 5-10

To maintain clarity with the prevalence of thick textures and rapidly changing chromatic harmony, percussion 2 must manage their pedaling technique carefully. At letters A and L, the

length of notes during the harmonic progression is seemingly of great importance to Lansky. As mentioned before, the lower register of the chords played by piano 2 and percussion 1 dissipates quickly (figure 5.3). Lansky asks for piano 2 to deliberately cut off their notes, while the marimba notes will naturally decay. On the other hand, Lansky asks for piano 1 and percussion 2 to allow their notes to ring for their full value. It is important for percussion 2 to quickly reset the pedal just before playing the next chord. The goal of the performer should be to allow the notes to ring for as long as possible and to prevent unwanted dissonance from the previous chord.

Figure 5.4. Harmonic acceleration with arpeggiation. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 5 m. 61

Another passage where pedaling is crucial to sound quality is mm. 54-62. This passage is characterized by fast arpeggios of varying rhythmic speeds from both pianos and vibraphone. Once again, with the saturation of pitch content and frequently changing harmonies, effective pedaling is needed. Through most of this section, the arpeggios are based on a three-note rhythmic pattern, and in those instances, pedaling every dotted 8th note is ideal. In mm. 56-57,

when the harmony changes every downbeat, and the pattern changes as a result, pedaling every quarter note in line with the harmony works best. Finally, in mm. 57, 59, and 61, Lansky rapidly accelerates the progression, resulting in a chord change on every 8th note (figure 5.4). As one might expect, adapting pedaling to match said change will yield the best outcome.

As with every movement in *Textures*, both percussionists are frequently required to change mallets to suit the demands of the situation. For both players, there are many mallet changes needed in *Granite*; however, most of these instances allow the performer ample time to swap implements. Therefore, a detailed discussion on everyone is not necessary. However, there are a few instances that should be addressed.

At the start of the movement, percussion 1 is asked to play the glockenspiel and marimba simultaneously. On its own, this passage does not present any issues. However, immediately after the opening statement concludes, percussion 1 needs 4 marimba mallets available for the chords at letter A. Unfortunately, there is not enough time to both drop and pick up new mallets between beat 3 of m. 8 and beat 1 of m. 9. Instead, by using a six-mallet grip in the left hand, percussion 1 can simply drop the plastic mallet used for the glockenspiel in time for the chords at letter A.

Depending on the performers' grip preference, there are a couple of approaches available. If the performer is using a Musser/Stevens grip, the third mallet should be added underneath the inside left-hand mallet (mallet 2). This process will essentially superimpose a Burton cross-grip onto the inside mallet as detailed by Dean Gronemeier in his 1996 article in "Percussive Notes."⁷¹ This will allow the extra mallet to be easily released from the hand by simply opening up the index finger and thumb. If the performer is using a Burton cross-grip for the 4-mallet passages, adding a third mallet underneath the inside left-hand mallet again allows for an easy

⁷¹ Dean Gronemeier, "Six-Mallet Independence: A New Twist on an Old Idea." *Percussive Notes*

transition to letter A. The performer's proficiency with a 6-mallet grip is irrelevant, as no interval changes or mallet independence are required to perform the passage.

One final consideration for percussion 1 in the opening of *Granite* is the choice of marimba mallets. As mentioned earlier, a graduated set of marimba mallets is generally recommended throughout *Textures* so that every register of the instrument is adequately articulated. The requirements of movement five are no different, as the performer is expected to cover a wide range of the instrument. At the start of the movement, it is recommended that percussion 1 uses a medium rubber mallet for the quarter note triplets as opposed to a yarn mallet. Firstly, this will help with articulating upper range notes on the marimba. Secondly, the slightly sharper attack of the rubber mallet will better match the timbre of the woodblocks played by percussion 2. Ideally, the performer should place this mallet in their outside right-hand position (mallet 4) so that the mallet can be used with the 4-mallet chords at letter A. The added projection may even be a benefit at letter A, bringing out the melodic line that emerges from the chord progression.

Recap

Lansky's command of building a dissipating tension is on full display in movement five, *Granite*. With the combination of rhythmic and pitched dissonance through layers of polyrhythms and jarring intervals a need for resolution is developed. That need is satisfied by through textural and harmonic resolution. The recurring chord progression used throughout movement five is also a bit unpredictable but is comparatively more stable. However, it is the disarray of the dissonance that makes the clarity all the more satisfying. The final element of

note is the siren motif that is indiscriminate in its tendency to interrupt. The oscillating thirds in the glockenspiel are what close the movement out, getting the last word in.

As with many of the movements in *Textures*, the percussionists are asked to frequently asked to play multiple instruments at once in *Granite*. Careful planning on mallet choice and attention to detail on one's touch for different instruments will be key to a successful performance. In addition, the percussion 2's vibraphone pedaling technique and the 32nd arpeggios on marimba are important elements that can determine the quality of a performance if not treated properly. This movement is also yet more evidence of the importance of the marimba and vibraphone to the overall character of sound.

Movement VI – Points of Light

Analysis

In *Points of Light*, the meandering motif, initially introduced in the first movement, becomes an essential element to the music's construction. In fact, the movement functions as a compositional study on the chromatic gesture. This time, G natural is the center. This chromaticism, however, is contrasted by the Pop and Blues influenced harmonic progressions that are scattered throughout the movement. At first, the meandering gesture revolves around F#, G, and A. The first two measures use only those three pitches spread across the four musicians. After a brief period of ambiguity in the first two measures, Lansky confirms G minor in m. 3 with the use of Bb in the vibraphone and piano 2 (figure 6.1). Lansky also combines layers of the meandering motif at different rhythmic speeds. Percussion 1 and 2 remain grounded with 8th notes, while the pianos alternate between 8th notes and 16th notes in opposition. This trading of 16th notes between players becomes the center of attention and a recurring orchestrational

technique. Although there is a recurring textural pattern between the two pianists, Lansky tends to avoid direct repetition. That being said, the movement ends with an almost exact repetition of the first eight measures.

6. Points of Light

♩ = 120

The musical score for "6. Points of Light" by Paul Lansky, measures 1-3, is presented for a percussion ensemble and two pianos. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The time signature is 4/4. The percussion section includes Skins, Marimba, Woods, and Vibraphone. The piano section includes Piano 1 and Piano 2. The Skins part has a simple rhythmic pattern. The Marimba part has a more complex rhythmic pattern. The Woods part has a simple rhythmic pattern. The Vibraphone part has a simple rhythmic pattern. The Piano 1 and Piano 2 parts have a complex rhythmic pattern with arpeggios and a legato marking.

Figure 6.1. Opening three measures of “Points of Light.” *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 6 mm. 1-3

Similar to movement one, Lansky uses both G major and minor. For most of the piece, Lansky merely alternates between the two rather than presenting them simultaneously. After initially beginning the movement in minor, Lansky shifts to G major at letter A. Alongside this tonal shift is a textural change in the pianos. To contrast with the homogenous staccato orchestration, Lansky adds two-measure-long arpeggios with a legato marking. Like the 16th note patterns, the pianists alternate every two measures between staccato 16th notes and legato arpeggios. Alongside this change to G major, there is an interplay between F# and F natural. The

meandering gesture remains present; however, the range of pitches has expanded greatly while remaining centered around G natural.

At letter B, Lansky provides the first harmonic shift away from G. At m. 21, the ensemble shifts to the V (D major). Even though the harmony functions as a V^7 , Lansky still includes both the raised ($C^\sharp$) and lowered ($C^\flat$) seventh of D major. Alongside the change in harmony, Lansky changes to a $\frac{3}{4}$ meter. In addition, Lansky provides orchestrational clarity by temporarily pausing the meandering motif, opting for clearer arpeggiation in piano 1. The rest of the ensemble plays two complementary melodic sequences. The marimba and vibraphone are paired, while piano 2 is given a counter-melody. When the harmony shifts to the IV in mm. 23-24, the two sequences are restated. The V chord returns in mm. 25-26 along with restatements of the original two melodic sequences (figure 6.2).

The image shows a musical score for measures 23-26. The instruments listed on the left are Skns. (Saxophones), Mar. (Marimba), Wds. (Woodwinds), Vib. (Vibraphone), Pno. 1 (Piano 1), and Pno. 2 (Piano 2). The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of arpeggiated chords and melodic lines for each instrument. The harmonic progression is from IV⁷ to V⁷.

Figure 6.2. IV^7 to V^7 harmonic progression. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 6 mm. 24-26

After the V^7 - IV^7 - V^7 progression, Lansky returns to I^7 in m. 27 before returning to V^7 in m. 28. Lansky abandons the melodic sequences in favor of generic arpeggiation from the

vibraphone, marimba, and piano 2. Piano 1, on the other hand, offers ornamentation around the diatonic scales with contrasting stepwise motion. Measures 29-30 shift back to IV⁷ and feature another restatement of the melodic sequence in the vibraphone and marimba.

Figure 6.3. Marimba adds 16ths and ensemble shifts to G major in m. 47. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 6 mm. 45-47

With the conclusion of that phrase, the harmonic movement seen in the previous ten measures comes to a halt. Obfuscated by the chromatic meandering gesture in piano 1, the overall harmonic presentation remains static around the V chord. A D-pedal passes around the ensemble through mm. 31-42 in various forms. Alongside that, the staccato 16ths from piano 1 wander around with A#, B, C, D, and Eb. In m. 43, the tension finally resolves with a return in G minor. The texture here similarly features a pedal tone alongside exchanges of chromatic meandering 16th notes through the ensemble. In this case, it is not just the pianists who partake, but also percussion 1 (figure 6.3). After four measures of G minor, Lansky abruptly shifts to G

major in m. 47. It may, however, be more accurate to say G mixolydian because of the deliberate use of the lowered seventh scale degree (F $\flat$).

At letter F, Lansky brings back the melodic sequence in conjunction with the same V⁷-IV⁷ - V⁷ - I⁽⁷⁾ from earlier in the movement. This time, piano 2 joins the percussionists, playing the vibraphone and marimba lines with their right hand (figure 6.4). Coupled with Lansky's abundant use of the b7 scale degree through movement six, this recurring chord progression is perhaps Lansky's most overt use of Blues inspired harmonic language. While it may be more common for the IV⁷ chord to resolve to I, the movement between V⁷-IV⁷ - V⁷ certainly evokes a similar character. It is the repeating melodic sequence that also adds to the list of evidence. It is also typical for a similar melodic device to be used at the end of a 12-bar Blues form during the V⁷ - IV⁷ before returning to I⁷.

The image shows a musical score for four parts: Marimba (Mar.), Wdr. (Wdr.), Vib. (Vib.), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The score is in 3/4 time and features a repeating melodic sequence across four measures. Piano 2 plays a complex, fast-moving line in the right hand, while the percussionists play a simpler, repeating pattern in the left hand. The key signature is one flat (F major/D minor).

Figure 6.4. Piano 2 and both percussionists align with similar melodic material. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 6 mm. 51-54

After a brief diversion through F minor/major in mm. 58-65, from m. 67 to the end of the movement remains concentrated around G minor with a cacophony of sound. The collision of multiple iterations of the meandering gesture from all four ensemble members is the defining texture of the final passage of *Points of Light*. Instead of alternating the 16ths between piano 1

and 2, both pianists now duel with their own iteration of the meandering motif. At letter J, Lansky begins using octave displacement on some of the 16th and 8th notes, placing them an octave or two octaves away from their original register (figure 6.5). After six measures of chaotic polyphony, the pianists' displacement 16th notes align for one measure as a push towards a cadence (figure 6.6). The cadence is partially evaded on beat four of m. 77, and the meandering gesture continues into the next measure. Measures 78-85 are almost an exact repeat of the first 8 bars of the movement. The pianists are back to trading their 16th notes, and the percussionists simplify their syncopated 8th notes back to their original presentation. Finally, on beat four in the last measure, every pattern reaches its conclusion on a G natural, mirroring the beginning of the movement, which began with a unison G.

Figure 6.5. Octave displacement in piano 1 and 2. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 6 mm. 70-72



Figure 6.6. Brief alignment between both pianists. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 6 mm. 76-77

Performance

A key point of emphasis for the percussionists is the almost homogeneous staccato texture that persists for the entirety of *Points of Light*. While the vibraphone can directly alter the length of notes through manipulation of the sustain pedal, this is not possible on the marimba outside of dead strokes or manually muting the bars. The quick, rhythmic pace of the movement further limits the options. However, instead of shortening the note length, percussion 1 can change the articulation by sharpening their attack. For percussion 1, some medium rubber mallets will do just that on the marimba. Percussion 2 will also want to use harder vibraphone mallets and carefully manage their use of the sustain pedal to match the staccato articulation. Occasionally, Lansky will place a tenuto marking interspersed amongst the sea of staccato notes. It is crucial to provide those tenuto notes with extra weight. On the vibraphone, percussion 2 can briefly press the sustain pedal to extend the note. On the marimba, percussion 1 should apply a slight accent to the tenuto notes, taking care not to overplay. A slight emphasis should be the goal.

Throughout the sixth movement, both percussionists are required to play marimba or vibraphone in conjunction with other unpitched instruments in certain passages. Because of this, important musical material on pitched instruments occasionally has to be performed with one hand, which can compromise note accuracy. Two key examples of this are in mm. 21-26 and 51-56 (figure 6.2). Here, the melodic sequence on the vibraphone and marimba is the primary focus. However, the percussionists must still maintain clear articulation and steady rhythmic pulse on the skins and woodblock.

For movement six, the icarus Quartet adds an additional drum to the percussion 1 setup. Instead of placing the drum next to the other “skins,” it is placed in front of the low end of the marimba, next to the glockenspiel. Because of the demands of the part, the performer can play the drum with their left hand and the marimba with their right hand. The icarus Quartet’s specific drum choice is a Chinese tom, which contrasts with the toms and bongos in percussion 1’s setup.⁷²

Recap

Points of Light centers on a wandering chromatic idea that becomes the driving force of the entire movement. Everything revolves around G, but Lansky constantly shifts between G minor and G major, blending them with hints of pop and blues-inspired harmony. It is the juxtaposition of the disorder of Lansky chromaticism with the grounded harmonic progressions that make this movement so compelling. In the opening, the music is very focused and built from just a few pitches shared across the ensemble. As the movement develops, the texture becomes more animated, especially through the back-and-forth exchange of fast 16th-note patterns

⁷² icarus Quartet, “Textures by Paul Lansky,” YouTube, June 16, 2022

between the pianists. Meanwhile, the percussionists keep a steady rhythmic layer underneath. This interplay creates a flickering, sparkling effect, which fits the title well.

Lansky adds contrast by occasionally stepping away from the dense chromatic texture into clearer harmonic moments. These sections, along with recurring chord patterns that resemble blues progressions, give the movement a more familiar, grounded sound before it slips back into complexity. As the piece moves forward, tension builds through sustained pedal tones and increasingly busy chromatic lines. Eventually, everything intensifies into a dense, chaotic texture where all players layer their own versions of the meandering motif at once. The pianists, instead of trading ideas, now overlap them, pushing toward a brief moment of alignment before the music relaxes again. In the end, Lansky brings the movement full circle by returning to material that closely resembles the opening. The piece resolves cleanly with all performers landing together on G, echoing the very first sound of the movement.

From a performance standpoint, the main challenge is maintaining a clean, consistent staccato articulation at a fast pace. Percussionists, in particular, need careful control of attack and balance when switching between pitched and unpitched instruments or playing important lines with one hand. Both mental and physical dexterity must be achieved for this movement. With proper precision and clarity being the focus, the percussionists should be able to provide the pianists proper support similar to the drummer and auxiliary players in popular music settings.

Movement VII – A flutter, On Edge

Analysis

Movement seven begins as a contradiction to the bright staccato character of *Points of Light*. Rhythmically, there is considerably more space as Lansky opts for whole notes, half notes,

and quarter note triplets instead of 16th and 8 notes. Lansky gives each musician a different ostinato (figure 7.1). The pianists each play whole notes, with piano 2 beginning its cycle on beat 1 and piano 2 on beat 3. With each piano entrance, there is a combination of short and sustained articulation. The left hand in the deep bass register merely pops its note while the right hand holds for the entire note length. The vibraphone fills in beats 2 and 4 with repeating half notes given to percussion 2. The final ingredient is the quarter note triplets on the glockenspiel. Even with the consistent rhythmic patterns, the lethargic character is akin to wading through water.

The musical score for the opening five measures of "A flutter, On Edge." by Paul Lansky is presented in 4/4 time with a tempo of 90 bpm. The score is divided into four staves: Glockenspiel, Vibraphone, Piano 1, and Piano 2. The Glockenspiel part features quarter note triplets, starting on beat 1 and moving up stepwise, with a dynamic marking of *pp* and a *deadpan* articulation. The Vibraphone part plays a half-note ostinato on beats 2 and 4, with a dynamic marking of *pp*. Piano 1 plays a whole-note ostinato, starting on beat 1 and moving up stepwise, with a dynamic marking of *pp*. Piano 2 plays a whole-note ostinato, starting on beat 3 and moving up stepwise, with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The score includes dynamic markings (*pp*, *mp*) and articulation (*deadpan*).

Figure 7.1. Opening five measures of "A flutter, On Edge." *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 mm. 1-5

Lansky's use of polytonality at the beginning of movement seven completes the ethereal aura presented thus far. As the pianists and percussion 2 maneuver through their rhythmic cycles, each player is given a different major chord, seemingly at random. The first four measures showcase a more substantial variety of harmonies, but by the end of m. 4, the pattern becomes consistent. Piano 2 carries the torch from the start by doubling the root and playing the major third of unrelated major chords. Piano 1's first three harmonies pair root and fifth together, but

make the switch to root and major third in measure 4. Percussion 2, at first, utilizes a variety of intervals: major third, major seventh, perfect fifth, and major sixth. As expected, on beat 4 of m. 4, the major third is confirmed. Percussion 1 is the only one with an unchanging collection of pitches. The glockenspiel, played by percussion 1, stays rooted to four pitches: C, D, E, and F#. Not only is there no discernible pattern within each instrument's harmonic progression, but there is also no consistent relationship between each entry. There are occasional moments of alignment, like m. 4, where each player eventually connects on G major. Or the downbeat of m. 5 when piano 2 lands on an E major chord supported by the E natural from the glockenspiel.

The opening of *A flutter, On Edge*, begins with a texture and character entirely different from the majority of the rest of the movement. Lansky has employed this technique in a previous movement. Movement four, *Slither*, similarly begins with orchestration and harmonic structure that contrasts with the preceding music. However, the opening of movement four essentially functions as a short nine-measure introduction. Taking into account movement seven's slower tempo and the fact that things don't "get going" until at least m. 17, this introduction potentially carries more significance than its counterpart. Its purpose is not within the polytonal harmonic language but comes from the rhythmic progression.



Figure 7.2. First use of a "fluttering motif." *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov, 7 mm. 17-20

By tracking the staccato bass notes from the two pianists, one can see Lansky's use of rhythmic acceleration as a form of motivic development. In m. 12, piano 1 increases their rate of progression from whole notes to half notes. At m. 15 (letter A), piano 2 increases the pace to half note triplets while maintaining the staccato articulation. Piano 2 continues the progression by switching to quarter notes in m. 17 signalling the completion of the process. The sequence of metric modulations feels like the gradual acceleration of a locomotive. Perhaps this is referenced by a portion of the title: "on edge." Along with piano 2's quarter notes in m. 17, piano 1 also introduces a new motif. Two beats of 16th notes containing a sequence of parallel fourths that is reminiscent of the fluttering of wings (figure 7.2). Piano 2 responds with their own sequence two measures later, and piano 1 overlaps slightly with a repeat of its first pattern.

The call-and-response continues in mm. 21-23, but with more frequent iterations of the motif (figure 7.3). This time, the motivic progression is not related to rhythmic acceleration, but with the increased amount and frequency of outbursts of thematic material.

The image shows a musical score for measures 21-23 of 'Textures' by Paul Lansky, movement 7. The score is written for four instruments: Maracas (Mar.), Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). Measures 21 and 22 are marked with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) instruction. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including staccato articulation, and a 'fluttering motif' consisting of parallel fourths in 16th notes. The score is presented in a standard musical notation format with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

Figure 7.3. Overlapping iterations of the "fluttering motif." *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 mm. 21-23

In m. 24, the 16th figures devolve into major seventh chord arpeggios first played by piano 1, with percussion 1 joining in m. 25. *A flutter, On Edge* and *Slither* share another common element, which is the abundance of the major seventh harmony. After the turbid harmonic maneuvering at the start of the movement, clarity is finally achieved. At m. 24, the major seventh chord becomes the primary sonic color in Lansky's palette. And much like *Slither*, Lansky chromatically weaves together iterations of the harmony. Measures 25-27 put the major seventh chord arpeggios in the foreground as Lansky moves from Bb^{maj7} to $B\flat^{maj7}$ and back to Bb^{maj7} . In m. 28, Lansky brings back the fluttering 16th notes with the support of unpitched percussion that mirror the pattern. Percussion 1 matches the fluttering 16th notes on the highest two "skins" in mm. 37-39. Lansky swaps from drums to the two lowest woodblocks in m. 40 played by percussion 2 before switching back to percussion 1 on the two lowest metals in mm. 41-44. Throughout this process, the contour of piano 2's pattern and the percussionists are in unison (figure 7.4). In mm. 39-41, he combines the arpeggios and fluttering 16th notes, all while continuing the use of major seventh chords.



Figure 7.4. Similar rhythm and shape between percussion 1 and piano 2. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 m. 37

At letter D (m. 45), another flutter-like gesture is introduced as the pianists alternate short bursts of 32nd notes (figure 7.5). For piano 1, each group of 32nd notes moves up a whole step before resetting at the beginning of each measure. Piano 2, on the other hand, moves up a whole step only on beat 2, while beats 1 and 3 are the same. Along with this addition, Lansky shifts to F^{min7} after the progression of Eb^{maj7} - G^{maj7} - B^{maj7} - Bb^{maj7} - A^{maj7} in mm. 39-44. However, the F^{min7} chord played by the vibraphone contrasts with the A naturals from piano 1. F minor receives additional support with the 16th arpeggios played by percussion 1 on marimba. While maintaining the 32nd note fluttering gesture, the harmony gradually increases in dissonance in mm. 48-50.

Figure 7.5. New “fluttering motif.” *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 m. 43-45

The 16th-note fluttering gesture returns at letter E (mm. 51-58), with another element that echoes the beginning of the movement. While the staccato 16th notes from the pianos seem to indicate Db^{maj9} , percussion 2 obscures this harmony. Through mm. 51-58, the vibraphone plays repeating half-notes on beats 2 and 4 in the manner of the beginning of the movement. These vibraphone half notes mostly support the prevailing Db major temperament but occasionally disrupts with non-chord tones. The nebulous harmonic character pairs well with the half-time rhythmic feel from the pianos, creating a dreamy affectation similar to the opening statement.

Lansky brings back the fluttering 32nd notes in m. 59 while also returning to F minor. Interestingly, the marimba plays G#, the enharmonic equivalent to Ab. The change at letter F is heightened by the subito forte following the tranquil piano dynamic marking from two measures prior. Lansky continues building intensity to reach the climax of the movement in mm. 63-66. Here, the 32nd notes are isolated to piano 1 but continue to cycle through the pattern unabridged. With piano 2's hands free, both percussion and piano 2 realize the progression of Bb^{min7} - Bb⁷ - Bb^{min7} - Bb⁷ with scales and arpeggios, respectively. After reaching the peak at mm 63-66, the movement begins to wind down in m. 68. Measures 69-73 feature a descending progression of augmented triads. Piano 1 embellishes the descent by arpeggiating the triads and adding to the fortspinnung character. The movement closes with an extended presentation of overlapping ostinatos that are strikingly static when compared to the preceding music.

Once the rhythmic and harmonic structure has unraveled, letter I to the end of the movement consists of contrasting rhythmic patterns given to three of the ensemble members. Piano 1 does not take part but continues its motivic unwinding in mm. 74-77. Piano 2 and percussion 1 and 2 are each given a distinct ostinato pattern. Piano 2 simply repeats the grouping of one 16th note and one 8th note without variation (figure 7.6). Percussion 1 plays a pattern in 7/8 17 times beginning in m. 74 and concluding after the last iteration in m. 88 (figure 7.7). The ostinato is played on the metal instruments so the performer must take care not to overplay. Percussion 2, beginning on beat 2 of m. 75 plays a pattern in 15/16 a total of 15 times (figure 7.8). Technically the last version of the pattern is cut short but is the last utterance of movement seven.



Figure 7.6. Piano 2 ostinato. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 m. 74



Figure 7.7. Percussion 1 ostinato. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 m. 74

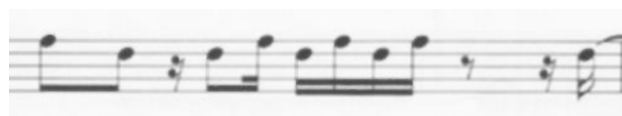


Figure 7.8. Percussion 2 ostinato. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 m. 79

Performance

While percussion 1 plays the exact same notes each time, percussion 2 slightly changes the contour in each repetition. Despite the slight alterations, only the highest two woodblocks are used. Because of the challenging syncopated rhythms, performers may have some difficulty aligning the patterns depending on each individual's rhythmic interpretation. In this passage, it is important for the musicians to iterate without inflection ensuring even rhythmic presentation. In addition, performers should indicate in their score instances of alignment or when someone else plays on an easy to find downbeat. One such example could be beat 4 of m. 82 where both percussion patterns reset at the same time. Finally, along with even rhythmic interpretation, the ensemble should maintain an even dynamic level. It serves to evoke the unmoving character that contrasts well with the rest of the movement.

Often accompanying the 16th note fluttering motif is percussion 1 on the “skins.” At letter C, for instance, the top two drums are playing at pianissimo alongside piano 2’s staccato 16th notes. The same pattern is repeated in mm. 41-44, this time on two metal instruments. In both cases, the performer should utilize double strokes to avoid hand crossing. The same sticking approach would be ideal at letter E except for the glockenspiel whole notes on the downbeat that interrupt the drums. To play both, percussion 1 can either play all of the drum notes in the right hand, leaving the left hand for the glockenspiel. Or they can bring their left hand over from the glockenspiel to the drums after striking on the down beat. At letter F, there is no longer a choice as the marimba notes occur on every beat with the drums filling in the remaining 16th notes (figure 7.9). In order to facilitate the quick motion across the two low drums, percussion 1 should allow their right wrist to rotate slightly as they move from drum to drum. If the performer only uses vertical motion in their stroke, unnecessary amounts of energy will be used.



Figure 7.9. Rhythmic pattern from marimba and drums. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 mm. 59-60

At letter G, the drum pattern becomes slightly more involved. In this case, percussion 1 is longer directly accompanying another instrument. The pattern repeats every 2 beats and may put the performer in an awkward position. Regardless of whether the player leads with their right or left hand, double strokes should be used on the consecutive high and low drum notes (figure 7.10).

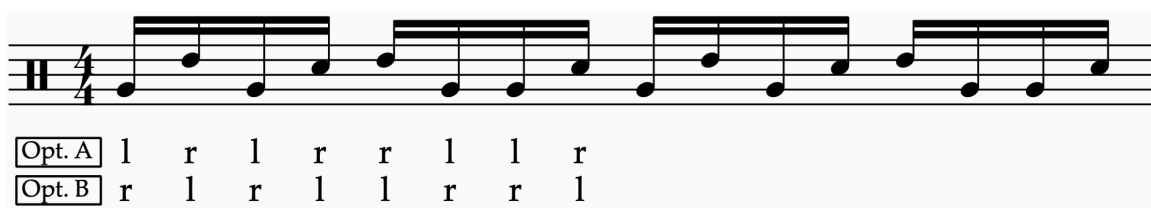


Figure 7.10. Sticking diagram for percussion 1's drum pattern.

Throughout movement seven, when both percussionists are given 16th note arpeggios it is recommended to use alternate sticking beginning with the left hand. Percussion 1 is given the first of these arpeggios in mm. 24-27. At this time in the piece the performer should be able to hold 4 yarn mallets to accomplish the task. However, because of the prevalence of material played on the metal and skin instruments, rubber mallets should be the main implement of choice for percussion 1. This is, of course, taking into account the plastic mallets for the glockenspiel. Furthermore, the specific choice of rubber mallets should not be too hard to avoid damage to the low end of the marimba in mm. 47-48. Depending on the choice of metal instruments, the rubber mallets should also be adequate in that instance as well. If a sharper articulation is desired, the mallets may be flipped and played using the shaft.

Recap

A flutter, On Edge, starts in a surprisingly calm and spacious way, especially compared to the fast, bright energy of the previous movement. The rhythm feels stretched out and almost heavy, with each instrument repeating its own pattern, creating a slow, floating texture. Despite the lethargic opening the movement begins to “wake up” as the piano parts speed up step by step, building momentum. This leads into a key idea of the movement: a fluttering, wing-like motif

made of fast notes that bounce between the instruments in a call-and-response style. The various iterations of this fluttering motif are essential to the character of *A flutter, On Edge*.

As the movement develops, the texture becomes more active and intense. The harmony settles somewhat around major seventh chords, which give the music an openness that contrasts with the opening on the movement. Lansky layers different fluttering figures, arpeggios, and rhythmic patterns, while also shifting between pitched and unpitched sounds. The result is a constantly evolving, energetic texture that builds toward a climax. After this peak, the music gradually winds down. The ending strips things back into overlapping, repeating rhythmic patterns that feel more mechanical and static. Each performer locks into their own cycle, creating a complex but steady groove that fades out without a dramatic conclusion.

For the percussionists, the movement is rhythmically demanding. Players need strong precision and coordination to keep the interlocking patterns aligned, especially in the final section where different time groupings overlap. Percussionists also have to manage quick transitions between instruments and techniques, while keeping their sound controlled and balanced within the ensemble.

Overall, this movement is less about melody and more about texture, rhythm, and gradual transformation. Movement seven lives up to its title with music that feels like it's constantly fluttering, shifting, and slightly on edge.

Movement VIII – Round-Wound

Analysis

The eighth movement, *Round-Wound*, is strikingly different in character from the previous seven movements. While tumultuous, *Round-Wound* is melancholic and lyrical. The overall sound of the eighth movement is also darker and freely utilizes the low register of the marimba and piano. The liberal application of the low end of the piano could be a reference to the title of the movement. The lowest strings of a piano have extra copper wire wrapped around the standard piano wire. In addition, the term round-wound refers to a specific method for making the strings of an electric bass.⁷³ Therefore, it is no surprise that the meter and rhythmic structure of the eighth movement are controlled and led by a succession of bass notes that oscillate between the two piano parts and are supported by the marimba (figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1. Overlapping ostinatos. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 7 mm. 6-7

⁷³ Strings Direct, “Round Wound vs. Flat Wound Strings: What Is the Difference?,” Strings Direct, August 29, 2023

Unlike the harmonic ambiguity elsewhere in the piece, *Round-Wound* has more defined key centers. The piece begins and ends in D minor and features a clear theme carried by the haunting melody of the glockenspiel and vibraphone. Like before, the eighth movement utilizes a repeated harmonic progression; this time, it is driven by the bass ostinato and is more conventionally tonal. After a four-measure introduction meditation on a D drone played by the glockenspiel and bowed vibraphone, the full ensemble enters in measure five. Although we are in D minor, the effect of non-chord tones creates a sonic palette that is reminiscent of a moody jazz ballad. The harmony in the inner voices remains unchanged in mm. 5-7 despite the bass ostinato alternating between D and C (except in the marimba part)(figure 8.1). This stagnation, combined with the slow tempo and melodic rhythm, lends a mournful or lamenting character. In m. 8, Lansky stays consistent on the i chord before finally arriving at a satisfactory harmonic change on beat 2 of the same measure. The shift to VI in beat 2 of m. 8 into iv in m. 9 hints at a powerful predominant-dominant function that Lansky satiates in m. 10 with a V⁷ chord before resolving back to i in m. 11. Lansky undercuts the resolution by returning to the dominant in m. 12 and standing on V⁷ until m. 18, when he finally returns to i.

The potential influence of the jazz idiom is once again present in the opening of this movement, not only with the lush color of the harmonies but also in the melodic content. The melody in the glockenspiel and vibraphone emphasizes non-chord tones, especially in the slower tempo. When Lansky finally lands on the V⁷ chord in m. 10, the melody firmly protests with a C natural. The clash between the C natural and an A dominant seventh chord is reminiscent of the frequent use of the flat third in jazz. When Lansky returns to the V⁷ in m. 12, so does the melodic line return to the C natural as if to confirm Lansky's choice. The resulting V^{7#9} chord will return in every repetition of the opening theme.

After the confirming cadence in mm. 18-20, Lansky once again questions the resolution. A lone D minor chord with an added raised scale degree 7 negates the conclusion of the phrase and leads into the next iteration of the opening chord progression. In m. 24, Lansky returns to the familiar opening character; however, this time it is modulated to F minor. Aside from this change, this is mostly an exact repetition of the primary theme. Once again, upon arriving at the V^7 chord, the melody lands on Eb over a C^7 , continuing the earlier trend. The ensemble traverses through the harmonic progression until arriving at yet another minor third with an added raised scale degree 7 in mm. 36-37. This time, the harmony is played twice, drawing more attention to itself. In mm. 38-42, Lansky hints at a possible return to D minor, but it is Db minor that houses the main themes' return in m. 43.

The primary progression is repeated, but Lansky surprises us in m. 51 by dropping out the percussion, leaving the pianos with entirely new material. Measures 51-66 serve as a palette cleanser, starkly contrasting with the main theme. The harmonic progression in this “B” section is built on the minor chord with a raised seventh that was foreshadowed earlier in the movement. Lansky presents this chord several times in this section, and often chromatically resolves the harmony to a dominant chord a half step below. From mm. 51-55, the ensemble slowly slides down, chromatically alternating between minor-major seventh chords and dominant seventh chords. These chords are presented without embellishment, first in the piano 2 part, then in both piano parts. Atop the cascading progression, the marimba arpeggiates the gradual change with highly virtuosic 32nd note runs up the instrument. Upon reaching the final dominant chord of this phrase, Lansky makes sure to include the clash between the raised and lowered 3rd of the altered harmony. Once again, in reference to the previous treatment of the dominant, the lowered 3rd in the chord is emphasized by repeated 16th notes in percussion 1.

More virtuosic 32nd notes in mm. 56-59 from the full ensemble hints at a return to D minor. The resolution is granted in m. 60, but not without the raised seventh (C#) that taunts the audience once again. It is first presented as an inversion in m. 60 and then in root position in m. 61. Despite the resolution, the vibraphone continues its 32nd note ornamentation and, in fact, will continue to do so until the end of the movement. Measure 67 not only confirms D minor but also the return of the main theme. Along with the bass ostinato and slow-moving melody in the glockenspiel, the hocketed 16th notes in the inner voices have also returned. The only change in texture is the vibraphone's 16th notes, which help drive the ensemble forward to the close of the movement. In m. 75, the marimba joins the vibraphone with its own 32nd note pattern that also continues until the end of the movement. The pianos, on the other hand, reach their conclusion in m. 79; firmly standing on a fifth of D and A in the low register. The harmony, as before, oscillates between piano 1 and 2 until the final utterance occurs in m. 86 is finally uninterrupted.

While the harmonic structure of the eighth movement is more conventional, the formal structure is less so. Because of the slow tempo and brooding bass ostinato, the eighth movement is reminiscent of a passacaglia or a chaconne. However, Lansky, influenced by jazz and popular music, bases the movement's structure on strophic song form. The main thematic material is a chorus that is repeated three times in mm. 5-21, 24-37, and 43-49; each in a different key area. Between each repetition is transitional material that serves as the verse, bringing us back to the chorus. The contrasting character mm. 51-66 is reminiscent of and functions similarly to a bridge in popular music. The chorus, so to speak, returns in m. 67 and provides one more iteration of the main theme before fading out in the home key. The combination of musical forms and compositional techniques from popular music and the baroque period makes for a compelling end to the piece.

Performance

The eighth movement, *Round-Wound*, embraces oversaturation and dense texture. The main theme comprises three elements: a bass ostinato, a slow, haunting melody, and hocketed inner notes (figure 8.1). This presents a challenge to the performers as they must not overpower the glockenspiel/vibraphone line with the full richness of the piano and marimba. Lansky alleviates this pressure through his orchestration of the main theme area. Instead of constant 16th notes being provided by the inner voices, the rhythms are offset and hocketed, so while there is always sound occurring on each 16th note pulse, there is space in between notes to help provide clarity. The melody is also intentionally given to the glockenspiel and vibraphone. Even with the mellow mallet selection used by Hammer/Klavier in their 2013 recording, the glockenspiel is still able to sing over the darker timbre of the piano and marimba.⁷⁴ Lansky ensures that each element of the main theme is clearly heard while also providing a full, rich sound that matches the harmonic character.

Because of the demands of this movement, discussion of mallet choice is less centered on the mechanics of switching implements and more on the actual choices performers make. Percussion 2 plays vibraphone for the entirety of the 8th movement; however, that does not mean that the same mallets should be used for the duration. At the beginning of the movement, while percussion 2 plays the melody alongside the glockenspiel, a softer vibraphone mallet would be ideal. Given the sonic character of the accompaniment and the fact that there is a great deal of space between strikes, a mallet designed for sharp articulation would not suit the needs of this section of the piece. It would unnecessarily stick out of the texture. The same sentiment should be shared by percussion 1 in regards to their choice of mallet for the glockenspiel. Using a softer

⁷⁴ Hammer/Klavier, *Paul Lansky: Textures and Threads*, (2013)

plastic mallet will help the glockenspiel blend with the vibraphone and the piano/marimba accompaniment.

To contrast with the softer mallets used in the first half of the movement, percussion 2 will want to switch to a harder cord mallet from m. 57 to the end of the piece (figure 8.3). Without this change, it will be difficult for the 32nd notes to speak clearly. That said, the performer should also consider Lansky's legato marking and find a balance between attack and tone. Regardless of the performer's choice of mallets, percussion 2 should also make sure that every measure includes a reset of the sustain pedal in accordance with Lansky's phrase markings.



Figure 8.3. Repeating melodic pattern from the vibraphone. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 8 mm. 60-61

Combined with the performers' choice of implements is the incredible importance of touch. The difficulty that arises for percussionists when tasked with performing on multiple instruments simultaneously has been discussed extensively in this document. For percussion 1, this movement is no exception. While the other performers in the ensemble have their roles clearly defined, with percussion 2 and the pianos presenting the melody and accompaniment respectively, percussion 1 is asked to do both. Percussion 1's right hand plays the main melody on the glockenspiel, and the left hand is assigned an ostinato accompaniment line designed to blend with the pianos' own ostinato (figure 8.1). To accomplish this, percussion 1 should use a 4-mallet grip in their left hand, so that a soft yarn mallet for the bass notes and a medium mallet for the middle and upper register of the marimba.

Even with the perfect mallets, however, a successful performance will depend on percussion 1's touch. The marimba ostinato covers a wide range of the instrument, and the player has to move quickly from the middle of the instrument to the low D every time the pattern repeats (figure 8.1). The fast velocity required to hit the correct notes may occasionally cause some notes to be played too loudly (faster velocity = more sound). Percussion 1 should use a relaxed piston stroke to help with the transition between notes. At times when a quick movement is required, it is imperative that the performer decelerate their stroke at the correct time to achieve note accuracy and dynamic balance. Lastly, percussion 1 must ensure that the marimba ostinato does not interfere with the rendering of the melodic line on the glockenspiel. Touch and limb independence are key.



Figure 8.4. 32nd note arpeggios on the marimba. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 8 m. 53

At letter E, percussion 1 should consider swapping to more articulate yarn mallets for the 32nd-note arpeggios in mm. 53-59. For ease of performance, percussion 1 and percussion 2 should experiment to find the optimal sticking for this passage. While the choice of sticking is often a matter of personal preference, there are a few suggestions that may improve note accuracy. In m. 53, percussion 1 should be holding 4 mallets and begin this phrase with their right hand and continue alternating between their inside mallets (mallets 2 and 3) as they move up the instrument (figure 8.4). However, player 1 may want to consider adding a double lateral

stroke somewhere within the pattern to allow the left hand additional time to return to the low register of the marimba. Measure 54 can be played without this additional consideration.

At letter F, percussion 1 should utilize double lateral strokes to navigate through a continued barrage of arpeggios. Beginning with the 32nd notes at m. 57 that continue until the end of the movement, percussion 2 may use either a 2- or 4-mallet setup. Similarly to percussion 1 in m. 53, the arpeggios on vibraphone in mm. 57-59 can be played by alternating the inside mallets and adding some double laterals when needed. Both percussionists must commit to the decrescendo to piano at 59, and percussion 2 may want to clear the sustain pedal to ensure the letter G is not covered by unwanted residual resonance. At letter H, the glockenspiel is the last instrument left playing the melody of the main theme while percussion 2 maintains a repeating 32nd note ostinato pattern. The melody vanishes entirely at letter I, when percussion 1 joins in with their own 32nd note ostinato (figure 8.5).

The image displays a musical score for four instruments: Marimba (Mar.), Vibraphone (Vib.), Piano 1 (Pno. 1), and Piano 2 (Pno. 2). The score spans measures 74 to 115. The Marimba part begins with a melodic line in measure 74, followed by a dense 32nd-note ostinato starting at measure 115, marked 'pp to end'. The Vibraphone part features arpeggiated figures in measure 74 and continues with a 32nd-note ostinato from measure 115, also marked 'pp to end'. Piano 1 plays a melodic line in measure 74 and then a 32nd-note ostinato from measure 115, marked 'pp to end'. Piano 2 plays a melodic line in measure 74 and then a 32nd-note ostinato from measure 115, marked 'pp to end'. The score is marked with a decrescendo to piano (pp) at measure 115.

Figure 8.5. Ostinatos and 32nds combine to usher the ending of the movement. *Textures* by Paul Lansky, mov. 8 mm. 74-75

Despite *Round Wound* having clear thematic material and displaying a dichotomy between melody and accompaniment, it is fitting that the movement, and therefore the piece, closes with the amalgamation of ostinatos. In other words, at the end of the piece, we are simply left with sonic texture. It is particularly noteworthy that the percussionists close the piece on marimba and vibraphone, given their importance to the piece and the artform. The instrument choice also highlights compelling timbral blend of keyboard instruments between percussionist and pianist.

Recap

The eighth movement, “*Round-Wound*,” from *Textures* contrasts with earlier movements by adopting a darker, more lyrical, and melancholic character. It emphasizes low-register sounds in the piano and marimba, with a bass-driven ostinato shaping the rhythm and structure. Unlike previous harmonic ambiguity, this movement is tonally grounded in D minor, and features a recurring theme led by glockenspiel and vibraphone. While the harmony follows more conventional progressions, Lansky incorporates jazz-like elements, such as non-chord tones and altered dominant chords, creating a moody, expressive sound. The movement also blends classical and popular influences, resembling both a passacaglia and a strophic song form. The main theme (like a “chorus”) repeats in different keys, separated by transitional “verse-like” sections, and includes a contrasting “bridge.” The piece ultimately returns to D minor and fades out with layered ostinatos.

Performance-wise, the *Round Wound* requires a careful balance so the melody is not overwhelmed by dense textures. Percussionists must make thoughtful mallet choices and maintain precise control of touch, especially when managing multiple roles (melody and

accompaniment simultaneously). Technical challenges include rapid 32nd-note passages, wide movement across instruments, and coordination between parts.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY

The history of percussion is both long and recent. Various forms of implementation and cultural significance have existed in music for thousands of years. At the same time, its use in Western classical music has been limited until the last hundred years. The works for two pianos and percussion are a prime example of, and a catalyst for, the development of the art form that accelerated in the twentieth century. Beginning with Bartok, Stravinsky, and others, one can see how composers began to incorporate percussion into their serious chamber works in various ways. While the evolution of the instrument through percussion ensemble and solo literature has certainly been discussed in academic circles, the works of two pianos and two percussionists are no less valuable and warrant serious attention. If anything Bartok's inclusion of percussion into chamber works like *Sonata for two Pianos and Percussion* predate many of the percussion ensemble works considered foundational to the percussion canon. Despite the genre's early entry, it did not truly hit its stride until the 2000s mostly due to the prolific work of the Yarn/Wire ensemble. Even still, newer works showcase the progression that percussion has made when compared to the accompanimental role given by Bartok. *Textures* is indicative of this phenomenon.

A major leap in instrumentation that occurred from 1939 to 2013 is the dominance of the marimba and vibraphone in the percussion sphere. Both the marimba and vibraphone have become the primary avenue for playing pitched music. Bartok, drawing upon his experience with orchestral percussion, uses the timpani the most out of all the instruments in the percussion section. The only keyboard instrument included in the Bartok *Sonata* is the xylophone. In contrast, *Textures* features four (marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel, crotales), providing the percussionists with the opportunity to present a greater share of the pitched musical material that would have previously been reserved for the pianists. From the noise makers to equal members of the ensemble.

Lansky, however, does not purely abandon the unpitched or indefinite-pitched families of percussion instruments. Even with new-found freedom, the percussionist still must master the art of noise. In *Textures* the battery of sounds outside of the keyboard instruments emphasize the percussionist's curation of artful noise. Instead of relying on orchestral staples like bass drum, snare drum, triangle, and tambourine, Lansky allows the player to find their own "right" sound. The instrument families utilized highlight the potential possibilities available to the modern percussionist. It also allows for unrefined versions of these sounds to be celebrated. For example, the inclusion of slats, that are simple planks of wood, alongside a refined wooden instrument like woodblocks. Lansky is allowing the percussionists to choose their instruments, providing a greater sense of agency to the musicians on the finished product in the same way that giving the percussionists a larger share of the thematic material does.

Aside from instrumentation, *Textures* showcases the advancements in technique on a variety of instruments. The most obvious case is the frequent use of 4-mallet technique throughout the piece. There is no single movement where it is not either required or

recommended for one of the percussionists to use a 4-mallet grip at some point. Despite not being a percussionist, Lansky also has an above-average understanding of the technical capabilities of 4-mallet technique. The composer relies on the performers ability to execute difficult combinations of various stroke types: double lateral and triple lateral strokes. Lansky also includes extended techniques like the bowing of vibraphone bars for a pure sustain timbre with no attack. Lansky also pushes the limits by often requiring multiple instruments with different implements to be played at the same time.

Lansky is far from the only composer to write music for percussion that innovates on the limits of performance. However, Lansky is able to compose music that pushes boundaries while remaining idiomatic. His connection to the artform begins before he ever wrote for percussion in the first place with his computer music that is full of artful noise. It is no wonder that he found a niche writing music for the noisemakers of the world.

Paul Lansky's *Textures* is a piece that lives up to its name. Even with four musicians, the layers of sound that Lansky provides transform the chamber ensemble into something far more lavish. The careful balancing of a vast palette of colors is a special aspect of the work. Despite remaining grounded in conventional modes of performance and tonality, Lansky is still able to create a unique character study within each movement. Even without narrative, the movements take on a life of their own. Through this innovation Lansky furthers the sonic potential of combining piano and percussion. Bartok inspired several generations of performers and composers through his groundbreaking composition *Sonata for two Pianos and Percussion*. Hopefully, new generations of artists will be inspired in the same manner through the innovations and artistry in Paul Lansky's *Textures*.

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APPENDIX A



April 24, 2026

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APPENDIX B

List of Works for Two Pianos and Two Percussion

Adamthwaite, T.V.	Twitch	2017
Andrews, Charles	Pop Goes the What?	2011
Angelakis, Ioannis	Hell's Kitchen	2016
Aoki-Navarro, Fernanda	Experimentine	2012
Arrigo-Nelson, John	fluttuazione/attimo	2008
Arrigo-Nelson, John	Lacrimosa risoluta	2015
Baldi, Zeno	Laminar Flow	2020-21
Barreau, Gisèle	Blue Rain for Two Pianos and Percussion	1998
Barros, Barnardo	broken	2016
Bartok, Bela	Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion	1937
Barzegar, Nina	Chronoception	2022
Behzadi, Ashkan	Petunia	2018
Berio, Luciano	Linea	1973
Bird, David	Mediums	2015
Block, Olivia	Calibration Circle	2016
Boyce, Douglas	A Winter's Journey	2018
Braxton, Tyondai	Music for Pitch Shifter and Delay	2013
Bresnick, Martin	Hagyaték (Legacy)	2024
Bryan, Courtney	Sweet Chariot	2010
Busch, Erin	Thread	2022
Callery, Eoin	Pangenesiis	2013
Carson, Benjamin	Archives at Ninua	2022
Carter, Ryan	Filthy Machines	2007
Carter, Ryan	When All Else Fails	2018

Cendo, Raphaël	Direct Action	2015
Cetiz, Mahir	Kekeme	2010
Christie, Alex	Bonneville Salt and Glass	2012
Christie, Alex	Paranoia in the Expanded Field	2016
Cheah, Victoria	Ocean Into Wire	2021-22
Cheung, Anthony	Tactile Values	2023
Chung, Max	thunderstorm	2018
Cleare, Ann	I should live in wires for leaving you behind	2015
Connelly, Brendan	Quartet 1 (for Yarn/Wire)	2008
Corder, Nathan	Spilling	2023
Cox, Jessie	Mirror Blown Into Pieces	2022
Crumb, George	Music For A Summer Evening (Makrok III)	1973
Cuong, Viet	Cloak of Night	2024
Davachi, Sarah	Feedback studies for percussion	2021-22
Davis, Nathan	de clocher à clocher	2012
Del Pino, Francisco	Hidra	2022
Desiato, Giuseppe	De animalibus obsolescentis	2018
Devorah, Rachel	alberene	2017
Diaz, James	negative mercury	2022-23
Di Ponio, Joseph	Chora	2010
DiCatri, Zosha	Tachitipo	2016
Diels, Natacha	Panik (bread)	2012
Donatoni, Franco	Cloches III	1991
Dorfan, Ben	Vigil/Puzzle Riffs	2022
Dugger, Edwin	Zum Tanzen #9	2009
Dupuis, Alexander	untitled	2018
Dykstra, Jordan	Pitiless as the Sun	2022
Einbond, Aaron	Passagework	2010
Ergün, Cenk	Solus	2012

Evans, Peter	Returns	2013
Eyaguirre, M.Y.	Nanai	2018
Fell, Mark	Core, Self, Oscillation	2015
Flynn, Seamus	Escape Valve	2018
Franzson, Davíð	The Negotiation of Context B	2009
Gallo, Ricardo	Transient Concessions	2017
Galvao, Martim Schneider	on/off	2018
Gervasoni, Stefano	Sviete Tihi Capriccio Dopo La Fantasia	2005-06
Gordon, Michael	Material	2016
Grisey, Gérard	Stele	1995
Guadarrama, Andres	Como hilos de viento y luz	2021
Haas, Georg Friedrich	...Schatten...durch unausdenkliche Wälder	1992
Harlan, Andrew	Dimanche	2023
Hay, Alexandra	Piano Pieces	2013
Helgeson, Aaron	If where is of to why	2008
Heiniger, Wolfgang	Neumond	2018
Hennies, Sarah	Primers	2019
Higdon, Jennifer	Turbo Shift (A Crafter's Workshop)	2024
Higgins, Patrick	Three Lines of Flight	2019
Hough, Matthew	When They Say My Number	2006
House, Brian	Double Pincer	2018
Iglesia, Dan	Cardinality Aleph Two	2010
Issacson, Kurt	in the dark air, interfering with the proje	2013
Jacobs, Bryan	Un Mis Mix	2024
Jarrell, Michael	Rhizomes	1993
Jessen, Dana	This person would be an animal	2012
Kaczmarek, Konrad	Click Trap	2012

Kapustin, Nikolai	Concerto for Two Percussion and Piano	2002
Kim, Seong Ae	Frosted Dawn	2024
Koontz, Daniel	Flywheel	2014
Lamb, Catherine	curvo totalitas v 1 and 2	2016
Lang, Klaus	molten trees	2017
Langdon, Jack	It's All Real	2021-22
Lansky, Paul	Textures	2013
Laurello, Michael	Big Things	2021
Lefkowitz, David	Calder's Closet	
Leroux, Philippe	M	1995
Lewis, George	Into the Breach	2016
Lin, Mei-Fang	Yarny/Wiry	2007
Linberg, Magnus	Related Rocks	1997
Littwin, Hope	Psalm	2022
Lockwood, Annea	Into the Vanishing Point	2019
Lorusso, Giulia	Grain Stream	2022
Lou, Michelle	Diferrent Furs	2017
Luna-Mega, Christopher	The arrow of time	2016
Lutoslawski, Witold arr. For two pianos and percussion by Marta Ptasazynska	Variations of a Theme by Paganini	1941, arr. ?
Macklay, Sky	First Seven Words of Christ	2012
Makarome, Tony	The Ballad of Uncle Bobby	2012
Margolis, Emil	Unease and Disorder in the Lost and Found	2012
Martinaitayte, Zibuokle	Unique Forms	2017
Maslanka, David	This is the World	2009
McIntosh, Andrew	Hyenas in the Temples of Pleasure	2012
McIntosh, Andrew	Little Jimmy	2020
McKnight, Lucy	aching afterlight	2022

Meadowcroft, Thomas	Walkman Antiquarian	2013
Meadowcroft, Thomas	Forward Through Circles	2021
Meadowcroft, Thomas	Another Children's Television	2021
Meier, Manuela	Otherwise	2017
Mendoza, Kevin	Sinthome	2013
Mincek, Alex	Pendulum VI: "Trigger"	2010
Mincek, Alex	Images of Duration (In homage to Ellsworth Kelly)	2016
Mochizuki, Misato	le Monde des Ronds et des Carres	2015
Molk, Dave	The Mice in Men	2012
Monhardt, Jonathan	Microstructures II	2011
Moore, Ted	eyes may be impaired	2012
Morrison, Tom	piano, piano	2022
Munro, Ian	Behold, Behemoth	2012
Muntz, Mat	The magical realism of an Adriatic evening	2023
Murail, Tristan	Travel Notes	2015
Nail, Ashley	Hell is a Circle	2012
Nataraja, Dionysus	Marsinah's Pendulum	2023
Neal, Kate	Piano and Bells	2012
Neuwirth, Olga	Black Dwarf	2022
Onishi, Yoshi	Gemini Studies	2010
Onishi, Yoshi	Tréma/Trame I	2012
Papalexandri, Marianthi	Quartet for Motors and Resonant Bodies	2013
Perich, Tristan	Chalk	2012
Pinto, Paul	Overture	2022
Pluta, Sam	Tile Mosaic (after Chagall)	2010
Pluta, Sam	Seven Systems	2015
Poppe, Enno	Feld	2007/17
Poppe, Enno	Tonband	2008/2013

Pratt, Ryan	In/Of	2012
Quiñones, Christian	Dead and Magnetic	2022
Rapaport-Stein, Jeremy	Humbugs	2018
Reich, Steve	Quartet	2013
Reid, Leah	Occupied Spaces	2013
Ribeiro, Dannel	Bending Shapes Already Gone	2023
Ricketts, Matthew	After Nine	2012
Robertson, Ben Luca	Grey Mask	2016
Rodrigues, Diana Marcela (DM)	The sunsets on Mars are always blue	2020-21
Rodriguez, Mauricio	Seco	2013
Rogers, Erin	Flashdance	2019
Romberger, Daniel	Vegetables as Followers	2015
Rose, Michael	Time Will Have Its Way	2016
Rosenfeld, Marina	My Body	2019
Russell, Jonathan	Danny's Favorite Pocket Watch	2013
Rust, Joel	Who will we be	2016
Rzewski, Frederic	Les Moutons des Panurge	1968
Santos, Igor	Living To Fall	2022
Schedel, Margaret	Ease of Elision	2019
Schuessler, Philip	Particle Fountain	2014
Sheehan, Kelley	Acoustic sourings	2021-22
Shi, Fuhong	Traces of Time	2016
Slayton, Michael	Fantasy and Fugue	2002
Smith, Daniel Elijah	Flesh	2022
Smith, Linda Catlin	Morandi	1991
Snir, Adi	The Spectacle	2017
Soper, Kate	Wolf	2010
Sorey, Tyshawn	Be Holding	2022
Sorey, Tyshawn	For Ross Gay	2022
Stebbins, Heather	An Index of Fictions	2022

Stepp, Aaron	Ineffable	2016
Stevens, Sufjan	Round Up	2015
Stine, Eli	Necessary Annealing	2017
Streich, Lisa	Orchestra of Black Butterflies	2024
Stokes, Tobin	El Sol Del Sur	1996
Sturges, Greg	Three Needle Technique	2011
Sullivan, Dennis	DDU3	2019
Swanson, Pete	Eliminated Artist	2012
Swithinbank, Christopher	always extra folds of birds of paper and could move your finger along the length of them and have witness	2017
Szlavnic, Chiyoko	Mind is Moving	2016
Szlavnic, Chiyoko	Constellations I-IV	2009-13
Torvund, Øyvind	Untitled School	2014
Trapani, Christopher	Writing Against Time	2014
Tsadka, Ma'ayan	Sumud	2013
Tymoczko, Dmitri	High Windows	2013
Usher, Paul	Lines of Drift	2007
VanPamael, Jasper	The Wire	2017
Vine, Anthony	distance / absence	2016
Vinetz, Max	Scenes from an endless summer	2022
Wang, Lu	A-Ppa-ratus	2019
Warren, Kristina	reverie	2018
Way, Connor Elias	the relations of luminous to illuminated	2022
Wen, Deqing	Spiritual Rock n' Roll	2011
Winter, Michael	half-normal	2012
Wohl, Daniel	Pixelated	2010
Wubbels, Eric	alphabeta	2010
Wubbels, Eric	Diagrams of the Ear	2024
Wuorinen, Charles	Metagong	2008
Yip, Viola	Yin-Yang Yin-yang II	2016

Young, Katherine	BIOMES 6.0	2023
Young, Nina	Remains	2010
Zaes, Marcel	Parallel Prints	2021-22
Zohn-Muldoon, Ricardo	Rocio del Canto	2016