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By

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ABSTRACT

The marimba concerto traces its short history to the year 1940, when Paul Creston wrote *Concertino for Marimba*. Marimba concertos were among the earliest known works composed for marimba, and thus played an important role in the development of the marimba as a viable solo instrument and in the development of original literature composed for the marimba.

The purpose of this study was to document the development of the marimba concerto from 1940 – 2000. This work provides an annotated list of marimba concertos published during that time period and notes trends in each of three major periods. The first period includes works composed between 1940 and 1968, beginning with Paul Creston's first composed marimba concerto in 1940. The second period consists of works composed between 1969 and 1986, a period dominated by concertos composed by Japanese and European composers, including those by Minoru Miki and Akira Miyoshi in 1969, marking the beginning of the major Japanese influence on the marimba concerto. The most recent period consists of works written between 1987 and 2000. This period is dominated by works commissioned by American marimba artists, beginning with Leigh Howard Stevens' commission of John Serry's marimba concerto completed in 1987.

Each chapter includes an annotation of each work in that period. Annotations include information about the premiere of the work, technical requirements, and range of instrument required, in addition to other information found to be useful or relevant to teachers and performers. Each chapter concludes with a summary of

trends noted during that period, including an increase in the number of works written, greater technical demands, and an expansion in the range of instrument required.

It is the author's hope that the information provided in this document will serve as a useful resource for performers and educators, and will bring awareness to the large number of quality works available that are still rarely performed.

AN ANNOTATED CATALOG OF PUBLISHED MARIMBA CONCERTOS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1940 - 2000

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Although the marimba is "one of the oldest instruments known to man," [1] the history of today's modern instrument is relatively short. The modern marimba traces its origins from the experiments of Deagan and Leedy in the early 1900s,[2] to Clair Omar Musser's popularization of the instrument with his 100-piece marimba orchestras of the 1930s and 1940s.[3] The earliest repertoire consisted primarily of transcriptions supplemented by a few original works by marimbists such as Musser. As recently as 1963, statements such as the following by James Moore were still prevalent: "Until very recently, the marimba repertory consisted mainly of transcriptions of classical works, folk songs, and popular song arrangements."[4]

In fact, many of the earliest original compositions for marimba were marimba concertos. In her dissertation on the evolution of the solo marimba repertoire, Sarah Smith devoted most of her discussion to the early marimba concertos.[5] In a review of the premiere performance of the Creston marimba concerto, Howard Taubman states, "The program stated flatly that this concertino 'is the only work ever written for this

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[1] James L. Moore. The Marimba – Instrument of Singing Wood." *Percussive Notes* 1 no. 1 (February 1963), 3.

[2] James Blades and James Holland, "Marimba," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 10 November 2003), <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

[3] Sarah E. Smith. "The Development of the Marimba as a Solo Instrument and the Evolution of the Solo Literature for the Marimba." DMA Thesis, Ohio State University, 1995.

[4] Moore 4.

[5] Smith.

instrument in serious form.'"[6] The marimba concerto, therefore, played a very important role in the development of the solo marimba repertoire, especially in its earliest stages.

The purpose of this study is to document the historical development of the marimba concerto in the United States since 1940, when the first known marimba concerto was composed (Paul Creston's *Concertino for Marimba*), until the year 2000. This work will provide an annotated list of selected marimba concertos, and will trace trends in the development of this genre.

The first few marimba concertos were the result of commissions. In the 1940s and 50s, the marimba was not widely accepted as a legitimate concert instrument due to its short history in the United States and its primary use as a vaudeville act in the 1910s and 20s.[7] Ruth Stuber Jeanne, who performed the premiere performance of Creston's marimba concerto, stated in an interview: "No one really knew what a marimba was. It was 1940, and the marimba was not that popular."[8] As a result, composers were unlikely to take it upon themselves to write for the marimba. Performers who wanted to play the instrument in a concert setting were forced to either play transcriptions, write music for themselves, or commission composers to write for them.

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[6] Howard Taubman. Review of Concert Performance of *Concertino for Marimba and* Orchestra op. 21 by Paul Creston. Performed by Ruth Stuber with Orchestrette Classique, 29 April 1940, Fredrique Petrides, conductor. *New York Times* April 30, 1940, quoted in Sarah E. Smith."The Development of the Marimba as a Solo Instrument and the Evolution of the Solo Literature for the Marimba." DMA thesis, Ohio State University, 1995.

[7] Laura LeAnn Phillips."Vida Chenoweth and her contributions to Marimba Performance, Linguistics, and Ethnomusicology." DMA dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2000, 12.

[8] Smith 55.

One of the earliest pioneers in solo marimba performance was Vida Chenoweth of Enid, Oklahoma. Her goal from high school was "to make the marimba recognized and accepted as a concert instrument."[9] Not only was Chenoweth responsible for commissioning the third and fourth marimba concertos, those by Robert Kurka and Jorge Sarmientos, but she was also the first marimba soloist to play in Carnegie Hall, premiering Robert Kurka's concerto.[10] This landmark performance in the history of the marimba as a solo instrument received the following comment by reviewer Rafael Kammerer: "Miss Chenoweth has not only circumvented the instrument's limitations, she has raised the marimba to concert hall status, and in doing so has placed herself in the front rank of young American concert artists."[11]

In his dissertation on the development of four-mallet marimba technique, John Raush states: "As the marimba grew in popularity, serious performers were faced with the virtual absence of a significant marimba repertoire, and it is probably safe to assume that few today would take the marimba seriously had it not been for three composers who were attracted to the instrument and contributed important, original works to its repertoire: Paul Creston, Darius Milhaud, and Robert Kurka."[12] Very few original compositions were written for solo marimba with a large ensemble in the first three decades of the marimba concerto as a genre; approximately ten

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[9] Phillips 21.

[10] Ibid 56.

[11] Rafael Kammerer."Orchestra of America Gives Second Program." Review of concert performance of *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* op. 34, by Robert Kurka. Performed by Vida Chenoweth with Orchestra of America, Richard Korn conductor. *Musical America* 79 (1 Dec 1959), 37.

[12] John Richard Raush."Four-Mallet Technique and its use in selected examples of training and performance literature for solo marimba." DMA dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1977, 346-7.

compositions were published and performed in the United States during the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Not until the 1970s did the number of compositions increase at a greater rate, with more concertos written in that period than in the previous three decades combined. This rate of growth continued through the 80s and 90s, and it may be assumed that this growth in the genre will continue.

Statement of the Problem

While a few literary articles exist dealing with individual compositions, very little is written about the marimba concerto as a genre. The majority of research in this area deals with the first three major marimba concertos by Paul Creston, Robert Kurka, and Darius Milhaud. John Raush states in a review of Marta Ptaszynska's marimba concerto, "Although the concerto [by Ptaszynska] has been in existence for over 15 years, many aficionados of the marimba have probably never heard it or examined a score."[13] Unfortunately, this seems to be the case for many marimba concertos. Many teachers and students are unaware of the much larger repertoire that exists, which may explain why after more than sixty years the Creston marimba concerto is still one of the most frequently played.

Need for the Study

The concerto has long been a tool by which instruments receive recognition and legitimacy as a vehicle for expression. Patrons, critics, and champions of art are far more likely to attend an orchestra concert featuring a marimba concerto than they are to attend a solo marimba recital. As a genre, the marimba concerto has developed

[13] John R. Raush. Review of *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* by Marta Ptaszynska, *Percussive Notes* 40 no. 3 (June 2002), 71.

and received sufficient recognition to justify a need to trace its history. John Raush states "…no knowledgeable critic would refer to a concerto for marimba and orchestra as 'unusual,' thanks to the composers who have contributed artistically significant literature that has helped the marimba secure a position on the concert stage, and a seemingly increasing number of talented marimbists who have inspired their music."[14] However, no formal study has examined the history or trends of the genre. A document outlining the history of the marimba concerto genre will educate teachers, performers, and composers and serve to document its development. This document will also focus attention on the quality of the available literature.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to published, original compositions for solo marimba and large ensemble that have received a United States premiere. Works included must feature marimba as the primary solo instrument, but works that also feature a second mallet instrument such as Milhaud's marimba and vibraphone concerto are also included.

Although there are several unpublished works in existence, this study deals with published works only. Published works are likely to be more influential on the history and development of the marimba concerto simply because they are and have been more readily available. Only a few people have access to unpublished works; therefore those works are less likely to be influential to a broader constituency.

[14] Ibid.

Definition of Terms

A marimba concerto is defined as any work that features one soloist performing primarily on marimba together with a large ensemble. As stated in the "Limitations of Study," works that require the soloist to play a second or third mallet keyboard instrument are also included. While most works fitting this definition include the word "concerto" in the title, works not specifically entitled "concerto," but still fitting this definition, are included.

A large ensemble is defined as any group that would not ordinarily be considered a chamber ensemble. Therefore, works that feature a marimba soloist with percussion ensemble have been excluded. Works included generally utilize orchestra, band, or wind ensemble as accompaniment.

In discussing the evolution of the marimba technique required to play these works, it is necessary to use specific terminology that explains the specific types of strokes used. Due to the popularity of Leigh Howard Stevens' book *Method of Movement for Marimba,* many percussionists are familiar with the terms employed. These terms include:

Single Independent Stroke: A stroke in which in one hand, a mallet strikes the instrument while the other mallet remains stationary. Most commonly used in passages that are more easily played with two mallets, but must be played while holding four mallets, thus employing only the inner two mallets.

Single Alternating Stroke: A stroke in which "single note patterns [are] played by the same hand, alternating the inside and outside mallets"

Double Vertical Stroke: A stroke in which both mallets in the same hand strike the instrument at exactly the same time.

Double Lateral Stroke: Similar to the single alternating stroke, but at a faster tempo. This stroke occurs when the tempo is too fast to play each stroke separately, so a single motion by one hand is used to produce both strokes.[15]

One trend that will be noted is the expansion of the range of instrument used. In this document, the term C^4 refers to middle C. The most commonly sized marimbas are:

4-octave: $C^3 – C^6$
Low A (4 1/3 octave): $A^2 – C^6$
Low E (4 2/3 octave): $E^2 – C^6$
5-octave: $C^2 – C^6$

Other terms used are defined within the document as necessary.

Design of the Study

This study compiled and documented an annotated list of marimba concertos that met the qualifications listed in "Limitations of the Study." Information gathered about each concerto included basic identifying information such as composer, exact title, year written, date premiered, premiere performer, premiere location, and publisher. Other information that will be helpful to performers and teachers was also gathered, including length of the concerto, number of movements, marimba note range required, and accompanying ensemble requirements. As much of this information was gathered as was available. This material was then analyzed and examined for trends. Potential trends to be reviewed included those dealing with an increase in the frequency of pieces written or commissioned, artistic growth of the genre, an increase in the number of soloists playing the works, a change in the length

[15] Leigh Howard Stevens. *Method of Movement for Marimba*, 3rd printing, Keyboard Percussion Publications, Asbury Park, NJ, 1993.

of pieces, an evolution of playing technique required to perform these pieces, and a change in the ensembles that accompanied the works.

Some pieces are already well known, with an abundance of readily available information, most notably the concertos by Paul Creston, Robert Kurka, and Darius Milhaud. For these works, that available information is simply summarized. For the majority of works, however, very little information has been previously published. Most annotations consist of a summary of the little information available together with new information gathered in this research. Unfortunately, for several works, very little information is available. In those cases, the available information is presented in a brief annotation.

The first style period includes works composed between 1940 and 1968, beginning with Paul Creston's first composed marimba concerto in 1940. The second period consists of works composed between 1969 and 1986, a period dominated by concertos composed by Japanese and European composers, including those by Minoru Miki and Akira Miyoshi in 1969, marking the beginning of the major Japanese influence on the marimba concerto. The most recent period consists of works written between 1987 and 2000. This period is dominated by works commissioned by American marimba artists, beginning with Leigh Howard Stevens' commission of John Serry's marimba concerto completed in 1987.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I of the study consists of an introduction and overview of the development of the marimba concerto. The Statement of the Problem, Need for the Study, Purpose of the Study, Limitations of the Study, Definition of Terms, Design of

the Study, and the Organization of the Study are identified. Chapter II presents a review of the literature that includes historical information on the marimba as a solo instrument and the development of the marimba concerto, as well as literature pertaining directly to specific marimba concertos.

Chapters III, IV, and V outline the development of the marimba concerto. Works are annotated and trends in the development of the genre are identified. When possible, interviews with the composer, the commissioner, or the premiere performer of these works were conducted.

Chapter VI provides a summary and identification of the need for further research on the development of the marimba concerto. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further research are given. Appendix One consists of a chronological list of marimba concertos annotated in this document. Appendix Two contains the transcript of an interview with marimba solo artist William Moersch, conducted personally by the author. This interview consists of questions that not only document important historical information about the selected pieces, such as how and why the work was written and when it was premiered, but also questions that may assist performers not only in choosing a marimba concerto to perform, but also in preparing the work. Appendix Three includes a list of publishers. The document concludes with the bibliography.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

While several articles and even entire dissertations have been written about specific marimba concertos, no scholarly work has addressed the development of the

marimba concerto as a genre. Researchers Sarah Smith and Kathleen Kastner touched on the subject in their dissertations about marimba repertoire[16] and marimba technique[17] respectively, but these studies primarily dealt with only the earliest concertos. Dozens of new marimba concertos have been composed since these documents were written, necessitating the need for further study. Studying the history of the marimba and its early repertoire is essential to understanding the problems of the development of the marimba repertoire, while studying literature written about specific concertos is necessary to construct a history of the marimba concerto as a genre. Finally, it is helpful to study the history of the concerto in general in order to better understand those conventions as they relate to those of the marimba concerto specifically.

Related Marimba Repertoire Literature

The first marimba concerto was written by Paul Creston and premiered in 1940 by Ruth Stuber Jeanne. Miss Jeanne was interviewed concerning the circumstances of the commission and premiere of this work, most notably by Shirley Hixson for an article published in *Percussive Notes* in 1975, as well as by Sarah Smith for her dissertation on the history of the solo marimba repertoire, completed in 1995.

One of the earliest pioneers in marimba performance was Vida Chenoweth. Chenoweth commissioned the third and fourth marimba concertos to be written, those

[16]Sarah E. Smith."The Development of the Marimba as a Solo Instrument and the Evolution of the Solo Literature for the Marimba." D.M.A. document, The Ohio State University, 1995.

[17] Kathleen Sherry Kastner. The Emergence and Evolution of a Generalized Marimba Technique." Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989.

by Robert Kurka and Jorge Sarmientos. The circumstances of these works and their subsequent performance are outlined in Laura Phillips' dissertation on Vida Chenoweth and her contributions in marimba performance, linguistics, and ethnomusicology.[18] The Vida Chenoweth collection housed at the Percussive Arts Society Museum in Lawton, Oklahoma also contains many of Miss Chenoweth's personal documents that help to recreate the early history of the marimba concerto, including reviews, contracts, and personal memoirs.

Sarah Smith's document on the development of the marimba as a solo instrument dealt substantially with the development of the marimba from its ancient origins to its present day status as a fine art instrument. Smith also discussed the Creston and Kurka marimba concertos, interviewing Ruth Stuber Jeanne as part of her discussion on Creston's marimba concerto. A final section is devoted to a discussion of Keiko Abe and the Japanese influence on marimba repertoire.

Kathleen Kastner's thesis discussed the concertos by Creston, Kurka, and Milhaud. Although some historical information is included, these works are approached primarily from a technical viewpoint. Kastner's document also includes a chapter on the marimba in Japan, including a brief discussion on the works of Akira Miyoshi, one of which is his marimba concerto.

Finally, John Raush's treatise also approached the marimba repertoire from a technical standpoint. Like Smith, he traced the development of the marimba as a fine art instrument. Specific concertos that he discusses include those by Creston, Kurka, Milhaud, and George Frock.

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[18] Laura LeAnn Phillips. "Vida Chenoweth and her contributions to Marimba Performance, Linguistics, and Ethnomusicology." DMA dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2000.

The lack of a significant volume of marimba repertoire is a problem encountered by marimba performers as long as the instrument has existed. Another early pioneer of the marimba, Linda Pimentel, addressed this problem in her article published in *Percussionist* in 1974, "The Solo Percussionists' Performance Limitations." This article discussed the specific problem of a lack of concertos to play for competitions. She stated, "Practically every professional soloist in the art-music arena has entered certain series of contests…Percussionists have few concerti from which to choose, for such contests."[19] In recent years, well-known performer Nancy Zeltsman addressed this problem in articles for *Percussive Notes* stating the importance of commissioning new works for the marimba. Zeltsman is one of the most active commissioners of new works today. In fact, it is difficult to find a well-known marimba performer who has not actively addressed the problem of a lack of repertoire by personally commissioning new works.

As marimbist and educator William Moersch stated, "The commissioning of new music has been the primary source of marimba repertoire since 1940."[20] The problem of a lack of repertoire is addressed extensively by New Music Marimba, an organization founded in 1986. This organization "is dedicated to promoting and encouraging exceptional new music for marimba, both in composition and performance, and to aiding greater public knowledge and awareness of the instrument and its repertoire."[21] In addition to several commissioning projects, New Music Marimba published a repertoire guide in 1990 that contained information about

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[19]Linda Pimentel. The Solo Percussionists' Performance Limitations," *Percussionist* 11 no. 4 (Summer 1974), 128.

[20]William Moersch. "Commissioning Marimba Music," *Percussive Notes* 37 no. 5 (October 1999), 62.

[21] William Moersch, Editor, *New Music Marimba Repertoire Guide Volume 1* (New York City: New Music Marimba Inc., 1990), 1.

several new marimba works, including two concertos. Well-known marimba performers who have been affiliated with this organization include William Moersch, Leigh Howard Stevens, and Gordon Stout. The commissioning work of these performers and others has been vital to the expansion of the marimba repertoire, including the marimba concerto repertoire.

Related Marimba Concerto Literature: Theses and Dissertations

Several scholarly articles dealing with specific marimba concertos have been published, as well as a few dissertations or theses that included information about specific concertos. Two theses have been written on the Milhaud *Concerto pour Marimba et Vibraphone,* including one by Lawrence Douglas Blackshere that discussed the technical problems of the concerto and included information gathered from a personal interview with Milhaud conducted in 1971.[22] A thesis written in 1998 by David Gerhart discussed the "exotic influences" on the piece, including jazz, ragtime, and Brazilian music.[23]

Another dissertation that dealt with a specific marimba concerto is Michael Varner's document on David Maslanka's two marimba concertos. Specifically, he devoted two chapters of his document to an exhaustive discussion of Maslanka's *Concerto for Marimba and Band*.

A very interesting project by Domenico Zarro addressed Ney Rosauro's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*. In his dissertation Zarro not only discussed

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[22] Lawrence Douglas Blackshere. "Considerations on the *Concerto pour Marimba et Vibraphone (un seul executant)* by Darius Milhaud: A New Technical Approach." MA Thesis, California State College, Hayward, 1971.

[23] David Stephen Gerhart. "The Exotic Influences in Darius Milhaud's *Concerto for Marimba, Vibes, and Orchestra (1947).*" MM Thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 1998.

the work itself but included an instructional video intended to serve as a guide for performers preparing the piece. Robert Brudvig's DMA document discussed both the marimba concerto by Anders Koppel and his follow-up solo intended as an encore. This document discussed Koppel's work from a performer's standpoint in addition to providing the historical background of the piece. Finally, Christina Wilkes' document on the marimba music of Daniel McCarthy devoted a chapter to his *Chamber Symphony for Marimba and Winds* from the standpoint of a performer preparing the piece.

Related Marimba Concerto Literature: Articles

While several articles exist about individual marimba concertos, each has a different focus in regards to the type of information included. For example, Niel DePonte's article on the marimba concerto by Tomas Svoboda discussed the background of the work and provided musical examples together with some analysis, but the analysis was not a detailed theoretical one. David Eyler wrote an article about the Kurka concerto that included a more detailed analysis and some performance suggestions. He also included reviews of Vida Chenoweth's performances of the concerto in his article, which is useful in gaining historical perspective to the audience reception of the concerto at its premiere. Igor Lesnick's article on Milhaud's marimba and vibraphone concerto discussed the background of the concerto and included suggestions for mallet and instrument selection. One unique feature of this article is Lesnick's brief analysis and comparison of the original concerto and the piano version that Milhaud completed later. He concludes his article with a brief discussion of Milhaud's compositional technique and some of his other

works. Another important resource on the Milhaud concerto is Ron Fink's 1978 interview with Jack Connor, the commissioner and premiere performer of the concerto.[24] In this interview, Fink discussed with Connor the circumstances surrounding the commission of the Milhaud concerto.

Barbara Smolenska-Zielinska's article presented a psychological profile of Marta Ptaszynska's marimba concerto. She integrated a brief theoretical analysis with an analysis of the emotional content of the piece together with a brief discussion of the premiere of the work. Domenico Zarro's article on Ney Rosauro's first marimba concerto focused primarily on performance suggestions, although he began his article with a brief history of the concerto.

Several articles discussed two or more marimba concertos. For example, Kathleen Kastner's article discussing the Creston, Milhaud, and Kurka concertos was excerpted from her dissertation on the evolution of marimba technique that primarily discussed "the circumstances surrounding their [the concerto's] composition and performance aspects that point to the emergence and evolution of early marimba technique."[25]

Finally, New Music Marimba's *New Music Marimba Repertoire Guide* included sections on the Richard Rodney Bennett and Peter Klatzow concertos. The profiles on these two pieces include details about the commission and premiere of the works, brief program notes, composer biographies, and a musical example from each concerto.

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[24] Ron Fink."An Interview with Jack Connor, Marimba Virtuoso," *Percussive Notes* 16 no. 2 (Winter 1978), 26 – 27.

[25] Kastner 83.

Each of these articles presents a unique slant on the work being discussed, but all contain valuable information concerning the circumstances surrounding the creation of the work. By compiling this information from these various sources, one can significantly trace the development of the marimba concerto.

Other Resources on the Marimba Concerto

One of the most valuable resources for compiling a list of marimba concertos was William Moersch's *New Music Marimba Concerto List.*[26] This list included the title, composer, date, and publisher of nearly every marimba concerto written before 1995. Another valuable resource in gathering basic historical data on marimba concertos was the online repertoire database maintained by the Percussive Arts Society (PAS). This database originated from Thomas Siwe's book *Percussion Solo Literature*. In 2002, Mr. Siwe generously donated the book to PAS to be compiled as an online database for the use of PAS members. Since then, PAS members have contributed to update this information. While not all entries are complete, this database included title and composer, date composed, length of composition, exact instrumentation, information about the premiere performance of each piece, and program notes.

Several of the concertos examined have been reviewed in *Percussive Notes*, the journal of PAS. These reviews sometimes contained information about the

[26] Found online at <http://www.marimba.org>

premiere performance, circumstances surrounding the composition of the work, length of the work, and marimba note range required. At the very least, these reviews provided an idea of the character and difficulty of the work.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY MARIMBA CONCERTOS: 1940 – 1968

The development of the marimba concerto can be roughly divided into three major periods as described in the first chapter of this document. The first period, that of the early marimba concerto, took place from 1940 to 1968. Of the eight known published marimba concertos from this first period, five are well known and somewhat frequently performed, while the other three are less well known and rarely performed.

Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra – Paul Creston (1940)

Paul Creston composed the first marimba concerto in 1940. Frederique Petrides, conductor of Orchestrette Classique, an all-female orchestra based in New York City, commissioned the work as part of her quest to feature each member of her orchestra as a soloist on a concert. She commissioned Creston to write a marimba solo for Ruth (Stuber) Jeanne, the orchestra's timpanist. Creston was known as a champion of unusual instruments, having written several concertos "for different

instruments that were suffering from a shortage of solo or concert pieces."[27] The premiere performance of the concerto with the Orchestrette Classique at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall was presented on April 29, 1940 under the direction of Petrides.[28] While writing this concerto, Creston often listened to Stuber play, bringing passages of the concerto for her to play through as he worked on them. According to Stuber, he worked out other passages with his feet at the organ.[29] The resultant work is quite idiomatic.

The concerto is playable on a four-octave marimba and according to Stuber, "Creston knew the range of my instrument and wrote specifically for it."[30] It is written in three movements; the first movement is fast and requires the use of only two mallets. One of the hallmarks of Creston's compositional style was his use of rhythm, as is demonstrated in this movement, particularly through his use of hemiola and syncopation. The second movement is slow, requiring the use of four mallets for the four-part chorale texture that begins the movement. A cadenza-like section in the middle of this movement can be played with two mallets, while the end of the movement returns to a four-mallet chorale section similar to the beginning of the movement. Reviewer Louis Biancolli compared the harmony of this movement to Ravel's *Pavanne pour une Infante Defunte*.[31] The third movement is the most

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[27] Sarah Smith. "The Birth of the Creston Marimba Concerto: An Interview with Ruth Jeanne," *Percussive Notes* 34 no. 2 (April 1996), 62.

[28] Shirley Hixson. "From Whence Came Paul Creston's *Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra* Opus 24? – An Interview with Ruth (Stuber) Jeanne," *Percussive Notes* 14 no. 1 (Fall 1975), 22 – 23.

[29] Smith 64.

[30] Smith 65.

[31] Louis Giancolli, Review of Concert Performance of *Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra* op. 21 by Paul Creston. Performed by Ruth Stuber with Orchestrette Classique at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall, 29 April 1940, Frederique Petrides, conductor. *New York World Telegram* (April 30, 1940). Quoted in Shirley

technically difficult, in large part due to the tempo indicated by Creston. Premiere performer Ruth Stuber said, "I do think the third movement is marked too fast. I didn't play it at MM = 120, and Creston never said anything to me about the tempo."[32] Percussionist Charles Owen, first to record the Creston with a major symphony orchestra, states "The tempo marking 'lively' is appropriate for the finale to this exciting piece of music, and I might suggest that you keep this in mind when beginning the last movement, by selecting a tempo which will not change to 'frantic' as the piece progresses."[33] Playing it somewhat slower than the indicated tempo seems to be an accepted practice, but the movement is still difficult to play at a tempo that captures the "lively" character indicated by Creston. This movement only requires two mallets throughout, but contains rhythmic difficulties similar to those found in the first movement. One particularly difficult section that typically causes problems for younger performers is the section from measures 128 to 147, where the solo part remains in 6/8 meter while the accompaniment proceeds in 5/8 + 5/8 + 5/8 + 3/8 (although still written in 6/8). The use of hemiola, syncopation, and polyrhythm permeates this movement much as in the first movement.

A consideration for those performing this concerto is the difficulty of the accompaniment, particularly when using the piano reduction. Charles Owens states, "Initially, it might be noted that nothing is more important than engaging the service of a fine piano accompanist who will take the time to become thoroughly familiar

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Hixson, "From Whence Came Paul Creston's *Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra* Opus 24? – An Interview with Ruth (Stuber) Jeanne," *Percussive Notes* 14 no. 1 (Fall 1975), 22 – 23.

[32] Smith 64.

[33] Charles Owen."Paul Creston's Concerto for Marimba," *Percussive Notes* 21 no. 2 (January 1983), 64.

with the music, as the score reduction is challenging for the best of accompanists."[34] Despite the technical challenges found in this piece, it remains one of the most popular and frequently performed marimba concertos.

***Concerto pour Marimba et Vibraphone, un seul exectuant* – Darius Milhaud (1949)**

The second marimba concerto written was Darius Milhaud's *Concerto pour Marimba et Vibraphone, un seul exectuant*. This concerto was also the result of a commission, this time by Jack Connor, percussionist with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. When Connor decided to commission a piece for his "debut on the concert stage,"[35] he consulted a family friend who recommended several composers including Milhaud, Aaron Copland, and Ernest Bloch. Because Connor was familiar with some of Milhaud's works and knew that he had already written a concerto for percussion, he chose to ask Milhaud to write a new concerto for him. Although it took some convincing, Milhaud finally agreed.[36] The premiere took place on February 12, 1949 with the St. Louis Symphony under the baton of Vladimir Golschmann with Connor performing the solo part.[37] This three-movement work requires the use of four mallets throughout played on a four-octave marimba.

The first movement, marked *Anime*, features only marimba as the solo instrument. The orchestra introduces the theme of the first movement with the soloist following on the same theme on marimba. The soloist and orchestra play together throughout this entire piece with no solo cadenza. This 4/4 first movement is

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[34] Ibid 63.

[35] Ron Fink."An Interview with Jack Connor, Marimba Virtuoso," *Percussive Notes* 16 no. 2 (Winter 1978), 26 – 27.

[36] Ibid 26.

[37] Lawrence Douglas Blackshere."Considerations on the *Concerto pour Marimba et Vibraphone (un seul executant)* by Darius Milhaud: A New Technical Approach." MA Thesis, California State College, Hayward, 1971.

followed by a slow second movement that introduces the soloist playing vibraphone for the first time. In 3/4 meter, this movement requires the soloist to switch between vibraphone and marimba a number of times. The third and final movement is fast, beginning with a long orchestral introduction. While some meter changes occur, most of this movement is in 4/4 meter. Several fast changes between marimba and vibraphone occur in this movement, presenting one of the main challenges in this work.

Pianistically written, this work is not particularly idiomatic to the mallet keyboard instruments, especially at the time it was written. In fact, Milhaud later arranged the solo part to be played on piano, "ostensibly, because of the technical difficulty of the composition."[38] Despite the unidiomatic nature of the work, Milhaud did have the performer in mind as he composed, which is clear by the mallet indications in the score. In this work, the performer is required to have independent control over four mallets, particularly in contrapuntal sections that were very unusual for original mallet keyboard works available during the middle of the twentieth century. Fast alternating double vertical strokes also present a challenge to even the modern performer. The advanced four-mallet technique required for this piece helped raise the standard of four-mallet playing to a new level. As performer Igor Lesnick stated, "…with this piece, Milhaud showed, in an attractive way, that the future of the virtuoso playing of keyboard percussion instruments would require the complete mastery of four-mallet technique."[39]

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[38] Ibid 1.

[39] Igor Lesnick."Milhaud's Concerto for Marimba, Vibraphone, and Orchestra," *Percussive Notes* 35 no. 3 (June 1997), 58.

***Concerto for Marimba* – James Basta (1956)**

It is a common misconception that the third marimba concerto to be written was Robert Kurka's *Concerto for Marimba*. However, James Basta's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* was actually both written and performed prior to Kurka's concerto. Basta wrote his marimba concerto at the request of James Dotson, a fellow student at the Eastman School of Music. Dotson wanted to play a new marimba concerto for his audition for the Eastman Performer's Certificate, so he asked Basta to write the work for him. He later played the same concerto for Eastman's concerto competition, and performed the work with the Eastman/Rochester Philharmonic after winning that competition.[40] About fourteen minutes long, and like the two pieces before it, this work can be played on a four-octave marimba. Accompaniment arrangements for piano and band were later written.

The one-movement work can be conceptually divided into three major sections in a fast-slow-fast format. The entire first section played with two mallets, and Basta indicates that the performer should switch to softer mallets for the *meno mosso* section in the middle of this first section (at rehearsal C). In fact, the first large section of the concerto can be analyzed as a microstructure of the macrostructure of the piece, with a fast-slow-fast form. The second major section of the piece begins at rehearsal H with a change in character and tempo marked *adagio*. The accompaniment begins this section, with the soloist joining in a chorale texture eight bars later. Four mallets are required for this section until the end. Basta indicates that the soloist switch to "medium hard mallets" three bars before rehearsal letter I; this

[40] Greg Giannascoli, Program notes for Greg Giannascoli, *Velocities*, World Music Marimba WMM2, CD Recording.

would be an appropriate time to switch to two mallets for the final section of the middle part of the piece. The third section of the work begins at letter K in 9/8 meter with the exception of a brief adagio section at letter Q; this entire section can be performed with two mallets. The final section, often switching between duple and triple feel, is technically dependent on the use of double strokes.

***Concerto for Marimba* – Robert Kurka (1956)**

The fourth marimba concerto written was Robert Kurka's *Concerto for Marimba*, commissioned by Vida Chenoweth, who chose Kurka to write for her upon a recommendation by her manager.[41] Kurka wrote this concerto while in residence at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New York during the fall of 1956.[42] Tragically, Kurka died of leukemia before hearing his work performed. Chenoweth premiered the work on November 11, 1959 as the first marimba soloist to perform in Carnegie Hall.[43]

In three movements, this work was the first marimba concerto to utilize a low A marimba.[44] This concerto is full of technical difficulties and musical challenges. Kurka was a violinist and violist, and while he did work with Chenoweth while writing the piece, the resultant work is still somewhat unidiomatic. Chenoweth herself originally considered the piece to be unplayable, although she performed the piece as written after devoting herself to learning it in 1959.[45] When interviewed

[41] Laura LeAnn Phillips."Vida Chenoweth and her contributions to Marimba Performance, Linguistics, and Ethnomusicology." DMA dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2000, 42.
[42] Ibid 43.
[43] Ibid 55-56.
[44] Range A2 – C6
[45] Ibid 54.

several years later, she said, “Bob [Kurka] was a violin and viola player, and didn’t know much about the (marimba).”[46] Another performer, David Eyler, states “Difficulties in the entire work stem mainly from the passages which are unmarimbistic in nature.”[47]

While this work is commonly performed with four mallets today, there was originally some controversy as to whether the outer movements should be played with two or four mallets.[48] Due to advancements in marimba technique since the piece was first performed, most modern performers choose to use four mallets to better accommodate the large leaps found in all movements. These large leaps constitute one of the major difficulties of this work.

Other difficulties include the large intervals required in the chorale section of the second movement, for example, the interval of a major tenth required at the end of the opening chorale in the left hand. Perhaps the most difficult passage of the entire work is found at rehearsal number five in the second movement. The awkward hand positions required to play this section present a challenge for even the most advanced marimbist. Another passage involving extreme leaps is found near the end of the third movement at measure 296. The marimbist must make careful decisions regarding sticking in this section to facilitate this passage as smoothly as possible. As with the Creston concerto, the accompaniment to this work is quite difficult, particularly the piano reduction.

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[46] Martin Weir.“Kurka’s New Concerto,” *Percussive Notes* 32 no. 4 (August 1994), 70.

[47] David Eyler.“Robert Kurka’s Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra,” *Percussionist* 17 no. 1 (Fall 1979), 23 – 36.

[48] Ibid 25.

The work was well received at its premiere, with most reviewers having nothing but positive comments. It is interesting to note the unfamiliarity of the marimba concerto at this point in its history as evidenced by reviewer Jay Harrison, who stated "Concertos for marimba are no more often encountered than pterodactls in Times Square, but one of them turned up last night at a Carnegie Hall Concert…"[49] Nonetheless, this concerto was well-received and helpful not only in establishing the marimba as a legitimate concert instrument, but also in establishing Vida Chenoweth's solo career, as evidenced by reviewer Rafael Kammerer's quote, "Miss Chenoweth has not only circumvented the instrument's limitations, she has raised the marimba to concert hall status, and in doing so has also placed herself in the front rank of young American concert artists."[50] One reviewer went so far as to say that "the late Robert Kurka's concerto for marimba and orchestra saved the evening."[51] Despite the unidiomatic nature of the work, this historically significant work is still frequently performed by college level marimbists.

***Concerto para marimba y orquester* – Jorge Sarmientos (1958)**

[49] Jay Harrison. Review of Concert Performance of *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* Op. 34 by Robert Kurka. Performed by Vida Chenoweth with Orchestra of America at Carnegie Hall 11 November 1959, Richard Korn, conductor. New York Herald Tribune (12 November 1959). Quoted in David Eyler. "Robert Kurka's Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra," *Percussionist* 17 no. 1 (Fall 1979), 24.

[50] Rafael Kammerer."Orchestra of America Gives Second Program," Review of Concert Performance of *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* op. 34 by Robert Kurka. Performed by Vida Chenoweth with Orchestra of America at Carnegie Hall, 11 November 1959, Richard Korn, conductor. *Musical America* 79 (1 December 1959), 37.

[51] Miles Kastendieck. Review of Concert Performance of *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* op. 34 by Robert Kurka. Performed by Vida Chenoweth with Orchestra of America at Carnegie Hall, 11 November 1959, Richard Korn, conductor. *New York Journal-American* (12 November 1959). Quoted in David Eyler."Robert Kurka's Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra," *Percussionist* 17 no. 1 (Fall 1979), 24.

Many marimbists have addressed the lack of marimba concerto repertoire by exploring ways to stimulate the writing of new works. In an article written for the *Music Journal*, Vida Chenoweth states, "Formerly, there was little literature on which to base a career as a marimba recitalist. Serious works are now available and continue to mount as composers become aware of the marimba."[52] Usually, these works are commissioned, but Chenoweth took a slightly different approach in bringing the fifth marimba concerto into existence. Jorge Sarmientos' marimba concerto was the winner of a competition sponsored by Chenoweth in Guatemala.

The premiere performance was given on September 16, 1960 with the National Symphony Orchestra of Guatemala accompanying Chenoweth. Interestingly, Sarmientos played the timpani part on this performance.[53] A slow orchestral introduction begins this three-movement work before settling into the fast tempo that remains for the rest of this movement. In 4/4 meter, the beginning requires only two mallets. The original manuscript, now housed at the Percussive Arts Society Museum in Lawton, OK, contains Chenoweth's notations, including mallet indications. The performer is required to play with four mallets later in this movement, playing fast alternating double vertical strokes, some contrapuntal lines, and some chorale sections.

The second movement is in a slow 3/4 meter. One interesting aspect of this movement is the middle section, scored for solo marimba, timpani, and flute only, presenting a characteristically native Guatemalan sound. The final fast 6/8 movement requires the performer to switch between two and four mallets with some sections

[52] Vida Chenoweth. "The Marimba Comes into its Own," *Music Journal* 15 (May/June 1957), 12, 35.

[53] Phillips 59.

requiring significant coordination between the right and left hands. Sarmientos had heard Chenoweth play as part of her 1957 tour of Guatemala and had already composed an earlier piece for her entitled *Estampa Cakchiquel*.[54] Therefore, he was familiar with her technical prowess on the instrument, which likely affected his writing. Due to the lack of literature available when Chenoweth was first studying the marimba in 1940, her teacher, David Sydney, taught her to play piano and organ music, which taught her "to approach the marimba as a polyphonic, chordal instrument."[55]

***Konzert für Marimba und Orchester* – Masaaki Hayakawa (1964)**

The five works previously discussed are well known to most marimbists. Although the Creston is certainly the most frequently played of the five, the other four are still performed more often than many later works. However, the three remaining works from this first style period are not so well known and are rarely played. Two concertos were written in 1964.

Masaaki Hayakawa's marimba concerto, *Konzert für Marimba und Orchester*, marked the first Japanese marimba concerto to be influential in the United States. Hayakawa's concerto, though not frequently played, was published in the United States and warranted attention in a review in *Percussive Notes*. The Hayakawa concerto was written in 1964 and premiered by Dr. Yokote in 1965. Hayakawa states in the preface to the work "At first, this work was planned as a xylophone concerto, but after the first rehearsal, Dr. Yokote, who was the soloist, proposed to adopt a

[54] Ibid 58.
[55] Ibid 11.

marimba as a solo instrument instead of a xylophone."[56] Being originally conceived for xylophone, it is playable on a four-octave marimba.

Although Hayakawa does not indicate specific movements, three distinct sections create a fast-slow-fast format. The first section begins with a slow orchestral introduction before settling into the fast 4/4 meter that characterizes the first section. The second section is divided into three subsections, with two slower outer sections interrupted by a brief fast section marked *Furioso*. The chorale texture in the beginning of this section requires four mallets, while the remainder of the section requires only two mallets. The third section is fast with a long orchestral introduction preceding the entrance of the solo marimba. This section requires only two mallets except a brief section before rehearsal letter Aa that requires the performer to play a trill in the right hand while playing a moving line in the left hand, a technique that is unusually difficult for this otherwise idiomatic work. According to reviewer Lisa Rogers, the four-mallet technique required for this movement is rudimentary consisting mainly of double verticals, single independent strokes, and rolls, but the performer must have great two mallet facility.[57]

Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra – Gen Parchman (1964)

Gen Parchman's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* was also written in June of 1964. This work, like all of those before it, was the result of a commission, this time by Glenn Robinson, to whom the work was dedicated. In three movements, the middle movement features the vibraphone exclusively as the solo instrument

[56] Masaaki Hayakawa. Preface to *Konzert für Marimba und Orchester*, Frankfurt: Zimmerman, 1999.

[57] Lisa Rogers. Review of *Konzert für Marimba und Orchestra* by Masaaki Hayakawa, *Percussive Notes* 38 no. 4 (August 2000): 67 – 68.

instead of the marimba. The solo part enters with a cadenza after a slow introduction by the accompaniment. An extended cadenza section begins with a chorale texture that requires four mallets, followed by an accelerando to the allegro tempo that remains for the rest of the movement. Shortly after reaching this new tempo, Parchman indicates the soloist put down two mallets while still playing with the other two. The remainder of the first movement only requires two mallets. The writing in this movement is quite unidiomatic, with many awkward two-mallet passages as well as awkward chord changes in the opening chorale; however, it is not particularly difficult once the performer chooses and learns appropriate stickings. Another challenge lies in the changing meters that can present problems for both the soloist and accompaniment. There are also some unusual meter indications, such as 3.5/4.

The second movement for vibraphone requires four-mallets throughout and is also quite unidiomatic. Among its technical challenges are blocked chords that require many awkward hand positions, making the changes between chords fairly difficult to execute. A cadenza in the middle of this movement would be most easily played with two mallets. However, the performer must continue to hold four mallets, since there is no time to switch back to four mallets for the next section. Although the solo part indicates this section to be a marimba solo, the score indicates that the entire movement is played on vibraphone. The performer has no time to switch instruments here, so one must assume that the score is correct. Another slight difficulty is the contrapuntal motion that sometimes occurs between two hands, but this would not present a major challenge after a little practice. This movement is only a few minutes long, proceeding directly into the third movement. The soloist returns to the marimba for the very fast third movement, which again requires only two

mallets at the beginning. This is the most tuneful of the three movements, with the marimba writing being far more idiomatic than in the first movement. Parchman makes use of fast double strokes in this movement, very similar to those found in Basta's concerto. This movement is also reminiscent of Creston's *Concertino*, particularly in the sixteenth-note runs in the first 6/8 section.

A return of material from the fast part of the first movement is soon followed by a return of the opening motive of the third movement. The piece ends with a slow chorale section requiring the use of four-mallets that uses material from the cadenza of the first movement. Unfortunately, the unidiomatic writing of this work may have prevented it from being performed as often as other works from the same time period.

***Concerto for Xylophone, Marimba, Vibraphone, and Wind Orchestra* – Oliver Nelson (1967)**

Jazz artist Oliver Nelson wrote the final concerto in the first historical period in 1967. Nelson's concerto features the soloist on vibraphone and xylophone in addition to marimba. Nelson was more renowned for his jazz playing and composition than for his serious classical compositions. In his entry on Nelson in the New Grove Dictionary, Barry Kernfeld states, "Nelson aspired towards 'legitimacy' as a composer, but his 'serious' works are saccharine, and his playing of rhythm-and-blues, hard bop, and modal jazz and his compositions in these styles are of far greater

importance."[58] Unfortunately, this work is no longer available for annotation or performance.

Summary of Trends

Some trends can be noted in the early development of the marimba concerto. Nearly all of the works composed were commissioned, and most from composers who were not percussionists. This often resulted in works that were unidiomatic, such as the Milhaud, Kurka, and Parchman concertos, but as stated earlier in the discussion of the Milhaud concerto, this limitation could well have served to advance marimba technique. Three of the works included other solo instruments in addition to the marimba, specifically vibraphone and xylophone. It is possible that composers felt limited by the marimba, an unfamiliar instrument with little sustaining ability other than the roll. In later periods, the marimba began to stand on its own as its performance potential and possibilities became better known.

Even though all the works were originally composed with orchestral accompaniment until Nelson's concerto, which was composed with wind ensemble accompaniment, most were later arranged for wind ensemble or band accompaniment. Then, as well as today, with the wind ensemble being a relatively new genre, their conductors are more likely to program a marimba concerto than are orchestra conductors. Many of the composers of marimba concertos recognized this fact and either made arrangements of their works for wind ensemble or, as seen in later periods, wrote their original accompaniments for wind ensemble or band.

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[58] Barry Kernfeld."Nelson, Oliver (Edward)," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 2 February 2004), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

The four-mallet technique required in these works is often rudimentary, a product of the composer's lack of knowledge about the instrument together with the lower expectations of what was possible technically on the instrument at that time. Usually, when four mallets are required, it is in a chorale section. With few exceptions, the four-mallet technique required apart from chorale playing is generally rudimentary single alternating or single independent strokes. The major exception is found in the Milhaud concerto. Most likely due to Milhaud's piano background, this work requires the most advanced four-mallet technique throughout, requiring independence of mallets, contrapuntal playing, and fast double vertical strokes that move in contrary motion. Although the Kurka concerto is commonly played with four mallets today, most of the first movement and all of the third movement was originally conceived to be played with only two mallets, with the only sections requiring four mallets being the chorale sections interspersed in the first and second movements. Most performers today find the entire concerto is most easily played with four mallets, but it is important to remember that four-mallet technique has advanced considerably since 1959, when the Kurka was premiered.

In his examination of the history of the concerto in general, Abraham Veinus states:

> "Experience in the particularized problems of instrumental writing is a prerequisite for the maturing of large scale instrumental forms. Thus a violin concerto might, in principle, look back to the coloratura solos in a Monteverdi madrigal, but as a matter of practical composition its specific instrumental technique would rest necessarily upon the achievements of solo violin music, rather than upon vocal coloratura."[59]

Likewise, the development of the marimba concerto is dependent upon the development of the solo marimba repertoire, as well as the development of the

[59] Abraham Veinus. *The Concerto*. New York: Dover Publications, 1964, 7.

technique of the instrument. The development of the technique of the marimba had a profound impact on the marimba concerto, as will be seen in later works.

CHAPTER IV
THE MIDDLE PERIOD OF THE MARIMBA CONCERTO: 1969 – 1986

The second period in the development of the marimba concerto is marked especially by the influence of Japanese composers and begins with the concertos written by Minoru Miki and Akira Miyoshi in 1969. The influence of Japanese marimba soloist Keiko Abe cannot be overstated. Ms. Abe is renowned not only for her virtuoso technique, but also for her musical depth, and she was a crucial force in increasing the amount of original repertoire for the marimba in Japan, just as performers such as Vida Chenoweth were already doing in the United States.

According to Kathleen Kastner, "One of the most significant contributions made by Ms. Abe is the large amount of music written for the marimba as a result of her efforts: between 1964 and 1986, 32 composers wrote 54 compositions for her."[60] Abe and Japanese composers such as Minoru Miki and Akira Miyoshi were exposed to the marimba in 1950, when American missionary Dr. Lawrence Lacour introduced the marimba to Japan.[61] The Tokyo Marimba Group performed Creston's *Concertino* in Japan in 1961, thus introducing the American marimba concerto to Japan. Later, Jack Connor performed the Milhaud concerto with the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra.[62]

Exposure to the American marimba tradition helped enhance the status of the marimba in Japan and launched Keiko Abe's efforts to commission prominent Japanese composers to write for the instrument. This Japanese exposure to American marimba music came full circle in 1969, when Keiko Abe's first recording of solo

[60] Kastner 56.
[61] Ibid 52.
[62] Ibid 54-55.

marimba music was released in the United States. A landmark recording, it included excerpts from concertos by Miki and Miyoshi, among other works.[63] According to Kastner, "By the close of the 1970's, the Japanese marimba repertoire and its requisite technique had become a component of the major percussion education curricula throughout the United States."[64] The middle period of the development of the marimba concerto is marked by this Japanese influence.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* – Minoru Miki (1969)**

Keiko Abe was associated with the first two works of this middle period in the development of the marimba concerto. Japanese composers Minoru Miki and Akira Miyoshi were already known for their marimba compositions; Miki had composed *Time for Marimba* in 1968, a work now considered standard marimba repertoire, and Miyoshi had already composed *Conversation* and *Torse III* in 1962 and 1964 respectively, two more standard works for solo marimba.

Miki's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* was commissioned by Nihon Columbia Records, and was premiered by Keiko Abe with the Tokyo Symphony on October 11, 1969.[65] Miki wrote two possible endings for this two-movement work. When performed with the first ending, the work is playable on a four-octave instrument. However, the alternate ending requires a five-octave instrument, although all notes below "A" are in parentheses and doubled at the octave above, so it could conceivably still be performed on a low A marimba.

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[63] Ibid 60.
[64] Ibid 60.
[65] Percussive Arts Society. *Compositions Research*. Database online. <www.pas.org/Members/PRD/index.cfm>

A string orchestra with four percussionists accompanies this twenty-three minute work. The technique required to play this piece is considerably more advanced than previous pieces, in part due to wider leaps across the instrument, as opposed to the more conjunct approach of previous composers. Double vertical strokes, chorale playing, and single independent strokes are all required and used in combination in this piece. Patterns that gradually evolve and build intensity are found in the first movement. This piece demonstrates the energy found in Miki's other works, including his previous marimba solo, *Time*

While a steady pulse is discernible throughout most of the first movement, the second movement adheres more to the Japanese concept of *ma*, a more free concept of rhythm in which the space between the notes is as important as the notes themselves. Rapid gestures, rather than meter-bound rhythmical sections, are the core of this movement, particularly in the first half. A steady pulse begins at rehearsal 37 and is an important organizing factor until a return of the freer feel of the first section at rehearsal 46. The influence of Miki's experience in writing dramatic works can be seen in works such as these in which the Japanese concept of *ma* is prevalent.

***Concerto pour Marimba et Ensemble á Cordes* – Akira Miyoshi (1969)**

Miyoshi's single movement piece, *Concerto pour Marimba et Ensemble á Cordes,* was also composed in 1969. The Columbia Record Company commissioned this fifteen-minute piece, which was written for Keiko Abe and premiered in 1970 in Tokyo by the Nippon Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Hiroshi Kumagai, with Abe as the soloist.[66] While the vast majority of the work is playable

[66] Ibid.

on a four-octave instrument, there is one low "A" in the second measure of rehearsal 11 that requires the use of a low A marimba. The score has some graphic notation, typical of Miyoshi's compositional style after 1967.[67]

As in Miki's concerto, Miyoshi's piece makes use of the Japanese concept of *ma* through its use of fermatas and gestures that are indeterminate in tempo, particularly at the beginning of the piece. Wide leaps in range and dynamics lend a dramatic element to the introduction. Techniques required for this movement include fast double vertical strokes with changing intervals, short contrapuntal segments, rapid single independent strokes, and wide leaps across the range of the instrument. Musically, the ability to portray the constant contrasts that Miyoshi demands is crucial to making this piece work.

Concerto for Marimba and Nine Strings – *Earl Hatch (1974)*

Earl Hatch's *Concerto for Marimba and Nine Strings* was composed in 1974. Hatch, a prolific composer for the marimba, was also a percussionist. Therefore, it is no surprise that this work is quite idiomatic. This three-movement piece can be played on a four-octave marimba, and was premiered on March 16, 1984, in Kioso, Japan with Hatch as soloist.[68] The first movement begins with two mallets, and although the performer is required to play fast sixteenth note runs, the piece is very idiomatic. A section in the middle of this movement requires the performer to play with three mallets; this section is easily accessible by someone new to four-mallet

[67] Yoko Narazaki."Miyoshi, Akira," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 13 May 2004). <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

[68] Percussive Arts Society. *Compositions Research*. Database online. <www.pas.org/Members/PRD/index.cfm>.

playing, as the right hand does not change intervals. The performer returns to only two mallets at the end of the movement.

The second movement is slow and requires four mallets throughout for a chorale that is reminiscent of the middle movement of Creston's *Concertino*. The parallel movement between chords lies will on the marimba and is technically accessible. The four-mallet technique required for this movement is elementary, with only a few easy single alternating stroke sections interspersed with the chorale. The majority of the third movement requires only two mallets, and although a brief section requires the performer to use four mallets, he or she can return to two mallets for the very end. A brief cadenza ends the movement. Nine string players comprise the accompanying ensemble for this piece.

***Gitimalya for Marimba and Orchestra* – Toru Takemitsu (1974)**

Renowned Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu wrote a marimba concerto in 1974 entitled Gitimalya, which means "Bouquet of Songs." This single movement piece was commissioned by Michi Takahashi and premiered by her with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in November of 1975 under the direction of Edo de Waart.[69] This was not Takemitsu's first work for percussion, but it was his first featuring the marimba as soloist.

The piece begins with the orchestra alone in a very slow 4/8 meter. Aleatoric elements, such as indeterminate pitch and rhythm, permeate the piece in both the solo part and the accompaniment. The marimba part consists of two main technical

[69] Editions Salabert Publishing Company Website. *Toru Takemitsu*, found in Catalogue under "Composers" (Accessed May 25, 2004). <www.salabert.fr/english/framcat.html>.

textures; the first being a combination of double vertical strokes (blocked chords) and rolls. The contrasting texture is a single line played by combinations of single alternating and single independent strokes. A brief cadenza-like section precedes letter G, where the orchestra joins the marimba for a brief section. It is in this section that the soloist improvises on almglocken (tuned cowbells). At letter I, an unusual solo part occurs when the soloist plays sextuplets in octaves. In an extended cadenza just after letter L, the soloist is required to play with the backs of the mallets.

As in the piece overall, the solo part alternates between the thicker double vertical texture and the single line texture throughout the cadenza. Following the cadenza, the work ends with the orchestra accompanying the chorale texture of the marimba, the music gradually fading away to nothing with the solo marimba and percussionists having the last sounds.

This piece can be performed on a low A marimba. In addition to the almglocken in the solo part, some unusual instruments are required in the orchestra, including bass flute, celesta, and guitar. The percussion section is prominent in this work and features many ethnic sounds including Chinese and Javanese gongs, almglocken, and an African log drum. This work came at a time when Takemitsu was experimenting with combinations of traditional Japanese instruments and Western instruments; Gitimalya was one of the first pieces in which he incorporated other non-Western instruments.[70]

Konzert für Marimbaphon und Orchester – *Tilo Medek (1976)*

[70] Yoko Narazaki with Masakata Kanazawa."Takemitsu, Toru," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 25 May 2004). <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

German composer Tilo Medek completed a marimba concerto in 1976. *Konzert für Marimbaphon und Orchester* was written at the suggestion of Wolfgang Preissler and dedicated to him.[71] This piece requires the use of a five-octave marimba and exploits the low range of the marimba, rather than concentrating on the upper range as had most previous concertos.

The first movement, *Alleingang*, begins with a long introduction by the solo marimba. The soloist plays fast sixteenth notes without a break for almost the entire movement, stopping only just before the ending. This entire movement can be played with only two mallets. The second movement, *Stillleben*, is in a moderate 3/4 meter and begins with an orchestra introduction. The soloist begins with chromatic sextuplets that can be played with only two mallets, then moves into a contrapuntal section at rehearsal 27 that might be most easily played with four mallets. The music switches character at rehearsal 63 with a change to 6/8 meter. Eventually, four mallets are required in this movement in a section before 113 that features the right hand playing melodic patterns against a left hand accompaniment. Finally, at measure 134, the soloist plays a series of three note chords that require double vertical strokes.

The third movement, *Einschlub*, is in a moderate 5/4 meter, beginning with the orchestra and featuring the timpani. This movement alternates between two-voice counterpoint that requires great independence from the soloist and fast *moto perpetuo* sections that require significant two-mallet facility. The final movement, *Ein DDR-Bürger (nicht) in Amerika*, is in a "swung" feel. This movement also begins with the

[71] Percussive Arts Society. *Compositions Research*. Database online. <www.pas.org/Members/PRD/index.cfm>.

orchestra and combines all of the technical challenges of the previous movements. A long cadenza is followed by an orchestra interlude.

Unlike most previous concertos that required the use of four mallets, this concerto has no chorale sections and rarely uses the double vertical stroke. The main difficulty found in this work comes from the large amount of contrapuntal writing and the fast two-mallet sections. The work is about thirty minutes long, requiring substantial endurance from the soloist and accompanying performers.

***Concertino for Marimba and Wind Ensemble* – Niel DePonte (1976)**

Composer and percussionist Niel De Ponte wrote his *Concertino for Marimba and Wind Ensemble* in 1976. This piece, dedicated to Gordon Stout,[72] was originally written for wind ensemble accompanying the solo marimba part and was premiered on July 20, 1977 by the University of Michigan Wind Ensemble. The composer performed the solo part with R. Strange conducting. A version with orchestral accompaniment was premiered with the Oregon Symphony Orchestra with Neal Gittleman conducting on January 15, 1984. The one-movement work requires the use of four mallets throughout.

Since the composer is a percussionist, it is not surprising that this work is quite idiomatic. The main technical challenges are a few awkward chord positions in the choral sections that permeate the piece, together with several sections that require octave double vertical strokes. The fast parts of the piece require the performer to play fast repeated double vertical strokes. DePonte indicates a "ripple roll" at one point in the piece, one of the first instances of a specific type of roll indicated in a

[72] Percussive Arts Society. *Compositions Research*. Database online. <www.pas.org/Members/PRD/index.cfm>

marimba concerto. This piece is also available with piano reduction and was revised in 1987.

***Lauda Concertata for Marimba and Orchestra* – Akira Ifukube (1976)**

Yet another Japanese composer, Akira Ifukube, wrote a marimba concerto in 1976. The American premiere took place at the annual Music from Japan Festival in 1981 in New York's Carnegie Hall, with Keiko Abe as soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra.[73] Ifukube is especially well known for his film scores, including the 1954 movie Gojira. His music is influenced by Japanese folk songs and frequently uses "pentatonic and other oriental scales."[74] Unfortunately, a score was not available at the time of this writing.

Concerto for Solo Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone, and Orchestra – *Sam Raphling (1978)*

Sam Raphling's *Concerto for Solo Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylophone, and Orchestra* was composed in 1978. This three-movement work is about twelve minutes long. The first movement features marimba and can be played on a four-octave instrument. The use of four mallets is required throughout. The second movement is scored for solo vibraphone, and again requires the use of four mallets. The third movement is written for xylophone solo, and while it primarily requires two mallets, a third mallet is needed for a brief section. The third movement is in 8/8,

[73] Music from Japan, *Music from Japan Works Information* "Akira Ifukube."(Accessed 2 June 2004). <www.musicfromjapan.org/resources/m17w1.htm.>

[74] Masakata Kanazawa. "Ifukube, Akira," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 2 June 2004). <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

with a division of 6/8 + 2/8 that gives it a triple feel that is characteristic of the final movements of so many of these concertos.

***Dialogues II* – Rand Steiger (1979)**

Rand Steiger's *Dialogues II* was composed in 1979. Although it only calls for a low A marimba, it is considerably rhythmically complex, with shifting meters and odd groupings. The orchestration calls for horns, bass trombone, trumpets, piccolo, flutes, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, 2 percussionists, electric piano, harp, and strings. Due to its rhythmic complexity, this piece presents a challenge for the accompanying orchestra.[75]

This work is in three movements, with the first two proceeding in a generally slow tempo with the last movement quite fast. The first movement begins very slowly with a dialogue between the solo marimba and horn. Metric modulation is used to change the tempo throughout the opening section, with mixed meters used throughout. Four mallets are required throughout the entire piece, with many wide leaps, rolls, and fast virtuosic passages for the soloist. The orchestral parts are no less difficult, with much interaction between the soloist and individual players of considerable rhythmic complexity. A cadenza for solo marimba is featured in the first movement.

The second movement is slow and begins with just the string section of the orchestra in an environment of changing meters. Some aleatoric pattern repetitions occur in the orchestra as well as in the solo part. This movement contains a short cadenza and mainly alternates rolled sections with rapid passages, ending with the

[75] Rand Steiger. *Dialogues II*, Sylmar, CA: Leisure Planet Music.

orchestra alone. The final movement is fast, with the solo is featured at the beginning with orchestral accompaniment. Several passages require the soloist to play fast alternating double vertical strokes. A long orchestra interlude precedes several cadenza-like sections, with a true cadenza that is quite long occurring near the end of the movement.

Steiger introduces one additional instrument for the soloist at the very end, when the soloist cues the last note with a piccolo woodblock. Several special effects occur throughout this composition, including the use of brushes on the harp, special effects on the piano such as the use of a phase shifter on the electric piano, and aleatoric notation throughout. This piece requires advanced four-mallet technique from the soloist.

***Dialogue for Marimba and Orchestra* – Robert Kreutz (1979)**

American composer Robert Kreutz wrote *Dialogue for Marimba and Orchestra* in 1979 at the request of Donald Skoog, a student of James Dutton at the American Conservatory, where Kreutz was a composition student. Kreutz became interested in writing for percussion while a student at the American Conservatory and frequently wrote pieces for the percussion students there.[76] Skoog premiered this work with the Colorado State University orchestra under the direction of Will Schwartz in October 1983.[77]

[76] Brett Jones."Robert Kreutz: An Overview of his life and works for percussion," *Percussive Notes* 40 no. 6 (December 2002), 69.

[77] Ibid.

Dialogue is played on a low A marimba in only one movement that can be divided into 5 major sections in a fast-slow-fast-slow-fast format. The four-mallet technique required for this composition is fairly basic, consisting mainly of double vertical strokes with occasional single independent strokes. Substantial sections require only two mallets, usually requiring just alternating single strokes. Kreutz does include some mallet indications in the score, showing his awareness of percussion writing learned while at the American Conservatory.

The second section is slow and consists mainly of a chorale-texture in the solo part. The middle section begins with a long solo marimba section of continuous alternating single strokes (two mallets only). The soloist then picks up a third mallet for repeated double vertical chords before returning to two mallets for another long solo section which is in a fast 6/8 meter. The soloist returns to four mallets for another repeated double vertical section before the orchestra takes over. The music gradually slows to the tempo of the fourth section of the piece before another long solo for the marimba occurs, this time in a chorale texture requiring four mallets. Here, the soloist plays double vertical strokes in the right hand alternating with single independent strokes in the left hand. The tempo is slow when this technique begins, but gradually increases when the soloist puts down two mallets to play another two-mallet alternating single stroke section that leads into the final fast section of the piece. The soloist begins this final section holding four mallets and playing fast repeated double vertical strokes.

Following an orchestral interlude, during which the soloist switches to two mallets for a final section of alternating single strokes, the final and most difficult section features the soloist playing fast alternating double vertical strokes with some

single independent strokes in the left hand. This piece is currently available on rental only, since the piano reduction is now out of print.[78]

***Romantic Concerto #2 for Marimba and Orchestra* – Michael Gileadi (1982)**

Michael Gileadi's *Romantic Concerto #2 for Marimba and Orchestra* was composed in 1982. This work is dedicated to both the composer's wife Eva and to Dr. Michael Udow, percussion professor at the University of Michigan. Dr. Udow edited the published score. This work is restricted to the upper range of the marimba, requiring only a four-octave instrument. Four mallets are required throughout, with the primary technical challenges involving fast double vertical strokes and fast rolls.

The work is in three movements in a fast-slow-fast format; the first movement begins with the orchestra and soloist together, requiring the soloist to play rolls in fast rhythms (e.g. rolled triplets at quarter note = 92). A few passages in this movement would be more easily played with two mallets, but the soloist is required to hold four mallets to accommodate surrounding passages. A slow second movement begins with the orchestra and soloist together, with the soloist required to roll almost everything in this movement. Although Gileadi has written some four note chords, he does not restrict himself to a four-note chorale texture. Instead, he varies the texture considerably throughout the whole movement, using anywhere from one to four notes at a time. The third movement is the fastest of the three, and begins with a brief orchestra introduction. Some repeated four-note double vertical chords are not really playable at the tempo marked (sixteenth notes at quarter = 168), and some of the alternating double vertical strokes are very awkward at the marked tempo (alternating

[78] Ibid.

sixteenth notes with two notes in each hand at quarter note = 132). While Gileadi was not a percussionist and at times did not write idiomatically for the instrument, he did have Dr. Udow to edit the score, which suggests most of the piece to be playable as written.

***Concert Piece for Marimba and Orchestra* – David J. Long (1982)**

David J. Long composed *Concert piece for Marimba and Orchestra* in 1982. This work is playable on a four-octave instrument and only requires the use of two mallets. In only two movements, the work is available both with orchestral accompaniment or a piano reduction. The first movement begins with a brief orchestra introduction before the marimba enters with a slow rolled section. Although Long uses a variety of tempos in this movement, the overall tempo remains slow. He mainly uses the upper range of the marimba in this movement. The second movement begins with a slow introduction by the marimba and accompaniment before settling into a fast tempo. This movement includes a cadenza and makes use of octaves in some places, yet still requires only two mallets. Long continues to use mainly the upper range of the instrument, although he does exploit the lower range in the cadenza. This work is quite idiomatic, so it comes as no surprise that Long is a percussionist himself. Mallet choices are indicated throughout as are instructions regarding where to roll.

***Concerto per marimbafono e orchestra* Op. 8 – Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic (1984)**

Nejobsa Jovan Zivkovic composed his first marimba concerto in 1984. Premiered by the composer on August 8, 1986 in Sombor, Yugoslavia, this work is

approximately twenty-six minutes long and is in three movements.[79] Zivkovic is a percussionist who is known for his energetic playing style, and his numerous compositions reflect that style. The first movement begins with a brief orchestral introduction before the entrance of the solo marimba at rehearsal three. Only two mallets are required until rehearsal eleven, where the character of the music changes to *lento* and the soloist is required to play with four mallets for a quasi-cadenza section. The overall character of this movement is energetic and tense, with "a frantic theme in the solo part." [80]

Marked *Adagio molto*, the second movement is in a much different character than the first. The soloist begins this movement with four mallets, playing a chorale in the low range of the marimba. A better balance between solo and orchestra is established in this movement, and the soloist is featured in a cadenza of substantial length and difficulty. The movement ends with a return of the opening chorale.

The soloist begins the final movement with an energetic theme reminiscent of Orff's *Carmina Burana*, a theme that is later passed throughout the orchestra. Several meter changes and secondary themes provide many changes in character throughout this movement.[81] Advanced four-mallet technique is required for this work, with a variety of stroke types used. Typical of Zivkovic's compositions, one of the primary challenges for the performer is the energy required to perform this work. In a review of this work, Mark Ford states, "The marimba solo is difficult and requires an advanced performer with strong memorization skills and the orchestra

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[79] Percussive Arts Society. *Compositions Research*. Database online. <www.pas.org/Members/PRD/index.cfm>

[80] Mark Ford. Review of *Concerto per Marimbafono e Orchestra* by Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic, *Percussive Notes* 31 no. 2 (December 1992), 102-103.

[81] Ibid.

parts are also demanding…It may not be a classic, but it is definitely worthy of inclusion on the growing list of marimba concertos." [82]

***Koncert Na Marimba* – Marta Ptaszynska (1984)**

Polish composer Marta Ptaszynska composed *Koncert Na Marimba* in 1984 and 1985. This work was commissioned by the conductor of the Zielona Gora Symphony Orchestra, Szymon Kawalla, and was premiered by that same orchestra in January 1986 with Stanislaw Skoczynski performing the solo part.[83] The piece is dedicated to Keiko Abe, who performed the United States premiere of the work in Washington D.C. at the 1986 Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC).[84] At thirty-seven minutes long, this was the longest marimba concerto written to date.

Composed in three movements using traditional forms such as sonata allegro and theme and variations,[85] the work can be played on a low A marimba and requires the use of four mallets throughout. Ptaszynska is also trained as a percussionist who has lived in the United States since 1972.[86] As with many of her works[87], this concerto was inspired by surrealist paintings, "each movement of the work evokes images of a certain painting."[88]

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Program notes from *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* by Marta Ptaszynska, Krakow, Poland: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1992.

[84] Barbara Smolenska-Zielinska. Translated by Przemyslaw Znaniecki. "Concerto for Marimba by Marta Ptaszynska," *Percussive Notes* 29, no. 4 (April 1991), 78.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Michael Meckna with Barbara Zwolska-Steszewska, "Ptaszynska, Marta," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 26 May 2004). <www.grovemusic.com>.

[87] Ibid

[88] Smolenska-Zielinska 78.

Yves Tanguy's painting inspired the first movement, *The Echo of Fear*.[89] This movement begins with the orchestra's long, slow introduction eventually joined by the marimba. The tempo gradually builds to letter E, where a new, fast tempo begins. The marimba part in this section is characterized by fast constant motion. Some improvisation is required of the soloist. An extended written-out cadenza is followed by a slow conclusion to the movement. This movement is characterized by "a powerful mood of darkness, mystery, and apprehension" suggested in the introduction.[90]

Max Ernst's painting *The Eye of the Silence* was the inspiration for the second movement.[91] The solo part in this movement consists mainly of rolls and embellishments to rolls, with the marimba part becoming more active in the middle of the movement before returning to a chorale texture at the end. Like the painting upon which it is based, this movement "imparts a feeling of mysterious calm."[92]

The final movement is based on a painting by Graham Sutherland entitled *Thorn Trees*.[93] A theme and variations with a fast overall tempo, the theme uses mixed meters. Interestingly, the soloist does not play at all in the third variation. The fifth variation is marked *allegro maestoso* and represents a significant change in character from the rest of the variations. There is a cadenza in the final variation. This work has had a very positive reception; Ptaszynska won an ASCAP prize in1986 for this work. Additionally, reviewer John Raush states,

> "Although the concerto has been in existence for over 15 years [in 2002], many aficionados of the marimba have probably never heard it or examined a

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid 80.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid 81.

score. They should immediately make its acquaintance. It is an inspired piece of writing and an effective showcase for the virtuoso marimbist."[94]

***Simard-Suite pour Marimba, Vibraphone, et Orchestre* – Pierre-Max Dubois (1985)**

Pierre-Max Dubois wrote his *Simard-Suite pour Marimba, Vibraphone, et Orchestre* in 1985. This work was dedicated to French-Canadian percussionist Marie Josée Simard, and features one percussionist playing marimba and vibraphone as the solo instruments. Dubois studied composition with Darius Milhaud at the Paris Conservatoire,[95] so it is quite possible that this composition was inspired by Milhaud's earlier work featuring the same instruments. The accompanying ensemble is string orchestra with percussion and timpani, and a piano reduction is available. The work is in five contrasting movements and is approximately twenty-one minutes and thirty seconds long.

The soloist begins on marimba after a brief orchestra introduction, switches to vibraphone for a brief section, and then returns to marimba. The second movement is played entirely on vibraphone and requires the use of four mallets throughout. The soloist returns to marimba for the third movement, and although the performer must hold four mallets throughout, much of the solo material can be played using only the two middle mallets. This movement includes some slight technical challenges, such as an awkward leap in double stops at rehearsal 1 and the use of double strokes

[94] John R Raush. Review of *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* by Marta Ptaszynska, *Percussive Notes* 40 no. 3 (June 2002), 71.

[95] Andrea Musk."Dubois, Pierre Max," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7 May 2004). <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

similar to those found throughout James Basta's concerto, but most of the solo material is quite idiomatic and can be easily played by an intermediate player.

The fourth movement is probably the most musically challenging of the piece. It is played entirely on vibraphone and requires the use of four mallets throughout. The performer would most likely need to use dampening techniques on the vibraphone for clarity, and some of the chord changes are more difficult than those found in the second movement. This movement segues directly into the fifth movement with a four-note chord on the downbeat, but the remainder of the fifth movement is played on marimba and can be performed with two mallets. This movement is the fastest of the five and has several fast runs, but they lie well on the instrument and present no problem to the intermediate player. The two-mallet sections should not present a problem for any performer proficient with two mallets; it is significantly easier than the two mallet sections of previous concertos such as the Creston or the Basta. The four-mallet sections require minimal proficiency with four mallets, and would be an appropriate introduction to four-mallet playing for a high school or young college student.

***Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra* – Peter Klatzow (1985)**

One of today's well-known concertos is Peter Klatzow's *Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra*, written for Robert Van Sice in 1985. This three-movement work requires advanced four-mallet technique, including octave leaps and one-handed rolls. A low E marimba is required, but there are *ossia* passages that can be adapted to a low A marimba. This well-written work was commissioned by Van Sice and the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra Development Committee, and

premiered by Van Sice and the Cape Town Symphony on May 23, 1985, with Enrique Garcia-Asensio conducting.[96] According to reviewer John Raush, this work is a true concerto, where "soloist and orchestra…compete on equal terms."[97] It is interesting to read the program notes from the composer:

> My Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra was the second of three works which I have written for marimbist Robert Van Sice. I hope that it will be an important contribution to the repertoire of this exceptionally exciting and versatile instrument. The concerto is in the traditional three movements and is tonal throughout. The first movement, sombre in colour, is gently elegiac. It is based on a single theme which becomes the source for transformations. The second movement is in the nature of a soliloquy for the soloist, whilst the third is a rhythmic and earthy toccata which recalls the African and South American roots of the instrument.[98]

The first movement begins with just the orchestra; the solo part enters at measure 16 with thirty-second notes, and the marimba plays with almost no break for the remainder of the movement. The almost constant thirty-second notes make this movement challenging for the performer, but the writing lies well on the marimba for the most part. One especially difficult moment occurs in measure 105, when the performer must double each note of an already fast passage. An independent roll is required for a brief moment at measures 118-119.

The second movement begins with the orchestra alone, with the marimba entering with an extended cadenza in measure 32. The marimba and orchestra do not really collaborate on this movement; in fact, they only play together for eleven measures, with the orchestra playing a subservient role to the solo marimba. The

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[96] Percussive Arts Society. *Compositions Research*. Database online. <www.pas.org/Members/PRD/index.cfm>

[97] John R. Raush. Review of *Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra* by Peter Klatzow, *Percussive Notes* 37 no. 1 (February 1999), 63.

[98] Peter Klatzow. Program notes for Robert Van Sice, *Three Marimba Concertos*, Etcetera KTC 1085, CD Recording.

third movement is in 6/8 meter, thus having a more dance-like quality. The marimba begins this movement and plays a constant sixteenth-note pace until measure 15, where an orchestral interlude begins. The marimba resumes with a more sparse texture in measure 27, maintaining this lighter texture until measure 41, the beginning of the second orchestral interlude. The marimba begins again in measure 47, returning to the busier texture of the first section. This alternation of orchestra and marimba, along with a varying of density by the marimba part, continues throughout this movement.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* – Raymond Helble (1986)**

Raymond Helble, a prolific composer for percussion, wrote *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* in 1986. This three-movement work begins with an orchestra introduction before the solo marimba entrance at measure fifty-eight. Like most of Helble's keyboard writing, the marimba part requires very advanced technique and can be difficult at times. Contrapuntal writing is common, as are fast repeated double vertical strokes with changing intervals in both hands. One-handed rolls are also required in this work as well as rapid linear passages that require single independent strokes. This work can be performed on a low A marimba. Helble shows awareness of the limited dynamic capabilities of the marimba through his light orchestral scoring while the solo is playing.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* – Ney Rosauro (1986)**

One of the most well-known and frequently performed marimba concertos today is still Ney Rosauro's first marimba concerto, *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra.* Rosauro, a Brazilian composer, currently teaches percussion at the University of Miami, where he received his Doctorate in Percussion.[99] This four-movements work is currently available for performance with string orchestra, wind ensemble, or percussion ensemble accompaniments. Rosauro premiered the original version for orchestra with conductor Manuel Prestamo in 1986 and the Manitowoc Symphony Orchestra.[100] The piano reduction of the work was premiered in Brazil in 1986 at the National Theatre of Brazil.[101] While this work has its technical challenges, it lies well on the marimba and is frequently performed by intermediate student marimbists. In an interview with Lauren Vogel Weiss, Rosauro states, "The music I write for mallets is very idiomatic. Before I publish any of my pieces, I have played them several times and made any necessary corrections to make the music fit the keyboard perfectly…in each piece there are many details that will develop a student's four-mallet technique."[102]

One of the major technical challenges of this piece occurs at the very beginning of the first movement entitled *Saudação* (Greeting). A left hand ostinato played with moving single alternating strokes accompanies the melody, which is in double vertical strokes, in the right hand. This movement begins with the orchestra and solo together constantly changing meter. Some alternating double vertical strokes and single independent strokes are required, but other than the opening

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[99] Lauren Vogel Weiss. "Ney Rosauro: Composer and Percussionist." *Percussive Notes* 37 no. 5 (October 1999), 59.

[100] Domenico E. Zarro."Ney Rosauro's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*." *Percussive Notes* 37 no. 5 (October 1999), 56.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Weiss 60.

motive, the technique required is not too difficult. The slow second movement, *Lamento*, requires more difficult techniques, including a one-handed roll in the left hand with double verticals in the right hand, and later, double lateral strokes in the right hand accompanied by single alternating and single independent strokes in the left hand. An easy chorale in the middle of this movement (at rehearsal C) leads into a section that requires single independent strokes at rehearsal D, before a recapitulation at rehearsal E.

The fast third movement, entitled *Dança*, requires double lateral strokes in one of the easier configurations (1-2-4-3)[103] at the beginning, before leading into a section at rehearsal B that requires fast repeated double vertical strokes in the right hand accompanied by the same double lateral configuration in the left hand. More single independent strokes are required at rehearsal C, although some performers choose to play this section (from C to E) with only two mallets. The recapitulation at letter E requires the use of four mallets again, but the performer has ample time to pick up two mallets if he or she has chosen to play the previous section with only two.

The final movement, appropriately titled *Despedida*, or Farewell, begins with the marimba and orchestra in unison. This movement has a short cadenza near the beginning that foreshadows a lengthier cadenza later. The main theme, which begins at letter A, requires the soloist to play fast double vertical strokes with the left hand while playing the melody in octaves in the right hand. The fast tempo required for the left hand ostinato presents a problem for some performers. The single independent section that begins after letter D could potentially be played with two mallets, although there is not really a good place to pick up four mallets before the

[103] Mallets are numbered from left (1) to right (4).

recapitulation of the second movement chorale that occurs later in the cadenza. The cadenza brings back themes from all four movements before the orchestra returns with a recapitulation of this movement. Although there are some technical difficulties in this piece, it is still quite idiomatic and therefore accessible for young players.

Summary of Trends

Although most of the works in this middle period were still the result of commissions, it can be noted that composers became more interested in writing for the marimba, and more chose to write multiple works for the instrument. Peter Klatzow followed his marimba concerto (1985) with the now standard marimba solo *Dances of Earth and Fire* (1989), and Miki and Miyoshi had both written works prior to their concertos. Other composers gave up on the marimba after writing pieces in this period; when asked to write another marimba concerto after *Gitimalya*, Toru Takemitsu refused, saying, "I don't particularly like the marimba."[104] It should also be noted that percussionists began taking matters into their own hands during this period and writing works for themselves. Works that fall into this category include the concertos by Earl Hatch, Ney Rosauro, David Long, Nebojsa Zivkovic, and Niel DePonte.

As the technical facility of marimbists grew, so did the writing for the instrument. The four-mallet technique required to play the works of the middle development period of the marimba concerto is more advanced, in large part due to the advanced technique of marimbists such as Keiko Abe and Robert Van Sice who

[104] William Moersch. Personal interview by author via electronic mail, 26 May 2004.

commissioned many of these works. While nearly all of the pieces from the first period had substantial portions that required two-mallets, the majority of pieces from the middle period use four-mallet technique throughout. The technique required is more advanced, including more combinations of stroke types and more contrapuntal playing, whereas most of the four-mallet technique required for the pieces in the first period revolved around chorale sections that utilized only the double vertical stroke type. In addition to the technical prowess of performers who were actively commissioning and playing marimba concertos, solo marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens was also influential on the development of marimba technique. According to Michael Burritt, "Mr. Stevens' development of 'one-handed rolls,' birch mallets, and independent four-mallet technique have dramatically changed the solo marimba idiom as we know it."[105] The first publication of Stevens' *Method of Movement* in 1979 had a profound impact on the development of marimba technique. Stevens was the first marimbist to demonstrate a complete grasp of independent technique for four mallets, and his book systematically documented the four stroke types.[106] His influence on the technical development of marimbists during this period also impacted the technical expectations of marimba concertos.

The range of instrument used began to expand, although somewhat gradually, during this period. The first use of the five-octave instrument was seen in the first concerto of this period, Miki's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*, with the inclusion of an optional ending that requires the lowest C. The first piece that actually requires the expanded range without giving options was Tilo Medek's

[105] Michael Burritt. "An Interview with Leigh Howard Stevens," *Percussive Notes* 30 no. 6 (December 1992), 10 – 13.

[106] Kastner 64-65.

concerto. The only other pieces from this period requiring an expanded range were Peter Klatzow's concerto and Nebojsa Zivkovic's concerto, both of which required a low F. The other pieces are all playable on either a four-octave or low A instrument. Along with the increase in range, the length of pieces slowly expanded, with works over twenty minutes long gradually replacing the more common 15-minute length of the first period.

Only one concerto (DePonte) in this period was originally written with wind ensemble accompaniment in this period, although some of the other works were later arranged for this accompanying medium and others. While several concertos in this period were written for smaller string orchestras, including those by Hatch, Miki, Miyoshi, and Rosauro, other composers began to expand the orchestra to explore new colors with the solo marimba, including Medek and Takemitsu.

A split not unlike that seen in the solo marimba repertoire occurred between composers having no experience playing percussion, composers who happen to be percussionists, and percussionists who also happen to be composers. Composers like Miki, Miyoshi, and Klatzow were not percussionists, but became interested in writing for the marimba after seeing its technical possibilities demonstrated by performers, most notably Keiko Abe and Robert Van Sice. The resulting works were not necessarily idiomatic, but were carefully crafted artistically. Other composers such as Takemitsu were attracted to the marimba because of the new sound possibilities it created, similar to the natural expansion of percussion in the orchestra during the twentieth century. Composers who also happened to be percussionists made an important contribution to the repertoire with works that were both compositionally sound and idiomatically appropriate for the performer. Ptaszynska was the most

notable example in this category. Finally, because of the lack of quality works available, the percussionist/composer makes a debut in this period. Works such as those by Rosauro, DePonte, Long, Zivkovic, and Hatch fall into this category.

Although a few four-movement concertos were written, most concertos adhered to a three-movement "fast-slow-fast" form. Many concertos from this period included cadenzas, including Hatch, Takemitsu, Medek, and Steiger, among others. Composers were fairly traditional with form in this period, although some works with programmatic elements, a characteristic more often associated with symphonic works rather than concertos, were written. Most notably, the concerto by Ptaszynska was programmatic, although Takemitsu's *Gitimalya* and even Rosauro and Medek's concertos with their descriptive movement titles had programmatic elements.

In summary, the general trends that can be observed during this period are an advancement in four mallet technique, a greater number of works written, although still the result of commissions in most cases, and a greater interest in writing for the marimba by composers, as seen by their collaboration with specific performers and their tendency to write additional pieces for the marimba.

CHAPTER V
THE RECENT MARIMBA CONCERTOS: 1987 – 2000

Despite the increase in repertoire during the middle developmental period of the marimba concerto, marimbists still sought more quality repertoire for their instrument. American performers and composers dominated the latest period in the development of the marimba concerto. With the founding of New Music Marimba in 1986, American marimbists began to commission even more pieces, including concertos for marimba. The first of these concertos was written by John Serry in 1987 and commissioned by Leigh Howard Stevens.

Concerto for Marimba - John Serry (1987)

The first piece to be discussed in this period is John Serry's *Concerto for Marimba*, commissioned by Leigh Howard Stevens with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and James Madison University. The work was premiered with the University of Wisconsin wind ensemble and later performed at the Kennedy Center with the James Madison University wind ensemble. According to Serry, his biggest challenge in writing this work was in reconciling his musical ideas with his wish to put Stevens' technique on display.[107] Serry is an experienced composer for percussion who earned a Bachelor of Music in percussion from the Eastman School of Music. His earlier solo work for marimba, *Night Rhapsody*, is a staple in the solo marimba repertoire. According to Serry,

> [The] first movement is very atmospheric with collage elements, including a brass chorale in a balcony (or offstage) wafting a Bach chorale down into the original modern vocabulary of the work. There is a message having to do

[107] John Serry. Personal correspondence via electronic mail, 4 June 2004.

with cessation of conflicts (both in the world and internally). The second movement is a double fugue (in a modern language).[108]

The piece is approximately nineteen minutes long and in addition to the standard wind ensemble instrumentation, utilizes a vast array of percussion instruments, including some unusual instruments such as a waterphone and camel bells.

***Concerto for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra* - Richard Rodney Bennett (1988)**

In 1988, Richard Rodney Bennett was commissioned by William Moersch to write a marimba concerto, the result being *Concerto for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra*. Moersch premiered this sixteen-minute, two-movement work with the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, Donald Spieth conducting, on March 11, 1988.[109] Moersch decided to commission Bennett after performing *After Syrinx II*, a solo marimba piece that Bennett composed for Moersch's New York debut recital. Bennett agreed, with the stipulation that Moersch secure a performance date.[110]

The first movement of this work begins with the soloist playing continuous triplets for several measures. The triplets start as single independent and single alternating strokes, but double vertical strokes are gradually added in the right hand as the piece builds in volume and intensity. This type of writing continues through this movement; according to the program notes, the marimba serves "as an obbligato over the orchestral harmonies."[111] Bennett is cognizant of the delicacy of the marimba throughout. The work is scored for accompanying chamber orchestra, and Bennett uses two styles of writing: "more traditional, hand-to-hand playing when the marimba

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[108] Ibid.

[109] William Moersch, ed. *New Music Marimba Repertoire Guide Volume I* (New York City: New Music Marimba Inc., 1990), 50.

[110] Moersch, personal interview.

[111] Moersch, *New Music Marimba Repertoire Guide*, 50.

was with the orchestra, and more delicate, one-handed playing when the marimba was alone."[112] An extended cadenza presents a variety of technical demands, including rapid yet delicate playing, fast double vertical strokes, and one-handed rolls.

The second movement, marked *molto ritmico,* is in 6/8 meter and begins with a soft, syncopated theme in the low register of the marimba, after which the solo marimba texture soon thickens to include octaves. The movement builds in intensity to the cadenza, which according to Moersch, is the most difficult section of the piece. He says, "I found the greatest challenge to be the second movement cadenza, where the orchestra interlude builds to high excitement and then cuts off abruptly as the marimba enters. The soloist must then sustain the same energy level as the orchestra for virtually the entire cadenza, without a break."[113] In his program notes, he says, "…the marimba, in effect, becomes the entire orchestra."[114] Fast double vertical strokes and hand-to-hand octaves are among the technical difficulties of this movement.

***Concerto for Marimba and Wind Ensemble* - Thomas Briggs (1988)**

Composer and percussionist Thomas Briggs wrote this seven and a half minute, one-movement work in 1988. It begins with wind ensemble accompaniment prior to the entrance of the solo marimba at letter A. The first section is marked *Allegro,* and requires solid two-mallet technique from the soloist, including alternating strokes, octaves, and rolls. At nine measures after rehearsal D, the soloist switches to four mallets. Pianistically written, this section features the right hand

[112] Moersch, personal interview.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Moersch, *New Music Marimba Repertoire Guide,* 50.

playing melody and the left hand playing accompaniment. The performer eventually switches back to two mallets and is required to play some fast double stops. The middle section is marked *Larghetto* and includes a cadenza requiring the performer to hold at least three mallets. Marked at quarter note = 132, the final movement uses the same material as the first section. Briggs primarily utilizes the upper range of the marimba, although the solo part descends to B in some sections, thus requiring a low A marimba. Even though this piece is scored for a fairly large wind ensemble, Briggs was obviously well aware of the dynamic limitations of the marimba, as the orchestration remains light while the soloist is playing. However, some four-mallet sections appear out of place technically, requiring the performer to suddenly play fast, repeated three-note or four-note chords in a section that could otherwise be played with two mallets.

***Concerto for Marimba and Band* - David Maslanka (1990)**

David Maslanka was commissioned by the United States Air Force Band to write a marimba concerto in 1989; the resultant work being the single movement *Concerto for Marimba and Band*, completed in 1990. Soloist Randal Eyles performed the premiere of this twenty-minute work at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in November 1990 in Philadelphia.[115] Maslanka already had significant experience writing for the marimba when he composed this piece; in fact, he had already written a marimba concerto with percussion ensemble entitled *Arcadia II*. In preparing to write for solo marimba, Maslanka mentions that he had listened to

[115] Michael Lynn Varner. "An Examination of David Maslanka's Marimba Concerti: Arcadia II for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble, and Concerto for Marimba and Band." DMA Document, University of North Texas, 1999, 81.

Creston's *Concertino,* and was also familiar with Kurka's marimba concerto. Additionally, Maslanka heard Leigh Howard Stevens play as he wrote *Variations on Lost Love*, a work commissioned by Stevens.[116] The concerto was the first marimba work in which Maslanka used the full range of the five-octave marimba, exploiting the lower range extensively. According to Michael Varner's dissertation on Maslanka's two marimba concertos, "The percentage of notes above middle-C [in *Concerto for Marimba*] is 38.4% which is less than half the number of notes above middle-C that were found in any of the movements of *Arcadia II*."[117] Maslanka was well aware of the problem of balance between the marimba, an instrument that does not project well, and the large band for which the accompaniment is scored. He chose to solve this problem "by exploiting both instrument tessitura and ensemble density."[118] According to Varner, "*Concerto for Marimba and Band* is much more a dialogue between instruments of the ensemble and the soloist than *Arcadia II*."[119] Although Maslanka's earlier works, including *Arcadia II* and his solo works *Variations on Lost Love* and *My Lady White*, are notorious among marimbists for their technical difficulty, this work is more accessible, according to Varner.[120] Although the piece does require one-handed rolls, it does not require contrapuntal playing, and the texture of the solo part is primarily monophonic.[121]

***Concertino for Marimba* - Keith Larson (1990)**

[116] Ibid 128-129.
[117] Ibid 86.
[118] Ibid 86.
[119] Ibid 85.
[120] Ibid 90.
[121] Ibid 90-91.

Composer Keith Larson's *Concertino for Marimba* was published in 1990. This six-minute work is available with orchestra or wind ensemble accompaniment. Like so many other marimba concertos, this one-movement work is in a three-part, fast-slow-fast format. Only a four-octave instrument is required, as Larson writes for the marimba entirely in treble clef. Following a long orchestral introduction, the soloist is required to use four mallets throughout the majority of the composition. The outer sections are in 6/8 meter and utilize 2:3 polyrhythms. The four-mallet technique required is fairly basic, consisting mainly of double vertical strokes and single alternating or single independent strokes for the thinner textures. The slow middle section is in 3/4 and can be played with two mallets. This section is rolled and includes a cadenza-like section. According to reviewer Jim Lambert, "this work is appropriate for an advanced high school keyboard percussionist or for the junior collegiate recital."[122]

***Loving Mad Tom* - Andrew Thomas (1990)**

Another composer most well known for his solo marimba writing is Andrew Thomas. Many percussionists are familiar with his solo work *Merlin*, however fewer are familiar with his marimba concerto, *Loving Mad Tom*. This work was commissioned by New Music Marimba and premiered by William Moersch. Marimbists familiar with *Merlin* should be warned that this piece uses a much

[122] Jim Lambert. Review of *Concertino for Marimba and Piano* by Keith A. Larson. *Percussive Notes* 35 no. 5 (October 1997), 85.

different musical language. Moersch states, "I was expecting '*Merlin* with Orchestra.' As it turned out, Andrew changed gears somewhat in the concerto and in his next marimba piece, '*The Great Spangled Fritillary* [GSF], which he composed for Nancy Zeltsman and Marimolin. The compositional ideas of the concerto are more closely related to *GSF* than to *Merlin*."[123]

Moersch premiered *Loving Mad Tom* with the Louisiana Symphony Orchestra in October 1990. The title is a reference to an anonymous 17th century poem, upon which this work is based. According to the program notes, each stanza of the poem corresponds to a movement of the piece.[124] This thirty-minute work is very programmatic, and in his program notes Thomas provides a detailed description of how the music corresponds to the poem. The instrument range required is a low E marimba, with the lowest note an F, just as in *Merlin*.

The first movement is based on the first stanza of the anonymous poem. According to Thomas' program notes, "the music opens upon a pastoral country scene."[125] Following this orchestral introduction, a change in the music occurs with the entrance of the solo marimba reflecting the main character's state of mind as he begs for food.[126] The fast tempos with almost continuous sixteenth notes in the solo marimba part continue as Thomas explores the entire range of the instrument, rather than just using the higher octaves. This exploitation of the entire range leads to wide leaps that often present difficulty for the soloist. Another technical difficulty is found in the fast double vertical strokes that interject the continuous sixteenth notes. Until

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[123] Moersch, personal interview.

[124] Andrew Thomas. Program notes, preface to *Loving Mad Tom*, manuscript, 1990.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

measure 176, the meter is 4/4, and while there is some syncopation, the pulse is easily felt in 4/4, unlike the ambiguous pulse of *Merlin*. Measure 177 introduces odd meters such as 15/16, 17/16, and 14/16, which signifies the beginning of a lengthy solo passage for the marimba, joined by interjections in the percussion section. The mixed meters disappear shortly after their first appearance, and the entrance of the orchestra again in measure 219 reestablishes the 4/4 pulse. The use of *col legno* and *pizzicato* effects in the strings after the solo marimba passage suggests a new character, as does the slightly slower tempo at measure 248. A less dense texture begins in measure 248, with an eighth note pulse replacing the more frenzied sixteenth note pulse. The solo marimba reenters at measure 256 as the most active voice, with sixteenth notes and sextuplets, though not continuous as in the first part of the movement.

The second movement begins in measure 304 without a break, with the character of this movement reflecting the second stanza of the poem, "agile, stiff, funny, ingratiating, and just a bit frightening."[127] Many of the same technical issues abound as in the first movement. The sixteenth note passages in this movement are more linear than those in the first movement, requiring single independent strokes more than single alternating strokes. Some fast double vertical strokes are required, including some hand-to-hand double vertical stroke passages. Wide leaps and passages played in octaves present a challenge later in the movement. A brief solo passage for marimba at measure 412 returns to more disjunct sixteenth note patterns requiring single alternating strokes.

[127] Ibid.

The third movement, subtitled "..On the lordly lefts of Bedlam…," is based on the main character's confinement in an insane asylum.[128] A sparse and delicate texture begins this movement, including many special effects throughout the orchestra; for example chains on a tam tam and woodwinds blowing air through their instruments without producing a pitch. The entire woodwind section interrupts this ominous mood with a sudden *fortissimo* entrance at measure 70, and although they fade away quickly, this interruption is followed by an increase in dynamic and density by the solo marimba at measure 74. Eventually dropping out, the marimba provides only brief interjections for a lengthy orchestra interlude that gradually builds in intensity to measure 138, where the entire orchestra (without the soloist) plays sixteenth notes at a *fortississimo* dynamic. In the fourth measure following, the marimba and one percussionist must match the dynamic of the entire orchestra with their sixteenth notes. This intensity gradually decreases, and the movement ends with the same delicate yet ominous mood with which it began.

The final movement, "…With a host of furious fancies…" begins with solo marimba for 41 measures before the orchestra entrance. In this 12/8 movement, the marimba plays a constant eighth note pulse until measure 40, where the density doubles to sixteenth notes. The orchestra takes over the eighth note pulse at measure 42; the eighth note pulse remaining present until measure 140, where it drops out for three bars before reentering in the solo marimba at measure 143. At measure 158, a duple feel is introduced against the triple feel. The duple feel gradually gains prominence throughout the rest of the movement, eventually taking over completely at the end. With very few exceptions, either an eighth note pulse (in 12/8) or a duple

[128] Ibid.

subdivision is felt throughout the entire movement, creating a *moto perpetuo* effect. According to Thomas, the main character Tom "is a frightening lunatic" in this movement. He says, "This movement is a celebration of his questing spirit."[129]

Concerto in One Movement for Marimba and Orchestra - Emma Lou Diemer (1991)

The prolific American composer Emma Lou Diemer wrote a one-movement concerto for the marimba in 1991. Commissioned by the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic under the direction of Jo Ann Falletta for their 10th anniversary season, the work was written for Deborah Schwartz, who performed the premiere with the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic on a series of concerts in March of 1991.[130] This work can almost be played on a low F marimba, with the exception of one chord that uses a D# and C (spelled B#) below. Four mallets are required throughout, with the primary technical demands including basic double vertical, single independent, and single alternating strokes. The solo part is very pattern oriented. According to Diemer, Deborah Schwartz "offered excellent editorial suggestions."[131]

Although the work is in one movement, it can be divided into three major sections in a fast-slow-fast format. The first of two lengthy solo cadenzas separates the first fast section from the middle slow section and consists mainly of sixteenth notes. These sixteenth notes gradually speed up into a "quasi tremolo" section that gradually turns into rolls, serving as a transition into the middle section. Throughout the middle section, the soloist is either playing rolls in a chorale-texture or playing

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Emma Lou Diemer."Program Notes," preface to *Concerto in One Movement for Marimba and Orchestra*, Greensboro, NC: C. Alan Publications, 1994.

[131] Ibid.

arpeggiated patterns that are similar to rolls. The final section returns to the fast tempo of the first section. An active marimba part in the final section features patterns similar to those found in the first section.

The second marimba cadenza occurs near the end of the piece and incorporates an ostinato played by the string bass, together with an active percussion section. After the cadenza, a short coda similar to the other fast sections of the piece concludes the work. The accompanying ensemble is an orchestra, although a piano reduction is available. Diemer offers suggestions in the piano reduction whereby the piano can imitate the effects of the percussion section in the second cadenza. The orchestration is slightly reduced; Diemer states, "This lighter instrumentation is appropriate considering the relative subtlety and delicacy of the marimba."[132] Her statement and collaboration with Schwartz while writing the piece show an increasing awareness of the marimba's capabilities and limitations.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* - Dan Levitan (1991)**

Concert Artists Guild winner Douglas Walter premiered Dan Levitan's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* in 1991 with the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra. A second concerto using material from the first was premiered by Walter on January 20, 1995 with the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra, Oswald Lehnert conducting.[133] The Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned this work for Walter, who was their principal percussionist. He says, "We chose Levitan because I am a great admirer of his work – he has also written for me *Variations for Vibes and*

[132] Ibid.
[133] "Premieres," *Symphony* 45 no. 5 (September/October 1994), 53.

Piano which I premiered on an evening concert at PASIC in San Antonio in 1988."[134] Unfortunately, this piece was unavailable at the time of this writing.

***Marimba Concerto: After Hampton* - Libby Larsen (1992)**

Yet another New Music Marimba commissionee, Libby Larsen is also a prolific composer. William Moersch premiered her work, *Marimba Concerto: After Hampton,* on October 24, 1992 with the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra. The title of the piece refers to legendary jazz vibist Lionel Hampton. In her program notes, Larsen states, "The first movement begins with the assumption that after the work of Lionel Hampton in the 1930s and 1940s, the mallet percussion instrument was established in our culture as a vehicle for principal musical material."[135] Although Larsen had not written any works for solo marimba prior to this concerto, she was recommended by Moersch's manager at the time, Earl Blackburn. According to Moersch, " Libby Larsen was the composer representative to the American Symphony Orchestra League and Earl felt that she would be an 'easy sell' to the orchestra managers."[136]

After Hampton was a private consortium commission, a collaboration of thirteen orchestras.[137] An unusual aspect of this work is its feature of the percussion section in addition to the solo marimbist. Larsen compares the gradual inclusion of the percussionists as soloists to a Baroque concerto grosso ensemble. She states, "My *Marimba Concerto: After Hampton* places in solo positions instruments which were

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[134] Doug Walter, e-mail correspondence to author, 3 June 2004.

[135] Libby Larsen. "Program Notes," *Marimba Concerto: After Hampton*, manuscript.

[136] Moersch, personal interview.

[137] Ibid.

absent in baroque, classical, and romantic orchestras."[138] This twenty-five minute work is in three movements. According to Moersch, "The main challenge I found with *After Hampton* was in the ensemble element of playing together with both the orchestra and the percussion section soloists, particularly in regard to the varying location of the percussionists on stage."[139]

The first movement, subtitled "Allegro/Cross-Rhythms/Relaxed/Allegro Assai/Pass the Plate," begins with an orchestral introduction that changes meters at least every other measure. The marimba entrance at measure 37 requires the soloist to play hand-to-hand double vertical strokes. A section marked "Rag" at measure 45 is contrapuntal. Technical demands in the "Cross-Rhythms" section, which begins at rehearsal 12, mainly consist of double vertical strokes, both hand-to-hand and hands together, although a brief section of doubled sixteenth notes occurs. The "relaxed" section beginning at rehearsal 15 consists of a variety of stroke types. One of the more technically challenging sections begins at rehearsal 17 with a contrapuntal section in a swung feel. Rehearsal 20 marks the return of the introductory material in a section marked "Allegro Assai" which presents the same challenges as the first section. The final section, marked "Pass the Plate," requires both single independent strokes for a more linear line, and hand-to-hand double vertical strokes as found in the rest of the movement.

The slow second movement subtitled "Slowly, in muted colors" begins with rolled octaves in the low register of the marimba. These rolled octaves expand into a four-part chorale section before breaking down into a fast double lateral stroke

[138] Larsen. "Program Notes."
[139] Moersch, personal interview.

section. While the main texture of the marimba part is the chorale texture, some more rhythmic sections are interspersed.

Like the first movement, the third movement is subdivided into several sections with colorful titles, including "Raucous," "Full Turning," "Constant Billy: Setting the Beans," and "Finale." In the first section, challenges include fast repeated double vertical strokes, double vertical strokes moving in parallel motion, and some sixteenth note runs that require combinations of stroke types. Single independent strokes that move in contrary motion are required in the second section, "Full turning," along with some double-strokes. The main motive of this section, an uneven subdivision of 12/8 meter, gradually expands from two notes played as single independent strokes to octave doublings of those notes in both hands. A single alternating stroke pattern (permutation 4-1-3-2)[140] begins at rehearsal letter 11 and returns several more times in this movement. The first entrance of the solo marimba in the third section, "Constant Billy…" is a single line with some notes doubled. After rehearsal 22, the hand-to-hand double vertical stroke texture found in the first movement returns. "Setting the Beans" is a brief section for orchestra alone. A variety of stroke types are present in the "finale," which builds in intensity to the end of the piece.

***Concertino for Marimba and Winds* - Alfred Reed (1993)**

Alfred Reed's *Concertino for Marimba and Winds* was composed in 1993 and dedicated to Reiko Kono. In three movements, with an unusual set up of slow-fast-fast, the first movement is entitled "Nocturne" and, according to Rebecca Kite, "the

[140] Mallets are numbered right (1) to left (4).

feeling of this movement is somewhat introspective."[141] A few cadenza sections are included in the first movement. This work requires a G below a low A, requiring the performer to use a low E marimba. In a preface entitled "Technical Notes for the Performer," marimbist Rebecca Kite suggests that since the G is only used in the opening cadenza, the performer could play those notes up one octave and perform the entire concerto on a low A marimba.[142]

Four mallets are required throughout this movement, with the primary techniques required being double vertical strokes, both repeated and as rolls, single alternating strokes, double strokes as found in Basta's concerto, and single independent strokes. While most of the second movement can be played with two mallets, a section of alternating double vertical strokes requires four mallets, in addition to the last chord of the piece that requires three mallets.

The third movement is marked "bright rock/boogie tempo," suggesting a popular music feel. Double vertical strokes in the form of four mallet chords and single independent strokes, basic techniques that seldom tax experienced performers, are required in this movement. Aside from some use of syncopation and the swing feel required for the third movement, the accompaniment does not appear to be too difficult. Although the original accompaniment is for wind ensemble, a piano reduction is available for this work.

***Chamber Symphony for Marimba and Winds* - Daniel McCarthy (1993)**

[141] Rebecca Kite."Technical Notes for the Performer," preface to *Concertino for Marimba and Winds* by Alfred Reed, Oskaloose, IA: C.L.Barnhouse Company, 1993.

[142] Ibid

Although Daniel McCarthy had already written two works that feature the marimba as soloist, his *Chamber Symphony for Marimba and Winds* was the first to feature the marimba with an accompanying ensemble other than percussion instruments. As the title suggests, the accompaniment for this piece is a small wind ensemble, including brass quintet, woodwind quintet, one percussionist, a bass clarinet, and saxophone. Cort McClaren commissioned this piece with the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, intended for performance by guest marimba soloist Michael Burritt with the faculty wind ensemble of UNCG.[143] The instrumentation for this piece was inspired by McCarthy and Burritt's desire to create "a piece that was accessible to the college faculty."[144] McCarthy and Burritt are surely aware of the difficulty that exists for marimbists seeking concerto performance opportunities. This work is a creative solution to that problem in its utilization of an accompanying ensemble other than the percussion ensemble, large wind ensemble, or full orchestra.

This three-movement piece utilizes a fast-slow-fast format, and requires advanced four-mallet technique. All of McCarthy's solo marimba works were written for Burritt, who is known for his outstanding technical prowess as well as his energetic performance style. His influence is obvious in this work. In her dissertation on the marimba music of McCarthy, Christina Wilkes states "Important aspects of McCarthy's marimba music are consideration of tempi and endurance for the marimbist…McCarthy has been successful in extending the mental and physical endurance of the marimbist…"[145] Specific challenges include the dexterity and independence required to play "fast, sextuplet-based rhythms and hand-to-hand

[143] Christina Faye Wilkes. "A Performer's Guide to the Marimba Music of Daniel McCarthy." D.M.A. document, University of Arizona, 1996, 93.
[144] Ibid 93.
[145] Ibid 156-157.

syncopated patterns."[146] Additionally, wide intervals for extended periods of time, fast tempos, and contrapuntal writing all present technical challenges. Musically, rhythmic complexity, uneven phrase lengths, and unusual harmonic progressions[147] all challenge the performer to make logical sense of the music.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* - Evan Hause (1994)**

Written at the MacDowell Colony in August of 1994, Evan Hause's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* is a one-movement piece requiring a five-octave marimba. Percussionist Loren Mach, who commissioned the work, premiered it on April 13, 1996.[148] In addition to being a composer, Hause is a multi-instrumentalist who includes percussion among the instruments he plays.[149] Mach and Hause were friends and fellow students at the Oberlin Conservatory as undergraduates, where Mach premiered Hause's solo marimba work, *Fields*. Later, frustrated with the lack of quality marimba concerto repertoire, Mach approached Hause to write a concerto that "would make the marimba shine."[150] Mach says, "I asked for a competition piece (whatever that means) that would showcase all that can be done on the marimba like in *Fields*, and one that would enable my musicianship to shine through."[151] Mach won the Grand Prize in the 1995 St. Louis Symphony Young Artists Competition with his performance of Hause's concerto but unfortunately did not get to perform it with the St. Louis Symphony. The orchestral premiere with the Cincinnati College-

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[146] Ibid 156.
[147] Ibid 156.
[148] Evan Hause. Official Website (Accessed 1 June 2004). <www.hausemusic.com>
[149] Ibid.
[150] Loren Mach. Personal correspondence via electronic mail, 4 June 2004.
[151] Ibid.

Conservatory of Music (CCM) orchestra was included in the grand reopening of the Corbett Auditorium at CCM. Mach says,

> I was one of many concerto competition winners at CCM that year. Gerhard Samuel, CCM's music director at the time, honored me with this high profile concert because he was an important composer and supporter of contemporary music, but more importantly, the music of our time written now by living composers.

Hause's concerto begins with an orchestral introduction before the marimba entrance at rehearsal A. The marimba part is very disjunct, requiring the soloist to cover a large range in a very short amount of time. Constantly changing meters, odd rhythmic groupings, and syncopated patterns contribute to the rhythmic complexity of this piece. Mach points out that this piece is very difficult to put together with an orchestra; for his premiere performance, he was allowed six hours of rehearsal time, and as he says, "This is unheard of in the real music world. And the orchestra was still barely able to pull it together."[152]

A variety of strokes types are required throughout this piece, with the fast tempo along with the wide range used combining to make the solo part quite difficult. Hause's awareness of the marimba and its idiosyncrasies are evident in passages such as that found around rehearsal G, where an arpeggiated pattern gradually evolves into a roll. A one-handed roll section at rehearsal V, features a melody rolled in octaves in the right hand with an eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The tempo of the final section, along with the syncopated accent pattern and loud dynamic, presents a very difficult but very effective and climactic ending to this piece.

[152] Ibid.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* - Anders Koppel (1995)**

Anders Koppel was commissioned by Bent Lyloff of the Copenhagen Conservatoire to write a marimba concerto to serve as the required work at the 1995 International Percussion Competition Luxembourg.[153] The resulting piece, *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*, was premiered at that competition in 1995. This fourteen-minute work is in a three-movement form and utilizes a low E marimba.[154] The performer must use four mallets throughout the work, and the writing is somewhat unidiomatic for the marimba, presenting a challenge to any performer. This work is most appropriate for a graduate level or professional marimbist, due to the advanced four-mallet technique required to perform it.

The work is tonal throughout, but highly chromatic. The marimba introduces the main theme in each movement, and a cadenza is written out in the first movement. The concerto follows a typical fast-slow-fast format. Some of the challenges of the first movement include the crossing of hands, sixteenth notes at a fast tempo, and awkward hand positions in fast alternating double vertical strokes. The second movement, perhaps the most unidiomatic and difficult of the three, has a slow overall tempo, but is incredibly difficult in the middle section due to fast alternating double vertical strokes in very awkward hand positions. The third movement marked "Andante" uses many thirty-second notes, giving it a faster feel than the marked tempo.[155] This movement is the most tuneful of the three and while it has some awkward moments, is far more idiomatic than the second movement. Many of the

[153] Robert Ian Brudvig. "A Performer's Guide to the *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* and *P.S. to a Concerto* by Anders Koppel." DMA Document, The University of Arizona, 2002, 20.

[154] Ibid 22.

[155] Ibid 22.

fast thirty-note sections are scalar patterns not particularly difficult to play on the marimba. This movement does require the alternating double vertical strokes that make the previous movement so difficult. One new difficulty presented in this movement is the independence between the two hands required in measures 32 through 37, a section that returns again at measure 99. A piano reduction is available for this work, one with considerable difficulty as well.

***Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* - Tomas Svododa (1995)**

The Oregon Symphony Orchestra commissioned Tomas Svoboda's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*. Completed in 1995 and premiered by Niel DePonte with the Oregon Symphony on March 26, 1995, this three-movement work is twenty-three minutes long. The work is dedicated to DePonte and can be performed on a low A marimba. The accompanying ensemble includes winds, strings, harp, celesta, and piano.[156]

While Svoboda is a composer by trade, he also studied percussion at the Prague Conservatory.[157] Therefore, as might be expected, this work is quite idiomatic. The first movement requires four mallets, with the exception of one section. Beginning with an orchestral introduction, the tempo is slightly faster when the solo marimba enters at letter A. Many idiomatic patterns are presented on the instrument, although Svoboda is not afraid to stray from idiomatic writing when musically necessary. The second movement is perhaps the most unidiomatic of the three movements; although the overall tempo is slow, it contains many fast arpeggiated

[156] Niel DePonte. "An Analysis of Tomas Svoboda's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*." *Percussive Notes* 34 no. 3 (June 1996), 53 – 60.

[157] Robert A. King Jr. "Svoboda, Tomas," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 17 May 2004). <http://www.grovemusic.com>.

runs. Four mallets are required throughout this movement, which begins again with a short orchestra introduction. The third movement has the same technical challenges as the previous two movements, with even more fast runs. This fast movement begins in 2/4 with a lengthy orchestra introduction, with a substantial section in 6/8 meter at the end. Svoboda changes meter throughout the entire concerto, which is typical of the "rhythmic vitality" that characterizes his works.[158] A long solo passage near the end of this movement might be considered a cadenza. This work is particularly significant in bringing the marimba concerto to greater recognition, with DePonte's recording of it nominated for a Grammy award in 2003. According to William Moersch, "Niel DePonte is to be commended for the recent Grammy Award nomination of the Svoboda Concerto. That may have done as much as anyone to put the instrument in the public eye."[159]

Concerto No. 2 per marimbafono e orchestra Op. 25 - Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic (1997)

The second marimba concerto by Balkan percussionist/composer Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic was composed in 1996 and 1997. Premiered by Zivkovic on April 9, 1997 with the Münchener Symphony,[160] this work is twenty-six minutes long and requires a five-octave marimba. Like Zivkovic's other works, this piece is very energetic, a trait consistent with his playing style. The piece uses the entire range of the instrument, with constant mood contrasts serving as focal points of the three-movement piece.

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Moersch, Personal interview.

[160] Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic. Preface to *Concerto No. 2 for per marimbafono e orchestra* op. 25, Edition Musica Europea 1997.

The first movement begins with the orchestra and soloist together in a dramatic introduction that includes rhythmic freedom and an improvisatory feel. Markings such as *furioso, energico,* and *pesante* are all characteristic of Zivkovic's music, and all are found in the introduction of this piece. After the introduction, an eighth note ostinato is established in the solo marimba, switching from an improvisatory feel to a more "groove-oriented" section. After a return to the freedom of the introduction at rehearsal 17, this frenzy dies away into a chorale section that ends this movement. The second movement is marked *notturno, tranquillo*, and begins with the orchestra alone. Odd rhythmic groupings (e.g. 9:2) and indeterminate *accelerando* markings lend a sense of freedom to this movement similar to that found in the outer sections of the first movement. Although this movement is reserved in its beginning, it gradually builds intensity and volume. A soft chorale at rehearsal 25 returns the mood to its opening state before another free, intense section begins after rehearsal 30. The movement returns to the opening mood at rehearsal 38, with a chorale marked *al niente* at the end.

Moving directly into the third movement, a fast and energetic pace is established. The form of the final movement reverses that of the first movement, with the "groove-oriented" sections at the beginning and end, and the free section in the middle, culminating with a substantial cadenza before the final section. The most common technique required for this piece is double vertical strokes and fast playing in general. The performer also must be able to sustain loud, energetic playing for long periods of time in order to play this work successfully, as well as portray the major contrasts in mood.

***Concerto for Marimba* – David J. Long (1997)**

Percussionist, composer, and pedagogue David J. Long published his first major marimba concerto in 1997. He had previously written a shorter work, discussed earlier in this document. *Concerto for Marimba* consists of three movements in fast-slow-fast format. After a long orchestral introduction, the marimba enters with sixteenth notes that require double lateral stroke technique. This concerto requires advanced four-mallet technique throughout, including double lateral strokes, alternating double vertical strokes, and wide leaps encompassing the entire range of a low-E marimba. Long's percussion background enables him to write an idiomatic, yet challenging solo marimba concerto.

***Konzert für Marimba und Streicher* - Eckhard Kopetzki (1999)**

After winning the 2003 PAS Composition contest with his solo marimba piece, *Three Movements for a Solo Dancer*, German composer Eckhard Kopetzki is rapidly becoming a familiar name to marimbists. His marimba concerto, *Konzert für Marimba und Streicher*, was written for Katarzyna Mycka in 1999 and subsequently recorded by the same performer on a CD of marimba concertos. Mycka performed this concerto at PASIC in 2001, thus exposing American percussionists to this four-movement work. In a 2001 interview, Mycka stated, "Three years ago we began to collaborate on this project for new marimba repertoire. I believe that his [Kopetzki's] pieces are very challenging because of his thorough knowledge of marimba technique and his special interpretations of the musical language. I like this concerto very much

and hope that it will become an important standard in the marimba repertoire."[161] Kopetzki calls it a "typical solo concerto," because of its virtuosic nature and the "emphasis on the manifold possibilities of the marimba."[162]

The form of this work strays somewhat from that of the typical marimba concerto; its four movements are reminiscent of a symphony, with a fast-slow-scherzo format for the first three movements, followed by a slow introduction leading into a fast final movement. The accompaniment for this work is a string orchestra, and the work can be played on a low A marimba. At nearly 25 minutes long, it is a substantial showpiece. Because Kopetzki is also a percussionist, the work is quite idiomatic. The main technique required includes double vertical octaves strokes, fast double lateral strokes at an octave interval, chorale style playing, and fast repeated double vertical strokes. Single independent strokes are not required for most of this piece, nor is contrapuntal playing. Despite the idiomatic writing in this piece, it requires advanced four-mallet technique.

***Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra* - Eric Ewazen (1999)**

She-e Wu and the Moment Musical Orchestra of Taiwan commissioned Eric Ewazen's Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra.[163] It was completed in 1999 and premiered one month later in Taiwan by Wu. Ewazen was no stranger to writing for the marimba. His previous solo marimba work, *Northern Lights*, is considered a staple of the marimba repertoire. While writing the concerto, Ewazen was also

[161] Lauren Vogel Weiss. "Katarzyna Mycka: Marimbas, Motherhood, and More…" *Percussive Notes* 39 no. 5 (October 2001), 60.

[162] Eckhard Kopetzki. Program notes for Katarzyna My´cka, *Marimba Concerto*, Audite 97.478, CD Recording, 2001/2002.

[163] Eric Ewazen. Program notes for *Percussion Music of Eric Ewazen*, Resonator Records, CD Recording, 2003.

working on another percussion commission, *The Palace of Nine Perfections* for percussion ensemble, commissioned by Richard Gipson and completed in 2000. Similarities can be noted in the marimba writing of both pieces, as well as in the marimba writing of *Northern Lights*. Despite his experience in writing for marimba, Ewazen met with Wu to hear her play. He states, "Her extraordinary playing, touchingly lyrical and brilliantly dynamic, helped pave the way for me to write a concerto, grandly scaled, which explores the wide range of expressive possibilities inherent on the marimba."[164] This nearly thirty-minute, three-movement piece exploits the entire range of the five-octave marimba.

The first movement begins with the marimba alone playing a slow chorale before the orchestra joins in the section marked *Allegro Vivace*. The most common technique required for this movement is the double lateral stroke in one of its most difficult configurations, a sticking pattern of 4-3-2-1.[165] Another difficulty in this movement lies in the wide range covered in short periods of time. Arpeggios that span 2.5 octaves frequently ascend and descend in the space of a measure. Repeated double vertical strokes that change intervals, (sometimes requiring intervals as close as a minor second), are also common. Repeated double verticals, arpeggios, and downward double lateral strokes provide the three main textures of this movement. A cadenza beginning with the*Allegro Vivace* motive (in a different key) is found near the end of this movement. The end of the cadenza marks a return of the opening chorale, this time alternating phrases with the accompaniment. The chorale is followed by a brief codetta.

[164] Ibid.

[165] The mallet numbering system used refers to the lowest mallet as 1.

According to Ewazen, the second movement is slow and lyrical, or a "song without words." [166] The marimba acts as accompanist for the first section of this movement before playing the primary melody at measure 74. Two main difficulties exist in this movement, the first the challenge of conveying the lyricism of this movement while playing one handed rolls with the right hand (often in close intervals) and playing accompaniment patterns in the left hand that leap between registers. Arpeggiated runs that permeate the middle section present the second major challenge. These figures cover the entire range of the instrument, often in as little as a single beat, presenting difficulty due to the tempo at which they must be played to accommodate the melodic orchestral figures they accompany. In fact, the tempo at which the performer can play these figures will determine the tempo of this movement. A recapitulation at measure 181 features the orchestra as accompaniment and the marimba as soloist, this time in a different key. Fortunately, the main theme is easier for the marimbist in this key (F Major) because it does not require the awkward hand positions of the original key (F# Major).

The third movement of this concerto is in ABA form, with the A sections in 6/8 meter. The primary technical difficulty of the A section is double vertical strokes that encompass large leaps. The B section, in 4/4, creates a much different mood than the A sections with its jazz-like character, and while double vertical strokes still present one of the main difficulties, single independent strokes and fast double lateral strokes are also required. Ewazen requires the marimbist to play on the edge of the marimba bars with the shaft of the mallets at one point in this piece. Marimbist She-e

[166] Ewazen, Liner notes.

Wu performs this section as "marimshots"[167] in order to still be heard. The second A section begins with an introduction made up of new material before the recapitulation. With a few minor exceptions, this recapitulation is the same as the original A section until a transition begins at rehearsal 291. This short transition leads into a restatement of the opening chorale from the first movement, this time featuring the soloist and orchestra together. A short coda concludes this work, and contains some of the most difficult passages of the entire piece. Originally for marimba and string orchestra, an arrangement of this piece has recently been completed for marimba and wind ensemble.

***Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble* - Lynn Glassock (2000)**

Lynn Glassock's *Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble* was written in 2000 for the 2000 PAS Composition Competition, for which it won first prize. This work features a soloist on vibraphone and marimba. It was the required piece for the 2000 concerto solo competition, also sponsored by PAS, and was premiered at the 2000 PASIC in Dallas, TX at the final round of the competition. It is dedicated to Mike Votta and the University of North Carolina Wind Ensemble. Glassock is a percussionist and frequent winner of the annual PAS composition competition.

A wind ensemble introduction begins the first movement, with the soloist entering in a free, cadenza-like section at measure 12. This movement is fast and

[167] "Marimshot" is a term coined by students of Leigh Howard Stevens and denotes a technique in which the marimbist plays with the head of the mallet on the bar (as normal) while hitting the shaft of the mallet on the edge of the bar at the same time.

rhythmic, with syncopation and hemiolas adding drive. In the program notes, Glassock says

> "There are many sections of the composition in which the soloist is playing phrases that could have easily been written in time signatures that are different from those which were actually used. During these sections, the notes in the solo part are often beamed to reflect the desired 'odd meter' note groupings, while those of the ensemble (piano) follow the more common method of beaming used when the pulse is represented in quarter notes."[168]

The second movement features solo vibraphone, and Glassock's familiarity with this instrument results in complete instructions for the performer, including pedaling and dampening indications. The solo part is often contrapuntal in this movement, with a slow tempo throughout. The soloist returns to marimba for the fast third movement, and while this movement has the rhythmic drive and syncopated patterns of the first movement, it does not have the odd rhythmic groupings in the solo part, although mixed meters are still prevalent. As an active performer and pedagogue, Glassock is well aware of the capabilities of the mallet instruments and writes accordingly, with a solo part that is idiomatic, yet still challenging.

Summary of Trends

The primary source of marimba concertos today remains commissioned new works. While the percussionist/composer became even more prevalent during this period, those that no longer consider percussion performance to be their main focus (John Serry, Evan Hause, and Eckhard Kopetzki) wrote their works as a result of

[168] Lynn Glassock. Program notes from Glassock, Lynn. *Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble*, Granada Hills, CA: Studio 4 Music, 2000.

commissions, not for their own performance. Percussionist/composers who still perform and teach actively are also writing pieces, and works such as those by Nebojsa Zivkovic and Lynn Glassock were written for their own performance and that of their students. As the marimba grew as a solo instrument, so did other composers' interest in writing for it. Composers such as Eric Ewazen, Andrew Thomas, Richard Rodney Bennett, David Maslanka, and Anders Koppel have all written multiple works for marimba.

While very few works in the middle period were written for extended range instruments, the majority of works in the last period are for low E instruments, and a few even utilize the full five-octave range, most notably those by Ewazen and Hause. Another notable trend is the consistent use of four mallets throughout all of these compositions. Whereas pieces in the first period had substantial two-mallet sections and required only rudimentary four-mallet technique, and the second period works tended to mix sections with two and four mallets, nearly all of the works of the final period require four-mallets throughout the entire composition. More advanced techniques, such as the one-handed roll, are more frequently required; works that require this technique include the Ewazen, Hause, and Bennett concertos.

The average length of pieces in the first period was 14 minutes. In the middle period, the average length increased to 19 minutes, which is also the average length of pieces in the last period. A trend indicating a substantial shift in the development of the marimba concerto is the increase in the number of works written with wind ensemble or band accompaniment. Although several works in the two previous periods were later arranged for this medium, only two were originally composed for

it. In the latest period, seven works were originally composed for wind ensemble or band.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Conclusion and Summary

From the years 1940 -2000, at least forty-five new marimba concertos have been published, with the number of concertos written increasing substantially each decade. However, several more concertos exist that have not been published, and thus are rarely performed. Furthermore, several of the published concertos are not well known and are rarely performed. It is the author's hope that this document will serve as a reference to performers and teachers and will bring attention to the published works that are infrequently performed.

Many trends have been noted in the development of the marimba concerto since 1940. Perhaps the most notable trend is the advancement of technique required to perform more recent works. While the concertos of the first period generally required only two mallets for large portions of the work and required only rudimentary four-mallet technique, the concertos for the middle period required technique that was considerably more advanced. After the publication of Leigh Howard Stevens' *Method of Movement for Marimba*, the technical demands rose even more as composers became aware of the new technical possibilities on the instrument.

Along with the growth of marimba technique came the growth of the marimba itself. While concertos composed in the first period required only a four-octave or low-A marimba, some concertos in the middle period required a low-E or even five-octave instrument. The works written in the final period rarely use the four-octave marimba and commonly exploit the entire range of the five-octave marimba.

As composers became aware of the possibilities of the marimba concerto, more works were written. Each decade from the 1940s saw an increase in the number of works written, beginning with only two works published in the 1940s, and concluding with fourteen known works published in the 1990s. It is assumed that this growth trend will continue. Additionally, as the number of concertos written increased, so did the interest of composers in writing for the marimba. While early composers such as Paul Creston, Robert Kurka, and James Basta did not write any additional works for marimba, later composers such as Eckhard Kopetzki, Peter Klatzow, Emma Lou Diemer, and many others went on to write additional marimba works. Some composers, specifically Nebojsa Zivkovic and Ney Rosauro, wrote additional marimba concertos.

Finally, some changes can be noted in the type of composers writing for the instrument. Most of the works written in the early period were composed by well-established composers who were commissioned to write marimba concertos. While most marimba concertos today are still the result of commissions, there are a substantial number of works written by percussionists who also happened to be composers, including those by Ney Rosauro, Lynn Glassock, and Nebojsa Zivkovic. Composers who happened to be percussionists also wrote many works in the middle and late periods, including Marta Ptaszynska, Evan Hause, and Eckhard Kopetzki. Despite this increase in the number of works written by percussionist-composers and composer-percussionists, non-percussionist composers still made a substantial contribution in the latest periods. Composers such as Eric Ewazen, Libby Larsen, and David Maslanka are notable examples. Interest in writing for the marimba continues

to rise, and should lead to a continuing increase in the number of high quality works written.

What has not changed is the primary source of these pieces: the commission. Although the appearance of the percussionist/composer in the middle period added a new group of pieces, the majority of pieces are still written as a result of commissions by marimba players who seek more high quality repertoire. From Vida Chenoweth in the 1950s to William Moersch in the 1990s, marimba performers are still active in their quest to increase the marimba repertoire.

Recommendations for Further Research

Additional research and analysis should be undertaken on individual pieces. This paper has simply provided the most basic information about each individual work. A more detailed analysis could be done of individual pieces, and more information could be gathered concerning the inception of these pieces. A theoretical analysis of many of these pieces would provide an interesting and compelling study. Although this document has discussed to some degree the evolution of marimba technique required to play these pieces, a far more extensive study on this topic is warranted.

Another genre of works that is related to this study is the marimba concerto with percussion ensemble or other small chamber groups. These works fell outside of the scope of this document, but would provide another significant study. These works have perhaps been more influential in the development of percussionists, given the greater performance opportunities they provide. As William Moersch stated, "The key necessity [to convincing orchestras to hire a marimba concerto soloist]

remains to have significant solo management, as orchestra management in general will not deal directly with the solo artist."[169] A percussion ensemble director is far more likely to feature a marimba concerto soloist than an orchestra. Performers familiar with this genre will therefore have more performance opportunities than those who restrict their repertoire to concertos with large ensemble accompaniment.

Several marimba concertos exist that have not been published. Although these works are not likely to have influenced the development of the marimba concerto since they are not well known, it would still be interesting to examine the circumstances surrounding these pieces. Exposure to these pieces could result in a demand that might result in their eventual publication.

A comparison of the conventions of the marimba concerto with those of other instruments would be an interesting study. As marimbist Robert Van Sice stated, "What is hard to accept, but is simply reality, is that the maturing of any instrument takes time and we have just started 200 to 300 years later than some other disciplines."[170] A comparison of the first sixty years of the marimba concerto with the first sixty years of a more established genre, such as the violin concerto, could lead to some interesting conclusions and projections for the future of the marimba concerto.

This study was limited to the study of the marimba concerto in the United States. While every effort was made to identify and locate those pieces that have had influence in the United States, it is likely that some were overlooked. Additionally, significant marimba performance traditions have developed in other areas of the world, most notably in Japan and in Europe. Documenting those traditions, and

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[169] Moersch, personal interview.

[170] Michael Burritt. "Interview with Marimbist Robert Van Sice," *Percussive Notes* 30 no. 2 (April 1992), 15 – 17.

perhaps studying the influence of those traditions have had on the American tradition would be enlightening. Modern marimba performance traditions are also starting to develop in Latin American countries, and while many of the concertos written in Latin America are still unpublished, the influence of these works is likely to increase over time and eventually spread to the United States and beyond.

APPENDIX ONE

CHART OF MARIMBA CONCERTOS INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT

THE EARLY MARIMBA CONCERTO

Date	Composer	Range	Publisher
1940	Creston, Paul	4 octave	G. Schirmer, Inc.
1947	Milhaud, Darius	4 octave	Enoch Publishing
1956	Basta, James	4 octave	Music for Percussion
1956	Kurka, Robert	4.3 octave	Weintraub Music
1958	Sarmientos, Jorge	4.3 octave	Keyboard Percussion Publications
1964	Hayakawa, Masaaki	4 octave	Zimmerman
1964	Parchman, Gen	4 octave	Seesaw Music Corporation
1967	Nelson, Oliver		C.F. Peters (no longer available)

THE MIDDLE MARIMBA CONCERTO

Date	Composer	Range	Publisher
1969	Miki, Minoru	4 octave	Norsk Musikforlag A/S
1969	Miyoshi, Miki	4 octave	Ongaku no Tomo Sha Corp.
1974	Hatch, Earl	4 octave	Earl Hatch Publications
1974	Takemitsu, Toru	4.3 octave	Editions Salabert
1976	Medek, Tilo	5 octave	Edition Wilhelm Hansen
1976	DePonte, Niel	4.3 octave	Studio 4 Music
1976	Ifukube, Akira		Ongaku no Tomo Sha Corp.
1978	Raphling, Sam	4 octave	Music for Percussion
1979	Steiger, Rand	4.3 octave	Leisure Planet
1979	Kreutz, Robert	4.3 octave	Contemporary Music Project
1982	Gileadi, Michael	4 octave	Permus Publications
1982	Long, David	4 octave	C. Alan Publications
1984	Zivkovic, Nebojsa	4.6 octave	Edition Musica Europea
1984	Ptaszynska, Marta	4.3 octave	Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne
1985	Dubois, Pierre-Max	4 octave	Billaudot
1985	Klatzow, Peter	4.6 octave	PM Europe Publications
1986	Helble, Raymond	4.3 octave	Keyboard Percussion Publications
1986	Rosauro, Ney	4.3 octave	Pro Percussão

THE LATE MARIMBA CONCERTO

Date	Composer	Range	Publisher
1987	Serry, John		Serry Publications
1988	Bennett, Richard R.	4.3 octave	Novello & Co.
1988	Briggs, Thomas	4.3 octave	C. Alan Publications
1990	Maslanka, David		Carl Fischer Music Publishing
1990	Larson, Keith	4 octave	H.E. Steinhardt Co
1990	Thomas, Andrew	4.6 octave	American Composers Alliance
1991	Diemer, Emma Lou	4.6 octave	C. Alan Publications
1991	Levitan, Daniel		
1992	Larsen, Libby	4.6 octave	EC Schirmer Publishing

1993	Reed, Alfred	4.6 octave	C. L. Barnhouse Company
1993	McCarthy, Daniel	4.6 octave	C. Alan Publications
1994	Hause, Evan	5 octave	Hause Music
1995	Koppel, Anders	5 octave	Norsk Musikforlag A/S
1995	Svoboda, Tomas	4.3 octave	Thomas C. Stangland Co
1997	Zivkovic, Nebojsa	5 octave	Edition Musica Europea
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APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM MOERSCH

CC: How many marimba concertos have you premiered?

WM: Richard Rodney Bennett: Concerto for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra (1988)
Andrew Thomas: Loving Mad Tom: Concerto for Marimba (1990)
Libby Larsen: Marimba Concerto: After Hampton (1992)
Richard Wilson: Triple Concerto for Horn, Marimba, and Bass Clarinet (1999)

CC: How do you think the evolution of the marimba concerto compares to the evolution of solo marimba works?

WM: A concerto will be more significant than a solo work due to the increased exposure and attention an orchestra appearance has over a solo recital. The occasion of the first marimba concerto remains a landmark to this day and yet no one remembers the significance of the first composed solo work for marimba. In the same fashion, the commissioning, programming, and premiering of a concerto is a larger, more complex project and will therefore happen more infrequently than with solo material.

CC: What strategies do you use to convince orchestras to hire you to play a marimba concerto? Has it gotten significantly easier as the marimba concerto becomes better known?

WM: I have used a variety of strategies, as described below; however, the key necessity remains to have significant solo management, as orchestra management in general will not deal directly with the solo artist.
I do not think it has gotten easier. On the contrary, as the solo ability of orchestral players has improved, I think it has become more difficult for outside percussion soloists to displace principal players as concerto soloists, with the exception of those with significant solo management, primarily Evelyn Glennie.

CC: Where do you see the future of the marimba concerto?

WM: I would hope that more players will be involved with more composers and more orchestras, resulting in more concertos. It is striking to realize that in 65 years we have gone from only one marimba concerto to something approaching 125 or more – actually, I stopped counting in 1995 at 110.

CC: What has been your favorite concerto to play?

WM: Richard Rodney Bennett: Concerto for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra

CC: Why is the Bennett concerto your favorite?

WM: I should elaborate on my previous answer; my favorite concerto is the one I

am currently performing. My earliest career goal as a musician was to play marimba concertos, a realization that came to me in the midst of my concerto debut at the age of 18 with the Hovhaness, in Ann Arbor and Interlochen, MI. Since then, some of my highest moments of musical satisfaction have been in concerto settings: the premiere of the Bennett, coupled with a performance of the Creston and dedicated in gratitude to the memory of my teacher, Charles Owen; a particularly transcendent performance of the Larsen with Enrique Diemecke and the San Antonio Symphony; and the more recent and much delayed London premiere of the Bennett. I suppose the Bennett is my favorite because it is both the first concerto I commissioned and, to my mind, the most musically significant.

CC: What seems to be the audience favorite of the concerti that you have performed?

WM: It is hard to tell, removed from the context of each performance. When I perform, they are ALL the audience's favorite. (Well, perhaps the Richard Wilson Concerto was the <u>least</u> favorite…)

CC: Do orchestras usually hire you to play a specific piece, or do you market yourself to play specific pieces?

WM: On the one hand, each engagement begins with the specific choice of the guest soloist (me). On the other hand, most of my engagements have involved some pre-existing selection of a specific piece, usually having to do with a premiere or commission. The situations where I have been completely free to play whatever I wanted have been in the minority.

CC: What is the most musically challenging concerto that you have played and why?

WM: Honestly, I have found each of them to be musically challenging in a variety of ways. Some are more technically demanding (e.g. Richard Rodney Bennett), while others may be somewhat musically obscure. The challenge as a soloist is to convey the emotion represented in the most direct way possible; the addition of an orchestra both makes the task more difficult and puts the soloist in added relief.

CC: Besides you, what marimbists have been the most influential in popularizing the marimba concerto, either through their work in commissioning pieces or through performing frequently?

WM: Evelyn Glennie, of course, has been influential with her high visibility, although she is known more as a percussionist, rather than as a marimbist. At the same time, I have been disappointed in the quality of the majority of her commissions. She has not used her position to the fullest advantage of the art form, for there is no one else in as powerful a position to commission the very highest level of composers. Robert Van Sice, Katarzyna Mycka, and Pedro Carneiro are all making significant contributions. Neil DePonte is to be commended for the recent Grammy Award nomination of his recording of the Svoboda Concerto. That may have done as much as anyone to put the instrument in the public eye.

CC: Can you tell me about the conception of New Music Marimba? Who was involved, and how did you turn it from a dream to a reality? Besides the works commissioned and publications offered, were there any other objectives that NMM hoped to accomplish?

WM: My early grant-writing success with the National Endowment for the Arts (Consortium Commissioning, Solo Recitalist Fellowship, and Recording Grants), demonstrated the need for non-profit status. After using P.A.S. as an umbrella conduit for the first grant and investigating other subsequent avenues, I decided to found my own non-profit. Hence, New Music Marimba was born, with the assistance of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts and a Board of Directors composed of friends and professional colleagues of mine in New York. The mission statement reads: "New Music Marimba is a non-profit organization, founded in 1986, and dedicated to promoting and encouraging exceptional new music for marimba, both in composition and performance, and to aiding in greater public awareness of the instrument and its repertoire. New Music Marimba's activities include commissioning new works, distributing information about new works for marimba, producing concerts of solo, chamber, and orchestral music featuring the marimba, sponsoring marimba composition and performance seminars, and providing a resource service for coordinating such projects." We have been remarkably successful in accomplishing those objectives.

CC: Why did you decide to commission Richard Rodney Bennett to write a concerto for NMM? Did you have any say in the piece as he was composing it? How long did it take you to learn it? What did you find to be the greatest challenges musically and technically?

WM: I was so impressed with "After Syrinx II", the solo piece that Richard had written for my New York Debut Recital in 1984, that I asked if he would compose a concerto for me. His stipulation was that I had to have a performance commitment before he would begin the piece. Earl Blackburn, my manager at the time, made the connection between the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra and my NEA-sponsored Alice Tully Hall recital in 1988. I had little or no input with either piece, as Richard was, by far, the most professional and prompt composer I ever encountered, for which I credit his film score experience. Richard decided, based on his experience with the solo piece, that the marimba would better balance with a chamber orchestra than a full orchestra, and that two styles of writing should be used for the solo part: more traditional, hand-to-hand playing when the marimba was with the orchestra, and more delicate, one-handed playing when the marimba was alone. He finished the Concerto on January 17th and the premiere was on March 11, 1988. I found the greatest challenge to be the second movement cadenza, where the orchestra interlude builds to high excitement and then cuts off abruptly as the marimba enters. The soloist must then sustain the same energy level as the orchestra for virtually the entire cadenza, without a break. It is, perhaps, the most physically demanding situation in the entire repertoire.

CC: Why did you commission Andrew Thomas to write a concerto for NMM? Did

you make any specific requests based on what you knew of his writing from Merlin? What did you find to be the greatest challenges musically and technically?

WM: As with Richard Rodney Bennett, I was so impressed with "Merlin," the solo piece Andrew Thomas had written for me, that I also asked him to compose a concerto. I did not make any specific requests, although I was expecting "Merlin with Orchestra." As it turned out, Andrew changed gears somewhat in the concerto and in his next marimba piece, "The Great Spangled Fritillary", which he composed for Nancy Zeltsman and Marimolin. The compositional ideas of the concerto are more closely related to "GSF" than to "Merlin." The main challenge for me had to do with understanding and adapting to that new language, particularly in the second movement. After my premiere performances and Evelyn Glennie's later performance of "Loving Mad Tom", Andrew subsequently made a revised version of the concerto.

CC: Why did you choose Libby Larsen to write a concerto for you? Which of her works were you familiar with that inspired you to ask her? Had she ever written for the marimba before? Did you play for her to show her what the instrument is capable of - if so, what pieces? What were the greatest challenges musically and technically?

WM: The Libby Larsen Concerto project was the brainchild of Earl Blackburn, my manager at the time. I was growing frustrated with declining grant opportunities as the NEA was cut back by successive Republican administrations in the late 1980's and early 1990's. After losing a couple of commissioning projects when the grants did not come through, we decided to fund a commission outside of the usual channels. Earl came up with the idea of a private consortium commission, using orchestras as the consortium, with each participant orchestra contributing a share of the total budget, in this case, both the composer's fee and my soloist fee. Libby Larsen was the composer representative to the American Symphony Orchestra League and Earl felt that she would be an "easy sell" to the orchestra managers. The aspect of featuring the orchestra's percussion section in the concerto was also a marketing decision of Earl's. I was not previously familiar with Libby's work at the time, although she had the premiere of her "Piano Concerto: Since Armstrong" during the initial phase of the marimba concerto project. I believe "Corker" was one of the few instances of marimba in her previous music, although I did not encounter that piece until after the Marimba Concerto. I don't recall what discussions we had regarding my approach to the marimba, but I do find it significant that Libby was the first composer to write a concerto for me who had not previously written a solo piece.

Following the success of her "Marimba Concerto: After Hampton", I did ask Libby to write a solo piece, but we were both unhappy with the result and the piece was abandoned.
The main challenge I found with "After Hampton" was in the ensemble element of playing together with both the orchestra and the percussion section soloists, particularly in regard to the varying location of the percussionists on stage.

CC: Do you have any works commissioned right now? Who have you attempted to commission that refused to write a piece? Has anyone refused to write a piece for

you because they felt that the marimba did not have enough artistic potential? Who would you like to commission in the future?

WM: I have not commissioned any further concerti. My recent solo commissions include Akemi Naito's "Memory of the Woods", Alejandro Vinão's "Khan Variations", Robert Maggio's "Songs from the Wood", and Charles Griffin's "Visitations." I have commissions in progress from Stephen Taylor and Akemi Naito.

The "ones that got away" have been John Corigliano, who started a piece in the first NEA Consortium Commission project, but then abandoned it and was replaced by Joseph Schwantner; Lou Harrison, who I approached during the First Gulf War, but who was so upset over the war that he was not composing at all; Richard Danielpour, who wanted far more money to write a marimba concerto than I could afford; and Stephen Albert, who was killed before anything substantive could result. One might conclude that Corigliano, Harrision, and Danielpour were not entirely convinced of the marimba's potential, although the only composer who turned the idea down flat was Toru Takemitsu -- "I don't particularly like the marimba," was his response (and he had already written a marimba concerto!).

I would love a solo piece from György Ligeti.

CC: Can you tell me about your attempts to do a collaborative commission with other performers and orchestras?

WM: I have done many collaborative commissions: three Consortium Commissioning Grants, first with Leigh Howard Stevens and Gordon Stout, then with Robert Van Sice and Nancy Zeltsman, and lastly, with Joseph Gramley and Luanne Warner; Libby Larsen's Concerto, with thirteen orchestras; and Alejandro Vinão and Robert Maggio, with a large consortium of colleagues.

CC: What is the status of New Music Marimba today?

WM: New Music Marimba is still active, primarily with commissions, both in-house and as an umbrella conduit for outside projects. The 1990 Repertoire Guide remains in print and there are intentions to publish an updated, expanded version in the near future. A gratifying measure of our success is in the now-worldwide recognition of the repertoire we have championed.

CC: Many well-known marimba soloists have chosen to direct their energy towards expanding the solo repertoire and have not commissioned any marimba concertos. In fact, many of them rarely play concerto appearances, if at all. As you stated earlier, marimba concertos are a much bigger project than solo works, as far as commissioning and premiering them. What has driven you to put this extra time and energy into dealing with marimba concertos?

WM: For several reasons that I mentioned previously: a composer has written a particularly successful solo piece and we are both interested in continuing the

collaboration, or a composer has a connection with an orchestra that would be interested in such a piece, or a composer is well suited to a marketing angle involving a concerto. In all cases, the operative issue is the increased impact that a concerto will have in relation to a solo piece, both for the composer and for the soloist.

CC: You mentioned that it is becoming more difficult for soloists to displace principal orchestra players as concerto soloists. While this is obviously a disadvantage for soloists right now, do think that this trend is inhibiting the growth of the marimba concerto or promoting it? In other words, do you foresee that this could eventually benefit everyone by promoting the marimba as a plausible solo concerto instrument, or do you think this trend is limiting the growth of the genre somehow? Do you think that the recent trend of marimbists under professional management as a result of winning prestigious competitions is helping or could help to reverse that trend (e.g. Nanae Mimura, Makoto Nakura, Naoko Takada)?

WM: This trend will clearly promote the growth of the percussion concerto, primarily through the added clout of an orchestra-based commission, which not only guarantees performance but may lead more readily to recording, as well. However, whether this will include the marimba to a favorable degree remains to be seen. There is still a difference in experience between a capable orchestral percussionist and a true solo artist. As for the establishment of the marimba as a plausible solo instrument, the necessary elements are sufficient artists and repertoire of the highest caliber, combined with awareness and interest from established management, both solo and orchestral. It has been very gratifying to see the growth in opportunities for a new generation of marimbists; when I approached many of the same competitions twenty years ago, they had little or no interest in either the marimba or contemporary repertoire.

CC: You have hinted at the problem of trying to get higher profile composers to write marimba concertos. Do you foresee this problem improving as the marimba continues to get exposure, or have you seen any improvement since you first began commissioning works?

WM: I do not think the solution lies in the instrument's exposure, but in the creativity of artists and funding opportunities. Granted, there are some composers who may not be interested in writing for the instrument, but there are many others who would be delighted, either for the right soloist or the right opportunity. Using the model of the private consortium funding of the Libby Larsen project, Jonathan Haas was able to interest Philip Glass in writing a timpani concerto. It is a tragedy that so many generations of great composers have already been lost to us, Olivier Messiaen and Luciano Berio, to name but two. Every true artist of the instrument shares a responsibility to help create a legacy of repertoire for future generations.

CC: You have a substantial number of concertos listed on your marimba syllabus. Which concertos do you find yourself most consistently recommending to your students or other non-professional performers?

WM: First, I think every developing player should learn at least some, if not all, of the historical repertoire: Creston, Milhaud, Kurka, Basta, Sarmientos, Hovhaness and Mayuzumi. Then, I have a number of favorites from the modern era: Bennett, Klatzow, Kopetzki, Svoboda, Bresnick, etc. It is also the responsibility of each student to seek out that music with which they can find a personal affinity.

CC: What draws you to a concerto (or to any piece of music)?

WM: The aspect of music that first caught my attention as a shy teenager was the ability to express personality and emotion through solo performance. To me, successful music conveys a sense of emotional commitment, whether gravitas or ecstatic. I am drawn more to pieces with some element of mystery, of challenges to be explored and savored, rather than the more obvious or superficial.

APPENDIX THREE
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