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- I. Solo Recital: Saturday, April 27, 2013, 1:30 p.m., Recital Hall. “Canaries” from *Eight Pieces for Four Timpani* (Elliott Carter); *Velocities* (Joseph Schwantner); *Across the Floor* (Justin Bunting—world premiere); “#9” from *Douze Études pour Caisse-Claire* (Jacques Delécluse); Canned Heat (Eckhard Kopetzki); *Rhythm Method* (arr. Tom Kubis); November Evening (Christopher Norton); Suite of traditional American Revolutionary War drum beatings (arr. Justin Bunting—world premiere); *States Medley* (Bob Becker)
- II. Solo Recital: Saturday April 26. 2014, 1:30 p.m., Recital Hall. *the anvil chorus* (David Lang); *Piru Bole* (John Bergamo); #41 (David J. Matthews, arr. Justin Bunting—world premiere); *42nd Street Rondo* (Wayne Siegel); *Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra*, I. and III. (Eric Ewazen)
- III. Solo Recital: Sunday, March 22, 2015, 1:30 p.m., Recital Hall. *Khan Variations* (Alejandro Viñao); *Mourning Dove Sonnet* (Christopher Deane); *Fusão Árabe* (Justin Bunting/Adam Snow—world premiere); *unchained melody* (David Lang); *Electric Thoughts* (Ivan Trevino—North Carolina premiere); *Third Construction* (John Cage)
- IV. D.M.A. Research Project. MUSIC THEORY ON MARIMBA: BRINGING THE CLASSROOM INTO THE PRACTICE ROOM. The first years of collegiate music study may be a student’s initial experience with four-mallet marimba, music theory, or both. While proper instruction in both areas is obviously essential to success, the connection between the two areas is even more important. Although referenced often in private instruction, such a combination of music theory and four-mallet technique does not currently exist, despite its value to the student and educator. As a result, there is often a gap between the classroom and the practice room. Through the creation of ten original etudes for marimba, this document is meant to help close that gap and allow students to recognize the relevance of their coursework to their time in the practice room.

MUSIC THEORY ON MARIMBA: BRINGING THE CLASSROOM  
INTO THE PRACTICE ROOM

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Many college percussionists experience four-mallet marimba technique, music theory class, or both for the first time in their freshman year of study. These topics are often separate in a student's mind: technical work is for the practice room and music theory is for the classroom. This document addresses that lack of direct connection between music theory and four-mallet technique, which is missing in the current marimba literature.

This lack of connection is most commonly the case for percussionists because the music studied in music theory, especially the first year, is often common practice music. When students are working on marimba solo repertoire, which has all been composed less than a century ago, it is difficult to make a connection to music studied in class. Other factors include differences between teachers, courses, and textbooks, as well as curricular design. In order to make this connection, more emphasis can be placed on how material learned in the classroom can enhance and relate to work in the practice room. The etudes in this document are intended to serve as an impetus for such discovery.

The connection between marimba technique and music theory can also aid in the development of young musicians making the transition from high school to college percussion programs. The musical and technical demands placed on college percussion majors are much higher than that of high school percussionists. These demands can often



be overwhelming as students are asked to learn new techniques, acquire new skills, and experience new instruments and ensembles. Allowing a student to see the connection between marimba technique and music theory early on makes a student more likely to make similar connections moving forward.

This document contains ten short four-mallet marimba etudes accessible for most early four-mallet players. These etudes simultaneously reinforce study of four-mallet technique and music theory. Both the marimba and music theory sequences are based on a common progression of topics in university curricula. When viable, two complementary topics were aligned for additional reinforcement of the concepts. For example, the first etude focuses on interval changes with double-vertical strokes and interval size.

The marimba and music theory sequences used in this study were created through the examination of existing literature. There is no universally accepted curriculum for either percussion or music theory. Therefore, the progression of topics used may not fit every curriculum. The purpose, however, is to create a general sequence of topics that can serve as a prototype for simultaneous study of each subject.

The purpose of this study was to create a book of etudes that aligns a progression of topics in a university music theory curriculum with a progression of skills in four-mallet marimba technique. My hope is that the repeated linking of the music theory topics with technical concepts will lead the student to explore such connections in the future. This connection between areas not only serves to reinforce the student's comprehension of each topic, but also allows him or her to see the importance of each

and how they can be applied to other marimba repertoire. Appendix A lists representative solos for further study for stroke type or technique.

Theoretical understanding of marimba repertoire can lead to well-informed interpretive ideas. Most fundamental development of technique and musicality takes place in the student's first two years of undergraduate percussion study. There are many great music theory classes and texts and many great marimba technique studies, but nothing that explicitly links the two areas. By allowing students to apply analytical skills in short solos, they will be more likely to apply the same ideas going forward into more advanced repertoire. This document will assist university percussion professors and students by bringing music theory content into the marimba practice room.

### Definition of Terms

Stroke-type designations are defined by Leigh Howard Stevens in his book *Method of Movement for Marimba* (originally published in 1979).<sup>1</sup> Stevens's definitions have been shortened below along with additional pertinent terms for the purpose of clarity.

**Stevens Technique:** A method of holding four mallets (two in each hand) to play the marimba. Developed by Leigh Howard Stevens in the 1970s as a modified Musser grip, this technical approach involves each mallet moving independently of the other. The third and fourth fingers hold the outside mallet, while the first

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<sup>1</sup> 5th ed. Asbury Park, NJ: Keyboard Percussion Publications, 2000.

and second hold the inside mallet in combination with the thumb. The hand is in a thumb-up position with few exceptions and interval changes occur with the inside mallet moving on a curved line inside the hand.

**Musser Grip:** A method of holding four mallets (two in each hand) to play the marimba. Developed by Clair Omar Musser in the early twentieth century. The mallets are gripped similarly to Stevens technique, but with the palm facing down. The only exception is for rolls, when the thumb faces up. For interval changes, the inside mallet pivots on a single point in the center of the palm.

**Piston Strokes:** A method of playing two notes in the same hand at the same time. The mallets and wrist begin in an up position, move down to strike the bars, then immediately return to an up position. There is no preparatory stroke. When changing intervals, the changing mallet begins above the first note and ends above the next to be played. This is the primary method of playing double-vertical strokes.

**Preparatory Strokes:** Raising the mallets from a down position to an up position in preparation for the next stroke.

**Double Vertical Strokes:** Playing two notes per hand at the same time. These strokes can either be played in the piston style described above or a more relaxed, legato style depending on the musical context.

**Single Independent Strokes:** Playing with only the inside or outside mallet while rotating around the unused mallet.

**Single Alternating Strokes:** Single-note patterns within one hand that alternate between the inside and outside mallet with a rotating motion.

**Double Lateral Strokes:** A combination of double-vertical and single-alternating strokes, allowing for a quick succession of two notes in each hand.

**Mallet Numbering:** A way of labeling and discussing which mallet should be used. Most commonly, and in this document, mallets are numbered 1 through 4, left to right.

**Triple Lateral Strokes:** An advanced technique involving rotating from the first mallet to the second and back to the first producing three notes in one stroke (e.g. 1-2-1, 4-3-4).

**Chorale:** In the context of four-mallet marimba, all chords are rolled unless otherwise indicated.

**Traditional Roll:** A quick and continuous succession of double-vertical strokes between hands, which creates a sustained sound.

**Double Lateral Roll:** A quick and continuous succession of double-lateral strokes between hands, which creates a sustained sound (most commonly: 1-2-4-3 or 1-2-3-4).

**Ripple Roll:** A quick succession of strokes employing a double-vertical motion with the inner mallet in each hand slightly higher than the outer to allow the mallets to strike the bars at slightly different times.

**Independent Roll:** A quick back and forth rotation within one hand that creates a sustained sound. Derived from the piano roll, one hand can sustain one or two

itches while the other is free to play other figures. Both hands can instead produce independent rolls simultaneously at different speeds.

CHAPTER II  
ORGANIZATION OF THE METHOD BOOK

Marimba Sequence

The sequence of four-mallet marimba topics used in the etudes was created after examining existing method books. One popular book that addresses technique and then places it in the context of short solos is *Marimba: Technique Through Music* by Mark Ford.<sup>2</sup> The book begins with an initial approach to four-mallet technique, chord exercises, and tips on how to practice. From there, the book is divided into six sections by each technique: Single Independent, Single Alternating, Double Lateral, Double Vertical, Chorales, and Combined Strokes. Each section begins with a one-page discussion of the stroke type (if applicable) and is followed by at least two short solos that incorporate that stroke. A DVD of Ford performing each work is included.

A similar book is *Impressions on Wood* by Julie Davila.<sup>3</sup> Davila's book contains eight marimba solos, a marimba and vibraphone duet, and a trio for marimba, congas, and timbales. Each piece is accompanied by a lesson plan that isolates specific technical challenges contained in that work. The back of the book defines each of the four stroke types (Single Independent, Single Alternating, Double Lateral, Double Vertical) in one or two sentences. An audio performance CD is also included for reference.

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<sup>2</sup> Nashville, TN: Innovative Percussion, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Nashville, TN: Row-Loff Productions, 2006.

In addition to the Ford and Davila texts, there are quite a few other method books that serve a similar purpose. Bart Quartier's *Image: 20 Children's Songs for Marimba* does not specifically address technique, but is a collection of relatively simple, short solos for beginning mallet players.<sup>4</sup> One solo includes chord names but no music notation. Lastly, a book that begins to directly incorporate music theory knowledge into four-mallet study is *Mallet Studies* by Robert Schietroma.<sup>5</sup> The book addresses chord progressions in open and closed position and harmonic intervals moving in parallel and contrary motion early on. Later, it addresses chord voicing on vibraphone and more complex progressions. *Method of Movement for Marimba* by Leigh Howard Stevens details nearly every aspect of the four-mallet grip through text, pictures, and diagrams followed by 590 exercises for the sole purpose of developing technical facility of the four principal stroke types.<sup>6</sup>

The two books that address stroke types specifically are those by Ford and Stevens. Figure 1 shows the sequence of topics by Ford, Stevens, and the author.

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<sup>4</sup> Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Meredith Music Publications, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Denton, TX: RonJon Publishing, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> Keyboard Percussion Publications, 2000.

Ford	Stevens	Bunting
Single Independent Strokes	Single Independent Strokes	Double Vertical Strokes, Interval Changes
-	-	Double Vertical Strokes, Rolls
Single Alternating Strokes	Single Alternating Strokes	Single Independent Strokes
Double Lateral Strokes	Double Vertical Strokes	Single Alternating Strokes
Double Vertical Strokes	Double Lateral Strokes	Double Lateral Strokes
Chorales	-	Triple Lateral Strokes
-	-	Independent, One-Handed Rolls
-	-	Three Types of Rolls (Traditional, Independent, Double Lateral)

Figure 1. Comparison of Marimba Topic Sequences.

Double-vertical strokes and changing the horizontal distance between mallets in each hand, also known as changing the interval, are rudimentary components of four-mallet marimba technique. Learning Stevens technique and beginning work on double vertical strokes is comparable to learning how to hold snare drum sticks and working on a full stroke. Double-vertical strokes allow the student to get comfortable with the mallets sitting properly in their hands and work on the piston stroke. The second etude focuses on the double-vertical stroke, putting them in the context of traditional rolls.

Single-independent strokes introduce forearm and wrist rotation that is vital as technique progresses. These strokes are introduced early because they involve rotation in only one direction in each hand. Next, single-alternating strokes require rotation in both directions, left and right, in an alternating fashion. The last of the four fundamental stroke



types introduced is the double-lateral stroke because it is considered the most difficult to properly perform.

The final three techniques included in their own etude are rarely directly addressed in current method book literature: triple lateral strokes, independent or one-handed rolls, and ripple rolls. These techniques are often learned in the context of advanced solo literature or through exercises created by an individual student to work on the specific technique. The three etudes use these advanced techniques as their basis while keeping them in the context of a solo that is more accessible.

### Music Theory Sequence

The sequence of music theory topics was developed through an examination of music theory textbooks and curricula used at The Ohio State University, Belmont University, and The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Many music theory textbooks fill the need of the two-year curriculum for beginning music majors. Joseph Straus's *Elements of Music* is a fundamentals text geared towards non-music majors or aspiring music majors, but is still relevant to first-year music majors depending on the student's level of experience in theory.<sup>7</sup> Straus introduces note names and clefs before rhythm and meter. Scales are introduced next, followed by intervals, triads, and seventh chords. The book closes with a discussion of harmonic function, non-harmonic tones, and beginning concepts of form.

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<sup>7</sup> 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2008.

Robert Gauldin's *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*<sup>8</sup> and Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne's *Tonal Harmony*<sup>9</sup> both begin with fundamentals as their first main section. After fundamentals, they cover diatonic harmony, diatonic seventh chords, and chromaticism. Finally, *Teaching Approaches in Music Theory* by Michael Rogers discusses how to teach music theory and ear training.<sup>10</sup> This book is one of the first to evaluate teaching techniques and methods used in theory courses. Rogers provides thoughts regarding how, and in what order, to teach fundamental topics in music theory. Figure 2 compares the sequences from the above texts and the one used by the author. Only topics used by the author have been included in the sequences.

Straus	Gauldin	Kostka/Payne	Bunting
Intervals	Intervals	Intervals	Intervals
-	SATB Part-Writing	Diatonic Harmony	SATB Chorale
Diatonic Harmony	Diatonic Harmony	SATB Part-Writing	Diatonic Harmony
Cadences and Periods	Cadences and Periods	Cadences and Periods	Cadences and Periods
-	Modulation	Modulation	Modulation to Closely-Related Keys
-	Binary Form	Binary Form	Mode Mixture and the Neapolitan
-	Ternary Form	Ternary Form	Binary Form
-	Modal Exchange and the Neapolitan	Mode Mixture and the Neapolitan	Ternary Form

Figure 2. Comparison of Music Theory Topic Sequences.

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<sup>8</sup> New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> 2nd ed. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.

The first etude is based on a homorhythmic texture. An understanding of intervals is fundamental to the understanding of most music theory topics and music in general. The second etude employs four voices in the context of an SATB chorale and simple diatonic harmony. This etude reinforces an understanding of proper four-part voice leading. Etude 3 expands on this concept with the inclusion of seventh chords and diatonic harmony beyond basic tonic and dominant function.

Cadences and periods constitute the first introduction to the concept of form. The next etude introduces modulation to closely-related keys, specifically modulation from a minor key to its relative major. Mode mixture and the Neapolitan are the last harmonic topics explored in the etudes. These topics allow for expanded harmonic and melodic possibilities. The final two etudes that introduce new topics are both form-related: they are composed in binary and ternary form, respectively. These formal structures allow the student the opportunity to understand the topics he or she has been studying in music theory class in the context of marimba literature.

### Organization of Lessons

The two topic sequences were merged to create the basis for eight of the ten etudes (Fig. 3). The final two etudes are comprehensive, including various topics from previous etudes. The idea of each etude is to illustrate each topic in the context of a short solo with the desired result being his or her ability to recognize these topics and techniques in other solos in the literature.

Marimba	Music Theory
Double Vertical Strokes, Interval Changes	Intervals
Double Vertical Strokes, Rolls	SATB Chorale
Single Independent Strokes	Diatonic Harmony
Single Alternating Strokes	Cadences and Periods
Double Lateral Strokes	Modulation to Closely-Related Keys
Triple Lateral Strokes	Mode Mixture and the Neapolitan
Independent, One-Handed Rolls	Binary Form
Chorale with Three Roll Types	Ternary Form

Figure 3. Sequence of Combined Topics.

In some cases, the marimba technique and its respective theory topic work quite well together. For example, the first etude is double-vertical strokes and intervals. Basic double-vertical exercises are often based on changing intervals within each hand. When aligned in an etude, it becomes easier for the student to recognize intervals while working on their technique. For example, if a student can recognize that C-G is a fifth, they can memorize what a fifth feels like in their hand across the entire range of the instrument regardless of the notes. The second etude is an extension of this idea. A solo, etude, or passage where all notes are rolled in four-mallet marimba playing is commonly referred to as a chorale. Many four-voice chorales have been transcribed for marimba. This original etude is similar to such transcriptions in its four-voice, homophonic texture, yet at a lower level of difficulty.

The next two etudes are also examples of how topics from each area, theory and four-mallet marimba technique, fit well together. Single alternating strokes and double lateral strokes, which are employed in these etudes, can be used to arpeggiate chords. This arpeggiation can make harmonic material clearly evident. Through harmonic and

formal analyses, the student can understand the structures used as the bases for these etudes. Both forms of analysis aid in not only the note-learning process, but also help guide the performer's comprehension of the piece.

CHAPTER III  
MUSIC THEORY ON MARIMBA: BRINGING THE CLASSROOM  
INTO THE PRACTICE ROOM

Introduction

The following etudes were composed specifically for this study. The four-mallet technique and music theory sequences were created independently and then combined to create a logical order of concepts in the early study of both topics. This study is not meant as a primary resource for the study of either area, but as a supplemental method of study. Once the student learns each topic elsewhere, they can see how the two fields interact in the corresponding etude of this method.

Due to the technical limitations of four-mallet marimba playing, some compositional aspects of the etudes may deviate from common practice music. For example, parallel intervals that are not allowed in part writing may be present in the solos for the sake of not overreaching the ability level of the player for which these solos are intended. The presence of parallel fifths, parallel octaves, or other part-writing errors should not detract from the player's understanding of how the two topics interact, but should actually enhance comprehension of how music theory concepts apply specifically to four-mallet marimba playing.

## Etude 1—Double Vertical Strokes, Interval Changes/Intervals

After learning how to properly grip four mallets, double-vertical strokes and interval changes are the two most essential techniques in four-mallet marimba playing. This solo, *Lullaby*, is composed entirely of double-vertical strokes in both hands. The focus should be on properly executing double-vertical strokes across the indicated dynamics and properly shifting intervals.

Similarly, recognition of interval size and quality are essential to comprehension of music theory. Because this solo is purely diatonic, only interval size is really pertinent. The student should practice hands separately and notice each interval size as he or she plays. While recognizing fourths, fifths, and so on, the student should learn how each interval feels in the hand and exactly what it takes to shift to that interval.

The student should practice this solo right hand only and left hand only. While playing each hand's notes, the student should call out the interval they are playing. For example, starting at the rehearsal A with the right hand only, the student should say "third, third, third, fourth, fifth, sixth" and so on. This will reinforce the recognition of the specific interval not just two notes stacked on top of each other.

Parallel intervals in a single hand will be recognizable as those occurring when the hand shifts but the distance between the mallets does not change (i.e. mm. 7-11). Parallels occurring between voices in different hands will be more difficult to see and feel. The student should also take notice of sound, feeling, and effect of consonant and dissonant intervals, for example the expressive dissonance on the downbeat of m. 11.

# Lullaby

Double Vertical Strokes, Interval Changes/Intervals

Justin Bunting

Waltz-like ♩=100-112

A

Marimba

mf mp

poco rit. a tempo

B

mf

f



32

C

*p*

*rit.*

40

*poco rit.*

*a tempo*

48

*molto rit.*

8va  
RH only

*pp*

Figure 4. *Lullaby*.

## Etude 2– Double Vertical Strokes, Rolls/SATB Chorale

Young marimba players often have trouble rolling four-note chords. Many beginning students play four-mallet rolls as if they must play hand-to-hand as fast as possible, whereas thinking of them as a quick succession of proper double-vertical strokes produces a better effect. Proper understanding of this point means: 1) Each stroke should be a true double-vertical stroke, and 2) Roll speed can be slower than many students think. A practice strategy for chorales that reinforces technique is to play all four voices together in rhythm without rolls, and then in constant eighth notes. Next, begin alternating eighth notes between hands, followed by sixteenth notes between hands. Finally, the student can speed up the hands slightly to create a sustained roll sound.

This solo is a four-voice chorale. However, there are several deviations from a Bach chorale style. One deviation is the inclusion of parallel fifths to maintain an appropriate difficulty level, since large leaps from chord to chord within each hand can be quite technically difficult for young players. The student should analyze the piece and see where these deviations occur. The intention is that the general principles of proper voice-leading are upheld with deviations that are understood to be a result of four-mallet marimba style.

What chord quality is used only in m. 20?

# Chorale

Double Vertical Strokes, Rolls/SATB Chorale

Justin Bunting

**Largo** ♩=76-84  
(all notes rolled)

**A**

Marimba

*mf* *f*

**B**

*f* *p* *mp*

**C**

*mf* *mp*

*f*

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Figure 5. Chorale.

### Etude 3 – Single Independent Strokes/Diatonic Harmony

As with double-vertical strokes, a young player will often sacrifice proper single-independent stroke technique when he or she has to play two or more in quick succession with the same mallet. In this solo, care should be taken to maintain the technical integrity and rotation of all single-independent strokes regardless of dynamic or rhythm.

The most obvious deviation from standard practice diatonic harmony is incomplete chords. In isolating single-independent strokes, harmonies are implied through the two-voice counterpoint. These harmonies allow the student to understand how chords are realized in the context of this marimba technique. The student should analyze the harmony to fully understand the harmonic motion to and from tonic. What rhythmic technique is employed in m. 15? In what way does it enhance the melody?

# Midnight Dance

Single Independent Strokes/Diatonic Harmony

Justin Bunting

Bouncing J. = 90-100

Marimba

mf

4

1

2

3

simile

4

3

A

(mf)

mp

4

1

2

1

3

4

2

2

Musical score for measures 19-23. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 19 starts with a treble staff containing a quarter note B4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F4. The bass staff contains a dotted half note B2. Measure 20 has a treble staff with a quarter rest, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 21 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 22 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 23 has a treble staff with a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. A small number '1' is centered below the bass staff.

Musical score for measures 24-28. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 24 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. A box containing the letter 'B' is positioned above the treble staff. The dynamic marking *mp* is placed above the treble staff. Measure 25 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the bass staff. Measure 26 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 27 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 28 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2.

Musical score for measures 29-33. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 29 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 30 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 31 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 32 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 33 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. The dynamic marking *(mp)* is placed above the treble staff, and *f* is placed below the bass staff.

Musical score for measures 34-38. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 34 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 35 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 36 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 37 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 38 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2.

Musical score for measures 39-43. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 39 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 40 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 41 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 42 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2. Measure 43 has a treble staff with a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The bass staff has a dotted half note B2.

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Figure 6. *Midnight Dance*.

## Etude 4 – Single Alternating Strokes/Cadences and Periods

This solo focuses on different combinations of single-alternating strokes. At rehearsal A, mallets 1 and 3 create the accompaniment to a single-independent melody in the right hand. There is a particular difficulty in phrasing the syncopated melody over the accompaniment. At rehearsal B, both hands are moving outside to inside while mallet 4 plays the melody and should be brought out. Finally, at rehearsal C, the strokes are offset to create a sixteenth-note pattern. Care should be taken to exaggerate proper rotation regardless of the context in which the single-alternating strokes occur.

This is a fundamental exploration into formal structures. For maximum comprehension, the student should work through the solo and first label all phrases, cadences, and the one period. What type of period is it? As intervals are to harmony, periods and cadences are essential to the comprehension of formal structures in music. This etude includes parallel intervals in the left hand that make the part easier so the student can focus on the more challenging right hand. At rehearsal C, it is mostly parallel because the passage ‘pure technique.’

# In Flight

Single Alternating Strokes/Cadences and Periods

Justin Bunting

Lively ♩ = 132-140 A ♩ = ♩

Marimba

*f* ————— *mp*

1. 2.

*mf* sim.



18

22

26

C

*f*

29

31

dim. and rit.. al fine

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "In Flight". It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 33 and contains two measures of music. The second system starts at measure 35 and contains two measures of music. The music is written for piano in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody in the right hand is a simple eighth-note pattern, and the bass line in the left hand is a simple quarter-note pattern. The second system ends with a double bar line and a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. There are also some decorative elements like a small circle above the staff and a crescent moon below the staff at the end of the second system.

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Figure 7. *In Flight*.

## Etude 5 – Double Lateral Strokes/Modulation to Closely-Related Keys

This solo is a large step forward both technically and musically from the previous four. For the first time in these solos, the player must perform rubato, silence between sections, and double-lateral strokes at different speeds, intervals, and in multiple contexts. In the rubato sections, double-lateral strokes occur with smaller melodic intervals. In other sections, they help to emulate Spanish guitar style. These sextuplet figures mimic the fast arpeggiations of Flamenco guitar playing. Relaxation and rotation are essential to performing proper double-lateral strokes at the speed required in this solo.

Where does the modulation occur? Label it and explain the relationship between keys. There is only one and it is meant to serve as an introduction to recognizing modulation or changing key areas in marimba music. At rehearsal D, the student should label the harmony (root and quality) in each measure to help recognize and learn notes faster. In mm. 48-50, there are non-chord tones in the right hand. Circle and label them.

# Fantasia

Double Lateral Strokes/Modulation to Closely-Related Keys

Justin Bunting

Marimba

Slowly, Molto Rubato

*mf*

**A**

Dancing ♩ = 110-120

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

**B**

*mf*

Measures 18-20. Treble clef: triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) repeated six times. Bass clef: simple eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 21-23. Treble clef: triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) repeated six times. Bass clef: simple eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 24-26. Treble clef: triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) repeated six times. Bass clef: simple eighth-note accompaniment.

**C**

Slowly, Molto Rubato

Measures 27-30. Treble clef: melodic line with a slur over measures 28-29. Bass clef: simple eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamic marking *mf*.

Measures 31-33. Treble clef: melodic line with a slur over measure 31 and a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) repeated six times. Bass clef: simple eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamic marking *f*.

35 D  
molto rit. and dim. *pp* *mp*

38

42

46 *f*

50 *mp*

54

58

62

*crescendo* -----

66

===== *f*

70

## Etude 6 – Triple Lateral Strokes/Mode Mixture and the Neapolitan

Triple lateral strokes are often not isolated and developed outside of the context of an advanced marimba solo in which they appear. This short solo allows the student to develop this technique. The focus should be to stay relaxed, keep the rhythm steady unless a ritardando is indicated, and properly shift from the natural to sharp and flat keys as fluidly as possible.

The student may notice some surprising-sounding chords that they have not experienced in any of these etudes to this point. Knowing to look for mode mixture and the Neapolitan, the student should analyze the piece and circle instances of either of these in the music.



# Serenade

Triple Lateral Strokes/Mode Mixture and the Neapolitan

Justin Bunting

Marimba

**A**

*mp*

2nd time to  $\emptyset$

*mf*

1.

*poco rit.*

**B**

2.

*f*

8

10

12 **C**

14 **D.C. al Coda**

*rit.* **p**

**Coda**  $\oplus$  **p** *molto rit.*

Detailed description: The image shows a piano score for a piece titled 'Serenade'. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music is primarily composed of eighth-note triplets. The first system (measures 8-9) shows a steady triplet pattern. The second system (measures 10-11) continues this pattern, with a sharp sign appearing in the treble staff in measure 11. The third system (measures 12-13) is marked with a 'C' in a box, indicating a Coda section. The fourth system (measures 14-15) is marked 'D.C. al Coda' and includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking over the first four measures and a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking for the final four measures. The fifth system (measures 16-17) is marked 'Coda' with a symbol and includes a 'p' dynamic and 'molto rit.' (molto ritardando) marking. The piece concludes with a final note in the bass staff of measure 17.

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Figure 9. *Serenade*.

## Etude 7 – Independent, One-Handed Rolls/Binary Form

As with triple lateral strokes, independent/one-handed rolls are not often isolated outside the context of an advanced marimba solo. Note changes between rolls should be as smooth and connected as possible. The student should feel free to experiment with the speed of the roll for expressive purposes.

As was the case with Etude 2, this chorale also contains some parallels and non-common practice voice leading in order to achieve the intended difficulty. The student should diagram the form of the piece including sections, phrases, and cadences and should feel free to use the type of diagram and labels taught in his or her music theory class.

# Morning Sun

Independent, One-Handed Rolls/Binary Form

Justin Bunting

Legato ♩ = 88-96  
roll all notes greater than eighth-notes

Marimba

**A**

**B**

**f** **mp**

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Figure 10. *Morning Sun*.

## Etude 8 – Chorale with Three Roll Types/Ternary Form

This chorale combines three types of four-mallet marimba rolls: traditional rolls, independent rolls, and the one that has not been included in this collection to this point, double-lateral rolls. These rolls are most commonly executed with mallet combinations 1-2-3-4 or 1-2-4-3. Each section, and corresponding roll type, should be practiced one hand at a time for maximum accuracy and technical efficiency.

As with the previous solo, the student should diagram the form of the piece including sections, key areas, phrases, and cadences. The three types of rolls serve as an enhancement to the formal structure of the piece: each roll type corresponds to a section of the overall ternary form.

# All But a Memory

Chorale with Three Roll Types/Ternary Form

Justin Bunting

Freely ♩ = ca. 90

(roll all notes)

Traditional Rolls

Marimba

*pp* *crescendo* *mf*

*pp* *crescendo* *f* *p*

**A**

Joyous  
Independent Rolls

*mp* *mf*

**B**

Double Lateral Rolls

*f* *pp*

Musical score for measures 36-44. The piece is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 36-44. The right-hand part (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left-hand part (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *crescendo* at the beginning and end of the system, *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 38, and *pp* (pianissimo) in measure 40. A hairpin crescendo symbol is also present between measures 38 and 40.

Musical score for measures 45-53. The right-hand part (treble clef) continues the melodic line, ending with a fermata over the final note. The left-hand part (bass clef) continues with chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) in measure 45, *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 47, and *mp* (mezzo-piano) in measure 49. A hairpin crescendo symbol is present between measures 45 and 47.

Figure 11. *All But a Memory*.

## Etude 9 – Comprehensive Etude #1

This solo is considered comprehensive in that it brings various techniques and music theory topics together. As is common in marimba repertoire requiring long passages of double-lateral strokes, stem direction indicates the hand with which the notes should be played (stems down—left hand, stems up—right hand). A single pitch should be played with mallet 3 if it has an upward stem and mallet 2 if it has a downward stem.

The student should analyze harmony from rehearsal B to rehearsal C. An understanding of the phrase structure, and overall formal structure, will help the student with the musical direction of his or her performance. The student can decide where the climax of the piece occurs and decide how to achieve this both musically and technically. He or she will also be able to more readily recognize repetition, streamlining the note-learning process.



# Whirlwind

Comprehensive Etude #1

Justin Bunting

Driving ♩ = 108-112

Marimba

*mf*

*f*

*mp*

gliss. A

Musical notation for measures 15-19. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 6/16. Measure 15 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth notes. The bass clef has a similar rhythmic pattern. Measure 16 has a 6/16 time signature. The piece ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to two sharps (F#, C#).

Musical notation for measures 20-25. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 6/16. Measure 20 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef has a series of chords, and the bass clef has a series of chords. The dynamic marking *f* is present at the beginning of measure 20.

Musical notation for measures 26-29. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 6/16. Measure 26 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef has a series of chords, and the bass clef has a series of chords. A box labeled 'B' is above measure 27. The dynamic marking *mf* is present below measure 27.

Musical notation for measures 30-32. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 6/16. Measure 30 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef has a series of chords, and the bass clef has a series of chords. The dynamic marking *f* is present below measure 30.

Musical notation for measures 33-35. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 6/16. Measure 33 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef has a series of chords, and the bass clef has a series of chords. The time signature changes to 4/4 at the end of measure 35.

36 C

*ff*

39

*mp*

41

43 D

*sub. mp*

45

*sub. mp*

48 *sub. mp* *crescendo* -----

52 ----- *ff*

57

Detailed description: The image shows a piano score for a piece titled 'Whirlwind'. The key signature is E major (three sharps) and the time signature is 12/8. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 48-51) features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both consisting of eighth notes. The dynamic is marked 'sub. mp' and 'crescendo' with a dashed line. The second system (measures 52-56) continues the melody and bass line, with the dynamic increasing to 'ff'. The third system (measures 57-60) shows a change in the right hand to a block chord pattern and the left hand to a descending eighth-note line.

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Figure 12. *Whirlwind*.

## Etude 10 – Comprehensive Etude #2

This solo, *Musette*, is meant to emulate the French popular music style of the same name. Therefore, some emphasis should be placed on the downbeat of each measure. The opening section is very free in tempo and dynamic. When the octave melody begins in m. 33, the student should feel free to play as written, as quick double-lateral strokes with the higher note of the octave landing on the beat, or as independent rolls.

The student would particularly benefit from a harmonic analysis of this solo. An understanding of the harmonic progressions will inform how to phrase the melody as well as the bass line of the accompaniment. For example, in the first phrase of rehearsal A (mm. 17-24), the highest pitch of the melody is on beat three of m. 20. On this same beat, the bass line includes a chromatic tone that leads to the next downbeat. These two things combined indicate a need to let the phrase lead to this point and then decay going forward. It would also be beneficial to circle and label non-chord tones because of their prevalence in both the melody and the bass line.

# Musette

Comprehensive Etude #2

Justin Bunting

Rubato ♩ = ca. 116

Marimba

*mp*

**A**

*mf*

*rit.* *mp*  
*a tempo*

**B**

Lively *J.* = 54-58

**C**

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Musette". The score is written in G minor (one flat) and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system starts at measure 84. The second system starts at measure 92. The third system starts at measure 100. The fourth system starts at measure 109 and includes a *crescendo* marking with a dashed line and a *ff* (fortissimo) marking at the end. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, often with rests, and a bass line with chords and eighth-note patterns.

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Figure 13. *Musette*.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

#### Summary

Though four-mallet marimba and music theory are present in nearly all collegiate percussion and music curricula, to this point nothing in the literature that highlights the relationship between them. The preceding collection of solos does just that. The integration of theory into actual solos, as opposed to exercises or chord improvisation, allows the student to connect his or her lessons in the classroom to technical development in the practice room.

It is often difficult for a percussionist to bring music theory into the practice room for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that all percussion music has been composed in the twentieth century. When studying Classical or Romantic era music, for example, the percussionist cannot go back to the practice room and immediately relate to the piece that was just analyzed in class, since he or she is likely working on a solo that was perhaps written as recently as a few years ago. By focusing on the one specific idea for marimba and music theory in each of the preceding solos, the student will quickly understand how quickly music theory can be integrated with marimba music and use that knowledge when learning solo repertoire outside of this material. By working through this book in conjunction with private marimba instruction and music theory classroom

experience, the student will develop a fundamental approach to learning and understanding solo marimba repertoire through the lens of music theory.

### Suggestions for Future Research

This document serves but as a starting point for future research. Although the etudes were used in private instruction by the author during the creation of the document, continued exploration into the usefulness of this idea will require an examination of the effectiveness of this method. An investigation with a larger number of participants is necessary for the anticipated results of the method to be confirmed.

Future studies into the utilization of this method require a broader scope than the current study. The number of etudes produced for this study can be expanded to include more topics in both areas. Etudes could also include multiple topics from each field within a single study. They could also include material to supplement each etude, such as marimba or theory exercises for the student to complete that apply directly to material in the etude. Such material could include such things as more specific instructions for the analysis of each etude. A later edition would include a workbook that contains a study copy and performance copy of each etude. The workbook would also include a theory lesson applying the specific topic of each etude and a technical lesson that includes exercises that apply to the marimba technique.

In addition, several studies could be conducted on the effectiveness of the method on other instruments. Although the current study used four-mallet marimba technique as a means to lessen the distance between performance-based and theoretical concepts,

similar results could be achieved with an instructional method created specifically for a different instrument or instrument group.

The study of how music theory and other academic topics are applied to performance situations offers enormous potential. Although many percussion studio teachers already utilize music theory topics as means for interpretive instruction, direct application of music theory to four-mallet marimba solos has yet to be adequately explored. Consequently, a complete method of integration has not yet been developed. Further exploration of this interaction appears to present endless possibilities for the integration of music theory and marimba performance that can help advance the level of interpretive discussion between percussion teachers and their students.

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APPENDIX A  
REPERTOIRE SUGGESTIONS

*Lullaby*—Double Vertical Strokes

“Mazurka” from *Funny Marimba Book I* (Nebojša Jovan Živković)  
*Etude Op. 6, No. 9 (B Major)* (Claire Omar Musser)  
*The Offering* (Michael Burritt)

*Chorale*—SATB Chorale

*Christ Lag in Todesbanden* (J.S. Bach, arr. Leigh Howard Stevens)  
*Three Chorales* (Evelyn Glennie)  
*Song for Stephanie* (Peter Klatzow)

*Midnight Dance*—Single Independent Strokes

*Mbira Song* (Alice Gomez)  
*Etude in e minor* (Pius Cheung)  
*Michi* (Keiko Abe)

*In Flight*—Single Alternating Strokes

“From the Cradle” from *Image* (Bart Quartier)  
*Starscape* (Mitchell Peters)  
“Song” from *Preludes 1-5* (Michael Burritt)

*Fantasia*—Double Lateral Strokes

*Asturias (Leyenda)* (Isaac Albeniz, trans. Leigh Howard Stevens)  
*Restless* (Rich O’Meara)  
*Rhythm Song* (Paul Smadbeck)

*Serenade*—Triple Lateral Strokes

*Sea Refractions* (Mitchell Peters)  
*Caméléon* (Eric Sammut)  
*Dancing Shadows* (Jonathan Anderson)

*Morning Sun*—Independent/One-Handed Rolls

*Variations on Lost Love, Variations I and II* (David Maslanka)

“Ivan Sings” from *The Adventures of Ivan* (Aram Khachaturian, arr. Leigh Howard Stevens)

*Merlin*, I. (Andrew Thomas)

*All But a Memory*—Chorale with Three Rolls Types

*Caritas*, II. “Solemn” (Michael Burritt)

*Merlin*, I. (Andrew Thomas)

*Variations on Lost Love*, Variations I and II (David Maslanka)

*Whirlwind*—Comprehensive Etude #1

*Etude No. 1* (Paul Smadbeck)

*Four Rotations for Marimba* (Eric Sammut)

*Astral Dance* (Gordon Stout)

*Musette*—Comprehensive Etude #2

“Waltz” from *Album for the Young* (Tchaikovsky, arr. Leigh Howard Stevens)

*Musetta’s Waltz* (Giacomo Puccini, arr. Eric Sammut)

*Valse Brillante Op. 34, No. 2* (Frédéric Chopin, arr. Jeremy Muller)