



Mark Ford is the Coordinator of Percussion at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. Mark has composed popular compositions for percussion ensemble, solo marimba and wind ensemble, and he is the featured soloist on the UNT Wind Symphony recording, Contact (GIA Music). A past president of the Percussive Arts Society, Ford serves as the Education Director for Tama/Bergerault and also represents Innovative Percussion, Sabian, Evans and Meinl as artist/clinician.

For more information on Mark go to www.musiconpublications.com.

Resources:

Percussive Arts Society - www.pas.org

The Percussive Arts Society is the best percussion resource for students, teachers and professionals. The PAS web page contains information on the fundamentals of percussion techniques, literature, historical percussion data, current events, articles ranging from jazz drumming to world percussion and much more.

Marimba: Technique Through Music by Mark Ford

An intermediate marimba method focused on applying specific stroke techniques in etudes to develop tone and musicianship. Published by Musicon Publications.

Teaching Music through Performance in Band

Larry Blocher, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, Ray Cramer, Tim Lautzenheiser, Edward Lisk, Richard Miles, and Andrew Trachsel. Compiled and edited by Andrew Trachsel.

Now in its twenty-fifth year, the Teaching Music through Performance in Band series spans twelve volumes as well as additional supplemental publications, including volumes for Beginning Band, Middle School Band, Marches, and Solo Accompaniment. Each of the twelve volumes of Teaching Music through Performance in Band features in-depth teacher's resource guides for 100 significant works published for Grades 2 through 6 as well as special topic chapters written by each of the authors. Since the release of Volume 1 in 1997, this has become an essential resource for every wind band conductor looking for the best repertoire or to gain insights from leaders of the profession.

Articulation, Balance and Blend with Keyboard Percussion Instruments in Concert Band

Mark Ford, Percussion
75th Midwest Clinic Anniversary
December 17, 2021

Introduction

The percussion keyboard section is an important voice for symphonic concert band literature. Wind Ensemble composers have been effectively creating new sonic possibilities for years with percussion keyboard instruments. These instruments include a unique section within the band comprised of marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone and chimes combined with piano, harp and celeste. Creating a beautiful balance and blend with these instruments is a challenge that can be remedied with strong performance fundamentals, specific listening instructions and quality mallets matching timbral expectations.

Teaching Percussionists to Listen

Traditional percussion education focuses mainly on technique, rhythmic subdivision and dynamic control and very little on listening skills. In order for percussionists to develop strong musical skills, they must learn to listen carefully and critically to their own playing. Just like brass and woodwind players, listening skills are an essential path to musical growth for percussionists.

Musical Goals

This clinic will focus on the technical and musical percussion skills required for performing percussion keyboard instruments. Excerpts from symphonic concert band literature will demonstrate timbral and articulation shifts with mallet choices that can highlight musical phrases in the winds.

Performance Mindset:

Do not strive to be perfect in performance. Strive to be prepared, engaged, and expressive.
Good things will happen!

Articulation, Balance and Blend with Keyboard Percussion Instruments in Concert Band

by Mark Ford

Introduction

Excerpts - Mark Ford’s Concerto for Marimba (Musicon Publications 2021)
Explanation of compositional techniques for percussion in Symphonic Concert Band literature.

Listening - Give Percussionists the Key to Success

- a. Recording practice sessions with and without the band
 - b. Score Study, listening and “marking” parts
 - c. Define what “articulation” means to percussionists
- d. Allow for “real” growth by allowing the student to be involved in performance decisions.

The Percussion Keyboard Section in Symphonic Band Literature

- a. Harmonic/melodic reinforcement
 - b. Color
 - c. Rhythmic drive

Balance and Blend within the Keyboard Section

- a. Understanding the musical role of each instrument (i.e. melodic, accompaniment, color, resonance, articulation, etc.)
- b. Assign specific listening assignments in ensemble performance to create a balanced, focused musical delivery
- c. Utilize mallets from the same line and company for consistent balance and blend.

Articulation and Phrasing

- a. Instruct percussionists with musical articulation terms
 - b. Develop technical skills based on articulation
- c. Mallet choices for percussion keyboard instruments
- d. Playing techniques and musicianship
- e. Demonstration and performance of musical excerpts

Conclusion

- a. The Percussion Ensemble benefits the Concert Band
- b. The musical development of the student percussionist
- c. Percussive Arts Society resources

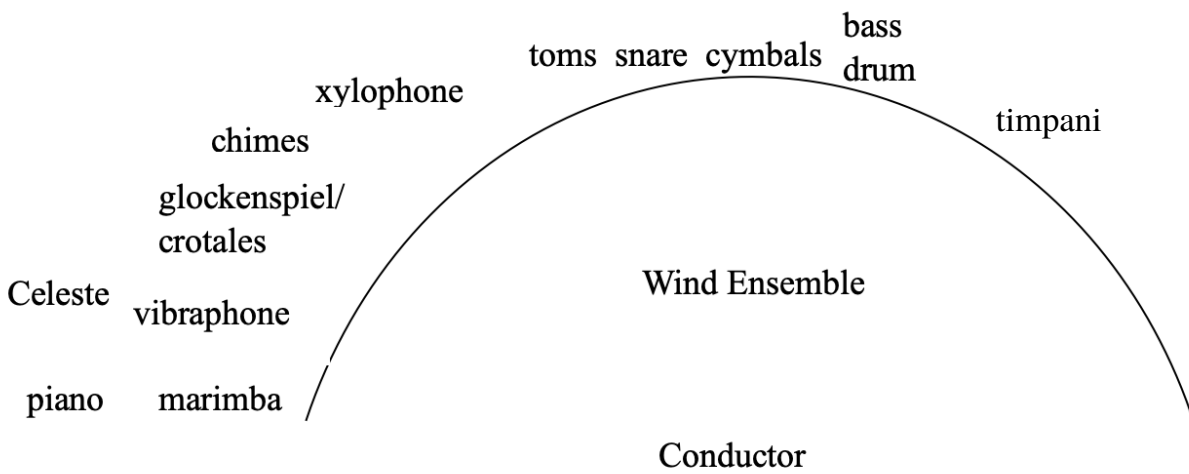
Examples of Wind Ensemble Literature with Expanded Percussion Keyboard Sections:

(All recordings cited are the UNT Wind Symphony directed by Eugene Corporon)
Michael Daugherty: American Gothic (2013/19) trans. Galyen - New GIA Production
James David: Ghosts of the Old Year (2016) on Noteworthy (GIA CD-1073)
Kevin Walczyk: Symphony No. 4: Unforsaken (2016) on Hope (GIA CD-1055)
Paul Dooley: Masks and Machines (2015) on Discoveries (GIA CD-1005)
John Mackey: The Frozen Cathedral (2012) on Offerings (GIA CD-962)

Wind Ensemble Percussion Section

Instrument placement for ensemble blend:
Place low projection instruments closer to the audience:
Marimba – low projection
Vibraphone - low projection
Celeste - low projection
Piano - low projection (unless amplified)
Xylophone - high projection
Glockenspiel - high projection
Crotales - high projection
Chimes - high projection

General Wind Ensemble Percussion Placement



Fundamental Techniques - Percussion Keyboard Instruments

Two and Four Mallet Playing Techniques and Strokes

Keep hands low to the keyboard
Utilize wrist for fluid stroke motion - Avoid excessive elbow motion

Reading on Percussion Keyboard Instruments

Keep music stand close to the keyboard
Place music stand directly between the player and director

The Mallets Matter

Consider timbre and blend when selecting mallets
Choose single brand of mallets for focused ensemble tone
Consistent stickings are important for clarity (similar to bowing, etc)

Suggested Videos - YouTube Channel - Mark Ford Marimba

Listen With Your Eyes?
Marimba Technique
The Secret to Playing The Marimba