

# **Percussion Mallet Instruments in Concert Band Literature: The Fourth Dimension**

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## **A New Approach**

Composers are utilizing keyboard percussion instruments as a new voice for Wind Ensemble and Concert Band Literature. Contemporary composers such as Joseph Schwanter, Michael Daugherty and Jack Stamp are adding new possibilities to wind ensemble literature by creating a fourth dimension (or voice) with keyboard percussion instruments, piano and celeste.

In the past, percussion in the concert band implied all percussion instruments. Today's leading composers are splitting the percussion area into two sections: the battery (snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, etc.) and an expanded keyboard section often including piano (and sometimes harp and celeste). Composers are treating this expanded keyboard section as an individual voice in combination with the brass, woodwinds and battery percussion. This new approach has created new opportunities for musical dialogue through a variety of sonic possibilities. As the keyboard percussion parts have increased in exposure and difficulty, the percussionist's accountability for performance skill and organization has also increased.

## **Traditional Use of Percussion Keyboards in Band Literature**

Harmonic and melodic reinforcement: Bells and xylophone doubling woodwinds/brass

Color – Highlighting shape of melodic line and creating atmosphere with ostinatos

Solos – Brief interludes and transitions

See Page 5 – *Symphonic Dance No. 3, Fiesta* by Clifton Williams

Examples of the expanded keyboard percussion section or “Fourth Dimension”

See Page 6 – *Recoil* by Joseph Schwanter

## **Solo Keyboard Performance**

The development of solo marimba literature has influenced composers.

An example of contemporary solo marimba performance:

*Kingdom Lore Fanfare* (2005) by Mark Ford, Innovative Percussion Publications

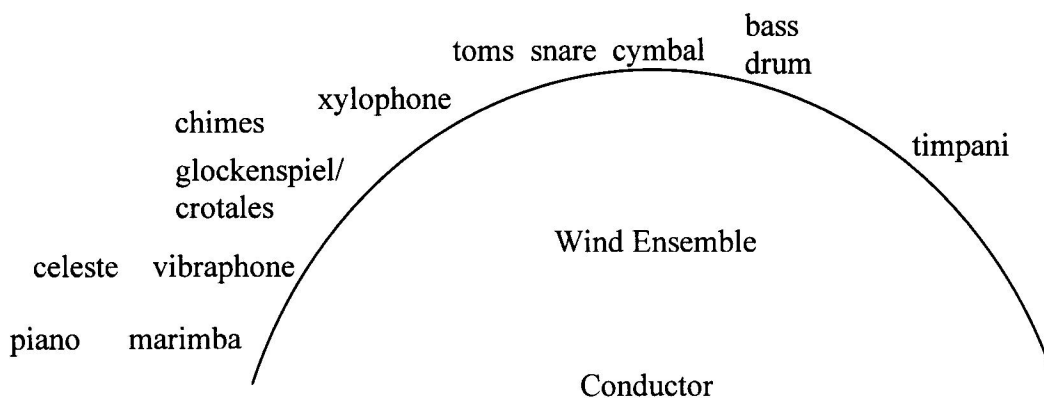
## Wind Ensemble Percussion Section Techniques

### A. 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



### B. Instrument Organization

- Student leaders are essential
- Changing equipment between compositions – plan and allow time

### C. The director and the percussion section:

- Focus on the sound and be musically specific
- Demand that percussionists listen to their instruments/ensemble
- Define tone (brighter, warmer, etc.)
- Expect articulation (legato, marcato, etc.)
- Focus instruction on dynamics within balance and blend

### D. The Connection to the Percussion Ensemble

- Percussion ensemble featuring multiple keyboards can serve as a lab to learn ensemble techniques.
- Performance demands in percussion ensemble can be similar to wind ensemble percussion parts.
- Chamber music skills enhance listening and musical sensitivity in large ensembles.

D. Performance Techniques on 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

Four Mallet Stroke Types:

Single Independent Strokes  
Single Alternating Strokes  
Double Lateral Strokes  
Double Vertical Strokes

Listening, Breathing and Articulation

Legato Stroke  
Staccato Stroke

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 throughout the ensemble (similar to tonguing/bowing)

**Conclusion: The Possibilities of the “Fourth Dimension”**

The musical development of the student percussionist is dependent on:  
Listening and attendance to a wide variety of musical events  
Opportunities for crafting sound in chamber and large ensemble settings  
A supportive director and private percussion instructor  
Challenging and exciting music within structured technical and musical expectations  
The opportunity to fail in order to learn

**Resources:**

Examples of Wind Ensemble Literature with expanded percussion keyboard:  
Michael Colgrass - Winds of Nagual (1985) Colgrass Music  
Michael Colgrass – Bali (2005) Colgrass Music  
Richard Danielpour – Voice of the City (2005) Associate Music (G. Schirmer)  
Michael Daugherty - Bells for Stokowski (2002) Peermusic III Ltd.  
David Gillingham - Concerto for Piano (arr. Fisher) (2003) C. Alan Publications  
Donald Grantham – Court Music (2005) Piquant Press  
Joseph Schwantner - and the mountains rising nowhere (1977) Helicon Music  
Joseph Schwantner – Recoil (2004) Atherton Hill Press  
Jack Stamp - As If Morning Might Arrive (1994) Neil A. Kjos Music  
Hokoyama Wataru - Beyond (2000) Masters Music

Examples of Percussion Ensemble Literature requiring advanced keyboard performance:

Large Ensembles:

Joseph Blaha - The Night Watch (2000) OU Percussion Press

Tom Gauger – Portico (1983) Tom Gauger Music

David Maslanka - Crown of Thorns (1991) OU Percussion Press

Gordon Stout - Desperate Attitudes (1998) Keyboard Percussion Publications

David Welcher – Chameleon Music (1987) OU Percussion Press

Medium to Small Ensembles:

Michael Burritt - Marimba Quartet (2000) Keyboard Percussion Publications

Christopher Deane - Vespertine Formations (2003) Innovative Percussion Publications

Mark Ford – Stubernic (1988) Innovative Percussion Publications

Lynn Glassock - Passage (1996) Innovative Percussion Publications

Charles Griffin - The Persistence of Past Chemistries (1998) [www.Charlesgriffin.net](http://www.Charlesgriffin.net)

**Percussive Arts Society - [www.pas.org](http://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 and recording reviews, 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 Innovative Percussion Publications.

**Method of Movement** by Leigh Stevens

Published by Keyboard Percussion Publications, Method of Movement is a text on four-mallet marimba technique featuring an in-depth analysis of marimba strokes through explanations and numerous exercises.

**Contemporary Mallet Method** by Jerry Tachoir

Contemporary Mallet Method is an introduction to the basics of vibraphone technique and jazz improvisation. Published by Innovative Percussion.

**Teaching Music through Performance in Band**

Teaching Music through Performance in Band is a series of five volumes that explore hundreds of band compositions in detail. Published by GIA Publications, Inc. and edited by Richard Miles, this series and its accompanying records are an excellent resource to band literature. Contributing authors include Larry Blocher, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, Ray Cramer, Tim Lautzenheiser, Edward Lisk and Richard Miles.

Mark Ford is the Coordinator of Percussion at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. Mark has composed many popular compositions for percussion ensemble and marimba, and he has recorded several CDs. He is also a featured soloist with the UNT Wind Symphony on the DVD Keiko, Carmina...Ra! (GIA Music). Ford serves on the Percussive Arts Society Executive Committee as Immediate Past-President and represents Dynasty, Innovative Percussion, Zildjian, Evans and Latin Percussion as artist/clinician. For more information on Mark and UNT Percussion go to [www.music.unt.edu/percussion](http://www.music.unt.edu/percussion).

Symphonic Dance No. 3, Fiesta - Clifton Williams

Musical score for Symphonic Dance No. 3, Fiesta by Clifton Williams, page 5. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flutes (1 and 2), Oboes (1 and 2), English Horn, E-flat Clarinet, B-flat Clarinets (1, 2, and 3), E-flat and B-flat Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, Bassoons (1 and 2), Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpets (1, 2, and 3), Horns (1, 2, 3, and 4), Trombones (1, 2, and 3), Baritone, Tuba (Street Band), Timpani, Bells, Mellophone, Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbals (Right), Maracas, Claves, and Gong/Bell. The score features various musical notations including dynamics (e.g., *marcato*, *f marcato*, *arco*), articulation (e.g., *trpt*, *trpt*), and performance instructions (e.g., *Bells*, *arco*). A rehearsal mark (M) is present at the beginning of the score.

Brillante e con brio

Schwantner RECOIL

Picc. *cresc. (unis.) ff*

Fl. 1 *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Ob. 1 *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Eng. Hn. *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Cl. 1 *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Cl. 3 *cresc. ff unis. ff*

B. Cl. *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Bsn. 1 *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Cbn. *ff ff*

S. Sax. *cresc. ff unis. ff*

A. Sax. *cresc. ff unis. ff*

T. Sax. *cresc. ff unis. ff*

B. Sax. *cresc. ff unis. ff*

Hn. 1 *(unis.) stopped open unis. stopped*

Hn. 3 *(unis.) stopped open unis. stopped*

Tpt. 1 *ff cresc. ff*

Tbn. 1 *unis. ff cresc. ff unis. ff*

Euph. *ff cresc. ff ff*

Tba. *ff cresc. ff ff*

Brillante e con brio

Pno. *ff ff ff*

Perc. 1 (Crot.) *f ff ff*

Perc. 2 (Vibes) Sm. Tam. Sm. Susp. Cym. 4 Tom-t. *f mf=ff f=ff ff*

Perc. 3 (Glock.) Med. Tam. Med. Susp. Cym. Conga. Bs. Dr. *f mf=ff ff=ff ff*

Perc. 4 (T. Bells) Lg. Tam. Lg. Susp. Cym. Ten. Dr. Bs. Dr. *f mf=ff ff=ff ff*

Tim. *f=ff f=ff f=ff ff*