

Creating

The Sixty-First Annual Midwest Clinic
An International Band and Orchestra Conference

MUSICAL EXPRESSION *with*
NON-PITCHED PERCUSSION

presented by
Eric J. Willie

Wednesday, December 19, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

Eric Willie serves as Assistant Professor of Percussion at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee. In addition to his duties at Tennessee Tech, Eric serves as the Vice-President for the Tennessee Chapter of the Percussive Arts Society and as a Percussion Arranger for the Spirit of JSU Drum and Bugle Corps.

Eric has been a featured performer at the Percussive Arts Society Convention, the Bands of America National Percussion Festival, and most recently, as a soloist with the Brass Arts Quintet on their latest release, *Serengeti*. Eric's articles have appeared in *The Instrumentalist* magazine and *Percussive Notes*, and he has contributed educational resources to Sabian, Innovative Percussion, Inc., and Black Swamp Percussion.

Eric holds an MM from the University of Kentucky and a BS in Music Education from Austin Peay State University. He is a candidate for the DMA in Percussion Performance at the University of North Texas.

Eric and his wife Rebecca reside in Cookeville.



Tennessee Tech University



BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

"Expression is what makes notes and rhythms have meaning for a listener. You must know what you think the notes are saying if anyone else is to gain some sense of meaning from your performance." – Christopher Deane

"Creating Musical Expression with Non-Pitched Percussion"

The Midwest Clinic

Wednesday, December 19, 2007, 5:30p.m.

Eric J. Willie, Clinician

Expression in music can be difficult to portray when there is an absence of harmony, melody and pitch. In addition, it can be difficult to create tension when there is no harmonic progression and it is difficult to discern a melody when there is no pitch content.

The percussionist performing a composition score non-pitched instruments encounters the aforementioned difficulties. The following suggestions can assist the percussionist to create musical expression within the repertoire for Non-Pitched Percussion.

I. Motivic Consistency

In an attempt to connect the ideas, phrase each statement in a similar fashion.

- A. While the second measure is not identical (Measure 29), it is similar and should phrase similar to the first measure.

John S. Pratt, *My Friend Norman*, (New York: Belwin, 1959), 30.



(Measure 1)



(Measure 29)

- B. The choice of dynamic inflection in Measure 1 is crucial for motivic consistency throughout the majority of the composition. I have chosen to group the first three notes together and add weight to longer note values.

Áskell Másson, *Prím*, (Switzerland: Editions Bim, 1984), 1-5.



(Measure 1, As Written)



(Measure 1 with Dynamic Inflection)



(Measure 11, Measure 1 in Retrograde)



(Final Measure)

II. Phrase Direction

Before beginning a new piece of literature, I recommend that the performer create a phrase outline of the composition. This can assist the performer in understanding proper phrase direction.

A. Add a crescendo to paradiddles to assist in separating the first two sections of music.

John S. Pratt, *My Friend Norman*, 30.

R L R R L R L L R
 (—————)
 (Measure 16)

B. Add a crescendo to single-stroke seven to the last measure to end the piece.

John S. Pratt, *My Friend Norman*, 30.

fff
 (Measure 80, As Written)

mf ————— *fff*
 (Measure 80, with Dynamic Inflection)

C. Add a decrescendo to syncopated passage to assist in phrase separation.

Áskell Másson, *Prím*, 2.

pp (—————)
 (Measure 29)

D. Crescendo non-accented notes (not just accented notes) to assist in crescendo.

Eckhard Kopetzki, *Canned Heat*, (San Antonio: Southern Music, 2002), 3.

sub. mp *sfz* *sfz*
 (Measures 45-46)

III. Rhythmic Freedom for Phrasing

Composers have a tendency to score continuously for percussionists. As percussionists are not required to breath (to perform), it is easy to compose music that does not require a break. In an attempt to create musical expression, allow the piece of music to “breath” by placing spaces or ritardandos at desired points.

- C. Allow a space before returning to previous motive to assist in audience comprehension.

Eckhard Kopetzki, *Canned Heat*, (San Antonio: Southern Music, 2002), 3.

Musical notation for measures 40-42. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. It features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) at the start. The notation ends with *etc.*

(Measures 40-42)

- a. Measures 40-42 return at a different dynamic level in measure 51.

Musical notation for measures 51-52. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. It features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) at the start. A *rit.* (ritardando) marking is placed above the notes. The notation ends with *etc.*

(Measures 51-52)

- b. Measures 61-64 return at a different dynamic level in measure 84.

Musical notation for measures 61-64. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. It features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) at the start. The notation ends with *etc.*

(Measures 61-64)

Musical notation for measures 83-84. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. It features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and a dynamic marking of *sub. p* (sub-piano) at the start. The notation ends with *etc.*

(Measures 83-84)

IV. Adapting these ideas to Large Ensemble (Wind Ensemble, Orchestra) Compositions

There is no change in musical approach between a solo composition and an ensemble composition. The choice of inflection and phrase direction must be consistent throughout the entire ensemble. Suggested dynamic are in parentheses.

William Schuman, *Chester*, (Pennsylvania: Merion Music, Inc., 1957), 28-30.

The image shows a musical score for three percussion parts: Snare Drum (Sn. Dr.), Cymbal (Cymb.), and Bass Drum (Bass Dr.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 220 to 227, and the second system covers measures 228 to 230. In the first system, the Snare Drum part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents (>) and triplets (3). Dynamics include *p* and *cresc. poco a poco*. The Cymbal and Bass Drum parts play a simple rhythmic accompaniment, with dynamics *p* and *cresc. poco a poco*. The second system shows the Snare Drum part increasing in dynamics from *mp* to *mf* to *f* to *ff* to *fff*, with accents and triplets. The Cymbal and Bass Drum parts also increase in dynamics, with *ff* and *fff* markings. The score ends with *etc.*

Placing a slight emphasis on certain notes will help create expression in the snare drum part. In addition, the emphasis will assist in expressing the snare drum part in single time while the wind parts are felt in a 2/2 or half-time feel.

William Schuman, *Chester*, 30.

The image shows a musical score for three percussion parts: Snare Drum (Sn. Dr.), Cymbal (Cymb.), and Bass Drum (Bass Dr.). The score covers measures 245 to 250. The Snare Drum part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents (>) and triplets (3). Dynamics include *fff* and *fff* with a crescendo line. The Cymbal and Bass Drum parts play a simple rhythmic accompaniment, with dynamics *fff* and *fff* markings. The score ends with a double bar line.

Be careful not to stagnate at the end of the composition. Allowing a crescendo will help forward momentum to conclude the piece.

Instruments and Implements

Snare Drum

- 14" Black Swamp Retrosonic Snare Drum
 - Snare drum used in "open" position for rudimental solo (*My Friend Norman*) and in "closed" position for concert solo (*Prim*).
- Heads
 - 14" Evans Strata 700 Batter Head
 - 14" Evans Genera Reso 300 Resonant Head
- Sticks
 - Innovative Percussion Christopher Lamb Snare Drum Stick, CL-1L for *My Friend Norman*.
 - Innovative Percussion James Campbell Snare Drum Stick, IP-JC for *Prim*.

Multi-Percussion (*Canned Heat*)

- Drums
 - LP Matador Bongos (2 Pair) with LP Bongo Stands
 - 12", 14", 16" Dynasty Concert Tom-toms
- Accessory Percussion
 - 18" x 26" Sabian Thundersheet (for the Resonant Metal sound)
 - Rhythmtch Drum Set Tambourine, DST
 - Metal Can (Large Green Bean)
- Heads
 - Evans Latin Percussion Bongo Heads (2 Pair)
 - 12", 14", 16" Evans 1000 Strata Concert Tom Heads
- Sticks
 - Innovative Percussion RFS-420, Hard Vibraphone (3 Needed)
 - Innovative Percussion TS-1 Multi-Tom Drumsticks

To further your ideas, listen to contemporary performers.

The following is a list of recommended recordings.

- Jason Baker, *The Noble Snare: Compositions for Unaccompanied Snare Drum*
- Guy Gauthreaux, *Open-Close-Open*
- Joseph Gramley, *American De-Construction*
- Markus Leoson, *Markussion-Heavy Loaded Percussion Recital*
- Morris Palter, *Remedy*
- Steven Schick, *Drumming In the Dark*
- Andrew Spencer, *Hollinden: Slender Beams of Solid Rhythm*

I would like to give a big thanks to the following people/companies who supported this clinic.

- The Tennessee Tech University Department of Music and Art,
Dr. Ted LaBar, Chair
 - www.tntech.edu/musicandart
- Dr. Eric Harris, Associate Director of Bands, Tennessee Tech University
- The Tennessee Tech University Percussion Studio
 - www.orgs.tntech.edu/percussionstudio
- Dr. Nick Petrella and Sabian Cymbals
 - www.sabian.com
- Everyone at Innovative Percussion, Inc.
 - www.innovativepercussion.com
- Jim Bailey and Evans Drumheads
 - www.evansdrumheads.com
- Tim Church and Black Swamp Percussion
 - www.blackswamp.com
- Mark Reynolds, Al Murray and Dynasty Percussion
 - www.dynastyband.com
- And last, but most certainly not least, I would like to thank my fiancée Rebecca Dorcy. Thank you for supporting and listening to me practice.

If you have questions that arise after the clinic,
feel free to contact me at (931) 372-6082 or
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