

PERCUSSIVE NOTES

Indianapolis Percussion
Ensemble c/o 16 Digby Ct.
Indpls. 24, Indiana.

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YOUNG AUDIENCE'S WEEK IN INDIANAPOLIS

The week of April 15-20 was designated "Young Audience's Week" in Indianapolis. All told the Indianapolis Percussion Ensemble presented ten ensemble programs in schools in the Indianapolis area.

These programs were informal with a bit of humor that made them an enjoyable as well as educational experience for the students.

One program was given at the Indiana State School for the Deaf. This was a most unusual undertaking and one in which the results were more gratifying than had ever been expected. Contrary to general knowledge, many deaf children do have some residual hearing bringing enjoyment of music, rhythm, and vibration, although this hearing often is not usable for the reception of speech. After consultation with the school superintendent, it was decided that the percussion instruments would offer the most chance of success and enjoyment to these children. The volume of the percussion instruments, the skill of the musicians and their own keen sense of vibration combined to make the program a most enjoyable one for the deaf children.

COMMENTS ON PERCUSSIVE NOTES

From Haskell Harr, Educational Director of Slingerland Drum Co., "I want to thank you for the copies of P.N. that you have sent me. I find them very interesting and educational. I hope that you will continue on with them."

From Remo Belli, President, Remo., Inc., "I have received and read with interest your April issue of P.N. I was delighted with the informative material contained therein, and wish to offer my best wishes for continued success to the many you have already undoubtedly received."

From James D. Salmon, Professor of Percussion, University of Michigan, "I was glad to get your copies of P.N. It is well written, and most interesting reading. You are to be warmly congratulated for this progressive effort."

THE PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

(Reprinted from program notes of Cleveland Institute of Music Percussion Ensemble March 24, 1963, *Robert Pangborn, Director.)

Percussion music--music expressed through rhythm instead of melody and harmony, suggesting endless variations of movement--is one of the manifestations of our restless times. It does not seem surprising, therefore, that an art form exploring the intrinsic melodiousness of drums and cymbals has become an accepted means of our musical expression.

Of the percussion instruments and their contribution to music as an art, the master orchestrator, Rimsky-Korsakov, could write only these disparaging observations in his celebrated PRINCIPLES OF ORCHESTRATION:... "they can only be considered as ornamental... they have no intrinsic meaning and are just mentioned in passing."

In spite of Rimsky's view of the role of percussion, history has begun to prove him wrong. Today every member in the percussion section of a symphony orchestra is expected to be a first-rate musician and a virtuoso, able to handle all the demands of his parts from Mahler, Stravinsky, and Bartók to William Schuman, Edgard Varese, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Indeed, the passage of a single generation, 1930-1960, has seen come into being a concert literature scored exclusively for PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE.

At present, most percussion works are short, written in single-movement forms. Works of more ambitious scope present two main problems. First a great variety of sonorities and tonal contrasts are needed to hold the interest of an audience. Second, such sonic variety calls for a large number of instruments, and there is a physical problem in setting up and adjusting them. Because setups often have to be changed between movements of larger percussion pieces, programs tend to become lengthy. There are times, too, when it seems that the composer requires an impossibly quick change of sticks and instruments. An instance in point is the new composition, FOR MALLETS, by Raymond Wilding-White which received its world premiere by the Cleveland Institute Percussion Ensemble.

(continued on page 2)

*see People in Percussion

The present revival of interest in percussion among both composers and performers not to mention new awareness on the part of public and recording companies, has been rationalized by some as showing the only remaining avenue left for musical exploration short of synthesized tape music.

Others attribute this revitalization to a necessary expression of the nervous turbulence of our times. Yet, others would have us believe that this interest in "primitive" rhythms and percussion instruments is a natural cyclical reversion. It would be wisest, it seems, to ascribe the present-day development to a combination of these causes and circumstances.

The Cleveland Institute of Music is rapidly becoming a center for creative percussive development through instruction, performance and compositional encouragement. The percussion program presented here today ** represents the culmination of two years of planning and hard work by the students and their instructor, Robert Pangborn. It is our sincere hope that this concert will inaugurate a new and vital area of musical expression for local composers, as well as an opportunity for the concert-going public of Greater Cleveland to remain constantly in the know of this exciting new art form.

**see Programs

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DRUMMING AROUND

Dr. Charles Henzie., Prof. of Music Education and director of the Butler University Marching Band, appeared as guest conductor and soloist with the Indianapolis All-City High School Band at their May 18 concert. Dr. Henzie performed the marimba solo Czardas by Monti, and directed the band in several selections including the Concertino for Percussion by Williams, featuring the band's percussion section.

A series of percussion clinics designed for the high school and junior high school percussion ensemble will be given by James L. Moore on June 11 and 13. Each clinic will cover an important phase of percussion playing: Phase I-Rudimental and Concert Style Snare Drumming; Phase II-Dance Set Drumming; Phase III-Latin-American Rhythm Instruments; Phase IV-Marching Band Percussion. For further information and enrollment blanks write to School of Music, Lilly Hall, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The May 1963 issue of The Instrumentalist magazine carried an excellent article by James D. Salmon entitled, "Mallet Percussion." This article is a must for directors, composers and arrangers who wish to have a better understanding of mallet percussion instruments, and the ranges and playing techniques of these instruments.

Percussion Ensemble Composition Contest: Announcement is made of a contest for composition of percussion ensemble music. The winning composition will be awarded \$200.00, and will be published by Music for Percussion, N.Y. For further information write to: Percussion Department, Cleveland Institute of Music, 11021 E. Boulevard, Cleveland 6, Ohio.

Remo Belli reports from the Tri-State Music Festival in Enid, Oklahoma that Louis Bellson was one of the first soloists in the history of the festival to receive a standing ovation from the audience. Bellson appeared as guest soloist with the Percussive Arts Ensemble of Denver, Colorado.

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PEOPLE IN PERCUSSION

Robert Pangborn is mallet percussionist with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra and the Cleveland "Pops," and for the past six years has been head of the percussion department of the Cleveland Institute of Music. Mr. Pangborn recently signed a contract with the Metropolitan Opera Association of New York City to play timpani and percussion during the 1963-64 season.

PROGRAMS

Cleveland Institute of Music
 Percussion Ensemble
 Robert Pangborn, Director
 Donald Erb Four Percussion
 Alan Hovaness October Mountain
 G.P. Geleman Concerto in D Minor
 Carlos Surinach Ritmo Jondo
 Warren Benson Trio for Percussion
 Raymond Wilding-White For Mallets
 Cole Iverson Contra-Rhythmic Ostinato

Butler University Faculty Recital
 James L. Moore, Percussionist
 J.S. Bach Chorale and Toccata
 Spiritual Deep River
 Clair Musser Etude in C Major
 Spanish Folksong Estrellita
 J.S. Bach Sonata No. 1 for
 Percussion Soloist
 W.A. Mozart Andante from Sonata in
 C Major
 M. Gould Pavanne from American Symphonette
 M. Colgrass Duet for Percussion
 E. Lecuona Andalucia

The Purdue University
 Percussion Ensemble
 Maxine LeFever, Conductor

Three Dances Jack McKenzie
 Prelude for Percussion Malloy Miller
 Three Pieces Warren Benson
 for Percussion Quartet
 Re: Percussion Frederick Shively
 Compelling Percussion Albert Payson
 Quartet
 The Epic of Western Man Harold Prentice
 Cole Iverson Saul Goodman

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Issues of Percussive Notes will include programs received of recent percussion events.

COMING NEXT ISSUE--look for a complete write-up on the recent visit of your editors to the percussion department of Indiana University. We are looking forward to bringing you a sketch on the growth of this outstanding department.

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PUBLICATIONS

PLAYING AND TEACHING PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS By Myron D. Collins and John E. Green

Published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. \$5.25

This text is a fine contribution to an area of college teaching sorely in need of well organized materials--the percussion techniques course. It places due emphasis on the most primary school percussion instrument, the snare drum, without slighting the other important instruments of the percussion section, i.e. timpani, mallets, small traps, etc. In the snare drum section of the book there is ample material for the development of the basic snare drum techniques and emphasis is placed on both the traditional hand-to-hand method of sticking and the more modern subtraction (or right hand lead) method. The mallet section presents some simple two, three and four mallet studies and the section on Latin-American instruments indicates the typical rhythms played by each instrument in the various Latin-American dances. The amount of material this book presents certainly supports the theory that the percussion technique course should span more than one semester and that the snare drum is not the only instrument to be mastered. This book will also serve well as a percussion manual for both the new band director and the more experienced school instrumental teacher.

A MODERN APPROACH TO INDEPENDENCE FOR THE ADVANCED DRUMMER, vol. I by Nick Ceroli

Distributed exclusively by the Professional Drum Shop, Inc., 854 Vine, Hollywood, Cal. \$4.00

This book is designed to give, as the author says, "greater contrapuntal independence or the ability to play one rhythm against another." This is definitely a new approach to the ability to the problem of independence. Much of the material previously available has dealt only with left hand rhythms played against the traditional "ride beat." Now in this new book we have a detailed analysis of complex rhythms in each hand. This seems particularly valuable to the development of Latin drumming and, of course, all types of solo work--both on the set and in the complex multiple rhythm parts being written for the modern percussion ensemble. I might add that Part I of this book could be handled by the younger drum students, while Part II is a bit more difficult as the author takes up such rhythm patterns as two against three, etc.

FOUR MALLET MARIMBA TECHNIQUES By James L. Moore, Percussion Instructor, Butler University

Two basically different grips exist for multiple mallet marimba and vibe playing. Advocates of each method usually feel their method to be most useful.

In general, the two grips are: (1) a grip in which the pair of handles are crossed in the palm of the hand, (2) a grip in which each handle is held independently and is not crossed over the other handle. (In this grip, one handle is held between the thumb and forefinger and one is held between the second and third fingers.)

Regarding tone production with these two methods: (1) there is no difference in playing struck chords, for all mallets should hit at the same time, (2) only in the tremelo (roll) does the tone production of the two methods differ considerably.

In producing the tremelo, the crossed mallet grip requires that the mallets strike in alternate pairs, the right hand pair together, then the left hand pair together. By increasing to a fast alternation, a semblance of a sustained tone is obtained.

In the independent suspension method, the pair of mallets in each hand play more or less of an "open flam." That is, the right outside mallet hits first, followed by the right inside mallet; then the left outside followed by the left inside.

Numbering thusly: ④ LH ③ ② RH ① , the sequence of strokes is 1-2-4-3.

To execute this "open flam" correctly, mallets #1 and #4 are held relatively tighter than mallets #2 and #3. This enables the inside mallets to flip up a bit higher than the outside mallets, thereby producing the flam sound. With practice, as the speed of hand alternation is increased slightly, the strokes will develop into an even series of sixteenth notes.

This independent suspension grip is sometimes known as the "Musser" grip, after the marimba artist, Clair O. Musser, who developed and used this method.

(In a future issue, Mr. Moore will discuss four mallet arranging and chord voicing.)

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Dear Editor:

After glancing through recent magazines and papers, it has come to my attention that an increasing number of wives are taking an active part in their husbands occupational obligations and interests. So, setting aside broom and bottle-sterilizer, I thought I too might have something to add to the pages of Percussive Notes.

Being a drummer's wife has certain occupational hazards. It is well to warn visitors, relatives, and drummer's wives-to-be of these. For example, have you ever tried cooking in a never-big-enough kitchen that contains a full set of timpani? (Storage is a problem.) Or take the "Case of the Vanishing Vibraphone." I thought the house seemed roomier--until I tried dusting under the bed!

A drummer's traps provide real interest to the small fry, but you too better pay attention to what there is lest you loose your stability when small "Danny" comes into the room clicking a real-looking gun (daddy's blank).

The whole concept of traps as musical instruments is fascinating to contemplate. Hubby recently went to Mexico with the orchestra. Imagine my surprise when he came home with a lovely pair of maracas for himself which he purchased for a ridiculously low price and didn't even think that 18 month old daughter would love a pair to play with. Or notice the satisfaction he derives from building his own marching machine. Or the ribbing my parents took on a pleasure cruise through the Caribbean for carting a Trinidad Steel Drum with them (son-in-law wanted one and they wouldn't trust the post office after what they went through to get it).

Small children especially are prone to pick up "daddy's" habits--like practicing paradiddles on the table between dinner and dessert. The noise one makes, three can make better!

The drummer's wife also has to put up with the stares of the neighbor's who witness "odd shaped" boxes coming and going at even odder hours. They are also watching when wife arrives home sitting in the back seat and hubby in front. (It's easier to load an old 28" bass drum in front! It's also easier to just leave it there since it'll be used next Saturday and we'll only be going a few dozen places between now and then.) I still haven't convinced the man across the street that at 11:00 p.m. when the temperature was about zero, my husband was not practicing the marimba in front of the house. (He was only trying to get the bars off so it would fit through the front door.)

Well, this wife must now get dressed for a dance--he's playing, I'm watching, and I'll bet there won't be another wife there that arrives carrying a "throne" and music stand.

(Continued on next page)

P.S. But there is another side to this which would require too much space to describe—the pride you derive from seeing hubby perform, entertain, and instruct; the people you meet, the fun of learning to play some of the "noisemakers"; the laughs when you tell people your experiences; the benefit of exposing the children to such a variety of "naturally fascinating: instruments; the thanks you get for making a set of timpani covers; and last but not least, the conversation and cup of coffee "after the dance or concert is over."

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PERCUSSION DISCUSSION

Chamber Music for Percussion?

Much of the professional percussion ensemble work being done today in reality involves winds and strings with augmented or featured percussion sections. This approach is fine and offers the serious composer and the commercial arranger a wide palate of sound.

If we are to present a true percussion ensemble, some serious thought should be given to how many and if any non-percussionists should be welcome to join the ensemble.

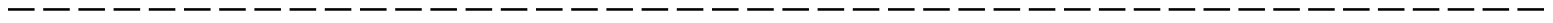
The Indianapolis Percussion Ensemble has attempted to program works for a small "chamber" size ensemble, performing mainly works for three or four players. One of the main considerations in this is to present a type of ensemble that high schools and colleges can readily develop in their own school.

A reader of P.N. who lives in Bridgeport, Pa. wrote us recently and asked if there was any chance for a person with poor high school grades to further his study of percussion on an advanced level. We would like to propose the following suggestions: 1. Many colleges have "special instruction" divisions where non-college students, either school age or adult, may come in evenings and take private lessons from the college music teachers. 2. You might study in larger cities at drum studios or schools operated by well known teachers and performers. 3. Many schools offer night or extension courses that would enable you to pass college entrance exams. 4. Check into the music careers offered by the armed services. Their entrance requirements are based on instrument performance--not high school grades. Note to you younger readers--keep up those high school grades!

Do you agree with the above? Do you have any views to air in Percussion Discussion? Let us hear from you.

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