

PERCUSSION METHOD BOOKS

Rudimental Arithmetic

Bob Becker

\$60.00

Keyboard Percussion Publications

For most musicians, college and high school algebra classes are a distant (and not too fond) memory. These “required” courses rarely made a musical connection with finding the value of x . However, math hits a little closer to home with contemporary rhythmic applications and rudimental snare drumming in particular.

Bob Becker, Nexus musician and author of *Rudimental Arithmetic, A Drummer's Study of Pattern and Rhythm*, has developed a drumming method that combines the mathematical concepts of rhythm with a collection of exercises and etudes. Rarely does a snare drum method book connect conceptual applications of the mathematical foundations of rhythm with musical applications. Becker achieves this goal and more.

When I first received this book, I grabbed my sticks and pad, eager to get started. I quickly learned that the sticks and pad could wait a little while. As with any strong educational process, Becker concisely explores the mathematical concepts of rhythmic groupings and meter before applying it to exercises and etudes. These discussions are thorough with numerous examples.

The book is organized into seven parts: Meter, Rudiments, Permutations, Partitions of Numbers, Polyrhythms, Exercises and Etudes. Each part discusses basic rhythmic concepts and demonstrates the appropriate mathematical formula(s). Then Becker applies these discussions to written musical notation. While there are exercises in each part of the book, the final two parts conclude with numerous pages of outstanding exercises and etudes. To complete the text, Becker adds a glossary of terms (both mathematical and musical) as well as a wonderful bibliography.

How we think about music is integral to the sounds we produce as musicians. *Rudimental Arithmetic* challenges the reader to mentally explore and articulate the foundations of rhythm for greater potential of application. The book provides “useful tools for improvisation, interpretation and composition in all forms of rhythmic music.” Students of all ages will want to explore this valuable 190-page text, which gives us insight into Becker's thought processes regarding rhythm. All in all, *Rudimental Arithmetic* adds up to an outstanding resource.

—Mark Ford

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION INSTRUCTIONAL BOOKS

Mallets for Drummers

Lynn Glasscock

\$19.95

Meredith Music

Conceived to be a basic two-mallet mallet primer for a percussionist with only a drumming background, this excellent 48-page method book contains several logical sections, including the first three, which primarily concern themselves with theory before moving ahead into brief etudes, then longer solo pieces. All etudes and solos are included on the enclosed CD recording. This method book for keyboard percussion could be utilized on xylophone, vibraphone or marimba. Glasscock has presented an excellent introductory method book for the “savvy” non-keyboard percussionist.

—Jim Lambert

KEYBOARD PERCUSSION SOLOS

Butterflies, Mountains, Bamboo

III

Stephen Crawford

\$14.00

HoneyRock

Stephen Crawford's latest work for solo marimba depicts the musical images of his trip to Taiwan and visit to Mt. Jhuzin. This particular mountain had been a training area for the military and is open to the general public for two days out of the year to celebrate the Yang-mingshan Butterfly Festival. Butterflies from around the region and even Japan and Okinawa migrate to the mountain to drink the nectar of a flower that grows there.

Crawford incorporates a lyrical “butterfly motive,” an energized “mountain motive” and a pentatonic folk melody to represent the various aspects of the festival. The butterfly and mountain motives constantly alternate between each other in the introduction, followed by the butterfly motive developed in a charming chorale. Then, the mountain motive is broken down to simple chords and built back up by adding one note at a time. Repetition and transposed motives lead into the rubato pentatonic melody. Short re-statements of the original two motives bring the piece to an energetic close.

This six-minute piece would work well for an intermediate marimbist due to the repetition and easily accessible motive lines. A 4.3-octave marimba could be used, except a 5-octave marimba is required for one phrase of the pentatonic melody.

—Brian Zator

Insect Music

Ken Metz

\$12.95

HoneyRock

This work for solo marimba consists of five short movements that “attempt to convey physical motions or images of the insect in the title.” The duration of the work is approximately six minutes, with the last two movements lasting only 30 seconds each. A 5-octave marimba is required, but a 4.3-octave could be used by transposing seven notes in the third movement up an octave.

The movement titles (and insects they represent) include “G Hopp” (grasshoppers), “Ballad of C Roach,” “Ant Invasion,” “Bness,” and “Romance of the Moths.” Each movement uses dissonance and atonality to convey its respective image, with the ant and bee movements played at fast tempos while the other three movements are played at slow or moderate speeds. The disjunct lines and lack of tonal centers create an unsettling feeling throughout.

—Brian Zator

Greensleeves

Arr. Gordon Peters

\$5.00

Studio 4 Music

Although this publication date is 2008, Gordon Peters crafted this four-mallet arrangement for unaccompanied four-octave marimba in 1952. Scored in A minor, the familiar “Greensleeves” takes the performer through two verses of the short 47-measure composition. This arrangement would be appropriate for the intermediate-level keyboard percussionist.

—Jim Lambert

Koda for solo Vibraphone

Jan Freicher

\$15.95

HoneyRock

This piece won the first-place award in the 2008 PAS Italy Composition Contest. It is a fairly lengthy vib solo that falls in the pop medium. It is not very difficult, with limited independence between the hands, but is lengthy enough for a junior or senior college recital. A mature high school student could also perform this solo, although it is too long for most state solo and ensemble competitions.

It is easy to read and uses the range of the vibraphone well, but is not necessarily a unique contribution to the repertoire. The most challenging aspect of the piece is some right-hand octaves in the melody in the middle section and some rhythmic syncopation creating a Latin feel. It is recommended for the intermediate vibist who has had some experience with pedaling and mallet dampening.

—Julia Gaines

III Continuum

Daniel Kessner

\$10.00

Studio 4 Music

This is a 12-minute marimba solo for advanced players. This version, premiered by Karen Ervin Pershing in 2003, is a revision of Kessner's original 1984 composition. The most significant change is a new first movement. Presented in four movements with no pauses, “Continuum” elicits a “smooth continuum of sounds, moods, and tempi.” The performer can easily portray this through Kessner's flurry of sixteenth notes in the outer movements, and tremolo/chorale effects in the inner movements. Kessner's specification of mallet choice, as well as when to switch mallets, also assists the compositional impetus.

The performer must have great technical facility and be able to execute double-lateral strokes and one-handed rolls at small intervals, mandolin rolls, and fast, two-mallet runs at a soft (*pp*) dynamic level. Advanced college, graduate students, or professional percussionists will enjoy the musical and technical challenges encountered in “Continuum.”

—Eric Willie

Ostinato

Jesse Monkman

\$14.00

TapSpace

This approximately five-minute, unaccompanied marimba solo is a technically challenging composition that originated as an exercise for four-mallet dexterity (according to preface notes by the composer). The c-minor tonality, left-hand ostinati and syncopated right-hand melody permits the performer to develop independence between the upper and lower voicings. The composition would lend itself to solo recital material for the younger college undergraduate.

—Jim Lambert

Spectrum

Daniel Berg

\$12.00

Keyboard Percussion Publications

“Spectrum” is an attractive four-mallet marimba solo by marimbist Daniel Berg. Similar to his popular composition “Over the Moon,” “Spectrum” creates a collage of uneven rhythms and shifting harmonies that slowly envelop the listener. According to the composer, “Spectrum” is similar to a prism. Berg hopes that the audience will hear “different sources of inspiration” in this prism such as “rhythms from the Japanese marimba virtuoso Keiko Abe and harmony from the music of genius Quincy Jones.”

While no meter is indicated for “Spectrum,” Berg writes in 7/8 or 5/8 much of the time. The glue that holds the music together is a left-hand ostinato that primarily shifts by half-steps