AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF PERCUSSION SOLOS OPUS 21 & 24.1

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INTRODUCTION

The following biography is selected from the composer’s well-crafted website (entitled: Nebojša Jovan Živković – Multipercussion-Concert-Artist & Composer) containing articles, reviews and concert critiques, video performances, video interviews, news and upcoming projects, listening, sheet music, mallets, and merchandise:

The Serbian-born composer and percussionist Nebojša Jovan Živković (pronounced: Neboysha Yovan Chivkovich) is both a virtuoso performer and composer of a large body of innovative music. Živković is one of the world’s most performed composers [of] Percussion music. At the present time, he has nearly three hundred performances of his compositions every year in almost fifty countries worldwide. His groundbreaking compositions for marimba and percussion have set new performing standards, and his captivating and energetic performances have influenced generations of marimbists. Many of Zivkovic’s compositions (for example: Ilijas, Ultimatum I, Trio per uno) have become standards in contemporary percussion repertoire worldwide. His orchestral works are performed by orchestras worldwide such as the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, BBC Concert Orchestra of London, Orchestra di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Northern Sinfonia in Newcastle, UK, and the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra. A native of Serbia, Živković completed his master’s degrees in composition, music theory and percussion in Mannheim and Stuttgart, Germany, where he has resided since 1980. He tours extensively throughout Europe and performs frequently in the USA, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Latin America, Russia, and Scandinavian countries.¹

The intention of this study is to be a practical performance guide for two works. The first is a marimba solo, “Ultimatum I” Opus 24.1, and the second, a multiple percussion solo, “Generally Spoken It Is Nothing but Rhythm” Opus 21. Among Živković’s many compositions, these two pieces stand out as unique contributions to the

percussion repertoire. A detailed performance study has not been published for either work.

“Ultimatum I” Opus 24.1 is an ideal solo marimba composition to include in a performance study of Živković’s music. The Opus 24.1 represents a high standard of the modern percussion repertoire. This solo is extremely technically challenging for the performer and contains extended techniques. Pairing "Ultimatum I" with the above mentioned multi-percussion solo is interesting for showing contrast in the composer’s work within a three-year time span.

Both works will be examined in the context of the formal structure and how the motivic, thematic and harmonic elements relate to the form. Particular emphasis will be placed on certain extended techniques and the somewhat ambiguous notation of roll styles in "Ultimatum I." Performance aspects such as phrasing, dynamic balance, expression, and style elements will be addressed. Suggestions for practice strategies will be included.

The study of harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral elements within “Generally Spoken” will highlight the importance of the overall character of the music. Performance aspects such as instrument selection, setup optimization, interpretation, utilization of expressive dynamics and articulations, dynamic balance, and suggestions for practice strategies will be addressed.

Score excerpts will be reproduced as they appear in the original scores (in some cases, measures/staves have been conjoined); permission for their use has been granted from Mr. Živković and Edition Musica Europea. While this study is best utilized with full
scores, every attempt has been made to make the numerous examples “stand alone” and make sense in relation to the formal structure.

A challenging marimba solo such as "Ultimatum I" (1995) is an obvious choice for this study considering the prominence of solo marimba compositions within the percussion community. The lack of extensive scholarship examining the music of Živković provides reason and hope for the usefulness of this document. The importance of Živković’s compositions within the modern percussion repertoire cannot be overstated.

Multiple percussion has fascinated composers since the early 20th century. The unique spectacle, the potential for new timbres and experimental sounds, and the difficulty in their execution make such works suitable for scholarship. “Generally Spoken It Is Nothing But Rhythm” (1991) meets these criteria and it is of the highest quality in comparison to many other works of this type.
In an interview entitled “Uneven Souls,” the interviewer Alison Shaw suggests that a trademark of Živković is “uneven grooves” (i.e., mixed-meter dances). When asked what best characterizes his music, Živković states: "One's performance should always add to the music itself," and he feels that his work has "wide ranges of expression and intensity, whether or not they are very contemporary sounding or more or less in a Slavic-tonal mood." He says his music has "guts," and "music is like religion: Do not try to understand it in order to believe in it—i.e., to love it. Rather, believe in it—i.e., listen—in order to understand it." Similarly, Živković says, "the primary means of perception in the musical arts should be with one's senses, and then afterwards we may analyze the music in order to discover why it "touched" us so strongly."²

Relatedly, in “Uneven soul: a Conversation,” Živković discusses his inspiration in performance as "communication with an audience...you hit the marimba...waves go through the air to the audience. They feel something inside and send feedback...this is an excellent experience."³ This interview provides detail into Živković's musical upbringing, influences and education growing up in Yugoslavia, Serbia, such as listening to popular music, High Music School in Serbia, and later studying composition in Germany where he was influenced by contemporary music. Other influences such as folk music, sacred

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³ Ibid., 42.
music, and Živković's personal heritage inform his musical style. Živković discusses his folk heritage as a "lucky thing on one hand, [or] a very uncomfortable thing on the other, because I cannot get rid of this Balkan influence [certain melodic structures, harmonies or rhythms] even in my most contemporary pieces." This internal conflict is interesting to note. In a discussion of musical influences, Živković states, "I like the approach and music of composers Gustav Mahler and Dmitri Shostakovich." A very interesting point is mentioned in “Tales from the Center of the Earth: an Interview with Ben Toth.” In discussing the collaborative effort between each other on the multi-percussion concerto "Tales from the Center of the Earth," Toth mentions that Živković "tends to compose at the instruments [in this case, a large percussion set-up], with a marimba and piano handy as well." This could explain much of the popular success of Živković's music—almost all of his work seems natural or idiomatic. Another common description is that it “lays well in the hands” and the gestures are natural. Although the idiomatic qualities of the music most likely benefit the popularity of sheet music sales, it may also inform us why Živković struggles with his folk heritage. Perhaps this struggle is related to the physical nature of composing at the instrument as one aspect of his creative process.

Two excellent articles by Ira Prodanov, a musicologist who specializes in twentieth-century music at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, provide a scholarly

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5 Ibid., 48.
6 Ibid., 49.
7 Jefferson Grant, "Tales from the Center of the Earth: An Interview with Ben Toth," Percussive Notes 44, no. 2 (April 2006): 40.
discussion of Živković's compositional style and traits of specific pieces. In "The Castle of the Mad King: Compositions of Nebojša Jovan Živković at PASIC '98 New Music/Research Day," Prodanov describes Živković's compositional approach as "polystylistic...[and] postmodern without a code of conduct." Influences range from "romanticism, impressionism, expressionism and the extreme avant-garde, and the folk music of his Balkan heritage." A telling personal insight of Živković's that Prodanov shares is that "honesty is a priority during his creative work." Prodanov suggests this is why the music is emotionally charged, regardless of the style.\(^8\)

The solo marimba work "Tensio," Op. 11 (1986) is mentioned as using Živković's "interval composing technique," and "has much in common with strictly determined twelve-tone technique."\(^9\) In discussing the multi-percussion piece "The Castle of the Mad King," Prodanov makes another insightful point by suggesting that the composer's idea is to "achieve balance between controlled content and improvisation, accomplished through shifts of energetic and aggressive, lyric and meditative parts." Živković is a self-proclaimed "very impulsive soloist,"\(^10\) and this concept of balance between control and freedom is important for understanding his unique creative work as a composer and as a performer. Prodanov continues discussing the expressionistic program for "The Castle of the Mad King" as "a picture of the author's sound castle...[with] the chamber of rage, torture, joy, longing, laughter, and those chambers in which it is almost forbidden to

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\(^9\) Ibid., 66.

\(^10\) Alison Shaw, 43.
In his second article, "Nebojša Jovan Živković: 'Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra,' No. 2, Opus 25," Prodanov suggests that the concerto "opens up possibilities for new investigations into the specific aspect of communication between the exotic (folklore) and the classical in twentieth-century music."\(^{12}\) This obvious folk-music exoticism in the composition of Živković in general is an important concept for understanding its unique appeal. Prodanov refers to the "Concerto, No. 2" third movement as having an "expressionistic, pagan intonation" and that a characteristic feature of Živković's style is "soloist entries of the marimba, and its virtuoso tonal possibilities in the forefront."\(^{13}\)

In the article “New and 'Old' Works for Marimba from Europe,” Živković discusses his work and preparation for a performance at PASIC (Percussive Arts Society International Convention) in Indianapolis in 2009. Notable here is Živković’s comment about his plans to perform "Ilijas or Ultimatum" because most of my percussion friends, especially college teachers from the USA, keep telling me how important it is that younger students hear me performing those pieces live on stage, so they have a chance to hear and see the composer."\(^{14}\) Živković’s performance of “Ultimatum I” at PASIC 2009 further inspired this dissertation project.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 66.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., 84.
\(^{14}\) Nebojša Jovan Živković, "New and 'Old' Works for Marimba from Europe," Percussive Notes, 47, no. 4 (August 2009): 43.
In the article “Interviews with Two German Percussionists,” Živković discusses his formal training and early influences. His training on marimba began in Germany when he started his college studies at the University of Heidelberg and Mannheim. Živković says, "There is a big danger for me to be labeled as a composing marimba player. I prefer to be labeled as a composer who plays marimba, because actually I studied composition more than marimba."15 Živković mentions Herman Shafer and Milko Kelemen as two of his very good composition teachers. Živković’s first connection to marimba music was with Japanese pieces (he later recorded Time by Minoru Miki and Two Movements by Toshimitsu Tanaka). Živković began marimba studies with the traditional grip, was later exposed to the Stevens grip (what Živković calls the independent grip), and later studied with Stevens and Keiko Abe.16 Živković completed his first marimba concerto in 1984 at the age of 22.

“A Comparative Analysis of Representative Marimba Works by Nebojša J. Živković,” the only published dissertation exclusively concerning the composer, contains detailed analyses of two concertos. “Tales from the Center of the Earth” Op. 33 involves a multi-percussion setup including a marimba with wind ensemble accompaniment, and the “Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra, No. 1, Op. 25” is written for solo marimba and percussion (separate setups) with orchestral accompaniment. This study provides some insight into Živković's compositional style and to an extent acts somewhat as a model for

16 Ibid., 21.
this current study.\textsuperscript{17}

Percussion repertoire has been greatly enhanced by multiple percussion compositions with new and experimental sounds. The article “Multiple Percussion” by Steven Schick is an excellent general primer for better understanding the concepts of these compositions. Multiple percussion as a solo instrumental classification began in the early twentieth century with compositions by Stravinsky, Bartók, and Milhaud. Karlheinz Stockhausen’s work “Zyklus” (or Cycle, 1959) is considered to be the first solo multiple percussion composition and is a continuation of the multiple percussion sound concepts of John Cage’s “Third Construction” (1941).\textsuperscript{18}

Instrumentation differs greatly in multi-percussion compositions and essentially requires the performer to learn a new instrumental setup for each piece. Much scholarly research has been done concerning the compositional notation of these works. Perhaps the most examined is the notational inconsistency is in the percussion part of Stravinsky’s \textit{L’Histoire du soldat}. The historical book \textit{Timpani & Percussion} by Jeremy Montagu notes that often "Composers seem to delight in making things more difficult than they need be, and even when they do try to help us, they often make it more complicated."\textsuperscript{19}
Pioneering compositional freedom needs to be balanced with the limitations of performance. This delightful tome by Montagu should be considered as a new historical

\textsuperscript{17}Jefferson Grant, "A Comparative Analysis of Representative Marimba Works by Nebojša J. Živković," (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2009), iii.


\textsuperscript{19} Jeremy Montagu, \textit{Timpani and Percussion} (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 140.
standard and a continuation of James Blades’ *Percussion Instruments*.

“An Examination of Notation in Selected Repertoire for Multiple Percussion” by Alyssa Smith is a study of historical and modern multi-percussion pieces. The lack of a standardized notation for multi-percussion creates problems for both the composer and performer. The dissertation is clear, succinct, and easy to utilize for understanding the difficulties in learning multi-percussion, a discussion of eight works covered in detail, and creating a notational system for composition. The pieces here are used to establish a list of problems, or a “what not to-do list,” when creating a notation system for a multi-percussion composition.

“Multiple-Percussion Notation: the Effectiveness of Three Types of Staff Notation on Sight-Reading Ability” is a very detailed study, useful for understanding elements of various types of multi-percussion notation, codification of terminology, and for judging what works well and what does not for certain compositional intentions. This dissertation examines notation in several works with a well-organized and detailed historical overview, and contains data from a pilot study intended to determine what style of notation may allow performers to most quickly and accurately realize the music. The

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20 Alyssa Smith, “An Examination of Notation in Selected Repertoire for Multiple Percussion,” (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2005), ii.
21 Ibid., 90-91.
22 Darin Kamstra, “Multiple-Percussion Notation: the Effectiveness of Three Types of Staff Notation on Sight-Reading Ability,” (DMA diss., The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2006), 1-7. A composer's use of conventional or unconventional notation (e.g., Stockhausen's *Zyklus*) being the main distinction mentioned in terms of intention. The intention of indeterminacy (or the extreme opposite with the inclusion of very specific indications by a composer, perhaps concerning timbre and implement selection) may better be suited to unconventional notation systems. An excellent article related to the latter is Daniel Adams, “The Compositional Use of Timbre in Selected Solo Multiple Percussion Works.” *Interface: Journal Of New Music Research* 21, no. 2 (1992): 117-134.
three types of notation examined are five-line staff, composite staff, and timbre-staff.\textsuperscript{23} Opus 21 combines all three of these notational styles.

The dissertation “Multiple Percussion Performance Problems as Illustrated in Five Different Works between 1959 and 1967” by Lambert has a chapter entitled “Problems of movement associated with multiple percussion works.” This chapter stresses that the “awareness of the instrument [the multi-setup] is the important factor to subsequent fluid body language [and] technical fluency in performance.”\textsuperscript{24} Lambert likens this total awareness in multi-setups to the kinesthetic sense used in performing on a marimba.\textsuperscript{25}

The keys of the marimba are always consistently placed. The important lesson from this is the need for absolute consistency in the multi-setup in order to attain this total kinesthetic awareness; even the slightest misplacement in the setup can cause errors. Percussionists are always aware of this, because they do not have direct contact with their instruments, but the need for extreme care in consistent instrument placement is heightened in multi-percussion, for multiple obvious reasons.\textsuperscript{26}

“Advanced Multiple Percussion Techniques: An Analysis with Musical Approaches to Performance Problems in the Music of David Hollinden” by Gould is an all-encompassing and very complex study. Containing a well-written, clear historical

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 123-132.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{26} It is important to at least mention the need for careful thought and experimentation with stance and posture at the instruments percussionists play. Similar to Lambert’s comparison of multi-setups to marimba playing, if the player’s stance is off by just a little, it can cause errors. Perhaps this is why most Timpanists or American drum set specialists choose to sit (aside from the obvious benefit of ease of executing simultaneous tuning changes or rhythms with both feet).
evolution of multi-percussion, there is, in this very thorough dissertation, a focus on
technical problems in general, and specific technical exercises derived from the music of
a contemporary composer. The attempt to make the exercises (what Gould called
practicums), universal or "dedicated to the techniques needed to perform music of the
past, present, and future," is a novel idea, and the study attempts to be a complete method
for a general course of study of multi-percussion. The technical chapters are progressive
and are concerned with sticking, dynamic control, tone production, polyphonic playing,
and musical gesture. The chapter on polyphonic playing is made interesting through the
use of drum set coordination patterns from Central American music that are given as
examples. The concept of a polyphonic texture is uncommon in works of multi-
percussion, although Živković’s Opus 21, with its use of four mallets, is rife with
overlapping multiple voices. The example from Gould’s chapter, “Cold Pressed” by
Hollinden, uses a bass drum with a foot pedal, and various instruments that are struck
with two implements, one in each hand. This three-part texture is used in several of the
solos in Reflex, a popular multi-percussion etude book by Dietz. Although the concept
of a polyphonic texture applies to Opus 21, the instrumentation does not. However, the
use of the etudes containing a foot pedal in the Dietz may help prepare performers for the
use of the damper pedal in Opus 21. In both setups, the performer is standing and

27 Michael Gould, “Advanced Multiple Percussion Techniques: An Analysis with Musical
Approaches to Performance Problems in the Music of David Hollinden,” (DMA diss., The University of
Kentucky, 1999), 6.
28 Ibid., 161-164.
29 Brett Dietz, Reflex: 15 Studies for the Intermediate Multi-Percussionist (Greensboro, NC: C.
Alan publications, 2009).
required to use one foot; only in Opus 21 are four mallets utilized requiring a five-way coordination.

The chapter from the Gould dissertation concerning musical gesture contains a section on instrument mapping. It is suggested that when preparing a new multi-percussion setup, “charting one’s movement enhances the performer’s sensitivity to the body’s gestures in relationship to the music.”

Going through the piece and writing down the choreography of the body initially may help speed up the learning process. Gould suggests that after the piece is internalized, the performer should practice the music away from the setup, with gestures only. While this type of “hands-only” score study may be useful for solidifying one’s kinesthetic memory, actual practice at the setup seems a better method for error detection. “Hands-only” score study would be excellent practice when the setup is unavailable, which is one of the many challenges in performing multi-percussion pieces (e.g., the time required to set up and the space to leave the setup intact). Visualization of playing the music with the score helps solidify one’s memory of the score and is vital to internalization.

Of the limited number of method books available for multi-percussion, The Contemporary Percussionist: 20 Multiple Percussion Recital Solos by Udow and Watts has perhaps the most popular group of progressive etudes for multi-percussion. This book attempts to aid percussionists in understanding notational as well as technical issues with multi-percussion. The authors utilize various forms of notation such as single line, two-

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30 Michael Gould, 178.
31 Doug Walter, "Memory Techniques for Keyboard Percussion, Percussive Notes 31, no. 3 (February 1993): 17-18. This article will be discussed in more detail later.
line with note heads only (without stems to provide specific rhythm, with spacing variation as the only indication), and in the final solos, timbre-staff notation. Timbre-staff notation shows where the instruments are assigned in ascending pitch order on a five-line staff with traditional note heads—this system, or elements of it, has been adopted by many composers. This book is useful for an introduction to multi-percussion concepts and notation, and contains etudes suitable for concert performance. An older but related article by Udow is “Visual Correspondence Between Notation Systems and Instrument Configurations.” This article is a detailed examination of specific works in order to introduce the concepts of the timbre-staff notation system that are utilized in the *The Contemporary Percussionist*.  

The article “Choreography in Multiple Percussion Playing” by Karen Ervin is quite useful for the inexperienced percussionist. This 1978 article is an excellent and easy-to-understand guide for multi-percussion. Ervin stresses the importance of a logical setup, relaxation, and the arc (the rebound or the stroke recovery/preparation for another stroke being arched rather than straight up/down). The arc is similar to “timing the components of gestures [strokes] to produce curved motions from Stevens’ *Method of Movement for Marimba.*” Planned motion is the essence of good choreography,” and Ervin suggests using video recording to help with "the [fine] line between relaxed follow-

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through with the body and unnecessary [and] inefficient motion."\textsuperscript{35} A very thoughtful exercise here is the practice of rapid motion [shifting] with pauses for orientation [and perhaps to isolate the excerpt].\textsuperscript{36} This is similar to the suggestion by Stevens that one not practice difficult position shifts slowly so that they become "perceived as exact and repeatable."\textsuperscript{37}

The \textit{Method of Movement for Marimba} by Stevens is generally accepted as providing a high standard of technique and style for four-mallet marimba playing. While the exercises in this method are for marimba, several points are required reading for all four-mallet percussion players in general. Perhaps the ultimate lesson here is that of relaxation, and this is stressed throughout this interpretive study of solo percussion music. Sections XVII and XVIII are particularly helpful and succinct. A universal lesson for four-mallet percussion playing is the goal of combining interval change, position shifting, and stroke recovery in a single fluid motion [or gesture].\textsuperscript{38} Stevens has codified terms for four-mallet strokes; particularly important are the double vertical strokes and the admonition for the use of the wrist rather than the arm for the sake of tone, control, and endurance. A final very important point and another universal lesson from \textit{Method of Movement} is “to use efficiently both momentum and inertia. The former should be sustained until the completion of a particular gesture: the latter may be used to execute

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{35} Karen Ervin, 99. \\
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 100. \\
\textsuperscript{37} Leigh Stevens, 38. \\
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 38.
\end{flushright}
passive interval changes." \(^{39}\)

*Four Mallet Studies* by Gary Burton is a method devised for playing the vibraphone. Of particular interest for this study is the discussion of *Other Factors of Four-Mallet Technique*. Burton stresses the need for total relaxation, and the exercises are challenging and varied. Burton advises the player to take full advantage of playing on the [extreme] ends of the vibe bars in order to keep "wrist twisting and excess motion [at] a minimum." \(^{40}\) This frequently overlooked general aspect of vibraphone technique is helpful for economical motion and a good tone within certain passages in vibraphone music in general, and may or may not be helpful for Opus 21 (e.g., some of the double-vertical strokes in figures 2.27 & 2.29 due to the quick tempo of the dance).

A related book is *Vibraphone Technique: Dampening and Pedaling* by Friedman. This easy to use method for increasing musicality on the vibraphone focuses on mallet dampening, pedaling, and the combination of both. Using the mallets to dampen notes can add clarity to sonorities, and can add phrasing and a personal interpretation to music for the vibraphone.

The *Extended Cross Grip Lesson Series* by Ney Rosauro is a valuable resource for performers who hold four mallets in a cross grip style (also known as the *Burton* grip). This in-depth video series of progressive lessons covers a relaxed and more graceful

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 38.
approach to the cross stick grip through simply explained interval exercises as well as advanced extended techniques.

“Memory Techniques for Keyboard Percussion” by Walter discusses the various methods of memorizing mallet keyboard music. Walter examines several techniques to increase and solidify memory that are intended for review after the notes have been learned. Visual memory stands out in Walter's article as the most reliable, and using visualization to reinforce memorization is the best practice. Walter discusses instructional memorization, harmonic memory, and expressive memory. He writes, "Probably the best way to prevent learning mistakes is to practice the work at a tempo slow enough to avoid mistakes."41 Another very important point is made that stickings should be chosen at the very beginning of the learning process, since they are the fundamental motion of the work.42

In summation, the major contributions to the study of Živković’s music are by Pradanov and Grant, and are mostly concerned with the concerto works. Pradanov’s articles provide a general overview and some specific analysis of the music of Živković. Grant’s dissertation goes in depth to cover two major works, measure by measure.

The five interviews with Živković are useful for getting an overall understanding of the composer as a person and his unique contributions to the concert percussion repertoire. The interviews also give insight into certain influences and the compositional

41 Douglas Walter, 21.
42 Ibid., 22.
process. Other important musical aspects covered are the idiomatic qualities to the writing, the exotic Balkan folk influence, and the expressionistic elements.

Perhaps the most useful methods of study to prepare a somewhat inexperienced percussionist for Opus 21 and 24.1 would be the *Method of Movement* by Leigh Stevens, an in-depth award-winning treatise considered to be the high standard of four-mallet marimba playing and all four-mallet percussion playing, and “Choreography in Multiple Percussion Playing” by Karen Ervin, a highly useful article from the *Instrumentalist*. Considering the majority of published print materials available for the study and preparation for multi-percussion (dissertations, methods, articles), Ervin’s article stands out as a succinct and complete primer for how to approach preparing multi-percussion repertoire.

Generally, the method books for multi-percussion do not seem appropriate in terms of effort required for their use in proportion to preparing “concert quality” multi-percussion compositions. Most are deficient in terms of general technique by assuming that students are already accomplished percussionists (having previous experience playing timpani and drum set). Of these methods, the Dietz seems to be the best in relation to Opus 21, mostly due to the use of the pedal bass drum for the standing multi-percussionist (this is quite popular with composers, c. 2010). The dissertations concerning multi-percussion are amazing in their detail, some with quite novel ideas in their approach to refining multi-percussion techniques, but they are either generally not readily available, nor easily utilized, nor necessarily apt to other compositions.
Opus 21 and 24.1 are of a high level of difficulty and should be undertaken only after many other solo marimba and vibraphone pieces are learned and performed. However, it is a worthwhile endeavor to seek out supportive materials of high quality that are easily utilized by a performer, particularly where the authors have considered the mindset of the performer. The following chapters are intended to be helpful for anyone interested in performing or studying Živković’s Opus 21 or 24.1.
Chapter One

ULTIMATUM I for Solo Marimba Opus 24.1 (1994/95)

ULTIMATUM I is an angry lament that bursts into 14/16 meter towards the end. It is an energetic, masterly piece in three parts. The first pathetic part is directly followed by an “energico e aggressivo,” a real battle with sounds and the permanent change of time. After a tremolo climax, which is a short reminiscence of the beginning, the “dance of the whip” begins the groovy third part of the piece in a 14/16 time. The last exhausting beats of madness are stopped by a sudden “fall.” The melody, moving in half steps and augmented seconds, and an uneven groove give this raving, powerful work a touch of the Balkans. 43

The score contains the brief program note included above. In using this chapter to prepare to perform ULTIMATUM I, performers should label their scores with the thematic, phrasal, and formal terms used in this chapter to aid in conceptualizing an interpretation. This is particularly important for pacing the intensity of dynamics and tempo, that is, choosing where to place emphasis/weight in articulation or tempo inflection, and where to focus on motion and destination with similar interpretive inflections. The performer should decide on stickings as early as possible and learn the notes slowly and carefully to avoid memorizing mistakes. As the gestures become more

familiar, the performer should use a metronome to refine the complex rhythms and solidify the drive, especially in the *aggressivo*.

The structure of the work is in three main parts. The first part consists of an introduction followed by the *misterioso*. A transition area leads to the second part, a very fast *aggressivo*, which contains many of the greatest musical challenges such as cross-rhythms and formal ambiguity. The final part is entitled “dance of the whip.”

Each part contains an iteration of the *molto ENERGICO!*, the motto theme for the piece. Živković discusses this theme in the following terms: “Energy is essential in Ultimatum I [and II], [an] expressive-energetic performance and attitude. Ultimative piece, ultimative energy.” The motto ushers in ”dance of the whip” in 14/16 meter, which uses an extended technique to achieve a whip-crack timbre. The first theme, entitled *patetico*, appears in the *misterioso*, and returns at the climax of the work near the end of the *aggressivo*.

The introduction begins with a *sforzando* roll lasting approximately five seconds, and utilizes a recurring slash notation on the note stems (as well as a helpful arrow indicating the starting note in the left hand, shown in figure 1.1). The composer indicates this slash notation as *prestissimo* in the score for “Generally Spoken,” but interestingly, not in the score for ULTIMATUM I. The intention is for the slashed notes to be played in very quick succession.

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44 Nebojša Jovan Živković, e-mail to Author, March 16, 2013, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L21KsblgYQk7NhCrvtRVTIruMAsy0ZRyQJ6yDspQ/edit
This traditional or tremolo-style roll leads to the recurring 25-note descending motto theme using the \textit{prestissimo} slash and marked \textit{molto ENERGICO}! (figure 1.2). This theme returns several times in fragments or with added notes to dramatically mark new sections within the piece. Analysis of this initial example of the motto theme may be conceptualized as being derived from three chords that appear in consecutive order: Gb major 7 $\#11$ (first six tones), G major $\flat 5 \ b 9$ (four tones), F$\#$ diminished 7 (six tones), and a lone E natural followed by a descending pattern of alternating semi-tones and thirds.
This association of the motto with altered chords acts as reinforcement for harmonic memory and may be a useful learning tool. Other potentially helpful devices for internalizing unfamiliar music are interval relationships, visual analysis, and of course kinesthetic memory reinforcement or practice. In the detailed article “Memory Techniques for Keyboard Percussion,” Walter gives detailed reasoning for the types of memory and learning techniques that are the most effective for keyboard percussion music. Visual memory is considered the most reliable. The best practices are using the score to reinforce memory while away from the instrument, and testing one’s memory while at the instrument with a listening coach.

The motto theme connects to the first specific rhythm of the piece, which consists of slashed accented *sforzando* eighth-note groups separated first by a breath mark, then a sixteenth rest, and then an eighth rest (figure 1.3).

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45 Douglas Walter, 17-23.
The interpretation of this section may be confusing because the fifth and sixth eighth notes are both slashed and are not beamed together. The point may be to play the eighth-note groups prestissimo but to place a short pause of increasingly greater length between each group. It would seem that this notation would imply the same thing as the previous two eighth-note groups. Furthermore, there may be a question as to the actual meaning of the breath mark that follows the second eighth note; an alternative interpretation may be to treat the breath mark as a comma for a longer pause than the following rests.

The physical motion of the interval change here between the fifth and sixth eighth-notes of figure 1.3 (A♭, D, E, D to G, E♭, G♭, F) is challenging. The shift requires the player to move the elbows into the body very quickly to achieve the hand position needed. A flexible wrist can aid this gesture somewhat.

In the final moment of this brief introduction (figure 1.4), the sfz chord (A♭, D, E, D) resolves to an E♭ chord, marking a new section of the work.

Figure 1.4, staff 2, the misterioso.
The *misterioso* part consists of melodic material based predominantly on fragmentary motives of a half step and major or minor third motion. The *misterioso* continues as the work began—without bar lines. Živković has indicated a tempo marking ($\text{♩}=80$) at this point and also provided footnote indications of optional range considerations for instruments of limited range, articulation, as well as a distinction between roll notation (figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5, page one, footnote indications.

The type of rolls, although indicated here as one-hand tremolos, may be interpreted another way for musical reasons. While the score markings would have the performer interpret all of the rolls in this section as one-hand rolls, an interpretive change is suggested. Alternating between traditional rolls and one-hand rolls to achieve as smooth and connected a roll as possible is suggested. This is especially apt where the right hand moves in intervals larger than a third, or when shifting to the upper or lower key manual, as in figure 1.6 below.
Figure 1.6, staff 3, option to replace the one-hand roll with a traditional roll.

![Figure 1.6](image1)

Another concern is the marked crescendo (figure 1.7). Since it is difficult to achieve a *forte* dynamic utilizing the indicated one-hand roll, the performer may change to a traditional roll for a stronger climax into the next subsection.

Figure 1.7, staves 3 and 4, traditional roll option.

![Figure 1.7](image2)

The fragmentary motives culminate in the first theme, marked *fff patetico* (figure 1.8). At this point, the footnote indication concerns a change in articulation, with all accents very strong and grace notes marked as *sfz*. The composer also makes use of an arrow notation to denote continued traditional rolls between both hands, while the left hand usually plays fourths or fifths, and the right hand octaves.
This arrow notation works well for sustained rolls, but when short rhythms are used in conjunction with slashed notes, the composer’s intention whether the following sixteenth notes (figure 1.9 and 1.10) are to be rolled or not is unclear. A performer may wish to interpret the short notes as quick rolls to add style and continuity with the preceding longer rolled notes.

The next clear subsection has a change of mood and texture with a G phrygian scale (figure 1.11), slow to fast to slow, that culminates with a tense A natural. A similar
statement follows in response (figure 1.12)—the sense of free-rhythm with continued tension connects to the slower mezzo-piano poco meno mosso (figure 1.13).

Figure 1.11, staff 9, chromatic G phrygian transition.

Figure 1.12, staff 10, G phrygian transition continues.

Figure 1.13, staff 11, poco meno mosso.
At the *meno mosso* in figure 1.13, there are repeated octave note motives of $\flat \text{VI}$, $\text{V}$, and $\flat \text{V}$ of the key of G. This rhythmic variation of the *patetico* motive appears throughout the work. At this point, the motive appears with varying speed over one-hand rolls of a I-V dyad in the left hand. Soon after (figure 1.14), we have a similar interpretive problem with continuity as in figures 1.9 and 1.10. It is unclear whether the composer intends for certain notes to be rolled or not (marked with a bracket in figure 1.14). Again, the performer may wish to interpret these notes as rolls to add a flash of rhythmic style, sustained emphasis, and continuity with the preceding material. This leads to similar

Figure 1.14, staves 12 and 13, ambiguous rolled notes.

motivic material now on a $\text{G} \flat$ dyad with clearly marked octave one-hand rolls in the right hand. A further example of this somewhat ambiguous notation is given in figure 1.15.

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Figure 1.15, staff 14, ambiguous rolled notes.

The next major section of the work (figure 1.16) is in mixed meter based on eighth and sixteenth-note rhythms. The section is marked *molto energico e aggressivo*, and the appearance of bar lines and clear phrasing marks is seen.

Figure 1.16, measures 15-16, *aggressivo*.

This *aggressivo* has a very fast marked tempo of $\dot{=}240$. Endurance and accurate execution are difficult here due to the loud dynamic marking coupled with the tempo. A particularly technically challenging excerpt is the descending phrase in figure 1.17.
Figure 1.17, measures 19-20, challenging descending phrase.

The transitions between notes and the interval shifts of the mallets are difficult, and the very quick rhythm compounds this difficulty. Many slow repetitions, phrasing in various groupings of notes (altering the rhythm by adding rests) and using dead strokes or stopped strokes in conjunction with quick shifts, will likely improve facility here.

This *aggressivo* section is marked very loud with occasional dynamic contrast indicated. The appearance of cross-rhythms acting as metered-*accelerandos*, propel the music forward with surging block chords. The *glissando* effects act to connect the jagged rhythms (figures 1.18 and 1.19).

Figure 1.18, measure 23, cross-rhythms and *glissando* effects.
Figure 1.19, measures 30-31, cross-rhythms.

Živković groups several cross-rhythms together in 4/8 and 3/8 (figure 1.20).

These sixteenth-note based cross-rhythms—grouped as ‘5’s and ‘8’s—with their extreme register leaps serve to keep the listener off balance.

Figure 1.20, mm. 44-46, [B] section (cross-rhythmic variation of [A] material from the aggressivo).

Perplexing about this entire first section of the aggressivo is the similarity of phrases. This quasi-repetitive material can be confusing for memorization.

Conceptualizing a form from the larger strains of the aggressivo is not easily done. The first strain material in the 11/16 measure (shown previously in figure 1.16) returns with double-vertical dyad strokes (figure 1.21 below) and this material returns again later in
cross-rhythmic variation (as shown in figure 1.20 above). This occurs just after the first reappearance of the motto theme (figure 1.22), now elongated to 31 notes.

Figure 1.21, measures 24-25, potential second [A’] section of aggressivo.

![Figure 1.21, measures 24-25, potential second [A’] section of aggressivo.]

Figure 1.22, measure 43, first reappearance of the motto theme.

![Figure 1.22, measure 43, first reappearance of the motto theme.]

The performer may wish to mark these strains as follows: [A] mm. 15-23 (starting in figure 1.16), [A’] mm. 24-29 (figure 1.21), [B] mm. 44-53 (figure 1.20), beginning after the first statement of the motto, and [C] mm. 54-58 (figure 1.23).

At [C], where one might expect another statement of the material of the [A] strains (figure 1.16), Živković inserts a very short phrase containing borrowed material from “Uneven Souls” Opus 22, composed a few years earlier in 1992 (figure 1.23). While this allusion seems out of place and confuses the sense of form, it provides brief relief
from the intensity of the fortissimo with the piano dynamic, and the music remains at a softer forte until the furioso, 24 measures later. This section may be thought of as a final strain of the first half of the aggressivo, and simultaneously as a brief transition to the next section (figure 1.27 cascading thirds). Throughout the aggressivo, there are repeated sforzando block chords (figure 1.24) that seem to act as ending points to phrases or strains. The final statement of these dyads is just after this [C] section.

Figure 1.23, measures 54-56, [C] section of aggressivo, and brief allusion to “Uneven Souls.”

Figure 1.24, measure 21, recurring sforzando block chords throughout aggressivo.

It may be best to think of the aggressivo in a three-part form with the aforementioned [A] strains as one side of a battle, ending a statement with the first reappearance of the motto. Considering Živković’s score note describing the aggressivo
as a battle and the comment concerning the *molto ENERGICO!* motto as “ultimative energy” (ultimative meaning final), then the motto should act to divide the *aggressivo.*

The [B] strain (figure 120) with its *mf* dynamic contrast, rhythmic variation of the previous strain material, and *metered-accelerando* should be seen as the response to this final ultimative statement. The [B] *response* is a clear variation and an *accelerando* to an immediate reiteration of yet another ultimative motto statement (figure 1.25), in which Živković indicates a change of interpretation. Now the descending motto theme is marked with a large slur; a smoother more connected *ENERGICO*!.

Figure 1.25, slurred motto theme.

The slurred motto is immediately followed by the final statement of the G *sforzando* block chords (figure 1.24). This would seem to mark the end of a section.

These recurring *sforzando* block chords might be distracting to the performer and confuse the three-part conception of form. The sense of form and direction should be marked by

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46 Nebojša Jovan Živković, e-mail to Author, March 16, 2013, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L21KsblgYQk7NhWCrvtkRVTIruMAsy0ZRyQJ6yDspQ/edit
the motto, not the *sforzando* block chords (figure 1.24). The form in three parts can be thought of as follows: One [A, A’], Two [B, C], Three [D, E]; [D] beginning at measure 62 (figure 1.26), and [E] at measure 79 (figure 1.29). This third and final section begins with a bridge of cascading thirds. This transition is marked by low G♭ dyads (figure 1.26) and continues with ascending chromatic thirds throughout the range of the instrument (figure 1.27). In measure 66 (figure 1.27), the time signature is missing in the current score edition—it has been added by hand.

Figure 1.26, measure 62, low G♭ block chords.

The cascading thirds section poses a technical challenge that can be lessened by slow tempo practice with isolated fast shifting, variation of rhythm, and the development
of fluid, curved gestures. Remaining relaxed here is necessary for accuracy. Živković eases the challenge slightly with the softer *forte* and the more liberal marking *poco pesante e liberamente*—*accelerando*.

The following section, marked *subito mp e crescendo*, then *accelerando e sempre piu a piu crescendo* at measure 71 (figure 1.28), mirrors the previous upward cascading thirds with a flurry of notes surging upward. This material continues the sense of transition with left-hand dyads with quick single alternating strokes. These measures may be conceived as various diminished chords with passing tones to aid in memorization.

![Figure 1.28](image)

This flurry of notes culminates at the *a tempo* (figure 1.29), with a return of the *fortississimo* dynamic. Curiously, Živković has indicated *senza misura* (without a sense of measure). This interesting indication appears to complicate this moment, but it seems to be effective as it suggests a more dramatic slowing of the feathered-beam notation and a subtle disregard for the underlying pulse indicated by the meter. The following *a tempo* and *furioso* is a restatement of a distinct rhythmic-chordal motive from earlier in the *aggressivo* (measures 39-40) and marks the final [E] section of the *aggressivo* (figure 1.29).
Figure 1.29, measures 79-81, returning motive introduces the *patetico* theme.

![Figure 1.29](image)

This familiar motive (figure 1.29, measures 80-81) resolutely introduces the dramatic reappearance of the *patetico* motive (figure 1.30) from the first section. Now expanded and stated in oblique motion with the left hand, it is used here as a transitory theme that at once returns the listener to the first theme and propels the music forward. The left hand dyad in measure 84 is missing a triplet mark in this score edition.

Figure 1.30, measures 83-86, dramatic reappearance of the *patetico* motive

![Figure 1.30](image)

Finally, at the *A tempo primo* in measure 95 (figure 1.31), we have a clear arrival of what Živković calls the “tremolo climax” with a restatement of the *patetico* theme. The return of the *patetico* theme, followed by *molto forte e pesante* parallel octaves in a
5:2 cross-rhythm, should be considered the climax of Opus 24.1. The *patetico* theme leads dramatically to what Živković calls the “fall,” a truncated motto statement that ushers in the final section of the work, the “dance of the whip.”

Figure 1.31, measures 95-98, return of E♭ *patetico* theme.

![Figure 1.31](image)

Figure 1.32, m. 102, the “fall” (truncated motto theme), ushering in the “dance of the whip.”

![Figure 1.32](image)

The dance in 14/16 meter consists of a repeated two-measure groove (figure 1.33), grouped in 2, 4, and 6 measures creating phrases initially punctuated by leaping cross-rhythmic runs. Some of the note beams in this two-measure pattern are marked with an ‘X.’

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47 Nebojša Jovan Živković, e-mail to author, March 16, 2013, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L21KsblgYQk7NhhiWCrvtkRTruMA0y0ZByQ6yDspQ/edit
Figure 1.33, measures 103, two-measure pattern, repeated throughout the “dance of the whip.”

![Musical notation](image)

There is a corresponding footnote in German, which translates as *normal stroke with the stick handle striking the flat top of the bar*. The effect is that the bars adjacent to the notated bars are struck with the shaft of the mallet as the mallet head strikes the written notes. This creates a clicking attack and a thin wooden timbre from the mallet handles—the combination results in a strong accent with a new sound color: the *whip*. This stroke has a similar feeling to a ‘rim-shot’ on a drum. In this case, the “shot” sound is created by the mallet-head and shaft both hitting the bars. The performer must not stroke with too much weight or velocity into the bar so as not to break the mallet shaft.

The execution of these accented shots can be difficult, and inconsistent sounds may occur, however this effect may be thought to reflect the jagged nature of the dance. The best method of execution is to attempt a stroke where the hand consistently drops lower than normal to allow the shafts to contact the bar in the same horizontal plane every time.

Interspersed between these uneven dance groove phrases are wide leaping runs of dissonant thirds and seconds, often as cross-rhythms 7:2 or 7:4 (figure 1.34 and figure 1.35).
The second marking is preferable, as the pulse is felt in half notes, which here is represented by 2. It is easier to attempt \( \text{7:4} \) or \( \text{7:2} \), focusing the mind on the pulse (either quarter or half notes) rather than a subdivision. Curiously, in the latter of these examples, three notes (G, A, & G) are missing accidentals that appear in the former example.

After a brief two-measure reiteration of the dance groove (figure 1.33), a phrase (figure 1.36) begins that hints at new melodic material and chord voicings from the closing of the piece. This phrase stands out in the dance because of its new material, the \textit{ritardando} leading back to the steady dance tempo, and the somewhat difficult execution required. This brief phrase will likely require a lot of attention for note accuracy.
The next phrase punctuates the dance groove with another truncated appearance of the 15-note “fall” motto theme (figure 1.37). This leads to a subito mezzo piano iteration of the dance groove, marked piu mosso e poco a poco crescendo, that builds to the “last exhausting beats of madness.” The performer should not rush the tempo too much, as there is a marked accelerando later in the run-up phrase (figure 1.38). This run-up phrase has many shifts of the hands and interval shifts of the mallets; great care should be taken in learning this phrase, as accuracy problems are likely.

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The run-up phrase leads to the final statement of the *patetico* theme (figure 1.39). This is marked *fff possibile, con tutta la forza!*—translated as *with all strength.* As when performing any work on marimba, the performer should consider these dynamic indications carefully, and play with proper intention but without cracking any bars.

The closing phrase is marked *liberamente* (figure 1.40) and uses the material hinted at earlier in the dance (figure 1.36). Živković marks the final chords *ffff possible* and they culminate in a highly dissonant *forte-piano crescendo* roll that recalls the similar roll from the opening. Opus 24.1 ends with a final statement of the *molto ENERGICO!* motto theme (figure 1.41).
Overall, the challenges of “ULTIMATUM I” are many—technical, musical, physical, and emotional. The composer’s comments concerning the piece focus on an energetic and expressive attitude. This chapter is intended to help performers make decisions that will effect their expressive interpretation. The energetic element is perhaps an elusive one. The energy is written into the music, but it will be the performers who must communicate this ultimative energy to audiences. Often, those composers and performers who intend to convey energy fail to do so. This could be a danger in Opus 24.1 with its angular texture, complex rhythms, fast tempos, and extremely loud dynamics. A somewhat reserved dynamic approach in general will likely lead to more success for most performers. The marimba can only be so loud before a plateau is
reached and the potential for a fine interpretation is lost. A true distinction from \textit{ff} overall must be made to the beginning and ending motto themes marked \textit{fff}, and the \textit{ffff} music that requires actual ‘over-playing’ of the bars.

The \textit{aggressivo} is the greatest formal challenge of the piece. How does one interpret these strains to form a cohesive whole, and of course, remember them all with their similarities and subtle differences? A sample conceptualization is provided in this chapter. The \textit{aggressivo} contains many of the technical challenges of the piece. Again, there must be emphasis upon relaxation (overwhelmingly stressed in the \textit{Method of Movement}). Use of the metronome can help establish a deliberate drive to the \textit{aggressivo} and help the performer achieve accuracy of the numerous cross-rhythms. It should be noted that the marked tempos in Opus 24.1 may be unsuited for some performers, such as in the \textit{misterioso} (\(\n=80\)). The score performance time is approximately 6 minutes, but a longer 8 minutes might be heard as valid for some who take up the challenge.

The variation of roll styles for marimba remains an elusive subject of study in general and Opus 24.1 is an excellent case study for experimentation. The independent roll is difficult to play at loud dynamics, hence the suggested change to traditional rolls for big climaxes. However, a third style of roll may be used as well. The \textit{ripple} style of roll is any combination of consecutive stickings (1234, 2341, 3412, 4123, and vice versa.) and has similarities in quality with both the independent and traditional tremolo rolls. As a final interpretive suggestion, this roll could be utilized in Figure 1.7 or in the culmination of the \textit{misterioso}, just before the \textit{aggressivo} in figure 1.42 below.
Figure 1.42, staff 14, ripple roll in culmination of the *misterioso*, *fff* just before the *aggressivo*.
Chapter Two

Generally Spoken It Is Nothing but Rhythm for Percussion Solo Opus 21 (1990/91)

The following poem is by the composer:

"Generally spoken," that is, when it is to be attempted – universal and comprehensive. There is courtesy but also censure. "It’s nothing but..." that is, lying in the still-wet grass of an Indian summer morning, looking up into the heavens and being aware of the faintly blue distance and the earth’s shade of green. But "rhythm" – that is, when deep inside the dormant, archaic impulse of the soul frees itself and flows, unrestricted, to the surface like an effervescing fountain. It is at this fountain that the thirst for the pulsation of harmony can be quenched. 49

Inherent to any multi-percussion setup are technical challenges due to the numerous quick transitions between multiple instruments. These technical challenges are compounded when a keyboard instrument is utilized (due to the fixed positioning of the keys) as in Opus 21. Among the many challenges for the performer are understanding the relationship between the setup and notation, selecting the instruments, and optimizing the setup. Živković utilizes a composite staff of three five-line staves that corresponds with the instrumental setup. The piece is written with few bar lines and limited phrasing marks, which can create difficulty with interpretation and phrasing. Although the title expresses a simplistic view of “it is nothing but rhythm,” the unique timbral sonorities achieved

between almglocken (tuned cowbells), toms, China gongs, and vibraphone are particularly attractive qualities of the work.

Performers should give careful consideration to the exactness of the setup (as well as stance and posture) every time they play the piece. The use of the left foot on the pedal may be better suited for some areas of Opus 21. An occasional switch to the left foot may be helpful for reaching instruments in the setup with the mallets. If vibraphone or multi-percussion techniques are unfamiliar, the performer should consult the sources listed in the Literature Review.

Two score editions exist for “Generally Spoken:” they both indicate 10 instruments or pairs of instruments utilized in the score in a numbered list (figure 2.1) and a corresponding diagram (figure 2.2). The later score edition has been engraved in computer notation and contains a few subtle changes to the recommended instrumentation. However, the score note (figure 2.5) has been replaced with a program note in German, and the elegantly drawn pictograph (figure 2.4) has been replaced with a black and white photo (in which the bamboo chimes are missing).

Figure 2.1, instrumentation list.

   16 & 14 inch  18 inch

Živković indicates four peculiar rhythmic notations (figure 2.3).

The score includes a very important pictograph (figure 2.4) that shows the setup needed to execute the piece.
Among some percussionists, it is generally accepted that pictographic notation is the "ideal solution for conveying essential information beyond normal notational contexts [and] their use greatly facilitates sight reading." In certain instances, pictograms can be problematic due to the lack of consistency of recognizable symbology. Živković has not utilized an abstract symbology, but created a likeness of the instruments.

Within the pictograph, the gongs appear to be too highly set and the largest tom is set askew, neither of which seem particularly helpful in execution. In the case of the gongs, the high placement may just be for clarity within the pictograph; in the case of the 16” tom, it is of course possible to strike it in a flat position or as it is shown in the

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The combination of the list, diagram, rhythmic notation, and pictograph are extremely helpful to the performer, and the composer should be praised for this clarity of notation and setup. This detail of description of score notation and logical instrument setup is uncommon in many works utilizing multi-percussion setups, especially in ensemble literature.\(^{51}\)

The composer lays out the notation in a manner that fits with the instrumental setup; from left to right in the setup corresponds with low to high within each of the three staves utilized in the score. From left to right in the pictograph, the instruments begin with a tom tuned to F (no. 7), China gongs (no. 8), Almglocken (no. 9), and woodblocks (no. 10). This grouping comprises the lowest staff and those instruments on the left side of the setup. Next is the vibraphone (no. 1), represented by the middle staff of the composite-staff system. The upper staff denotes the instruments on the right side of the setup, beginning with two cymbals stacked atop one another (no. 5) above an 18” crash cymbal (no. 4), then bamboo chimes (no. 6), bongos (no. 2), and finally two tom-toms (no. 3). The instruments in the top staff do not numerically coincide with low to high sounds (as they do in the lowest staff), but the placement on the staff approximately corresponds with the high to low pitches of the instruments.

\(^{51}\) The percussion parts for the symphonic work “Anima Mundi” are a suitable case study in problems with the appearance of like instruments in multiple parts, each of an individual multi-percussion setup. This creates numerous problems for the orchestra percussionist. Richard Danielpour, “Anima Mundi,” (Ney York, NY: Associated Music Publishers, Inc.), 1995.
The score note (figure 2.5) explains many details of the music. Helpful to the performer are the topics covered in the score note that reinforce other score indications. The absence of this note in the latest score edition does not seem to be an improvement.

Below are four alterations to the instrumentation that are suggested to aid in performance preparation:

1. The suggested tom sizes are two 14” toms, one of which is to be tuned “a bit higher” than the other, tuned to F (the latest score edition indicates a 12” tom for the highest tom), and a 16” tom the lowest. The first suggested alteration is that of a 15” tom for the tom in F, and for the higher tom, either a 12” or 14” tom may be tuned a minor third higher to A♭. The 16” tom may be tuned very low to C. The resulting sonority blends well with the overall tonality of the work. In the latest score edition, the photograph shows double-headed toms, whereas the original hand drawn pictograph has one-headed concert toms. It may be easier for the less experienced percussionist to tune single-headed toms, while double-headed toms would provide more opportunity for creative tuning.
2. The next alteration concerns the suggested sizes of cymbals: an 18” suspended and 14” heavy, stacked over a 16” crash (the latest score edition indicates a 17-18” crash, and a 15” with a 12-13” atop to produce a “trashy” hi-hat sound). Smaller cymbals are a better choice in place of the 14/16” stack. For greater contrast and ease of playing, a 14” crash with a 10” or 12” splash cymbal atop is suggested. The resulting sound has the same muted-sizzle effect as indicated from the stacking, but the sound has greater contrast with the 18” due to the smaller sizes. The smaller cymbals also increase accessibility to the 18” cymbal directly below the smaller cymbal stack.

3. Next are the suggested China gongs, which are to be tuned to D♯2 and F♯2. Obtaining gongs tuned exactly as indicated may be quite difficult, and Živković is aware of this, hence the indication of ‘if possible’ (figure 2.1, no. 8). However, the tuned almglocken are not optional, as they are readily available and are important for the untempered sonority when blending with the vibraphone in the second section of the work.

4. The score note also suggests the gongs be bound with elastic binding on a metal frame. The gongs may merely be placed at an angle upon a foam covered wooden platform with short dowel risers and placed on a music stand. This simple setup limits the amount of resonance and may help the performer with balance, as these instruments speak very brightly and have a long sustain.

The beginning has the tempo indication \( \dot{=} 126 \) and the marking effettuoso (meaning stopping). The score contains a unique symbol (figure 2.6) of an upside down
mallet, which indicates the use of the shafts. This roll on the gongs leads to a recurring motive between several instruments in the setup (figure 2.7). This initial motive is expanded upon twice to form the complete theme of the *effettuoso*, and each occurrence of the motive is preceded by a gong roll with the shafts of the mallets.

Figure 2.6, staff 1, unique score marking.

![Figure 2.6](image)

Figure 2.7, staff 1, initial motive—immediately expanded.

![Figure 2.7](image)

Within this piece, balance is difficult between such very different instruments used in conjunction; a light approach overall helps to maintain balance. Certain instruments like the cymbal stack, toms, and China gongs have an attack that makes balance an added challenge.

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52 The score note clarifies, “Play the gongs at the beginning with the middle of the shaft, without turning the mallets.”
The third and last statement of the opening motivic theme ends with the appearance of the first chord consisting of the appealing blend of tuned almglocken and vibraphone (under the bracket in figure 2.8). The performer should emphasize the D♯ cowbell for a clear sonority. The vibraphone stave is marked \textit{sempre con pedal} or always with pedal depressed so the notes carry over.

\textit{Figure 2.8, staff 2, first vibe/almglocken chord with block/cymbal stack texture.}

This chord is followed directly by the first statement of the sharp attack from the high block and cymbal stack that is used throughout the next period of the \textit{effettuoso}. Care should be used to not completely cover the previous ringing almglocken/vibraphone chord. Beginning the block/cymbal notes softly is helpful, and also because they appear seemingly mid-phrase with a marked \textit{mezzo-forte} dynamic. Although the block/cymbal strikes appear to span most of the three staves of the score, they can be played with the right hand with the mallets spread at approximately an octave. The stroke should emphasize the wood block over the cymbal stack. A dyad consisting of low vibraphone notes F and C is interspersed within the sharp attack of the block/cymbal stack. The
resulting sonority with the almglocken, F C D♯ G, is the underlying tonality of these phrases in the effettuoso. This first period comes to a close with a roll on the 18” cymbal (figure 2.9). Although preceded by a comma with enough time to execute the roll with two hands, it is easily done with a slow, soft decrescendo one-hand roll.

Figure 2.9, staff 2, one-hand roll.

The fortissimo second phrase of the effettuoso (figure 2.10) contains the first prestissimo notation and ends with a 3-second roll on the bamboo chimes. The bamboo chimes should sustain consistently and the prestissimo strikes on the low China gong should be balanced with the bamboo chime roll (both marked mp).

Figure 2.10, staff 3, fortissimo second phrase.
The first section of the *effettuoso* ends with a closing section that emphasizes toms and bongos (figure 2.11). At the fourth score system a dramatic transition with the appearance of new vibrphone pitches in descending octaves, Eb D G & F♯ (figure 2.12), marks the next section. A slight *ritardando* is suggested just before the new material to highlight the transition.

Figure 2.11, staff 4, closing to *effettuoso*.

![Figure 2.11](image)

The dramatic transition leads to a new theme utilizing an A♭ - E♭ dyad interspersed with the previous texture of block/cymbal strikes marked *meno forte* (figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12, staff 5, brief dramatic transition to second theme.

![Figure 2.12](image)
This new theme makes use of sixteenth-note rhythms with descending dynamics and utilizes previous ideas between the block/cymbal stack, bells, and gongs with interspersed A♭ - E♭ vibraphone dyads. The dynamic control of the cymbal stack may prove challenging, so as before, more emphasis or velocity into the block (and less upon the cymbal stack) may be needed to achieve balance. This new theme ends with the first \(sfz\) chords between the F-tom/almglocken and the vibraphone. In the first chord (end of example in figure 2.12 above) the vibe notes should be emphasized with the tom, and in the second, the left-hand should emphasize the almglocken.

In the third phrase of this second theme (figure 2.13), Živković ends the \textit{meno forte} (beginning a slightly louder \textit{forte}) and begins to develop the theme.

![Figure 2.13, staff 5, development of second theme.](image)

Interestingly, near the end of this previously mentioned development section, Živković creates three long phrases devoid of the block/cymbal stack notes, each interspersed with A♭ dyads (the first of which is shown in figure 2.14).
Figure 2.14, staff 7, development interest.

The following phrase has a softer dynamic with a change in texture leading to the \textit{poco a poco ritenuto morendo} closing of the development section (figure 2.15). This brief closing section is challenging and takes careful concentration due to the prevalence of lateral motion in the left hand while the right hand is static playing a high ‘sixth’ on the vibraphone. A subtle and light touch is required in the left hand for the closing.

Figure 2.15, staff 8, close of the development section.

The next section is a restatement of the introductory \textit{effettuoso} motive (figure 2.16) with slight variation of subtle superimposed F dyads over a one-hand gong roll.

59
Figure 2.16, staff 9, return of the first motive of the *effettuoso*.

Phrasing marks are lacking in the entire first large section of Opus 21. Included here in figure 2.17 is a suggested second phrase within this brief restatement of the first theme. The performer may wish to add similar marks throughout this first section.

Figure 2.17, staff 9, sample phrasing, recurring vibe/bell chord.

The cowbell and vibraphone chord returns here (figure 2.17 under bracket at the end), and as before it is followed by the high block and cymbal stack sonority (figure 2.18). Further variation is achieved by the addition of the China Gongs to the block/cymbal stack strike in a more deliberate eighth note (figure 2.18).

60
The delightful closing to the effettuoso (figure 2.19) uses the texture of the F-dyads over the one-hand gong rolls, but with the dyads creating a chromatic harmony ringing over and fading away al niente.

The following adagio e dolcissimo (figure 2.20) marks a major subdivision within the work and is perhaps the most intriguing portion of “Generally Spoken.” The slow tempo (♩ =50) and the tuned almglocken blending with vibraphone create a truly exotic sound, what the composer calls a “not-tempered tuning.”
The almglocken and vibe rolls (figure 2.20) require a unique technique of playing inside the mouth of the bell and striking top to bottom in quick, gentle, and controlled motion to achieve the sustained roll. Care must be used to not strike with the shaft of the mallet. A very light touch with slightly slower roll speed when smoothly connecting notes is needed to achieve a consistent sound at the desired dynamic. The gentle, sustained rolls are interspersed with polytonal chord effects throughout much of the range of the vibraphone (figure 2.21). These chords are stated in a jagged, polyrhythmic fashion that gives a sense of floating rhythm in this section of the work.
At figure 2.22, Živković varies the texture with statements of bell/vibe unison
strikes in quick succession, yet these are still very soft. As before, a light but quick attack
is required for these passages.

Immediately following the texture change is a restatement of the *adagio* theme
(figure 2.23) without a crescendo. The unchanging *ppp* dynamic is an added technical
challenge; the transitions between notes are very difficult to smoothly connect with a
consistent sound. Very soft stroke articulation and roll speed variation is recommended.
This final roll culminates in a brief moment of resolution with an *arpeggiated* C major triad marked let vibrate (figure 2.24). This is followed by the first appearance of the free-rhythmic notation with a five-second duration indication. Here also is the reappearance of the woodblock, which brings a timbral change and hints at the start of something new, but Živković returns to the previously heard C major chord idea. Immediately following this we have a very brief, but clear transition (figure 2.25) into the third and final section of the piece.
The third and final main section begins with a driving steady rhythmic *ostinato* (figure 2.26). This is punctuated with bursts of color, utilizing almost the entire setup.

The *ostinato* in the left hand is marked *ritmico, scioltamente con slancio simile sempre, improvis* (translated as *loosely rhythmic with momentum and always the same, with improvisation*). It can be challenging to the performer to maintain the same rhythmic style of *ostinato* in the left hand while the right is moving about so liberally. Careful slow repetition of difficult gestures in both hands help to develop a sense of a composite rhythm of the two. The composer’s indication of improvisation, while staying rhythmically the same, gives some leeway in execution.
The initial statement of the ostinato leads to three short phrases that are separated by fermatas, while the driving ostinato continues. The first of these (figure 2.27) contains chromatic one-hand rolls between the upper and lower vibe keys and more free-rhythmic notation. Due to the fast tempo in this section, certain double-vertical strokes may be played with more ease utilizing Burton’s suggested technique of striking the bars on the extreme inner-ends (as opposed to the normal center area).53

53 Gary Burton, 6.
This leads to a repetitive dance-like rhythmic texture of the *ritmico* (figure 2.28). The dance ebbs and flows with vibraphone lines, while accents drive the rhythm. Dashed bar lines are helpful for phrasing purposes and aid in reading.

*Figure 2.28, staff 17, beginning of the dance within the *ritmico*."

![Image of music notation]

The *crescendo* leading to a *subito mezzo forte* and the *decrescendo* that follows both act as a transition (figure 2.29) to a group of phrases that build momentum. This grouping of four phrases, each of increasingly greater length, is divided by three-note chords between the bells and vibes (first two phrases are shown in figure 2.30). The performer should again emphasize the bell strikes for a clear sonority.

*Figure 2.29, staff 18, dynamic transition into repeated second section of *ritmico*."

![Image of music notation]
A slight *ritardando* and *molto tenuto* is suggested to emphasize the final chordal statement of a 2nd inversion A♭ triad (figure 2.31). The *tenuto* will emphasize and sustain the pleasing A♭ sonority and create the feeling of a transition into what is perhaps the most challenging section of the work (figure 2.32).

This challenging section (figure 2.32) makes use of every instrument in a quick succession of constant sixteenth notes. I think of this section as the culmination of all of the timbres of the setup in an attempt to create a *mélange* of color. The marked tempo (∫=176) is quite fast for this section; if the slower tempo that is suggested by the *ritardando* at figure 2.31 is sustained, it will ease the challenge of the *mélange*.
Figure 2.32, staff 21, *mélange* section, perhaps the most challenging section.

The technical challenge here, aside from just trying to strike the instruments, is to phrase musically and follow the written dynamics. Živković again includes dashed bar lines. This *mélange* phrase ends with six *sforzando* bell/vibe C minor triads and a *sffz* vibe/F-tom strike (near the end of figure 2.33). This immediately repeats a large section of the dance back to the *subito mezzo forte* from the previous page (figure 2.29).

Figure 2.33, staff 22, *sforzando* and *sffz* chords and the first repeat of a large section.

A loud transition on the toms softens and slows following the repeat (figure 2.34). This leads to a slower dance section (*♩* =160), marked *poco meno mosso* (figure 2.35), of
three short phrases divided by sustained gong/vibe punctuations. This acts as a soft transition or closing to the dance. Careful balance is required between the gongs and the vibes.

Figure 2.34, staves 21-22, toms/vibe loud transition into slower dance.

![Figure 2.34]

Figure 2.35, staff 23, slower dance phrases.

![Figure 2.35]

The closing (figure 2.36) begins by utilizing the previous texture (figure 2.27) of chromatic one-hand rolls between the upper and lower vibe keys, overlapping each other creating a crescendo wash of chromatic saturation.
The final phrase of the work (figure 2.37), marked freely melancholic and tranquil, is somewhat open ended with a free rhythmic notation and the indication of *chromatic tremolo-glissando*. A suggested interpretation is a very fast slurred ripple-roll of a chromatic *arpeggiation* of the previous chord (sticking 1234, 1234, etc.), rising to the final crescendo chord. The last indication is a *pianississimo* strike of the F-tom with *ad libitum* repetitions. The written four notes played with a slight decrescendo close the piece very well.
Overall, Opus 21 is an eminently playable multiple percussion composition centered on a vibraphone. Many works of this kind, while being well crafted, may be too technically demanding, and many are just not good for audiences. “Generally Spoken It Is Nothing But Rhythm” is an excellent addition to any percussion recital and will captivate most audiences. The inclusion of the keyboard instrument in works of multiple percussion is a welcomed trait that hopefully will continue to grow in prevalence with more high-quality compositions.

Inherent to any multi-percussion setup are technical challenges and these are compounded in Opus 21 due to the inclusion of the vibraphone. Živković utilizes an excellent composite staff that corresponds with the instrumental setup. The limited phrasing marks in Opus 21 may be a hindrance for some, or welcomed freedom for others. Performers are beholden to make interpretive decisions that help convey the sense of form and direction. While the suggestions in this chapter are of course subjective, they are intended to be a helpful model.

The latest score edition for “Generally Spoken” has been engraved using computer notation and the few changes have been noted in this chapter. The earlier score edition has been intentionally used so the original manuscript style, the original score note (absent in the later edition), and the preferable, elegantly hand-drawn pictograph will be available in perpetuity.
CONCLUSION

This study will hopefully motivate others to investigate and do interpretive performance-based scholarship of quality solo percussion music. The intention in producing a practical performance-based document is that it be useful for anyone interested in searching for new solo percussion literature for performance, and helpful for those with a general interest in a living composer of modern percussion music.

The Serbian-born composer Živković has set new performance standards by way of his playing and compositions, with many works becoming standards within the international percussion community. His music is performed worldwide, and his captivating and energetic performances have influenced percussionists of multiple generations.

In general, modern solo percussion literature has extreme variability and the need is great for selective scholarship of quality music. As with any art, the subjective nature of aesthetic criticism is “in the ear of the beholder.” The music of Živković may be difficult for many listeners who are unaccustomed to concert percussion to appreciate. I suspect that more scholarly research into Živković’s personal history, Balkan heritage, and compositional concepts may help widen audience appeal.

Overall, this study is intended as a travelogue through two scores (chapters one and two). The suggestions for particularly troubling challenges are personal and may not be the best solution for all musicians. It should go without mention that technique is a means to expression and the tools that performers bring to the music will lead them to their own interpretation. The emphasis upon where the music is heading and how one
may choose to interpret and express that direction is of utmost importance in this solo music of such extremes.

In closing, consider a comment from the *Method of Movement*, “all technique in the service of musical expression.” The suggestions in this study are best thought of as guideposts along the path to a personal interpretation. Having in mind clear intentions regarding a character or an ethos for each phrase, section, and movement seems the best way to expression through a musical performance.

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54 Stevens, 38.
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