Six Mallet Writing for Marimba

Rebecca Kite

Six voices give composers new possibilities of harmonies and textures in marimba music.

Examples of six mallet writing

Page 2 *Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone*, Akira Yuyama (1968)
- Block chord style

Page 3 *Itsuki Fantasy for Six Mallets*, Keiko Abe (1994)
- Single melodic line with three voice accompaniment
- Chromatic playing – use entire bar for playing area
- Block chord style to make a big, rich sound from the marimba
- Small changes in mallet spacing in the hands

Kite Commissions

Page 4 *December's Ballad from Jazz Suite for Marimba*, Joan Griffith (1998)
- Melody in right hand, left hand accompaniment
- Jazz chords – bass note plus the chord making four voice harmony in the left hand

Page 5 *Circe*, Evan Hause (2001)
- Block chords – setting up harmonic idea for composition – one complete chord in each hand
- Wide spacing between hands – new texture possibility
- Six note chords integrated with single lines
- Big changes in mallet spacing in the hands for increased harmonic variety

Holding Six Mallets

Page 6
- Use Musser or Stevens grip, with mallet handles down low in hand
- Add inside mallet at 90 degree angle against other two mallets, hold with third, fourth and fifth fingers and second joint of thumb
- Pivot this inside mallet with the third, fourth and fifth fingers (similar to the Burton grip)
- Thumb tip and first finger hold middle mallet

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Rebecca Kite is a Yamaha Performing Artist.
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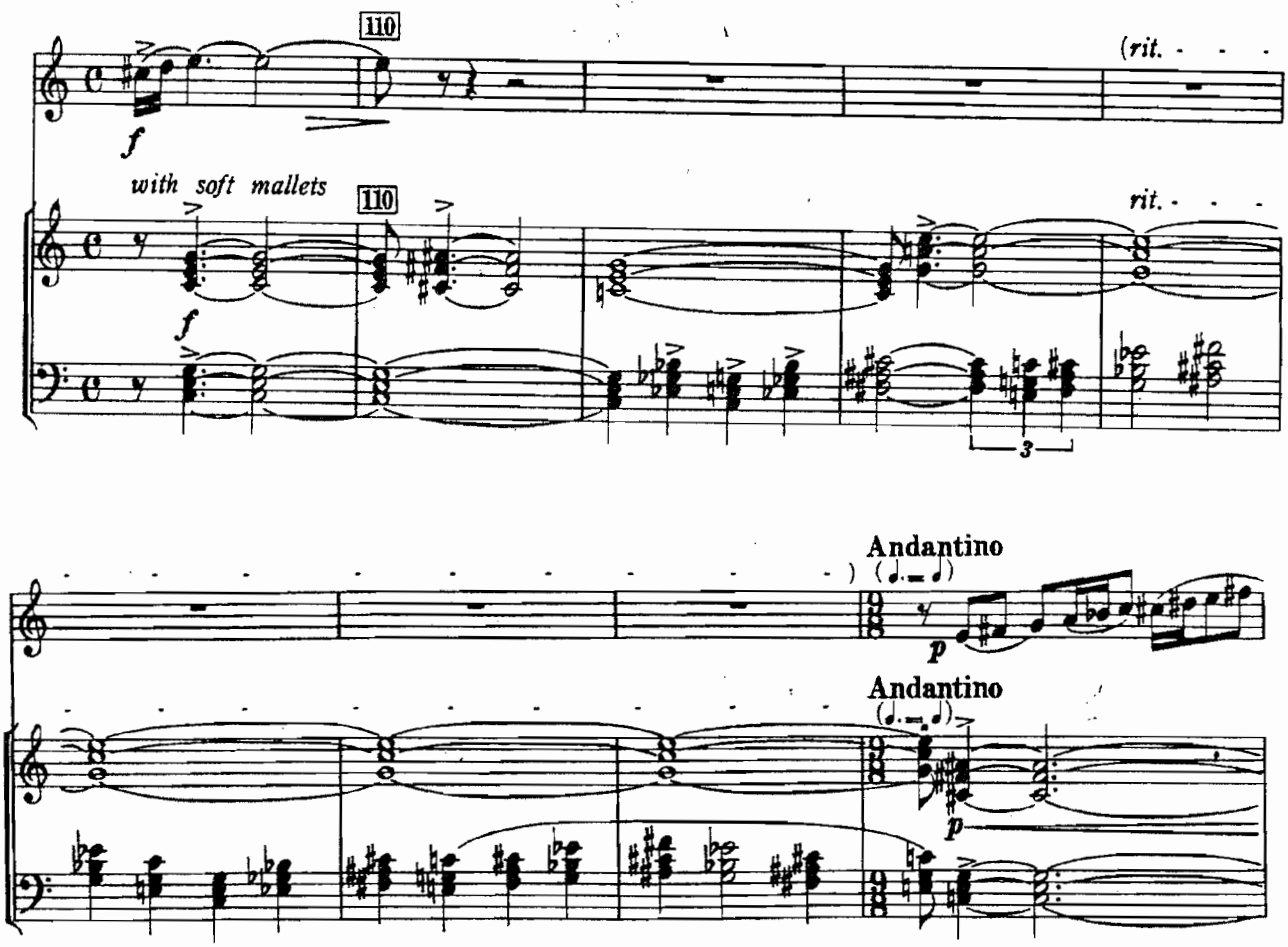
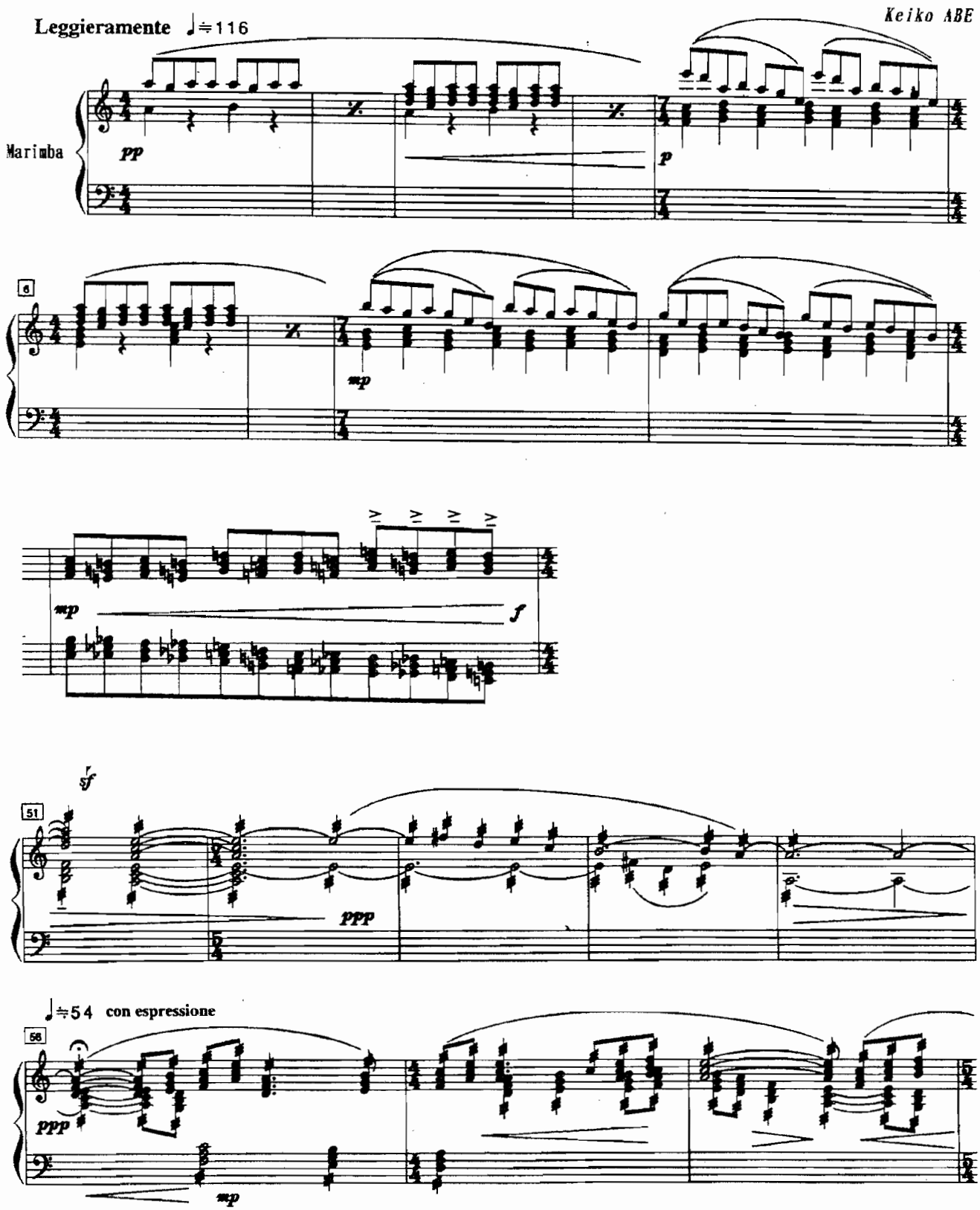
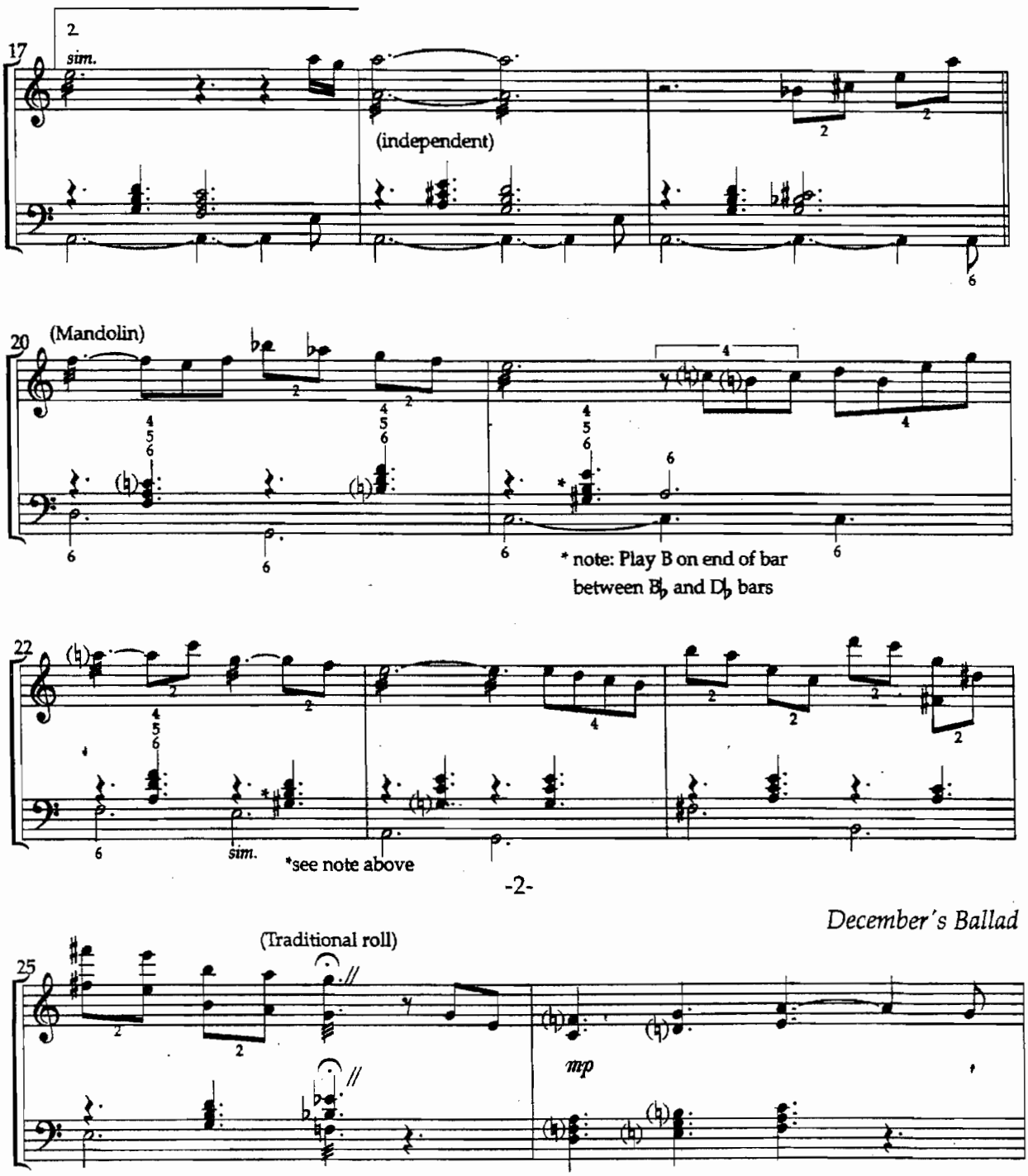
Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone, Akira Yuyama
published by Ongaku no Tomo



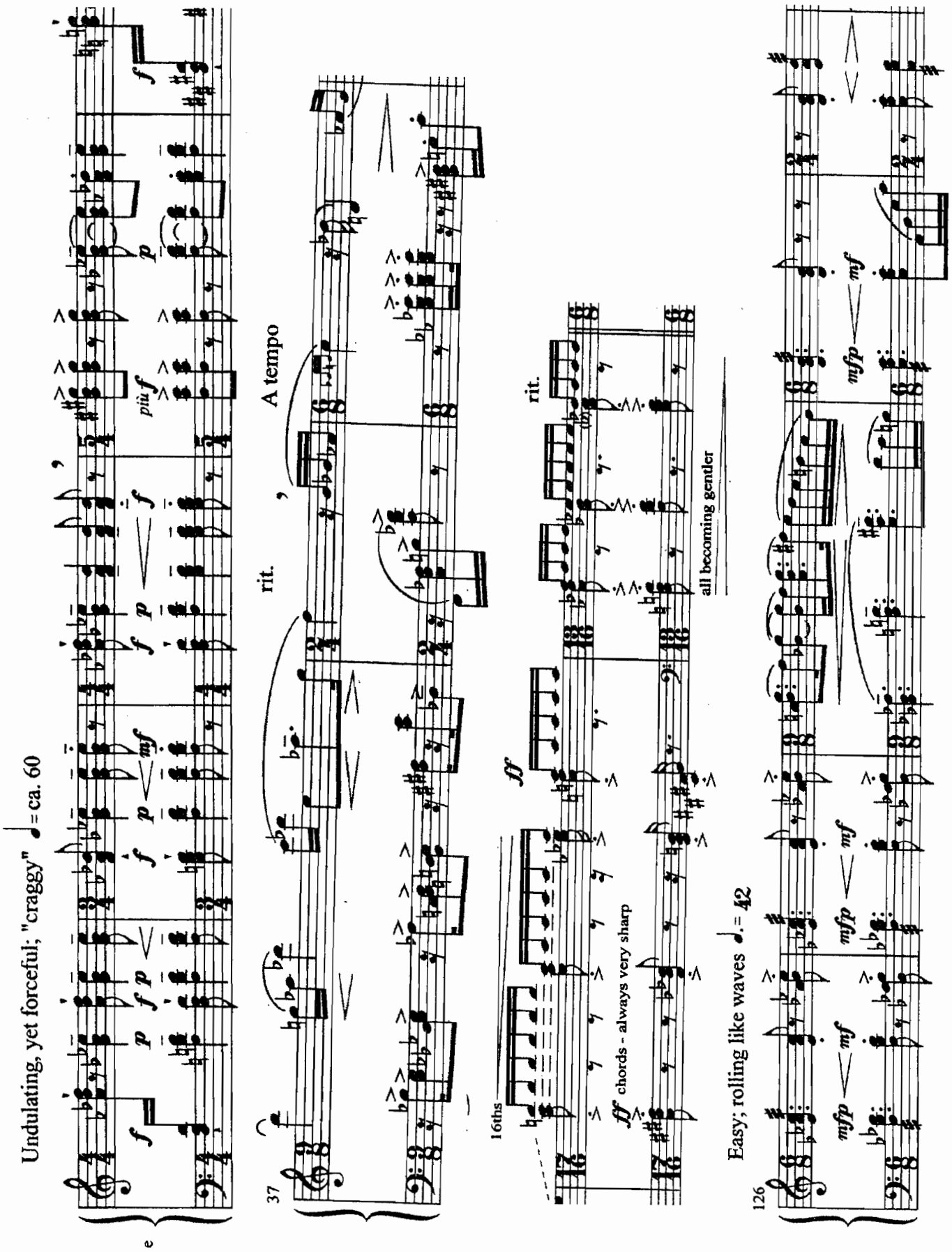
Itsuki Fantasy for Six Mallets, Keiko Abe
Published by Xebec Music Publishing



December's Ballad, from Jazz Suite for Marimba, Joan Griffith
Published by Pleasing Dog Music 1998

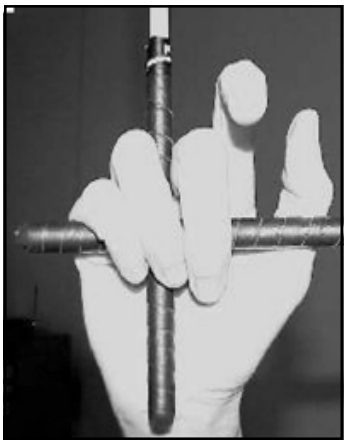


Circe, Evan Hause
Published by Evan Hause 2001



Six Mallet Marimba Grip

Rebecca Kite



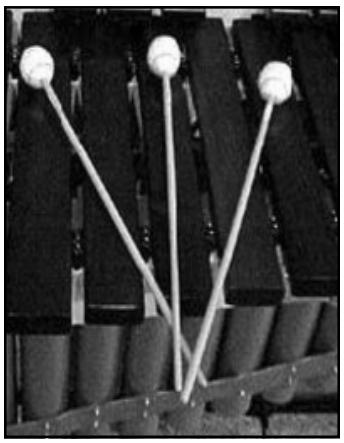
1- Place the outside mallet first, touching the skin of your palm, then the inside mallet so it can pivot freely.

2- This leaves your thumb and first finger free. Inside mallet rests below the first joint of thumb.

3- Slide third mallet under inside mallet. Control this middle mallet with your thumb tip and first finger.

4- Position for the middle and outside mallet heads to be close together.

5- Position for the middle and inside mallet heads to be close together.



6- Relationship of mallet handles while in your hand: outside and middle, touching palm: inside on bottom, pivoting from left to right under the outside mallet handle.

Six Mallet Compositions

Circe (2001) Evan Hause - six mallets, with some five and some four required
December's Ballad (1998) Joan Griffith (second movement of ***Jazz Suite for Marimba***) - five mallets
Itsuki Fantasy for Six Mallets (1994) Keiko Abe - six mallets throughout
Stunts and Traces (marimba and tape) Bruce Hamilton - six and four mallets

All music is available from Steve Weiss Music and/or GP Percussion Online: www.GPPercussion.com

--www.GPPercussion.com--
now: www.TakiMusic.com