

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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Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone, Akira Yuyama
published by Ongaku no Tomo

Musical score for Marimba and Alto Saxophone, measures 110-114. The score is written in 4/4 time. The Marimba part (top staff) begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes the instruction "with soft mallets". The Alto Saxophone part (middle staff) also begins with a dynamic marking of *f*. Both parts feature complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. The Marimba part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 114. The Alto Saxophone part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 114. The score concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking in both staves.

Musical score for Marimba and Alto Saxophone, measures 115-119. The tempo is marked *Andantino* with a metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 60$. The Marimba part (top staff) begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. The Alto Saxophone part (middle staff) also begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. Both parts feature complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. The Marimba part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 119. The Alto Saxophone part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 119. The score concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking in both staves.

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

Leggieramente ♩ = 116

Keiko ABE

Marimba

pp p

6

mp

mp f

51

ppp

♩ = 54 con espressione

56

ppp mp

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

17 *sim.* 2
 (independent)
 2 2
 6

20 (Mandolin)
 4 4 4 4
 5 5 5 5
 6 6 6 6
 6 6 6 6
 * note: Play B on end of bar between B_b and D_b bars

22 (h) 4 4 4 4
 5 5 5 5
 6 6 6 6
 6 6 6 6
sim. *see note above

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December's Ballad

25 (Traditional roll)
 2 2
mp

Undulating, yet forceful; "craggy" $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$

Measures 1-36 of the musical score. The piece is in 4/4 time. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various dynamics such as *f*, *p*, *mf*, and *piu f*. There are also accents and slurs throughout the passage.

Measures 37-50 of the musical score. Measure 37 is marked with a *rit.* (ritardando) and *A tempo*. The notation includes treble and bass staves with dynamics like *f* and *mf*, and features slurs and accents.

Measures 51-64 of the musical score. Measures 51 and 52 are marked with *16ths*. Measure 53 is marked with *ff* and the instruction "chords - always very sharp". Measure 54 is marked with *rit.*. The notation includes treble and bass staves with dynamics like *ff* and *mf*, and features slurs and accents.

all becoming gentler

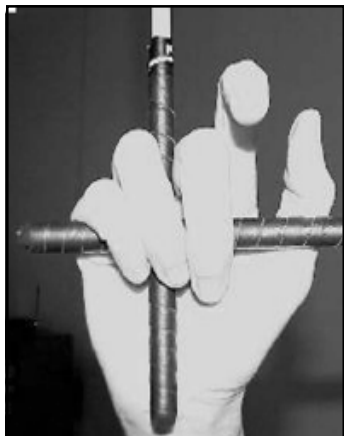
Easy; rolling like waves $\text{♩} = 42$

Measures 125-138 of the musical score. Measure 125 is marked with *126*. The notation includes treble and bass staves with dynamics like *mf*, *mp*, and *mf*, and features slurs and accents.

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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.



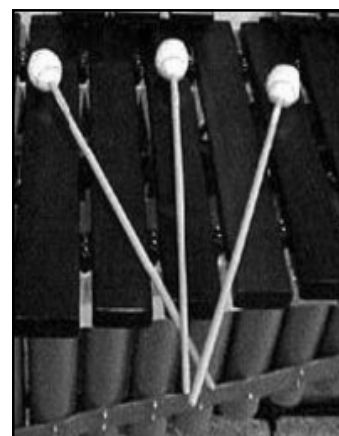
3- Slide third mallet under inside mallet. Control this middle mallet with your thumb tip and first finger.



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